

Wednesday 31 July 2019

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

QUESTIONS

Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation and Mental Health Facility - Premier's Promise

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.03 a.m.]

Your Government has descended into chaos and dysfunction as a result of your weak leadership. After five years as Premier you are not delivering the stability and certainty that you promised. In 2013 you said -

Tasmanians talk about wanting a government that has a clear agenda, that speaks with one voice, that is not compromised and dependent on political backroom deals for its survival ...

Just a few weeks ago you did a backroom deal with the member for Clark, Sue Hickey, that you clearly had no intention of delivering on. You have given false hope to the families of people fighting addiction because you were so desperate to cling on to power.

Will you admit that you lead a chaotic and dysfunctional Government that is compromised and dependent on political back room deals for its survival?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Good morning, everyone.

I reject the wishful thinking of a Leader of the Opposition under siege internally and still, despite what they say, very much wedded to the Greens. The Labor Party increasingly votes in this parliament with the Greens. While they stand for nothing, the one policy position they do seem to take is whatever the Greens are doing. Nine times out of 10 Labor is voting with the Greens. That alliance, that deal, is alive and well. It highlights the lack of substance and the lack of policy conviction in the Labor Party. Who is leading them and who is the real Opposition?

Regarding mental health services, as I said yesterday, I welcome the opportunity to speak with the member for Clark about opportunities for increased services, increased access to those services, and more support and resources for an area of concern to this Government. As the new minister outlined yesterday, we are already increasing our effort in this regard. The fact that we now have a Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing is a renewed and increased level of focus and attention and ministerial responsibility. It is a strong agenda.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with the member for Clark, as does the minister, to discuss proposals for what we can do to better help Tasmanians who need better mental health services who might benefit from the ideas of members of parliament from whatever perspective. The Labor Party has come up a big flat zero when it comes to good ideas.

Ms O'Byrne - You had that report in April. You could have funded it in the Budget.

Mr HODGMAN - I welcome them. I look forward to continue discussions with the member for Clark.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Byrne, it is very unladylike to be yelling in the parliament.

Ms O'BYRNE - Madam Speaker, point of order. One of us needs to be sitting down.

Madam SPEAKER - I suggest it be you. I do not like the temperament or the attitude. You are on warning number one.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I draw your attention to the inappropriateness of the member mentioning someone's gender in any kind of warning in parliament. First, my name is Michelle O'Byrne, or the member for Bass or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition -

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, are you referring that to me?

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, Madam Speaker. The word 'ladylike'.

Madam SPEAKER - For goodness sake, this is political correctness taken to the nth degree. Your behaviour was inappropriate, whether it was ladylike or otherwise. I will not be spoken to like that again, Ms O'Byrne.

Ms O'Byrne - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Please proceed, Premier.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our conviction and our effort to improve mental health services is clear. It does not mean for a minute that there is not more to do. I have always said we are willing to get ideas and suggestions from members in this place and experts. Our conditions will always be whether what is proposed will deliver the best possible benefit for Tasmanians who need those services and those who support them. It will always be evidence-led and instructed, not only by government officials and experts but also by the community sector. This concept is right for Tasmania and right for Tasmanians.

While the Opposition ties itself up in knots on matters that are of no consequence, the important thing for people with mental health issues or those who are looking after them is that this issue is front and centre for this Government and, I hope, for all members of parliament. We were elected by a majority of Tasmanians -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I cannot hear a word. Please, I am asking this side to calm down and let the Premier finish. Premier, it would be good if you wound up please.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding certainty and stability, Tasmanians can trust this Government to deliver on what we promised. We were elected a little over a year ago to deliver on an agenda. It has mental health services and improved support for Tasmanians within it. That is what Tasmanians are interested in, not the silly, petty, political games played by a

directionless Opposition that even their own party members say stands for nothing and is delivering nothing.

Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation and Mental Health Facility - Premier's Promise

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.08 a.m.]

Yesterday, the failed former health minister, Michael Ferguson, made it clear that your Government had no intention of delivering a state-of-the-art 50-bed drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility because there was no money in the Budget for it. That stands in stark contrast to what the member for Clark and member of your own Government, Sue Hickey, said a few weeks ago -

I am particularly excited today to announce that the Government has agreed to a 50-bed unit drug and alcohol and mental health dedicated state-of-the-art facility, probably at St John's Park, but certainly in greater Hobart.

Who misled the Tasmanian community? Was it the member for Clark or was it you?

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I want to raise on a point of order that the Leader of the Opposition has made a comment and referred it to me or attempted to quote me. It is entirely untrue.

Ms White - It's not a point of order - you're very sensitive.

Madam SPEAKER - I will take some advice from the Clerk because I think that is a point of order.

Mr Bacon - That's not a very ladylike way to behave.

Madam SPEAKER - Oh, come on, Mr Bacon.

Mr Bacon - What? I thought it was all right to say that.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not a point of order, it is a clarification. We are going to let it stand.

Ms O'Connor - Madam Speaker?

Madam SPEAKER - We do not have an answer yet, so could I have the Premier, please?

Mr HODGMAN - They are not so much in sync this morning as normal, but I welcome the opportunity to again speak on this matter and I totally reject, as I so often have to do and never more than now, the claims and assertions by the Leader of the Opposition. Talk about a whitewash lacking substance and being able to honestly articulate a set of events or a state of affairs in a simple question to me.

Ms White - A member of your Government made an announcement about a project that you backflipped on.

Mr HODGMAN - It again demonstrates the utter lack of substance. The only gain in town for the Labor Party under Bec White is to play games, create mischief, and worry more about themselves and less about the people they were elected to serve. Those people with mental health issues and those who care for them are front of mind for us, not your games, I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention to the question, which is how a member of his own Government can announce a project that just a few weeks later he backflipped on. Either the member misled the community or he did.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Premier, please resume.

Mr HODGMAN - Madam Speaker, it just shows the lack of substance and their attempt to cover up their lack of substance by making such claims. The important point is that as a government that is able to deliver more into Health, into Human Services and into a range of areas, we do so with a budget that is under control. Sensible Tasmanians - and they would not get any guidance on that front from the Leader of the Opposition - would appreciate that any government initiative needs to be funded and budgeted for in all areas, but especially in important areas of mental health services -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I issue a warning now to the Leader of the Opposition and a second warning to Ms O'Byrne. Premier, that is enough now, thank you; it has been over four minutes.

VDL Dairy - Allegations of Cruelty

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[10.12 a.m.]

Yesterday in response to our question about a series of detailed alarming allegations of animal cruelty and neglect at the VDL dairy, you confirmed we were misled at the Estimates table when the Director of Biosecurity Tasmania said he was unaware of cruelty allegations against VDL, when in fact RTI documents confirmed he was and you should have been as well, given their seriousness and the fact that this is Australia's largest dairy. Following media reports of our question and your answer yesterday, another former VDL staff member contacted our office who stated, and is prepared to swear, that he has witnessed cows' tails being broken as a matter of routine, watched as hoses have been shoved inside cows that have just given birth to fill their uteruses with water or air, seen calves starved to death, hundreds of bull calves shot because they are too small, and other shocking details of cruelty which I will spare the House for now. This is on top of a series of allegations of cruelty dating back to March 2016 and the letter in June from 20 senior staff seeking indemnity from prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act. Will you commit to ensuring Biosecurity Tasmania conducts a series of unannounced visits to each of VDL's 12 dairies at Woolnorth as a matter of urgency?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I said yesterday, our Government takes animal welfare seriously. Compliance with our state's animal welfare laws is a top priority and it must be implemented accordingly, and it will be. I make it very clear that under our Government we increased the penalties for aggravated cruelty to up to five -

Ms O'Connor - You lifted the ban on 1080 and removed the Treasurer's Instructions on cruelty-free eggs.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We increased the penalties for aggravated animal cruelty to up to five years. We strengthened the penalties across the board to send a strong message and to increase deterrents against acts of animal cruelty. I thank the now Deputy Premier and minister for primary industries and water at the time for his leadership and the strong support from this Government for those measures. We have also improved the powers of animal welfare officers.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. I asked the minister if he will commit to ensuring that there is a series of unannounced visits to each of VDL's 12 dairies.

Madam SPEAKER - As you know, that is not a point of order, but I would like the minister to try to be more focused.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker, it was a very lengthy question and I am trying to address each aspect of it and put it into some context. The member for Clark asked a whole range of questions and made a certain number of allegations that should be based on fact.

Regarding improving the power of animal welfare officers, we have increased their accountability and professional standards. I make it clear that Biosecurity Tasmania does an important job and I have confidence in Biosecurity Tasmania.

I make it clear that allegations of animal cruelty are treated very seriously and they need to be acted on appropriately. As I indicated yesterday, there was a whole range of visits to VDL regarding animal welfare concerns that were expressed. There were complaints made, each complaint was taken very seriously, and all complaints made in relation to the VDL property were followed up by experienced biosecurity inspectors - that is the advice I received - as they are with allegations of serious animal welfare in any location in Tasmania. No compliance action was required in any of these cases; that is the advice I have received. Regarding those further allegations the member has made today, based on the advice I have just received through the member for Clark, of course I will take it on board. I do appreciate -

Ms O'Connor - There needs to be a series of unannounced visits to each of those farms.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I ask Ms O'Connor to take this off line afterwards with the minister.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I am trying to make it very clear that I take very seriously the allegation that has been made through the member for Clark. Of course I will take it on board and follow it up with Biosecurity Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Could you ask the minister to answer the question as to whether or not he will commit to ensuring a series of unannounced visits to each of VDL's 12 dairies?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I am sure he did, so it is not a point of order. I am positive he did and I hope the minister might talk to you later.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, to make it very clear, I am taking this matter very seriously. The allegation has been made. I will take it on board and discuss it with Biosecurity Tasmania. They do a good job, I have confidence in them, and I will be following up on this matter.

Strategic Growth in Rural Communities

Mr TUCKER question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.18 a.m.]

Can you please outline how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government policies are delivering strategic growth in regional communities across Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is a very strong advocate for his community for regional Tasmania and for the growth in our economy. I said yesterday that it continues to be one of the strongest performing in the country in state final demand, private capital investment, record levels of exports, and large numbers of tourists continue to come into our state. Our visitor economy is a pillar and a key driver for Tasmania's strong economic performance. Our plan has always been to strategically invest in our competitive strengths and there is no greater competitive strength for our state than our tourism industry. It has always been the centrepiece of the plan that we were elected to deliver just over 500 years ago -

Ms O'Byrne - Ha, ha - 500 years?

Mr HODGMAN - with a majority of Tasmanians trusting us to continue the momentum in our economy and to continue to see more jobs being created for Tasmanians, the state out of recession and back in the grey, a budget out of deficit and back into surplus, and business confidence from the lowest in the country to the highest under this Government. That was what we were re-elected to deliver just over 500 years ago, and we will continue to strongly, and more so than any other government before it, invest in our strategic assets, our competitive assets. Tourism is one of them and we will continue to deliver the plan with which we were elected.

A great example of this was the announcement of Tasmania's next iconic walk proposal last week. The internationally renowned Overland Track and the award winning Three Capes Track are booked out during peak periods and have elevated Tasmania's great reputation as a destination for world-class walks. They deliver enormous benefits to their regions. For example, I am advised, the Three Capes Track delivers a visitor spend in excess of \$16.9 million per annum in walk fees,

accommodation, transport, equipment, meals and visiting attractions, and this translates to thousands of extra bed nights in both the Tasman Peninsula and beyond.

Our magnificent, wild west coast has been chosen as the preferred destination for the next iconic walk. This will ensure we stay ahead of the pack with the next world-class experience in this area. It will showcase the magnificent and unique west coast region, all that it has to offer and will enhance our reputation as one of the best eco-tourism destinations in the world. I acknowledge the West Coast Tourism Association for their contribution in developing this fantastic proposal, and a number of other communities that very keenly came forward with some great ideas.

This next walk incorporates the magnificent Tyndall Ranges, the spectacular wilderness and the very rich mining heritage of the area, which will be a feature of the experience. It points to the strength of our multi-use reserve principles, which can support the visitor economy, tourism and our great mining industry, which is a rich sector of mining heritage in our state alongside the community that values it. This will also be an important feature of the experience.

The Government will now undertake market testing; a detailed feasibility study informed by consultation with the community that will guide the walk's route and design facilities. We have every confidence it will be an amazing experience and that it will not, as somebody has suggested, kill people. It will be, however, something that many people will be dying to do because it is a wonderful experience that is presented to bushwalkers and Tasmanians and will be delivered.

Ms O'Connor - If you send people up over the Tyndall Ranges, you are putting them at risk. You are putting people at risk if you take them up to that mountain top.

Mr HODGMAN - I do not say that lightly. That was a suggestion made by an esteemed leader of a community that has used very dangerous language when this is a very exciting proposal before us. It is intended to drive growth in the west coast community as part of our strategic growth agenda and alongside other key strategic investments such as the Western Wilds drive journey or the Hobart to Strahan air passenger service, which we are supporting. We want our regions to be hubs of growth and more opportunities and that is exactly what strategic growth is all about.

Madam SPEAKER - Premier, you are now approaching five minutes.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, I will conclude. I would like to talk about taking our events and business conferences into regional areas with a \$20 million Regional Tourism Attraction Loan Scheme. We want to keep business and community confidence levels high. They are the highest in the nation. The Opposition will want to dent it for fun but it will damage Tasmania's strong economic position and the confidence people have to invest in our state. We have a number of initiatives within our budget to keep our economy strong, to keep people investing -

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, Premier.

Health - Efficiency Dividends and Budget Cuts

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.24 a.m.]

If you were listening, you would have heard the widespread shock and condemnation of your Government's plans to make more health cuts. This morning, Simon Judkins from the Australasian

College for Emergency Medicine has slammed your planned cuts that threaten any goodwill built up through the June access solutions meeting. Mr Judkins said, 'This is pushing the hospital and its patients to the edge of a cliff'. Are you prepared to torpedo the goodwill from the access solutions meeting by proceeding with budget cuts to Health?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The strong work we are undertaking to fix the health system that was a wreck, and to invest more than ever before, will always be informed by experts, those who have credibility in this space, those who wish to help, and I include -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am having difficulty hearing. Could you please calm down?

Mr HODGMAN - those who are involved in ongoing consultations and engagement. This included the access meeting, which the Opposition Party would um and ah about even being a part of, and if or when they were, would take the opportunity -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I draw your attention to the Premier's remarks. He is misleading the parliament and should reflect on his comments. We accepted that invitation as soon as it was issued. I do not know what he is referring to. He needs to be truthful in this place.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Premier, could you please address that.

Mr HODGMAN - The Tasmanian public cannot trust the Opposition to make a meaningful contribution to solutions. Their only offer is to play mischief and distract the Government from what we are endeavouring to do and they do so dishonestly. For those who wish to contribute and those who are, we thank them and we will continue the ongoing work -

Mr O'Byrne - Best minister ever. Two days later, 'ta-das' down the road.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr HODGMAN - including in relation to the access meeting. I hope all those involved are aware of the facts. We have outlined the Government's position with respect to the increased investments we are making and how they best be directed and what we need to do to keep our budget in good shape so we are able to make those investments. It can only be done by keeping our budget in surplus, keeping our economy strong to allow that, and to ensure that whatever the Government is doing is well directed and targeted to the best possible outcomes.

There are some people, most notably the Opposition, who would suggest that no government should ever be efficient, make savings that can allow us to invest more into the front line than the back line, or focus on what is going to deliver best our very strong agenda to improve health services, including for those who work within the hospitals. We need that budget capacity and it can only be ensured by managing our finances well, dealing with unanticipated shocks, massive revenue writedowns for the state, and a number of increasing demands on government as our population grows and requires better health care in the health system. That is why we are responding.

Ms White - Did you read your revised Estimates Report? Your mid-year update showed that you had already blown the budget well before any of those things.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms White.

Mr HODGMAN - To anyone, and I hope that those listening including those who represent our hard-working health professionals understand, we are not going to make cuts to frontline, essential health services. That is not going to happen. We will continue to work with unions, for example. I suggest those in the health space, the ANMF, which has been very productive and constructive in coming forward and saying that there are a lot of things they can do while we debate their pay rise, they can also make our health system work better and be more efficient. We have union leaders, true Labor people, coming forward to say they are here to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

We can deliver better health services for Tasmanians by reducing unnecessary costs in areas that do not deliver greater services to Tasmanians. That is what this is all about. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to provide a constructive contribution to this and not to mislead people, the AMA or anyone else, about what is happening. We will not compromise frontline health services. We have worked so hard to bring our budget back into good shape so we can invest more into it. We are not going to stop that now.

Access to the Justice System

Mrs PETRUSMA question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[10.28 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the steps the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is taking to deliver its commitment to provide Tasmanians with access to an effective and efficient justice system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question and for her continued interest in Tasmania's justice system. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is committed to ensuring all Tasmanians have access to an efficient -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - Madam Speaker, the other side is not interested in delivering an efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system but our side of the House is. We are delivering on our promises and what Tasmanians voted for, which is access to an efficient and effective criminal and civil justice system in which court proceedings are finalised in a timely manner.

As members would recall, the recent Budget invested more than \$35 million over four years into the courts to ensure Tasmanians have access to an effective and efficient justice system. However, as I have said previously, there is no one silver bullet that can resolve this issue alone; it is not only about resourcing.

To fully realise the benefits of the Government's significant investment in Tasmania's justice system we are also pursuing a range of legislative technological and procedural reforms to address the court's increasing workloads and to improve access to justice. To this end, I am very pleased to announce that 19 years and seven Attorneys-General after work first began, I will today be tabling the Magistrates Court (Criminal and General) Bill as well as the related Restraint Orders Bill and Magistrate's Court (Criminal and General) (Consequential Amendments) Bill.

It has taken the Hodgman majority Liberal Government to progress and finalise this significant reform, culminating in a four-bill package. The first of these bills was the Justices of the Peace Bill which previously passed the parliament and commenced on 1 July this year.

The Magistrates Court (Criminal and General) Bill will provide the Magistrates Court with a modern legislative framework, replacing 60-year-old legislation that the court currently relies upon for its criminal and general jurisdictions. The Justices Act 1959 on which the court currently relies is plainly outdated. It uses outmoded language and also does not provide the necessary legislative basis upon which to operate a modern court system. The bill makes a number of changes to court and police procedures that will make the justice system more efficient. Up-to-date technology will also streamline processes. Key changes that will be introduced by this bill also include more efficient commencement of proceedings, more timely disclosure provisions, the formalising of case management hearings, increased flexibility of court attendance by audio or audiovisual link and, importantly, increasing the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court to hear more matters that are currently required to go before the Supreme Court. I remind members that in our Budget we have not only replaced a part-time magistrate with a full-time magistrate, we have also announced an additional magistrate who will be recruited next year. We have provided that additional resource of more magistrates to respond to this aspect and increased workload as well.

Importantly, this legislation will set the foundation for the Justice Connect project to be designed, built and delivered. The design of Justice Connect is currently pending the final form of this bill as there would be little point spending time and money to design and build a modern technology solution to match outdated and at times, less efficient and paper-based procedures currently contained in the Justices Act.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Archer, you have gone over four minutes.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was not aware I had a time limit.

Madam SPEAKER - We are just trying to speed up question time to get more good questions.

Ms O'Connor - Just a bit of self-indulgence on the taxpayer's coin.

Ms ARCHER - Madam Speaker, with the greatest respect to that interjection, it is not self-indulgent to be reporting to the House on something that has taken 19 years to deliver.

Ms O'Connor - It is. Dorothy Dixers are by their nature self-indulgent.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. It has become disorderly. I will give Ms Archer one more minute.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. Once Justice Connect is complete, combined with these reforms that I will be tabling soon, it will provide significantly more efficient and

effective justice systems. This is complex information technology. It will replace multiple outdated and often unconnected IT systems currently used by the department in the courts, and will remove any inefficient paper-based practices and allow the courts to deliver more effective outcomes for Tasmanians. Members will be well aware that relying on paper also relies on people's resources of getting information correct. We do not want early releases, we do not want inefficient practices -

Madam SPEAKER - That is time, Ms Archer.

Abalone Industry - Update

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[10.34 a.m.]

Can you outline to the House how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is tackling the long-spined sea urchin and helping to rebuild the abalone fishery on the east coast?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his strong support for the seafood industry. There is no greater supporter of Tasmania's fishermen and fisherwomen than the Hodgman majority Liberal Government. As members of this House know, our highly sought-after fisheries, including the rock lobster and abalone sector, are major Tasmanian industries providing significant benefits, particularly in our rural and regional areas, including the east coast of Tasmania.

We are delivering on our \$26 million investment package to enhance and grow our \$950 million seafood industry, employing thousands of people across regional Tasmania. That is what the Tasmanian people voted for with the Hodgman majority Liberal Government. They voted for that and we are now delivering in spades, unlike Labor, who did not even get a policy up before the election on seafood or commercial fishing.

Tasmania hosts the largest wild abalone fishery in the world, providing around 25 per cent of the annual global production of the wild-caught product. The importance of our fishery to the world is highlighted this week with the seventh Australasian Abalone Convention being held in Hobart, which I was honoured to open on Monday night.

Abalone is an important target species for around 11 000 recreational licence holders and is a culturally important fishery for our Aboriginal community. We are delivering practical strategies on how to grow the value of our world-class wild-caught and farmed seafood sector.

One such example is the \$5.1 million Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund to support the sector and to tackle the centrostephanus pest. We are working closely with the abalone industry to fund programs to increase that sustainability. I am pleased to advise that in the past year some 540 tonnes of centrostephanus have been removed from the east coast of Tasmania. That is a great result. It is a partnership between government and industry working together to provide a more sustainable future. That is almost triple what was harvested in the previous year.

I am pleased to announce today that under that fund we have allocated \$1 million this year towards the initial project to control centrostephanus and improve abalone stocks. These will include the following: to educate the community on the centrostephanus threat; to assess the means of remediation in areas unsuitable for harvest, such as the application of lime in deep water; to monitor the measures taken to date to ensure future control efforts are undertaken in the most efficient way; to find other uses for sea urchins, particularly for waste material, for example, fertiliser or for fish feed; to identify centrostephanus larval dispersal patterns so eradication efforts can be targeted; to assess the recovery rates for kelp beds following urchin eradication through means such as fishing, culling or predation by rock lobsters; and to assess the differences in efficiency between harvesting the urchins and culling them in priority areas.

In addition, the fund is supporting research into the resettlement of abalone larvae to further improve abalone stocks. Funds have also been made available to the CSIRO to develop a long-term strategic response plan to the centrostephanus threat. That is going to be similar to that prepared for the crown of thorns invasion on the Great Barrier Reef.

We have much work to do. We are backing the sector and backing the industry. Much of this is happening through our world-class Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies. In conclusion, our majority Liberal Government is delivering on our long-term plan. We are growing our seafood sector. We are creating jobs and a stronger economy, and we are proud of it.

Health - Efficiency Dividends and Budget Cuts

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.39 a.m.]

While you are distracted by the chaos and dysfunction within your Government, the true impact of the Government's \$450 million budget cuts is starting to emerge. The Australian Medical Association has described your Government's planned cuts to Health and hospitals as 'the height of stupidity'. AMA Vice President John Davis did not mince his words. He said:

Cuts to hospitals' budgets will see patients not receiving the care they need when they need it and elective surgery patients having to wait longer for their operations, putting lives at risk.

Have you set your new Health minister up to fail by requiring her to make cuts that have been described as the height of stupidity, or will you today show leadership and commit to quarantining Health and hospitals from your Government's savage \$450 million cuts?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I affirm for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Davis and the Tasmanian community that our focus is on rebuilding the health system. More is now invested in it than ever before. There is more to do but we will not be compromised by ensuring we manage our state's finances well and have an efficient Government. We will work with health professionals so we can deliver better services, more services, for Tasmanians in increased facilities, which we are delivering.

As the Treasurer outlined yesterday, and to provide the appropriate context here, a \$35 million cut, as the Leader of the Opposition says, improved efficiencies and savings for the Government. It is not what the Leader of the Opposition continues to assert to be the facts so you cannot trust the Leader of the Opposition if you are Dr Davis or anyone else. Nor can you trust them when it comes to what they did when in government. They made massive cuts to our hospital system. When that happened either the AMA or another representative organisation said it would take a decade to recover from the cuts Michelle O'Byrne delivered. They were right.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. It is very hard to hear.

Mr HODGMAN - Tasmanians were warned that when Michelle O'Byrne and the Labor Party made savage cuts, hundreds of millions of dollars, to our health system it would take a decade to recover. It has.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 45 goes to relevance. The Premier could clear this up now by quarantining Health from further cuts. That would absolve all of the concerns in the health sector.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order as you well know, but maybe the Premier can think about it.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have outlined the process to determine what will be sensible savings measures, efficiencies, for our state, not only its finances but how Government operates in a range of areas. We have talked about consultants, advertising and travel, for example. The Labor Party is happy for the Government to keep spending in those areas. We have also said we will continue to work with health professionals about making our health system more efficient and deliver better results. I have been in meetings with the ANMF, which has said that there is a range of things we can do that will save the Government money and improve services for Tasmanians. Who says we should not be having that conversation with our health professionals? We will continue to do it.

I can guarantee that we will not be making cuts, as the Labor Party asserts, to essential services, including in Health and right across government. We will keep our Budget in good shape so not only can we increase our investments into health services, facilities and improving working conditions for our health professionals but also fix the health system we inherited from you that we were told would take a decade to fix.

Native Swans - Culling Program

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND HERITAGE, Mr GUTWEIN redirected to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr BARNETT

[10.44 a.m.]

The ABC yesterday revealed the shocking number of native swans that have been slaughtered over the past four years - 8000 of them authorised by the Government. Some 460 swans were culled in the past two years just from two farms adjacent to the Tamar Island wetlands area. Tamar

residents who heard the shooting reported seeing swans dying slowly, wings flapping. We received photos today of a swan without a wing from that shooting period unable to launch into flight from the water. I seek the leave of the House to table photos of this swan without a wing.

Madam SPEAKER - Unfortunately, due to question time being limited, I have to ask you to table it during other formal business.

Dr WOODRUFF - I will do that, Madam Speaker. My experience in the past is that we have accepted things during question time. If the Government has a problem with doing that, I will seek the leave of the House to do that at a later time.

Madam SPEAKER - I have taken advice from the Clerk.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minister, your Government collects no information about the localised impacts of these massive so-called 'culls' on Tasmania's swan population and undertakes no investigation about the animal welfare of these authorised slaughters. Native swans are protected birds in their own habitat.

Will you cancel all permits and undertake an investigation into local population dynamics and the welfare issues surrounding the widescale shooting of native swans?

Mr GUTWEIN - That question should have been directed to the minister for Primary Industries.

Ms O'Connor - You are responsible for threatened species and species management. How gutless.

Mr GUTWEIN - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The member should withdraw that.

Madam SPEAKER - Please withdraw it. It was not very parliamentary.

Mr GUTWEIN - It is not a matter for my portfolio. I made that perfectly clear and the appropriate minister is going to answer the question which, to be frank, the member who asked the question should have been aware of. It demonstrates a level of ignorance.

Madam SPEAKER - I have the point, thank you, Mr Gutwein. I will ask the Primary Industries minister.

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, the question was asked of the Environment minister because he is responsible for species management. I withdraw the allegation that he is gutless, but it is certainly cowardly.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as has been noted by the Environment minister, animal welfare is a top priority for our Government. Likewise, regarding crop protection permits and how they operate, the Government will always support landholders to sustainably -

Ms O'Connor - Which is why we asked the Environment minister the question.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I am trying to answer the question. They are interjecting and making it impossible for me to answer the question.

The Government will always stand up for landholders to sustainably manage browsing animal populations that are causing excess damage to their crops and pastures. Where wildlife is causing damage, a crop protection permit may be granted to enable applicants to cull the wildlife if alternative non-lethal strategies are neither effective nor practical.

Dr Woodruff - Rubbish, where is the evidence?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, the minister will be heard in silence.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that.

Where wildlife is causing damage a crop protection permit may be granted to enable those applicants to cull the wildlife if alternative non-lethal strategies, are neither effective nor practical. In issuing these permits, there is due process of assessment - consideration of alternative measures, overall population monitoring, and requirements to uphold animal welfare standards and guidelines.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr BARNETT - Annual monitoring of black swans since 1985 confirms the population to be widespread.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker, Standing Order 45 relevance. I specifically asked about local population dynamics because there is no local assessment done. I specifically asked the minister to undertake an assessment of local population dynamics.

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

Mr BARNETT - Yes, Madam Speaker, that is correct. We cannot have false or misleading allegations made. We must be making an assessment based on the facts. I am trying to outline the facts for the members of the parliament, and members of the community, to make it very clear that any assessment made is very carefully considered. There is an annual monitoring of black swans since 1985 which confirms the population to be widespread and abundant in Tasmania with no evidence of any long-term decline in numbers that either are statewide or at a regional level.

Applications for a crop protection permit take into account the damage being caused, the abundance of the species of wildlife for which a permit is being sought and the status of that species at a local, at a regional -

Dr Woodruff - You don't care about swans with their wings shot off. They mate for life, you know.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - My point, Madam Speaker, was that it is at a local level, a regional level and a state level. In the case of the black swan -

Dr Woodruff - Who is going to attend to this? Who is actually going to do something about that?

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Dr Woodruff, you are using that as a prop, so please put it down. I am very happy for you to show it to me later, or to table it at the right time. I ask that the minister be heard in silence. He has about 30 seconds left.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am more than happy to provide a more comprehensive response in light of the interjections from the Greens members. Let me make it very clear that regarding crop protection permits they take into account the damage being caused and the abundance of the species of wildlife. In the case of the black swan a physical assessment of each location on an application is also carried out. Discussions with landowners are held during the application process that cover damage, mitigation strategies including non-lethal strategies, their feasibility, potential impacts on neighbouring properties, as well as responsibilities and requirements if a permit is issued. All of this information is used to determine whether a permit is granted. Culling can only be carried out on the property where the permit applies.

Dr Woodruff - You never talked to the wetlands area about the impact on swans in the wetlands.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Dr Woodruff, that is warning number one.

Mr BARNETT - Finally, permits may be granted to multiple landowners in an area. However, total take quotas will be determined to ensure the long-term sustainability of the population in that area is not threatened. Madam Speaker, I could make it very clear and more comprehensive but in light of the time, unfortunately I am unable to.

Recognition of Visitors

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I ask the House to acknowledge our guests in the gallery. They are the SRC students from Triabunna District School. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

Health - Efficiency Dividends and Budget Cuts

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.52 a.m.]

Your Government is so out of touch and consumed by chaos and dysfunction that the Treasurer made the extraordinary claim that there is room for cuts in the Health budget. Andrew Brakey -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. We will hear the Leader of the Opposition in silence.

Ms WHITE - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Government is very sensitive over there about their cuts to Health.

Andrew Brakey from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation made it clear that there is no distinction between frontline and backline services in hospitals and any cuts would impact on patients. The AMA has completely rejected the claim that there is room for cuts. AMA Vice President John Davis said, 'There is simply no room for cuts to hospitals without catastrophic damage to already over stretched services'. Premier, who do you believe? The Treasurer or the health experts?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. When it comes to trust I certainly do not trust her nor what she says or how she represents people. You continuously misrepresent members in this place - and more often than not Government members - and you have done that to the Treasurer. Unlike some of the people you selectively quote in here who may only see and hear things in the media, you get to sit here and listen to what the Treasurer and I have outlined by way of a process and very clear commitments we are making and you still misrepresent it.

Ms O'Byrne - You don't tell the truth, that's the problem.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr HODGMAN - When it comes to trust I very strongly suggest that no-one should trust what the Leader of the Opposition says. When it comes to our clear commitments, we have said also that we will not cut those things or make the necessary savings and efficiency measures required of Government to in any way compromise our health and hospital system, the services it delivers and the people who are there to deliver them. We will continue to work with them as well.

On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition suggests and encourages us to meet with them, which we do through various forums including the recent access meeting. When we talk to some, including the secretary of the ANMF to whom the Leader of the Opposition has referred - and who, I said, has quite constructively and proactively spoken with Government in the context of wage negotiations and all the things we can do to make our health system better, then of course we will continue to listen to them.

Our commitment is very strong. If there is any confusion in the broader community about what is happening, I suggest you do not listen to the Leader of the Opposition because she will deliberately misrepresent things, but continue to work with the Government. This is a serious matter. Much of what the Leader of the Opposition speaks about goes to issues of trust. I say that if anyone thinks they can trust the Leader of the Opposition, you cannot trust the Leader of the Opposition or her team to manage the state's finances well. They cannot even do an alternative budget.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is getting to be unreasonable. I ask you to calm down because I do not want to be throwing people out.

Mr HODGMAN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition talks about trust but you cannot trust her or her party to manage our state's finances well or our economy. They cannot even produce an alternative budget. You cannot trust them to know what they stand for because they have completely abandoned Rebecca White's signature policy that they took to the election to remove gaming machines. You do not know what they stand for and you cannot trust the Leader of the Opposition to tell the truth. She has demonstrated this a number of times today. She could not even tell the truth when she was standing in front of a private residence for a media stunt when trying to make a point about public housing. You cannot trust the Leader of the Opposition.

Ambulance Services and Coverage

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.57 a.m.]

On 7 July an ambulance crew from Mowbray travelled the 400-kilometre round trip to Bridgewater to prop up systemic failures in the south caused by chronic understaffing and under-resourcing of ambulance services. There are just four ambulance crews in Launceston. That means that one-quarter of the resource was sent south to cover shifts that were vacant, which left the north of the state without adequate coverage. At the same time, ambulance ramping at the Launceston General Hospital has been severe, with crews sent from the north-west to cover shifts there due to under-resourcing. How many times this year has an ambulance crew from the north been sent south to cover shifts?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I welcome the question from the Leader of the Opposition. This side is investing \$125 million more into ambulance services to make sure we are reinvesting into the health system that was wrecked under those opposite. Already this week in parliament we have seen the other side trying to create fear around the health system. It is this side that is investing more in Health - 32 per cent of our budget, up from 25 per cent a decade ago, 1000 more people and 130 more beds. We are working to deliver solutions. The access solutions meeting that the Leader of the Opposition did not even bother turning up for is directly addressing making sure we have ways to have patient flow through the hospitals.

Ms White - Were you there? Where were you?

Ms COURTNEY - I was not the minister at the time. If that is all they have on the other side it is really insubstantial. I have to say, this is why Tasmanians do not trust Labor, because they come in here and try to spread fear among the workers in Tasmania, whereas this side is getting on with delivering actions, delivering investment and making sure we are addressing the concerns. This Government knows there is increasing demand and that there are significant challenges in the health system. I am very aware of that.

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Member Suspended
Member for Bass - Ms O'Byrne

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Byrne, I ask that you leave the Chamber until the end of question time, please.

Ms O'Byrne withdrew.

Ms COURTNEY - Madam Speaker, I am very aware of the challenges in our health system and the delivery of care across Tasmania. That is why -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45. Could you ask the minister to answer the question, which was how many ambulance crews have come south from the north this year?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I ask the minister to direct her attention to the question.

Ms COURTNEY - I will direct my attention to what we are doing as a Hodgman majority Liberal Government. We are delivering what we promised the people of Tasmania when we were elected: a \$125 million plan, which includes 42 new paramedics -

Ms White - Sit down if you don't know the answer.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms White, that is another warning. That is two.

Dr Broad - You haven't even mentioned ambulances in your answer.

Mr Ferguson - Are you serious?

Dr Broad - Yes.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms COURTNEY - I am talking about paramedics -

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair, please.

Ms COURTNEY - The behaviour we see from the other side shows that they do not want to listen to the answer. They do not want to offer solutions. They do not want to understand what we are doing. There will be 42 paramedics in regional areas.

Ms Haddad - You do not have an answer. How many? It is such a simple question. It is just a number.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Haddad.

Ms COURTNEY - These people are being employed to directly support the provision of ambulance services across Tasmania, new ambulance stations for Glenorchy and Burnie, more staff in the operation centre, secondary triage and more training equipment and more support for volunteers.

Mr O'BYRNE - Madam Speaker, point of order on relevance. It is a clear question. How many shifts of northern paramedics were sent south to cover the gaps created by the Government's under-investment in the ambulance service? If the minister does not know the answer, put it on the record later on.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you for that excellent advice, Mr O'Byrne. I am trying to keep this question time on time, which I am not doing too well. Please let the minister proceed.

Ms COURTNEY - I am surprised the Leader of Opposition Business would talk about under-investment in Health because this side is investing \$2 billion more across the next four years than when they were in government. This side is investing more money. We are listening to clinicians and making sure we are implementing solutions. We will continue to deliver solutions that will -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, on relevance. If the minister does not know the answer, she can commit to coming back to the parliament to provide it at the end of question time or she should sit down.

Mr FERGUSON - On the point of order. Can I try to be helpful here? You have ruled on this point and this is the same point of order, put three times.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. These points of order are becoming disorderly. We will draw the question to a close. Minister, I will give you another 10 seconds because we are really behind.

Ms COURTNEY - Madam Speaker, I assure you and the people of Tasmania that this side of the House will continue to invest in Health and frontline services.

Ambulance Services - Staffing

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.03 a.m.]

We have heard that an ambulance crew travelled more than 400 kilometres across the state, round trip, to prop up ambulance services in Bridgewater in early July. Sadly, this happens far too frequently under the Liberal Government. Unfortunately, you have not been able to give any details about how frequently that occurs and that is a disappointment. The failed former health minister, Michael Ferguson, announced in February last year that an extra 42 regional paramedics would be recruited by the state government. Is it not true that after 16 months and countless examples of ramped ambulances and exhausted paramedics, only one - just one - extra regional paramedic has been employed? Why will you not take the desperate pleas of our hardworking ambulance paramedics seriously?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition would know, operational matters of the distribution and allocation of ambulances are led from a clinical response to make sure we obtain the best outcomes for patients. The Government is not going to stand back from that. We will support Ambulance Tasmania and the people who work in the operation centre to make the right decisions that are right for the Tasmanian people and put the health of Tasmanians first.

This side of the House has been investing more within ambulance services - \$125 million. We are delivering on the commitments we made when we were elected by the people of Tasmania. I reassure Tasmanians that they can get the health care they need by calling 000. I want to make it very clear to Tasmanians that they have a system they can trust, because they do. This type of behaviour simply creates fear.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, on standing order 45. Could you draw the minister's attention to the question, which is, can she confirm just one regional paramedic has been employed in the last 15 months? If she does not know the answer, she can come back later with the information.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, that is very helpful advice but it is not a point of order.

Ms COURTNEY - I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition's concern for ambulance workers and paramedics. Why would the Opposition block our mandatory sentencing regarding protecting frontline workers, particularly paramedics?

Ms White - You haven't brought the legislation on. You brought it on yesterday and then you canned it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This side of the House has a clear record of investing across our health system. We are doing it now. It was delivered under Michael Ferguson and I expect to continue that and support our hard-working paramedics across the state.

Police Housing in Remote Areas

Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[11.06 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the progress of the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's upgrades to police housing statewide?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for her question. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering on our plan to build a stronger economy and to create jobs. The evidence shows that our plan is working. We are the only party in this place genuinely committed to community safety and law and order.

Remote area policing is a critical role for Tasmania Police and housing in good condition encourages police officers and their families to live and stay in our country areas. This is great for officers and the local communities. The Hodgman Liberal Government is the strongest supporter of Tasmania Police and we have made significant investments to upgrade police housing across Tasmania. This commenced in 2015-16, with a \$2 million investment to upgrade police housing on the west coast. We extended this program to improve police housing statewide in 2016-17 through to 2019-20. Combined, this has seen significant upgrades to 24 police residences since the ambitious capital program began.

While there was initially a strong focus on the west coast, residences have also been upgraded at Derby, Gladstone, King Island, Geeveston, Orford, Swansea and Triabunna. This year's Budget invests a further \$6 million over the next four years to continue this program for the police officers and their families in remote and regional Tasmania. Our commitment was also welcomed by the President of the Police Association of Tasmania.

I have the pleasure to announce that a request for tender process was undertaken for the renovations of Lady Barron and Whitemark residences on Flinders Island. Back in a Flash Construction, a small west coast business, was awarded the \$735 000 contract. The works have commenced and practical completion of both Flinders Island residences is expected in late November. This small Tasmanian business has previously undertaken similar works, with the completion of significant renovations to police residences at Strahan and Waratah in 2018.

In the coming 12 months our program will renovate or purchase a further nine police residences in locations including Flinders Island, Bridport, Bushy Park, Scottsdale, Swansea, Bicheno and Rosebery. This is necessary because the Hodgman Liberal Government has put an extra 139 police officers on the beat since 2014, with nearly 100 more to come over the term of this Government. This is in stark contrast to Labor, who ended up sacking 108 police officers. With Labor sold out to the radical Greens, who knows what they would have done if Tasmanians had not put a stop to it. By contrast, we are investing in police and the community infrastructure to support them. Our significant police housing infrastructure spend is in addition to the investment of \$10 million into the construction of new purpose-built police stations at New Norfolk and Longford, and a \$12 million investment in a new emergency service hub at Sorell. These investments will provide police officers with modern, functional, fit-for-purpose premises to serve their community well into the future.

I take this opportunity to thank all our 1259 police officers in Tasmania for the fantastic job that they do in protecting us and keeping us safe. Their dedication and contribution to our community each and every day ensures that Tasmania remains the best and one of the safest places in Australia to live and raise a family. Tasmanians can let the evidence speak for itself - Labor and the Greens are soft on crime. No matter what they say you cannot trust them. By contrast, the Hodgman majority Liberal Government will be unwavering in its commitment to our police and to the community's safety they help to deliver.

Time expired.

**MAGISTRATES COURT (CRIMINAL AND GENERAL
DIVISION) BILL 2019 (No. 27)**

**MAGISTRATES COURT (CRIMINAL AND GENERAL DIVISION)
(CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2019 (No. 28)**

RESTRAINT ORDERS BILL 2019 (No. 29)

First Reading

Bills presented by **Ms Archer** and read the first time.

MOTION

Select Committee on Firearms Legislation and Policy - Extension of Reporting Date

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin) (by leave) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee on Firearms Legislation and Policy be extended until 12 November next.

Motion agreed to.

TABLED PAPERS

Photographs of Swan Cull

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin)(by leave) - Madam Speaker, I lay on the table the three photographs I referred to during question time that were taken on 21 June 2019 from the second bridge on the Tamar Island wetlands.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Combustible Cladding

[11.15 a.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: combustible cladding.

I am pleased to bring this matter to the House this morning. It is a very important issue, not only for Tasmania, but a global issue. I have travelled widely and met with industry leaders. I have read just about every document available on this issue. It is a major community safety issue. There is a risk with aluminium cladding in Tasmania.

In February this year I read a Government media statement about a building ministerial council meeting that had just been held in Tasmania. There was quite a bit of bureaucratic and administrative spin about cladding. It made me wonder what was going on. I looked into it and

found we have reason to be very concerned in Tasmania. We identified a problem in 2017 after the then prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull, asked all states and territories to undertake an audit. This was triggered by the Grenfell fire in which 72 lives were lost and many people were injured. There is still debate about some of the accelerants but it was very clear from the findings that the main problem was the cladding on the outside of the building.

The cladding is a polyethylene core aluminium cladding - two pieces of aluminium on either side of an inner polyethylene core. It is a fabulous insulator and it is cheap. Apparently it works well and it is on thousands of buildings throughout Australia. We know it is on 43 multistorey buildings in Tasmania. The problem with the cladding is that between 20 per cent to 80 per cent of the polyethylene core is highly flammable. There is no such thing as high risk or low risk, it is just risk. CBOS undertook an audit in Tasmania which found that of the 43 buildings, one of them was repatriated. The reason that audit was undertaken was because it was a decree from the prime minister.

The audit points to where the problems are. We know which buildings have the ACP on them. However, nothing has been done to replace it. A Senate inquiry in 2017 stated that cladding on multistorey buildings should be replaced in the public interest. I am calling on the Government to release the list of buildings that have this cladding on them. There is one that you repatriated. You have the perfect opportunity to take the initiative and substitute the cladding on Tasmanian buildings. Some of them are just a piece of advertising; some will take time. All you have done is pinpoint a problem but not done anything to fix it. We have the opportunity in Tasmania to fix it.

It would provide assurance to the industry. Litigation is an issue. Who is responsible? Is it the developers? Is it the builders? Is it the surveyors? Is it the importers? You are up to your eyeballs in problems with this. All you have done is wrap it in administration and say we do not have a problem. Anyone who thinks you do not have a problem by having this on 42 multistorey buildings in Tasmania is fooling themselves. This Government has an obligation to protect Tasmanians. Provide the list of those 42 buildings. Let Tasmanians know if they are at risk.

One of them is an aged care facility. How much time would it take at 2 o'clock in the morning, for instance, if there was a fire, to clear an aged care facility of all inhabitants? We have it on student accommodation, we have it on buildings, so it is time for you to provide that information to the people of Tasmania. It is a public safety issue.

We also know that when the Grenfell fire happened in 2017, one of the biggest problems was the falling debris - the cladding and the molten lava - falling on first responders. That is how witnesses spoke about it. You need to make sure that not only the people in the buildings are protected but that the first responders coming into the buildings are also protected.

I know that there is no way you will take the front foot on this, but can you please at least put the public safety first? Can you let people know whether the building they are working or living in is dangerous? We also know that it is not just the multistorey buildings, so you have an obligation as a government to do the right things. You have gone to eight ministerial councils at least about this issue since 2014. Since 2014, you have known this was coming. You have wrapped it in administration. If you want, I can run through the science of how it actually burns. Please make the list available to the public.

Time expired.

[11.22 a.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the misrepresentation of facts and the reckless behaviour of the member opposite who purports to understand the aluminium cladding issue, as I have said many times publicly, is irresponsible. Not only am I saying it is irresponsible, fire experts have cautioned this sort of statement from the opposition spokesperson, as has the Master Builders Association. I will get to their direct quotes that they have made publicly in relation to your reckless comments on this topic in a minute.

I want to inform the House of a few things. As a government we have taken strong action when it comes to high-risk cladding of buildings in Tasmania. Aluminium composite panel, or ACP as it is known, has been available for approximately 30 years. However, only in recent years have fire-resistant ACP products been made available in Australia. As announced in October 2017, the Hodgman Government took proactive steps to use all of the existing powers available to us to prevent further use of ACP on a range of buildings. To this end, the Director of Building Control has used his powers under the Building Act 2016 to restrict the use of ACP with a polyethylene core in Tasmania.

Ms Butler - You put it on the new parliament building. It's crazy. Why would you do that?

Ms ARCHER - I am getting the facts on record, if the member could stop interrupting.

For any commercial building above two storeys that is classed as two, three and nine, or three storeys classed as five, six, seven and eight, approval is now required under the building product accreditation scheme which commenced on 27 December 2017. The Director of Building Control is working closely with the industry to ensure there is industry-wide awareness of the new regulatory requirements, including improving the standard of documentation for commercial building works and also delivering training for building surveyors, architects and building designers. Through these measures, the Government will ensure that the future use of cladding products in Tasmania meets appropriate safety standards and community expectations. That is moving into the future.

In relation to the statewide audit, at the same time the audit of buildings was carried out with potentially high-risk cladding being the focus, and that was completed in 2018.

Ms Butler interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask the member to allow the minister to speak.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is critical to get the facts on record here. It was conducted with the assistance of an independent fire safety expert. You cannot get better than that. The audit identified 42 buildings to be low risk, with one, the Launceston General Hospital, to be high risk. This cladding work was completed in 2012, interestingly enough, under the previous Labor government. It took our government to take swift action to rectify the LGH to ensure that this high risk was removed. The experts stated in the case of the other 42 buildings - and I will quote this for the benefit of the member opposite:

The use of ACP, aluminium composite panel, results in no additional risk to fire safety for those buildings.

That is what an independent fire safety expert said.

Factors to determine risk in the case of ACP buildings include building heights, fire safety infrastructure and method of installation, amongst other factors. It is important to remember that all buildings are flammable and appropriate risk assessment and management is always important. These are the critical elements of this. Building safety is focused on the safety of occupants and limiting the spread of fire, not necessarily preventing a fire in the first place.

Ms Butler - It is not safe, minister, and you know it is not safe.

Ms ARCHER - The member opposite has made claims that any risk is unacceptable. We can have this sort of risk with wooden products. Is the member suggesting that we stop using wood in buildings? It is just ridiculous. The Labor scaremongering has been called out because it has been called into question by the Tasmania Fire Service and the member has reflected on their ability to deal with building fires. The expert advice indicates that identified buildings are not subject to such risk as she has claimed. The scaremongering hit a new low last week with uninformed and dangerous comments that were made by Ms Butler.

I want to move to what the district officer of TFS, Andrew McGuiness, told Leon Compton on ABC radio on Friday 26 July when asked about the member for Lyons, Ms Butler's, call to remove all cladding. He said:

It's just not that simple ... If there is a relatively low risk from a firefighting perspective, then you would have to have some pretty solid evidence to support the removal of that ... I would rather see a considered and measured approach taken. Wait till the evidence comes out and use that evidence to make informed decisions on what we should do.

The Government has taken action from the recent building ministers' forum held in Sydney with all state and territory ministers present and the federal minister, Ms Andrews, as well.

The building industry understands that there is not a cladding crisis. Matthew Pollock, the executive director of Master Builders of Tasmania said in a media release last week:

Claims that people living and working in buildings in Tasmania are under threat of an inferno are disingenuous and fundamentally at odds with the facts. They also demonstrate a misunderstanding of the immediate issues for the industry that are vital to the state's economy. To question the safety of buildings deemed to be low risk by the experts is an extremely serious step to take. The industry hopes that those making them are confident in their understanding of the facts and the consequences.

The comments made by Ms Butler have been refuted by the fire experts and the building industry and I call on her to cease fearmongering.

Time expired.

[11.28 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this and commend my colleague, Ms Butler, for the work she has done in this space. She has done so not out of the motivations that this minister has ascribed to her, she has done so because she is genuinely concerned about safety. She recognises that as governments as regulators, as people in

this position, we have an obligation to provide the safest environment possible. If this minister can stand in this House and say 'all buildings are flammable', that is not a reason.

Ms Archer - It is what the experts say.

Ms O'BYRNE - You said that when you were sitting in your chair.

Ms Archer - Yes, I said it because the experts say it.

Ms O'BYRNE - That does not negate the obligation of this Government to take action where appropriate. Clearly the Government recognises that, because we now have a process around this cladding being used in future buildings. If we are genuinely concerned about the use of this cladding in future buildings, we must also be genuinely concerned about the existence of this cladding in existing buildings. That is a truism. If it is dangerous in the future, it is dangerous in its existence.

To label this reckless and irresponsible is simply trying to get out of the fact that some six ministers down the track since you got into government, this issue has not been dealt with by this Government. We have seen other jurisdictions do more. We have seen New South Wales and Victoria do more and in Tasmania we have had an action around the LGH but no action on the other buildings. The minister said, 'Since October 2017, we have been using existing powers to stop the usage and restrict its use in the future.'. If that is the case, it is because it is dangerous. If all buildings were flammable and this was a manageable risk, you would not need to do that. We do it because it is unsafe and it is inherent in the role of a government to act to ensure safety. When you know there is a risk it is your obligation to resolve it. Negligence occurs by the identification of a risk that you choose not to deal with.

The greatest risk is if this cladding is utilised on buildings used at a time when people sleep. If it is a hotel or an aged care facility it is a significant risk to those people because helping people out becomes dangerous. Independent investigations have shown that fire services have to make the assessment of risk for their own firefighters. They determine whether it is safe to go into a building to rescue people. If it is not safe for them to go in and fight that fire, and there is significant risk in this area, it is not safe for people to be in that building overnight. That is an absolute and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I note that the interjections have now ceased.

The CFMEU raise this. Unions representing workers in this area have made recommendations for years that this not be used. The minister can say it is not a real risk and that Grenfell Tower was different.

Mr Ferguson interjecting.

Ms O'BYRNE - You have not even been here, Mr Ferguson, so do not start yelling. You are a bully. At the Neo 200 fire in Spencer Street in February 2019 -

Ms Archer - You are such a hypocrite. You are the health minister that put the cladding on the LGH.

Ms O'BYRNE - I am sorry, you are now saying it has to be removed from every building -

Ms Archer - It was a high-risk building. We removed it from the building you put it on.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is a high-risk building. This evidence has been available since 2014; available to six ministers. Six Hodgman Liberal Party ministers have been attending ministerial councils and have done nothing. That is the problem. You have no consistency because you are in chaos the whole time, swapping ministers every time somebody has a bad day or misleads this House, as you do. To say that this is a low-risk product -

Ms ARCHER - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member accused ministers of misleading the House. If she wants to make that allegation against any particular minister -

Ms O'Byrne - Mr Brooks had to resign from the parliament.

Ms ARCHER - If I could finish my point of order - if the member wants to make an allegation against any particular minister, there is a form to do that so she should withdraw that last comment.

Ms O'BYRNE - I shall withdraw but refer all members to the Integrity Commission's investigation into their former minister, who misled the House.

In Spencer Street in February of this year, the Neo200 fire demonstrated that even a moderate risk is still a significant risk. This fire was allegedly lit by a single smouldering cigarette and it spread fast across seven floors and generated potentially deadly smoke. Australians are lucky that people were hurt by smoke inhalation and not killed, as we saw in Grenfell.

This is a significant risk and it is time the Government took some significant action. It is not enough to simply find a report that identifies those buildings and keep it internal. The member for Lyons, Ms Butler, has called for you to release the list of buildings -

Ms Archer - It doesn't matter. She has already leaked it.

Ms O'BYRNE - I beg your pardon?

Ms Archer - She has already leaked it to the media.

Ms O'BYRNE - I beg your pardon? That is a substantive allegation and if you wish to make a substantive allegation, as a former Speaker, you know there are forms of the House by which you can do that. Table the document, Ms Archer, that identifies these buildings.

What we have learnt from Neo200 is that there is no scaling of risk that is so secure that we do not take action when we know there is a risk. Other jurisdictions are taking action. Other jurisdictions are working substantially harder on this issue than this Government. They are genuinely concerned about the safety of their citizens and their firefighters, who have to go into these environments. The minister might say, 'Oh, that is scaremongering and that is their job'. I do not know that is an appropriate way to approach it because, as Australian fire safety engineer Tony Enright stated -

A kilogram of polyethylene will release the same amount of energy as a kilogram of petrol, and it gets worse than that because polyethylene is denser than petrol too.

So that is about a kilogram of polyethylene is about one and half litres of petrol. If you look at a one metre by one metre square section of ACP cladding that will have about three kilograms the equivalent of about five litres of petrol.

This is a significant risk. Now that evidence is there, we have had 2014 reports and a number of ministerial council meetings on this issue since 2014 - which this Government attended - and it is not good enough to say it is all our fault because some of this was done before you came in. This is the issue of your Government today to ensure our citizens are safe. The Lacrosse apartment building incident in November 2014 occurred during your term in Government, the report has been released, you were notified and you have done nothing.

Time expired.

[11.35 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has been responsible and proactive on the issue of combustible cladding in Tasmania. This action is in direct contrast to the scaremongering of Tasmanian Labor and member for Lyons, Jen Butler, over recent days. Labor's uninformed and dangerous commentary about cladding on buildings in Tasmania and the audit undertaken by the Government in 2018 has been highly irresponsible.

An independent risk assessment was undertaken by a fire safety expert as part of the 2018 statewide audit. Within the findings of the 2018 audit it was -

... concluded that 42 of the 43 building where ACP is in use can be classified as low risk (that is, the use of ACP results in no additional risk to fire safety for those buildings).

One building was identified with additional risk associated with cladding, the Launceston General Hospital. This cladding work was completed in 2012 under the previous Labor government. Well done. Our Government took swift action to rectify the LGH problem and to ensure this high risk was removed. Labor fails to understand that all buildings are flammable in some way and that appropriate risk assessment and management is always important. In the case of these 42 identified buildings, that risk is considered low.

The Government's advice is that the Tasmania Fire Service is fully prepared and can deploy appropriate tactics to deal with firefighting in tall buildings, including those with a diverse range of flammable materials such as aluminium composites. When interviewed by Leon Compton on ABC radio last week, Tasmania Fire Service District Officer, Andrew McGuinness, when asked about the member for Lyons, Jen Butler's call to remove all cladding, said -

It's just not that simple ... If there is a relatively low risk from a firefighting perspective, then you will have to have some pretty solid evidence to support the removal of that ... I would rather see a considered and measured approach taken. Wait until the evidence comes out and use that evidence to make informed decisions on what we should do.

Labor is clearly out of their depth and their attack on our hardworking firefighters only confirms how out of touch they are with the community and the building industry. Labor says there is no acceptable risk regarding cladding. This is an outrageous comment that is not supported by

anyone in the building sector. Matthew Pollock, Executive Director of Master Builders Tasmania, said last week -

Claims that people living and working in buildings in Tasmania are under threat of an inferno are disingenuous and are fundamentally at odds with the facts. They also demonstrate a misunderstanding of the immediate issues for the industry that are vital to the state's economy. To question the safety of buildings deemed to be low risk by the experts is an extremely serious step to take. The industry hopes that those making them are confident in their understanding of the facts and the consequences.

Labor should cease spreading reckless inaccuracies and unnecessarily causing fear for their own political purpose. In direct contrast to Labor's scaremongering and uninformed public commentary, the Hodgman majority Liberal Government has taken a responsible approach. In October 2017 the Government took steps to use all the existing powers available to it to prevent further use of ACP on a range of buildings. In December 2017 the Director of Building Control used these powers under the Building Act 2016 to restrict the use of ACP with a polyethylene core in Tasmania, particularly on buildings above two storeys. Further, the Director of Building Control is continuing to work closely with industry to ensure there is industry-wide awareness of the new regulatory requirements, including improving the standard of documentation for commercial building works and delivering training for building surveyors, architects and building designers. At the same time, the Minister for Building and Construction has worked proactively with her state, territory and federal colleges to examine future national measures to protect our community and ensure our building industry continues to meet high standards.

[11.40 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a very serious matter at the heart of what we are discussing here today and the slinging match across the Chamber does a disservice to the lives that have been lost and the severity of the issue for people who have been affected. There are real risks in living in buildings that have flammable materials. The fact is that humans living in buildings are surrounded by flammable materials everywhere and risk is not an on or off thing, it is a continuum. That is the nature of the world we live in. Everything we do is about making a judgment call and essentially making a social assessment, or cultural assessment sometimes, about what we think is appropriate in terms of risk. That can change dramatically, as we see around the world that different societies value things quite differently.

We have seen the northern Scandinavian countries very sensibly returning to trying to enable their children to have the sorts of childhoods that people in this Chamber would have grown up with. That means accepting a greater level of risk in children's playgrounds and there is a big move to rethink the costs we have imposed on our children by trying to remove every single risk in things like children's playgrounds and opportunities for a carefree childhood. We make decisions and we change our minds - fashions change - and there are real costs to building buildings and it is probably just a statement of fact that it is impossible to remove every risk.

However, that being said, the case of the Grenfell fire was the grossest example of the cheap penny-pinching of large corporations and massive companies who chose to make a \$100 000-odd saving on cladding and more than 70 people lost their lives. Those were not rich people. They were poor people, and often those two things come together. Penny-pinching happens more often in the buildings for poor people in poor communities than it does in wealthy estate areas, let's face

it. We have to be very careful to make sure we have safeguards and protections so that people do not get duded and have their lives put at risk.

That is why I want to come to the bigger issue here, which started in the 1990s when the national competition reform policies came in. It was the mechanism used by the Liberal free market ideologues to cook up a sort of pseudo evidence base for why it would be good for the economy if we privatised the hell out of every service provided by the public sector. It came from a Liberal ideology, which is to get rid of public services and move it all to the private sector, because in the words of the national competition policy at the time, the private market could deliver in a more cost-effective manner.

What a load of hogwash. With that has come, in the building and construction sector in particular, a disastrous amount of red tape that has rained down and continues to rain down on individual homeowner builders and small construction businesses because of this Liberal obsession with privatisation. The whole system has been designed for large private corporations to build at that level. Meanwhile, the houses that most Tasmanians can afford to build or most Tasmanian construction companies can afford to build are caught up in ludicrous paperwork and insurance premiums. What we are seeing here biting across housing surveyors and building certifiers in Tasmania and the rest of Australia is skyrocketing insurance premiums.

There is a solution to this. We can do what other countries have sensibly done. We can reverse this process. Local governments should be responsible for building certification. Local governments, state and national bodies should be responsible for building survey. It should be the remit, the bread and butter work, of the state to provide the insurance we need to build in the future. We cannot leave it up to individual certifiers in Tasmania to struggle on. Give them a job in a local council. Put them under the wing of the local council's premiums and insurance. Put them under the wing of the state government. We as a state need to take responsibility for these issues. We cannot devolve it to individuals, as is happening in parts of Tasmania, where an engineer in Launceston paid \$65 000 for professional indemnity last year and then was quoted \$450 000 to do the same thing this year. He negotiated it down to \$165 000. That is related. It is exactly the same thing. It is all part of this struggle to privatise when we need to come back to looking at what we want.

We want to build houses of good quality for people to live in. We want to have checks and balances. We want to make sure there is a reasonable level of risk. The only way we can ensure that is to bring that responsibility back under the wing of state and local governments.

I asked the minister in her national call for the solution which she proposes to call for an investigation into the damaging impacts of privatisation in this area. Call for it. Ask what they are. Look at what other countries are doing to bring this under public responsibility and see where the benefits are.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

**RIGHT TO INFORMATION AMENDMENT (APPLICATIONS FOR
REVIEW) BILL 2019 (No. 14)**

Second Reading

Resumed from 30 July 2019 (page 89)

[11.49 a.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill reinforces that the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to openness, accountability and transparency and will further the objectives of the existing RTI Act.

Following the recent Supreme Court decision, we took the first opportunity after the winter break to bring on this RTI bill. The process and procedures related to the ministerial delegations in Tasmania is similar to those in other jurisdictions. We have increased funding to the Ombudsman's Office in this Budget by \$245 000 a year for the office to support the RTI work. I also note and congratulate the Ombudsman, Mr Richard Connock, on his reappointment to the position for a further five years. This position incorporates the roles of Health Complaints Commissioner, Custodial Inspector, Principal Official Visitor, and coordination of the Official Visitor Scheme. It is a busy office. I am pleased, in a tight Budget, the Government has provided additional funding for this office.

Despite the Opposition and the Greens bemoaning the bringing on of the RTI bill yesterday afternoon, this bill addresses the February decision by the Supreme Court. We have acted promptly to rectify the bill, to align with the court decision regarding the right of the applicant to apply for a review because the RTI information is taken very seriously by this Government.

I support the bill.

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank members for their contributions and support for this bill. Members probably support the bill for different reasons. There have been some differences in views on right to information. I will correct the record from the Government's perspective. The Greens have flagged some amendments, which I have considered. I will address in summing up what our general view is on them and why I generally support those amendments. We have to go into Committee for that but there probably will not need to be much debate, given our acceptance.

Some issues were raised which do need a response in summing up. The first relates to the funding and resourcing of the Ombudsman's office, which was raised by Ms Haddad and Ms O'Connor. As Mrs Rylah pointed out, the recent Budget provided the Office of the Ombudsman with additional funding of \$245 000 per annum. The Office of the Ombudsman is an independent statutory office. Although the Government provides funding to that office it is independent and how that budget is administered is a matter for the Ombudsman. I have complete faith in his ability to do that and in carrying out the office and the role of the ombudsman, to the point where we have just reappointed Mr Richard Connock to that position for a further five years. That is worth mentioning on the record.

This funding will enable the office to undertake reviews of RTI decisions made by public authorities referred to the office in a more timely manner. Members do not have to take my word for it, but take it from the Ombudsman, who appeared before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts on 23 July. The Ombudsman, Mr Richard Connock, stated before that committee -

I will start off with the good news and that is the RTI additional funding, which we have been trying to get for years now. It has always been a problem, having only one officer doing all of this work. The additional funding has allowed us now to recruit a principal officer and another band 4 to augment the existing band 6 so we actually have a team now in RTI or we will once we have recruited. We are well on the way to recruiting a principal officer and the successful applicant will then be responsible for recruiting the band 4. We hope that will all be done very soon.

I am very pleased that this funding has been provided. As you can see, the Ombudsman will be putting this additional resource to good use.

Mr Connock has served in this position since 2015. The role incorporates the roles of Health Complaints Commission, Custodial Inspector, a role formed by our Government to oversee independently the operations of our prison system for which I am responsible, and also the role of Principal Official Visitor and coordinator of the Official Visitor Scheme. I am delighted he will continue in those roles for another five years.

Ms Haddad indicated in her contribution that internal review had no impact on decisions. I will make a few comments about that. The Right to Information annual report provides some data on the number of decisions made by public authorities that are changed at internal review and at external review by the Ombudsman. The data does not support the claim that the only practical effect of internal review is to delay a referral to the Ombudsman. Data extracted from Right to Information annual reports show that in the 2016-17 financial year, 67 requests for internal review were received and 23 reviews resulted in a change from the original decisions. That is a change of 34 per cent. In the 2017-18 financial year, 54 requests for internal review were received and 16 reviews resulted in a change from the original decision, so 30 per cent of those decisions were changed. To suggest that the internal review is redundant is not correct. It does have value.

I will address the tiered system, why we have internal and external review and why other jurisdictions also have a two-tiered system. The inclusion of internal review maintains a two-tier system for the review of RTI decisions. Although some jurisdictions do not have an internal review process, a two-tiered review system has remained in place in all other Australian jurisdictions. All jurisdictions that have gotten rid of the internal review system have replaced it with something else in terms of administrative review.

In Victoria, the 2012 amendments to the Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982 removing the internal review process appear to provide instead for two levels of external review, first to the Freedom of Information Commissioner and second to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or VCAT.

The ACT's Freedom of Information Act 2016 provides for two levels of review to the Ombudsman and then the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

In the Northern Territory, the Information Act 2002 still includes the right of applicants to seek internal review, however a public authority that receives a request for an internal review may choose to refer the decision for external review by the Information Commissioner without first going through the internal review process. The Information Commissioner has the power to refer the decision back to the public authority for a further internal review if appropriate to do so.

New South Wales has retained a right to internal review. Their processes allow certain people who have the right to seek a review to choose whether they wish to seek an internal review or to apply for an external review in the first instance.

Queensland has also retained a right to internal review. However, their processes allow certain people who have the right to seek a review to choose whether they wish to seek an internal review or to apply for an external review in the first instance.

To summarise on that point, the removal of internal review from the RTI Act in Tasmania would result in a review by the Ombudsman ordinarily being the only form of review available under our act. The provision of adequate administrative review avenues is considered to be therefore consistent with good administrative law and practice across our country. Every other jurisdiction that has removed the right to internal review makes provision for external review decisions by an Ombudsman or an information commission to be reviewed by civil and administrative tribunals. There has always been in other jurisdictions in states and territories a two-tiered system, whatever form it might take, as I have just run through.

Turning to comments that were made by member for Clark and Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, in her contribution, I want to state for the record that I am not quite sure in what context Ms O'Connor made the statement that the Ombudsman had only undertaken four external review decisions last year. She may have been going from a different time period, she may have meant last financial year, or she may have meant the last 12 months, so I just wanted to provide the figures for a period just to provide some context. It is worth noting that according to the most recent Ombudsman's annual report there were 23 external review decisions in the 2017-18 financial year. For that financial year that was the figure.

Dr Woodruff - But you don't have it for the 2018-19 year?

Ms ARCHER - We do not have the release of that yet. I do not know where Ms O'Connor got those figures if I do not have them, but certainly there is a stark contrast. Usually the figures stay quite similar or they may increase or slightly decrease, but they are generally around that sort of figure. There is quite a marked difference between four and 23.

Dr Woodruff - We may not be talking about the same time period.

Ms ARCHER - Exactly, and I acknowledge that, Dr Woodruff. I am just stating for the record.

I wanted to say a few things about the Greens' proposed amendment. Section 16(2)(c) provides that the fee may be waived if the applicant is able to show that he or she intends to use the information for a purpose that is of general public interest or benefit. It would be my understanding that a journalist who intends to use the information for reporting would usually meet this existing exception under section 16(2)(c) because these amendments deal with journalists.

Furthermore, the Ombudsman's guidelines in relation to charges for information specifically notes that fees should be waived for a journalist who proposes to use the information in writing an article on the subject which is of wide general interest within the community. I am advised that that fee is usually, if not always, waived, but in the interests of creating certainty in the act, which appears to be the point of the Greens' amendment, and to ensure the safe passage of this important legislation, the Government intends to support the Greens' amendment which I foreshadowed with Ms O'Connor yesterday.

It is also worth noting that the definition of 'journalist' is the same definition that appears in other Tasmanian statutes such as the Court Security Act 2017. Although I was not the responsible minister at the time I am also aware that during the passage of the Court Security Bill this definition was consulted thoroughly with numerous media organisations and so I acknowledge that consistency in drafting from the Greens. The reason the Government can support that is because it is not going to create any uncertainty with definitions across statutes and create unintended legal or procedural consequences.

Dr Woodruff - That is thanks to the work of our very excellent staff person, Thomas Whitton.

Ms ARCHER - I am quite willing to acknowledge they got it right in this instance, Dr Woodruff, so that is a factor the Government is taking into account when lending our support to the amendment.

In closing, I wanted to touch on some comments that some members have made from our side of the House in relation to the issue of transparency generally. It should not be lost on this House the significant steps our Government has made in relation to pushing information out into the public and thereby making our Government more transparent than any other government has been. Since first taking office we have adopted a number of measures in line with our commitment to improving the openness and transparency of government. We have made a commitment and concerted effort to improve openness and accountability of government decision-making. We have continued efforts to improve government transparency and accountability through numerous extensions to the information released under our routine disclosure of information policy, which is what I was referring to when I said we regularly push out information that previous governments have not.

Since June 2018 the Government has released more than 60 new routine datasets online as we have continued to expand public access to information on the activities of government. That is information that has been routinely requested through RTIs from quite similar sources quite often on an annual basis. The Government has taken that decision to ensure that we release that information as a matter of routine now. We have also launched a new government information gateway web page that is available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website to make government information proactively disclosed easier to find by members of the public and other interested parties, stakeholders and members of parliament.

We are continuing to publicly report on gifts, benefits and hospitality received and given by officers across all agencies, at least quarterly, on agency websites. We have implemented the updated Ministerial Code of Conduct and supported parliament's adoption of a new Members Code of Conduct, which took parliament quite some time to settle for all members to agree on. That has had our support. We are also undertaking, as members know, a review of the Electoral Act 2004, including electoral donations. We are continuing to publish information released under the Right to Information Act 2009 within 48 hours of release to applicants.

There is the ongoing application of the public consultation submissions in relation to submissions that are made to all of our reports, discussion papers and draft bills. Obviously people can say whether they want their submission to be confidential and we have a policy on that but our public consultation is just that, where people know that their submission will be public, so that information is routinely shared now.

Other government initiatives to improve government transparency and accountability have included implementing a public submissions publication policy requiring agencies to publish all submissions received in response to major policy and legislation reviews, which I have briefly touched on but we are expanding that to policy reviews as well. We are delegating ministerial responsibilities under the RTI Act to departmental officers and also improving the integrity of parliamentary decision-making by expanding the disclosure of spouse interests and financial information through amendments to the Parliamentary Disclosure of Interest Act 1996 and requiring disclosures to be published on the parliament website. We have finally moved in to the twenty-first century in relation to those disclosures, which used to have to be viewed in paper format. It was quite an onerous task for some members of the public or journos to come into our library here and request to see those and have a look. Now they can do it in the comfort of their own environments and access that information, which is publicly available but was not in an easily accessible form so we have ensured that technological advances are being made. These efforts to expand on our transparency agenda will continue during this term of government. We are always looking at ways to ensure there is openness and transparency in our government's decision-making. Hopefully that informs the House of the initiatives taken to date and those initiatives we continue to take.

Although we clearly have differing views at how we came to this point in supporting this bill and on the work our Government has done in the areas of transparency and accountability, it does appear there is agreement in the House that this bill should pass. We will address anomaly created by the Supreme Court decision I referred to in my second reading speech. It will also strengthen the RTI laws in Tasmania and for this reason I commend the bill to the House. I believe we need to go into Committee for the Greens' amendments.

Bill read the second time.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION AMENDMENT (APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW) BILL 2019 (No. 14)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

Section 45 amended (Other applications for review)

Dr WOODRUFF - We have discussed this in general terms. We propose two amendments and I suggest we apply them together. Madam Deputy Chair, I move -

That the following amendments be made to the bill -

That new clause A be inserted as follows -

A. Section 5 amended (Interpretation)

Section 5 of the Principle Act is amended by inserting before the definition of *officer* the following definition:

Journalist means a person who:

- (a) is engaged in the profession or practice of reporting, photographing, editing or recording for a media report of a news, current affairs, information or documentary nature; and
- (b) is paid to perform that profession or practice by a person, or body, that -
 - (i) is subject to a code of ethics and a procedure for the Australian Press Council, or for another person or body that is prescribed, to deal with complaints about persons engaging in such a profession or practice; or
 - (ii) is the holder of a licence under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 of the Commonwealth;

New clause B is to follow clause A -

B. Section 16 amended (Charges for information)

Section 16 of the Principle Act is amended by inserting the following paragraph after paragraph (b) in subsection (2):

- (ba) the applicant is a journalist acting in connection with their professional duties; or

We made these points in the second reading debate. The issue is that it is rarely the case in practice that journalists are required to pay a fee for a right to information request. However, technically, they are not exempt. Although it is usually waived, as the minister says, this change makes it crystal clear and helps the journalist avoid the paperwork and time lost in applying to receive an exemption. It ends the uncertainty that exists on paper, if not in practice.

It sends a strong signal to Tasmanians that journalist, as defined under this definition - not everyone who puts a hat on and call themselves a journalist - is that such a person is acting in the public interest. They are there to report on the practices and decisions of government, they provide a service to the community and we need that. It is an essential part of the democracy we hold very dear and need to continue to do so, in view of the Greens, because you have to have a watcher watching the government. It is the role of journalists, irrespective of the things published and whether we agree. That is the job of that profession and these two amendments seek to make it clear they would be exempt. As the minister said this is, verbatim, a definition that comes from the Tasmanian Court Security Act 2017. It will just remove the question for all RTI officers for all time as to whether they need to make a decision on that matter.

Ms ARCHER - The Government is content to support the amendments. It mirrors the definition of journalist exactly from the Court Security Act. I refer to the debate in that matter in

relation to how that was defined. It cannot be anyone calling themselves a journalist. It is clearly defined.

As the member quite rightly said, routinely, journalists have not been charged the fee because they act in the public interest and we are happy to acknowledge that is their role. What goes with that is a great responsibility for balanced reporting, seeing both sides and forensically looking into things. RTI is one of those things that enables them to do so, to have the accuracy of information. We are content to enshrine this practice into the legislation.

The legislation also deals with frivolous and vexatious claims, which I am not suggesting journalists would do or set out to do. Provisions in the act regarding matters or claims that may not be authentic or in the public interest are adequately covered. We are content to accept and agree to the said amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

New clauses agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 agreed to and bill taken through the remainder of the committee stage.

Bill read the third time.

MOTION

Access to Parliamentary Counsel - Referral to House Committee

[12.22 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the ... House of Assembly refers to the House Committee the matter of 'Parliamentary Counsel' and that the matters pertaining to the location within Parliament House and access arrangements to the Parliamentary Counsel be a matter to be determined by the Committee and reported to both Houses.

I have an amendment to offer to the House and some comments that I hope will allow the best approach so the Government's intent to provide a resource to members of this House, in particular, for access to a Parliamentary Counsel, can be achieved.

In this year's Budget the Government ensured provision was made, which is currently being provided by the House of Assembly Appropriation. We are seeking advice and you, Madam Speaker, have been seeking advice about barriers to allowing this to flow as an automatic outcome. We all want to make sure the resource is effective and useful to members. There is a process for non-traditional access to Government's in-house Parliamentary Counsel. We call it the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for members of the Legislative Council who are not members of the Government. For the benefit of members of this House, that system works well. It is part of the government bureaucracy and public service. They are professional public servants; they are not political operatives or political staff. There is an appropriate process so that members of the Legislative Council who are not members of the Government, who nonetheless have a responsibility

to review Government legislation, are given courtesy access to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel by the Premier, who is the responsible minister for the department concerned.

An independent member of the Legislative Council seeking or requesting amendments cannot simply go to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and make instructions. If a member wanted to draft a private member's bill and they wanted it to be professionally drafted by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel the answer is usually no. In certain cases the Premier can grant access. That has occurred a number of times. A bill that is being prepared by the member for Windermere has been drafted by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel by special permission of the Premier. That has allowed Mr Dean to approach the Office of Parliamentary Counsel via the Leader's office, so there is a proper, professional approach to it.

Any access to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for members of the Legislative Council go through the Leader's office. It is not confidential, so there is an openness to it, because it is a government public service offering that the Premier, through tradition, allows. That is how it works. I see some quizzical looks. That is interesting, because it seems that perhaps members of this House are not as familiar with how it works up there.

I have been a member of this House for nine years and there has never been non-government access to OPC. It certainly has not happened under previous Labor governments. The Government decided to provide a resource. The advice we had at one point was to provide it through the House of Assembly's services, which we imagine would be provided through the library's professional, wonderful staff, who provide information, advice and parliamentary briefings. There are barriers to that. The advice I have received is that to help navigate this could mean that resource needs to be carefully considered. The parliament's joint House Committee is a good place to examine those issues and figure out what is acceptable to members on both sides of the House, and to members of both Chambers.

I have an amendment that makes it clear that the motion before us today is not attempting to deal with anything other than non-government members' access. I will circulate that now. This motion would require concurrence from the other House. We would move it in the debates next week so that both Houses agree that the matter can be considered by the joint House Committee. I hope the House Committee will seek advice from the respective Clerks of the two Houses and assist members of that committee to make a recommendation back to Government as to the best construction.

I apologise for the delay on behalf of Government. There has been a period of time where the resource is financially available but members do not have access to it. This is our attempt to achieve that. There is a small gap in the beginning of my motion, that is to allow the other House to insert itself into and to sanction the matter going to the House Committee.

I have not asked for a time frame, but I would not expect the House Committee to take too long to resolve this.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I note that you are a member of that committee; other members of this House and the President will be members of that committee. I will move the amendment -

Ms O'Connor - No Greens on that committee, regrettably.

Mr FERGUSON - I will move the amendment and in so doing note that Greens members are entirely covered by the use of that term 'non-government members' access'.

I move the following amendment -

Insert before the words 'Parliamentary Counsel', the words 'non-government members' access to'.

I moved the amendment and I will conclude on the motion.

[12.28 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, for the sake of the process I will comment more broadly about the motion here as opposed to the final motion.

We will agree with the amendment. It makes sense to define the non-government members. We think the referral is a sensible place to have the discussion. The process in the upper House members, which the Leader of Government Business inferred would be at the behest of the agreement of the Premier, is a more recent occurrence. When we were in government it did go through the government leader's office in the upper House, but we did not see that approval as necessarily a right of veto. We provided a more relaxed approach in allowing independent members and non-government members of the Legislative Council access to that resource.

The reason why we are here debating this matter is because there is a will of both Houses of parliament to not only be consistent between access and resources for non-government members of both the Legislative Council and the lower House, but also to allow the workings of this parliament to be more professional and to assist members in drafting appropriate amendments, appropriate sections of either proposed or existing legislation, to ensure that this House gets it right. It improves the processes and the professionalism so that either the excuse or the argument is not run to say these amendments are poorly drafted and cause a whole range of issues. The reason we are talking about access to the staff of the OPC is to improve the role of legislators.

If the inference from the Leader of Government Business' comments around the current process the Government is applying to the upper House is that the Premier has a right of veto to access the resource, we do not agree with that.

Mr Ferguson - For bills, not for amendments. It is the House of review.

Mr O'BYRNE - Okay, maybe the Leader of Government Business might clarify that when talking to the motion. The whole reason we are at this point dealing with this matter and dealing with this referral is to assist us in the work of this House with appropriately drafted and constructed amendments and potentially bills. There should be that capacity for the lower House in dealing with private members' bills so that we do not waste people's time or have straw man arguments in either the public or in this House to say, 'We are not going to argue the merits of the amendment but we can't support it because it is poorly drafted and runs counter to the intent of a bill or the intent of the broader amendments'.

We want to make it very clear, and the House Committee will no doubt work through this, but in speaking to the amendment and therefore the substantive amended motion, that ease of access to OPC should not be something that the Premier can veto, particularly if the Premier does not agree with what we want drafted. That is not the intent of this resource.

This matter was a point of significant debate in this House and publicly about the ability of members of this House to undertake their work. We support the referral but we make it clear that the Leader of Government Business' position on the current application of the resources in the upper House reflects only on this Government, not previous governments, because we had a far more relaxed and open manner in dealing particularly with the resource for the Legislative Council. We make that point and agree to the amendment and the substantive amended motion on that basis.

[12.33 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, we support the amendment that has been put by the Leader of Government Business and we certainly support the allocation of a resource to make sure that non-government members in this place have access to professional drafting so that we are able to table legislation that is well drafted and able to be argued on its merits in this place without spurious claims that government or Labor members cannot support a bill because it is allegedly poorly drafted. We support this and want to thank you, Madam Speaker, for taking up this request and making sure there are resources allocated to non-government members in this place, because it will lead to higher quality legislation and, hopefully, better quality debates.

I am concerned that, because the Greens are not represented on the House Committee, that we will be stitched up again and the interests of the smaller party in this place will not be respectfully considered and upheld. That is our lot and I accept that, but I ask members of the House Committee to make sure they are treating all members in this place and all non-government members equally and not colluding, as they so often do, to shut out the Greens, given that it was our idea that Parliamentary Counsel be provided to non-government members in this place.

We argue that Legislative Council members already have a reasonable level of access to the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and this resource which you have obtained for the House, Madam Speaker, should be dedicated to non-government members in the House of Assembly, because it is in the House of Assembly, more often than not, where legislation is introduced. This is the House of the executive and the Legislative Council is a House of review and therefore should have access to Parliamentary Counsel in order to make sure that amendments they put are well drafted and in certain instances, for example, like the member for Windermere's anti-smoking bill, where Parliamentary Counsel is provided.

I agree with Mr O'Byrne that it should not be a matter of the Premier's veto on access. We acknowledge that there are arguments for having the Parliamentary Counsel resource that you have obtained for the House of Assembly, Madam Speaker, in-house in the library in order to not have to go through government and seek the Premier's approval for access, but we are really concerned that if this staff member is put in the library they will not have adequate support around them, there will be an occupational health and safety issue and they will not have peer guidance as they draft legislation and amendments.

At the moment we have not formulated a position on where that resource should be allocated and we will certainly be making a submission to the joint House Committee on behalf of the Greens. Our reservation about having that resource located in the Office of Parliamentary Counsel is that it just becomes another resource for government to exploit when they need extra drafting support because, as we know, parliamentary drafting is a specialised skill and it is hard for governments and parliaments to find good drafters. For example, in our own offices we have a member of staff who is pretty darn good at parliamentary drafting, and in fact that was acknowledged by the Attorney-General a short time ago in the debate on the RTI amendment bill. We put a lot of effort into making sure we get the language right so that the form of the words achieves its intended effect without unintended consequences possible down the track, but we would very much appreciate

having access to skilled parliamentary drafters. We would, for example, want to have some parliamentary drafting support in refining our voluntary assisted dying legislation. There is a whole range of areas where we would like to be able to access skilled draftspeople.

We will make a submission to the House Committee and I implore members of that committee not to resort to type and by reflex seek to marginalise and shaft the Greens. In this parliament every member is equal as members. I ask members of the joint House Committee to take that into consideration because, as I said to the Leader of Government Business in the last term of the parliament when we were so roundly shafted in the Standing Orders, 'Be careful how you treat people on the way up the ladder because in all likelihood you will meet them again on the way down', and that is what happened to this Government in this term of the parliament. They met us again on the way down. I ask for decency and fairness in the House Committee's deliberations.

[12.39 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I will speak twice more. I will address some of the comments on the amendment. I want to clarify that I am moving this amendment which is only consequential insofar as to be clear that the Government has the public service to support executive government. Many things have been consistent, one of which is the way that the rules have applied, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, and members of this House, that they have been consistently applied by this Government and previous governments. There has been no change to the rule. This Government is neither more lenient nor more stringent on the allowance of access to OPC.

Ms O'Connor - You are much bigger control freaks than the previous government simply by reflex.

Mr FERGUSON - I want to challenge that assertion made by the Opposition, Mr O'Byrne. Our rules are no different, no more stringent or relaxed; just the same. There is a recognition that the public service is there for the support of the executive government. Also consistent is that this Opposition and the previous opposition I was part of were calling for some form of access to OPC for drafting support.

Ms O'Connor - But you didn't make it happen, did you?

Mr FERGUSON - We are making it happen. It is happening now. The question is how best to provide it. The Greens members have done very well out of this Government. As to being excluded from committees, it is a very difficult argument for the member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, to make. There are only two of you and you somehow expect to be on every single committee.

Ms O'Connor - I am making the point that we are not on the House Committee and you are adjudicating over our place.

Mr FERGUSON - How many committees do we have? There would be a dozen including all the joint, Estimates and scrutiny committees and GBEs. There is the House Committee, the library committee, the integrity committee, there are three select committees and there are the standing committees. There are only two of you and the suggestion that the two of you -

Ms O'Connor - Yes, but we do the work of 10 women.

Mr FERGUSON - Maybe 20. You are very good but there are still only two of you, with respect.

Dr Woodruff - We don't mind. Don't worry about our workload. Bring it on, we can take it.

Mr FERGUSON - There are only two of you and yet somehow you have this idea that your two members deserve to be on every committee. No other member can demand to be on every committee. It is not going to work.

Ms O'Connor - How many members are there in the Liberal Party, statewide?

Mr FERGUSON - We are not going to give you our organisational information. We would never do that for you, Ms O'Connor, as much as we like you.

Ms O'Connor - You are patronising me again.

Mr FERGUSON - It is patronising to the House when you demand to be on every committee.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please, through the Chair.

Ms O'Connor - To be fair, I did not. The Leader of Government Business is misrepresenting me. I did not demand to be on the House Committee. I was pointing out that we are not on it and decisions will be made by that committee that will impact on the Greens.

Mr FERGUSON - You said we had excluded you.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. That is a point of clarification.

Mr FERGUSON - I feel that does help somewhat. I did believe that you had made claims that you had been excluded from it. The committee system is intended to be a subset of the House and that not every member can be on every committee. It would not work. Otherwise, you would not have committees; you would have the House do everything. That is the point I am trying to make because if the member makes those comments it is intended to be negative toward the Government and we can take it. We can accept that but we do not have to agree with it and I feel that the Greens members have done very well out of this Government.

Ms O'Connor - This Government this time, because you have had to.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. It is nearly lunch time and our sugar levels are low.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr O'Byrne has often made the point for you that the Greens have done very well regarding participation on committees. We have acted to ensure the Opposition and Greens members have a fair opportunity. I believe the Opposition should have -

Ms O'Connor - You mean the Opposition and Labor.

Mr FERGUSON - I believe the Opposition should have somewhat more opportunity than the Greens members because they are the Opposition.

Ms O'Connor - Technically, that is true.

Mr FERGUSON - They are the official Opposition and the government of the day needs to respect the official Opposition. I have been in opposition. No government lasts forever and we all need to act in a way that is fair to all concerned knowing that we all have our turn on each side of the Chamber. The Greens have done extremely well within our fair approach. They are well

represented on committees, particularly on the committees that matter most to them which are the scrutiny committees, the policy and select committee. It is true that the Greens are on every select committee. The Greens are two out of 25 members and yet hold a fifth of the membership of every one of those select committees.

Dr Woodruff - We have to be. It is because of the Greens that stinky little deal was outed and there is now a firearms committee.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair, please.

Mr FERGUSON - I appreciate that members have a significant appetite for work and want to be on more committees. You will not be denied access to sharing your opinions with the House Committee. I am sure the House Committee will be more than happy with that. I am not a member of that committee but I am confident that committee will be delighted to receive your wisdom, Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff, because this is intended to be fair and effective for all concerned.

I will make other comments in a short while but I wanted to make those points because I am not going to let them stand unchallenged when the Government acts to show respect to the Greens members and every member of this House. I include in that our backbench, who are derided by members over there for exercising their rights as members of parliament in question time, in private member's time and with the MPIs. I ask for reciprocal respect for our members also.

Amendment agreed to.

[12.46 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, we still need to see Legislative Council support for this motion in the other House. I hope the Opposition's members in the other House will equally support it there. This process and the financial resource being provided is not intended to replace or subtract from members of the Legislative Council's current access to OPC.

I would like to play out a scenario for you. Let us remember that the Legislative Council's proper role is as a House of review, not as a house of making government policy, which they acknowledge. A government bill, for example, the Greater Hobart Bill, which was dealt with yesterday, was drafted by professional drafters in OPC working for executive government under order of Cabinet and the Premier's advice and instruction. A specific draftsperson is allocated, sometimes a team, depending on the complexity. There is a principal draftsperson for every individual bill. This is how it is generally operated by our OPC management. When it goes to the Legislative Council in its role as a House of review, it has proper right and opportunity to identify a mistake or an oversight, which can occasionally occur - a missing word, apostrophe, an incorrect term or a term that was not adequately defined in the interpretation. Maybe, as we saw with the Legislative Council, it was a Government amendment put forward but it was on the request of a Greens member that we would think about such an amendment and we did so.

The way it works in practice is that if it is not a Government amendment, if it is an amendment being pursued by an independent, it works like this: the member is entitled to bring forward their own amendment drafted by themselves - a number of them have had legal training - or they might go to an outside person and that allows them to move their amendment as is their right as an MP. This process has often suffered from improper drafting or a misunderstanding of the overall construction of the bill. That is why, to support MLCs in their role as reviewers of legislation and

not as the makers of legislation, a principle has been worked through, presumably over many years, that a member can approach the Leader of Government in the Legislative Council and say, 'This is what I want to do, this is the kind of outcome I want, I want it to be advertised in three daily newspapers at least a month before the date required, and can you draft it in that way?'. That is more or less drafting instructions from the MLC.

It is received by the Leader of Government in the Legislative Council office. It is then transmitted via Government to OPC. It is drafted by either the very person who drafted the bill in the first place, so they have that comprehensive and synoptic view of where this amendment will sit best and how it should be drafted with this precise and professional language. This is how it has worked so well.

The amendment comes back through the Leader's office, directly to the member who requested it, but it is done in a collegial way. All members can see it and it is distributed. That is a professional approach. There are no surprises. The benefit for the member is to know they are getting their amendment drafted according to their wishes, it will be done in a way that is robust and will stand the test of time.

At times it has come back and the advice is that what the member is asking is not possible, it is not going to work. They will explain that to the member and the member will often drop it.

That system will not work for members of the Opposition of the House of Assembly because, unless you felt otherwise, you would want your amendment drawn up in some confidentiality because you are not doing it to review our legislation.

You are in the House where policy is made and if you, in the Opposition or a future opposition, wanted to make an amendment, you may want to decide. Sometimes you may want to discuss it with the minister and try to win them over and persuade them of the merits of the amendment, or you may actually want to be making some political comments or a very different policy approach, so you do not want to tell us. It needs to be confidential. You need somewhat confidential access to this resource.

If it is provided through the library, through the House of Assembly, as with any parliamentary library advice, it is completely confidential between the member and the adviser in the library. It is even confidential from your colleagues in your own party. It is entirely a resource for MPs individually.

It is our Government's view that regardless of whether the resource might be provided in a different way in future, we are not seeking to change the way MLCs currently get access to OPC via the Leader of Government in the Legislative Council for the benefit of reviewing legislation. We are looking for a way that you could have one-on-one professional advice on a confidential basis as is appropriate for members of parliament without it needing to come through any particular office.

The tension that exists here is that there is a view that an isolated resource in the Parliamentary Library may be cut off from colleagues and professional learning. That is something the House will have a look at. Maybe there is a question about reliability, when people need to take leave.

The House Committee will examine how the resource could be provided within the public service but with careful rules designed to ensure that the resource was not for executive government but for MPs in their role as legislators.

I hope that is helpful. I have sought to explain the process, to demonstrate the Government's intentions, which is to introduce for the first time, a resource that can be used not only for amendments but also for private members' bills that is done away from the visibility of other members and of the government of the day.

I perhaps have not clarified in relation to bills in the Legislative Council, as was past practice with the previous Labor-Greens government, MLCs are principally not members of that House to make new laws. They are there to review legislation. That is why there is a differential with bills. The Government has nonetheless been able on occasion, where special arguments have been persuasive, to allow members to have access to OPC for the purpose of bills.

There is the Ivan Dean bill. Previously there was an electoral amendment bill by the former member, Greg Hall. They are considered exceptional circumstances. That addresses Mr O'Byrne's point.

I hope we are coming to a point where we agree. I submit the motion to the House.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT REVIEW (INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS) BILL 2019 (No. 23)

Second Reading

[12.55 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice - 2R) - Before I commence my second reading speech I will go through my speech as slowly as possible because I realise that we hadn't intended to bring this on.

Ms O'Connor - Which bill is this?

Ms ARCHER - It is the Government Procurement Review (International Free Trade Agreements) Bill 2019. In relation to administrative arrangements it is a bill that comes under the Department of Treasury. I agreed to take this matter through on behalf of the Treasurer because it deals with designating functions for the Tasmanian Supreme Court.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Government Procurement Review (International Free Trade Agreements) Bill 2019. The Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, also known as TPP 11, came into force in Australia on 30 December 2018. TPP 11 requires that all states, territories and the Commonwealth introduce an independent review mechanism for government procurement. This Bill ensures Tasmania's compliance with that requirement.

The bill designates the Tasmanian Supreme Court to receive and review local and international supplier complaints. It applies in relation to an alleged contravention of Tasmania's commitments under TPP 11 and other free trade agreements with which Tasmania complies.

The bill expects suppliers and procuring entities to make a genuine attempt to resolve a complaint. A supplier can only make an application to the Supreme Court for a declaration in respect of conduct that has or would contravene an enforceable procurement provision if they have first made a complaint to the procuring entity.

Once a complaint is received by the procuring entity, the procurement must be suspended while an investigation is undertaken, except where the entity has issued a certificate stating that it is not in the public interest to suspend the procurement. The bill preserves the supplier's ability to participate in procurements, while also recognising that some procurements are so important that government entities should be able to continue with the procurement while an investigation is being resolved.

The bill imposes strict time limitations for an aggrieved supplier to make an application to the Supreme Court. However, the Supreme Court can allow an extended period if it considers appropriate to do so.

When considering whether to issue a declaration, the Supreme Court may grant an interlocutory or interim injunction restraining the relevant agency from engaging or proposing to engage in conduct that is or would contravene an enforceable procurement provision.

The Supreme Court is also to consider, where an application for compensation has been made, whether the issuing of a declaration or granting of an interlocutory or interim injunction would result in a significant delay to the procurement and whether compensation would be a more appropriate remedy.

An aggrieved supplier can apply to the Supreme Court for an order for payment of compensation in conjunction with, or independently of, an application for a declaration. Compensation is limited to expenditure reasonably incurred by the supplier in preparing a tender for the procurement, costs incurred in making the complaint, together with any costs incurred in attempting to resolve the complaint.

For completed procurements where a contract has been awarded, compensation is the only available remedy. The contravention of a procurement obligation does not affect the validity of an awarded contract.

The bill ensures that complaints can be dealt with in a timely, effective and transparent manner.

The decision to vest jurisdiction on the Supreme Court was informed by consultation between the Solicitor General and Crown Solicitor. This approach is also in line with New South Wales' position.

Debate adjourned.

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

MOTION

Battery of the Nation

[2.31 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes Tasmania has the renewable and dispatchable energy the rest of the nation needs, and the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to using this advantage to ensure all Tasmanians benefit.
- (2) Records this Government's continuing drive for the development of the Battery of the Nation and the crucial second interconnector, the Marinus project, which have the potential to inject up to \$5 billion into the Tasmanian economy and deliver 2000 jobs, particularly into regional areas.
- (3) Further notes that the development stage of the first phase of the Battery of the Nation carries the commitment of the federal government through the federal Underwriting New Generation Investment program.
- (4) Further notes that support by both the Hodgman Liberal Government and the federal government gives UPC Renewables and AC Energy more confidence to develop their Robbins Island and Jim's Plain wind and solar parks.
- (5) Recognises that Tasmania has a world-class wind resource complemented by our pumped hydro that means there will always be some electricity available for export when the mainland is experiencing low wind or high demand.
- (6) Acknowledges that the Australian Government clearly recognises the importance of Tasmania's energy solutions and our status as the leading energy state.
- (7) Commends the Hodgman Liberal Government for its strong commitment to making use of the natural resources available to the state while at the same time ensuring all Tasmanians will have access to low cost, reliable and clean energy in their homes and businesses.

Renewable energy is one of the state's fantastic natural assets and one of our greatest competitive advantages. We really do have what the rest of Australia needs: low cost, reliable and clean energy. The Hodgman Liberal Government's Tasmania-First Energy Policy is unashamedly focused on delivering that for and to Tasmanians first. Keeping downward pressure on power prices and maintaining energy security for our state as the leader in clean energy, we are one step away from reaching 100 per cent self-sufficiency in renewable energy.

These targets set us up to lead the delivery of low-cost, reliable and clean energy. Our energy policy forms an important part of the Hodgman Liberal Government's plan to build a stronger

economy and to create jobs and the evidence shows our plan is working. The latest Deloitte Access Economics Business Outlook, NAB Monthly Business Survey and, most recently, the CommSec State of the States report, all confirmed the strength of Tasmania's economy. Our Hodgman Liberal Government's Tasmania-First Energy Policy is about ambition and the courage to make the most of our advantages for the benefit of the state.

Australia's electricity market is in a period of dramatic change and an opportunity exists to take advantage of our abundant natural resources and significantly expand Tasmania's renewable energy capacity. We have world-class wind with our prime location in the path of the Roaring Forties and we have quality hydro and water resources, with the unique combination of the geography and topography to further and cost-effectively develop our hydro assets.

Tasmania's renewable energy development could become one of the greatest investments in our state for decades to come, delivering billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. This unprecedented change is driven by the pending retirement of ageing generation plants across the nation and the rapid and increasing penetration of intermittent, renewable generation such as solar and wind. According to the clean energy regulator, over 12 000 megawatts of new, intermittent renewable energy will hit the market by 2020, with thousands more to come online in the years to come, and these experts note that this is a conservative estimate.

According to the experts, however, over 17 000 megawatts of energy storage is required over the next two decades to firm their growing flood of wind and solar energy. Around 17 000 megawatts of energy storage is required for 12 000 megawatts of intermittent power. Batteries will not be enough and what will be needed is large scale, long-term storage that will keep the lights on and the prices down when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not shining.

Tasmania's Battery of the Nation is one of the most exciting projects for Tasmania for decades. As part of the feasibility work, 14 high-potential pumped hydro sites have been identified. The work to date estimates that Tasmania could more than double its hydro capacity and serve as critical energy storage that could support mainland Australia through its transition to the higher penetrations of intermittent wind and solar renewable energy. Phase 1 of Battery of the Nation is focused on taking one of the three top sites through to financial investment decision; Lake Cethana, Lake Rowallan or Tribute on the west coast. The Australian Energy Market Operators' recent ISP Insights Report, or Integrated System Plan Insights Report, reaffirmed the critical importance of Tasmania's Battery of the Nation hydro solution in addressing that need.

Most importantly, the Australian Government has acknowledged the critical importance of Tasmania's Battery of the Nation project. It has formed a key part, front and centre of the federal government's Climate Solution Package to bring firm, reliable power from Tasmania to the mainland. It is why the Australian Government has ranked Tasmania's Battery of the Nation in the top 12 projects under the Government's Underwriting New Generation Investments program. That is why the Australian Government has committed with the Hodgman Liberal Government to negotiate an underwriting agreement for the first phase of Battery of the Nation. Underwriting agreements are an exciting development in this project. Let us not forget 25 January of this year. With record heatwaves, Tasmania chipped in to help our sister state of Victoria during their rolling blackouts. If only we had had a second cable, we could have made all the difference that day. That is where Marinus Link steps in.

Mr O'Byrne - If you hadn't done that, we wouldn't have spent \$100 million on diesel.

Mrs RYLAH - I am talking about 25 January this year. The increased interconnection is critical to unlock Tasmania's energy development, Battery of the Nation's pumped hydro development and wind developments. We are talking about strategic national, state-building, nation-building infrastructure. In the words of the federal Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor -

Projects like this aren't nice to have, they are necessary to have. We must have them. That's why we see such potential in these projects. We stand ready to finance them.

We clearly have the support of the Australian Government with a \$56 million grant to progress Project Marinus. It is not only the federal minister for energy who wholeheartedly supports Tasmania's project. The Prime Minister said, 'We've got to get that second interconnector built. We are backing that in'.

The criticality of Tasmania's Battery of the Nation and Project Marinus is acknowledged with the Australian Energy Market Operators ISP Insights Report, noting the urgency of progressing these projects. The February 2019 Marinus Initial Feasibility Report shows the Marinus Link is technically feasible and economically viable under a number of credible scenarios. Credible scenarios mean early retirement of ageing power stations and that is starting to play out as we speak. Those credible scenarios are happening now.

Look at Victoria, with major plants such as Loy Yang and Mortlake facing extended outages. Leading into summer again, we are going to see greater instability and more outages. It is the threat of these outages and pending retirement that will put at risk the lights going out and prices going up.

Tasmania's energy security is sound. Our energy position is healthy and secure. However, it is the future of reliable, secure and low-cost electricity for the rest of the nation where Tasmania has an incredibly important role to play, that will benefit our state long-term with jobs for our children and our grandchildren.

This country does not have time to be unprepared for the rapid changes in front of us. Tasmania's role is critical. We do not have time for fence-sitters like Labor which continues to sit on the fence on the merits of these projects.

About Marinus - bring it on. We do not have time for naysayers and blockers like the Greens which block every development at every turn. No more about their pushback to a multi-million dollar job-creating development such as UPC's Robbins Island, jumping to conclusions even before the rigorous development and environmental approvals have been undertaken. We do not have time for conspiracy theorists, like the farcical claims from the Opposition that there is a federal-Greens alliance against the development of UPC's Robbins Island. It is a ludicrous claim.

Mr O'Byrne - You have heard what people have said. We are just quoting what your federal people are saying, Tony Abbott, Angus Taylor. It is ridiculous. Tony Abbott is against wind power.

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, you do not have the floor.

Mrs RYLAH - What you say in this release is insane. We do not have time for conspiracy theorists. They are ridiculous and ludicrous claims. For years the Greens and Labor have been

aligning themselves - to what end? Nothing, because we do not have the time for political stunts, scaremongering and baseless claims. This Government stands for state-building, trust-building policies that deliver. That resolve is seen with the economic standing Tasmania has achieved and will continue to achieve under our watch.

Let us look at jobs and investment and the numbers and impact. What does this mean for Tasmania? The first phase of Battery of the Nation will involve investment of between \$700 million and \$1 billion and will create 300 to 400 construction jobs.

Dr Woodruff - Where are the figures for that? Where has that ever been published?

Mrs RYLAH - That is just in the first part of building the pumped hydro.

Dr Woodruff - Can you release that information to the public, Mrs Rylah? Can you please put it on the public record and the reports behind it?

Mrs RYLAH - Yes, I am sure we can. Building pumped hydro will generate significant employment opportunities across a range of skills, such as engineering, project management, civil construction and trade. The Government is excited with the Australian Government's commitment to provide \$17 million to the Energising Tasmania initiative to provide fee-free training in priority areas needed to ensure Tasmania can train a skilled workforce in readiness for our major energy developments.

More importantly a 1200-megawatt Marinus link with Battery of the Nation will stimulate, according to Ernst and Young modelling in the initial Marinus feasibility report, \$5 billion into the Tasmanian economy. That is not paying for a cable purchased overseas; this is into the Tasmanian economy. There will be \$1.3 billion from the interconnector and \$3.7 billion from pumped storage and wind developments. There will be thousands of direct and indirect jobs for a decade or more.

Cattle Hill wind farm is a \$300 million investment that has directly supported our local businesses with multimillion-dollar contracts with Heywards, Gradco and Hazell Brothers. In Tasmania's world class wind, according to Renew Economy thanks to our position in the path of the Roaring Forties, we have enormous untapped potential to develop thousands of megawatts of wind, with our north west coast classed in the top four renewable energy zones in the nation. This is more than mere figures and statistics. It is the chance to take our state to the next level. New highly skilled jobs will encourage our children to stay, raise their own children here and attract others to make this state their home. It is about building a new sense of confidence linked to clean, affordable, natural energy sources.

We are not just talking about billions of dollars of investment in new renewables. There is enormous potential to use our energy strategically for investment attraction and job creation. As more businesses see a strategic advantage in sourcing their energy from renewable sources Tasmania could be more active in pursuing customers that value this attribute.

This means attracting new industry and expanding our existing industry to grow our economy and diversify our business and industrial base. Tasmania's brand will become a competitive advantage. The majority Hodgman Liberal Government's Tasmania First energy policy forms part of this plan to deliver the best business conditions in the country, to drive economic growth and to create new jobs.

We are about maintaining and investing for growth. The majority Hodgman Liberal Government will take Tasmania to the next level of posterity and growth.

[2.47 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, we do not oppose the motion in its intent to support renewable energy in Tasmania. We do oppose the self-congratulatory and grotesque self-aggrandisement of the Liberal Party regarding their role. We will not be lectured to by you rabble about supporting renewable energy in Tasmania. The Labor Party is the party of hydro. We built hydro. We built the Hydro. We are the party that built Woolnorth. We are the party that built Musselroe. We are the party that engaged with wind energy. We are the party when in government that supported renewable energy in Tasmania. We built Basslink. We will not be lectured by you, a rabble of a government that is so internally divided. You have absolutely no connection to the language, the diatribe and the reality of what is happening in your own party federally.

It is astounding to hear the Liberal Party is the only one that supports the jobs. There is a great opportunity for Tasmania, there are billions of dollars of investment, there will be thousands of jobs. Of course we support this. The biggest threat to renewable energy projects in Tasmania is the Liberal Party. What you do not understand is that there is a national energy market and a national energy market has to be managed by a national energy guarantee.

Mrs Rylah - Where were you at the energy inquiry?

Mr O'BYRNE - Let us walk it through. The National Energy Guarantee was a policy championed by the Liberal Party by your former prime minister, Malcolm Turnbull. It was supported by your current Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, and this was the only game in town. We needed a National Energy Guarantee to ensure that when a series of coal-driven energy plants on the mainland were coming out of the market, out of the grid, we could replace it with renewable energy, not only for the environment but in providing a supply into the national energy grid so we could keep the lights on for consumers and industry and keep the country going forward.

That was the policy, because industry and state governments were saying there is no national policy. The reason there was no national policy is because the Liberal Party in this country is so hopelessly divided over whether climate change is real and whether renewable energies will be the answer. It is absolutely true. Your caucus in Canberra rolled the National Energy Guarantee. All the states had signed up to it and your energy minister had signed up to it. It was your prime minister at the time Malcolm Turnbull's signature piece. He took it back to the caucus and got rolled. You have Senator Matthew Canavan as recently as yesterday saying the federal government is going to be investing in coal-driven energy projects.

When you go into a market and talk to all the people backing renewable energy projects, they want to compete in an environment where there is equity and where renewables are rewarded and encouraged. The problem is, if you have a federal party encouraging coal-driven energy, you completely undermine the market for renewables because the cost price of getting it to the grid is different. You have a whole range of projects that are now under risk and you are not even listening. All the renewable energy projects across Australia are under risk because your federal party, including Barnaby Joyce and Eric Abetz, is still talking about nuclear energy. It is embarrassing.

It is 2019 and we are a first-world country. We have a range of renewable projects that have been proposed across the country and many of them have not even got to the point of securing

capital because of the lack of a national energy policy and a national market which encourages renewable energy and brings projects on line.

Mrs Rylah - But ours has.

Mr O'BYRNE - You have a federal resources minister who is actively encouraging coal-driven energy projects at the expense of Tasmania and renewable projects because it undermines the market in which we go into. You need to make sure there is a market for your energy. You say you are the only champion of all of these projects but that is not true. Your biggest enemy is your federal caucus. Do not come into this House and lecture us about whether we are on board. You cannot even sort out your own party. It is an absolute disgrace.

Mrs Rylah - Didn't you listen? The issue is about storage. It's not about the energy. It's storage we need.

Mr O'BYRNE - Oh, so apparently now it is not about the energy. Where is Hydro going to make the money to build all these things? Where is Hydro going to get the revenue from the sale of energy? A national market, member for Braddon. If the national market is being undermined in terms of renewables by your federal government using federal taxpayers' money to underwrite coal energy, you undermine the market because there will be no market.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, this debate should go through the Chair.

Mr O'BYRNE - Madam Speaker, renewable energy companies have said if the federal government continues to undermine the national energy by putting in subsidies for coal-driven energy, you completely undermine the opportunity of investment which is at risk in Tasmania because you will not get the second connector up. The work the state Government is doing now through the Marinus project and the TasNetworks and Hydro work which has been funded predominantly by the federal government is about the business case. The business case relies on a market where, if we build UPC pumped hydro at Robbins Island and Jim's Plain, it only works if there is a market on the mainland. If there is no market on the mainland these projects do not stack up. In the same breath you say that the Liberal Party is the only one that wants to encourage renewable energy, but your dinosaur national coalition in Matthew Canavan, Barnaby Joyce and Eric Abetz -

Ms O'Connor - Oh, hello - Parliamentary Friends of Coal Exports, anyone?

Mr O'BYRNE - I am talking about renewable energy.

Ms O'Connor - Exactly. The incredible hypocrisy of you people.

Mr O'BYRNE - Well, what about wind projects? I will get on to the Greens in a minute about your hypocrisy. Let us face it, the most important contribution in the history of the Greens is calling Woolnorth wind farm projects 'parrot blenders'. It is just embarrassing. You have no credibility in terms of -

Ms O'Connor - You're talking about something that was said 15 years ago in this place.

Mr O'BYRNE - Here we have the Liberal Party in Tasmania hopelessly divided saying they are the only ones championing renewable energy. They have a federal caucus that is encouraging coal-driven -

Ms O'Connor - You have no credibility on this. You've got your federal colleagues signing up to the planet rapers.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, could we just allow some space so that I can hear the debate, please?

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, Madam Speaker, but I needed to take the opportunity to point out the member for Franklin's abject hypocrisy.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you for that contribution, Ms O'Connor. Please proceed.

Mr O'BYRNE - Madam Speaker, we will not be lectured by this mob about how we support jobs and investment and how we support renewable energy projects in Tasmania, because the Labor Party, both state and federal, supports a National Energy Market and a National Energy Guarantee which encourages renewables and provides a market for the Tasmanian-based developments. If you do not have a national market that will accept our energy, the projects you say you are championing completely fall away because the business case will not stack up.

Mrs Rylah - You are wrong because we have an underwriting agreement and the underwriting agreement funds the storage.

Members interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - The underwriting agreement only stacks up -

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I will not tolerate any side yelling at each other across the Chamber. Let us have a lovely calm afternoon and be very respectful of each other.

Mr O'BYRNE - That is where the member for Braddon really needs to get fully briefed on these matters, because the storage in and of itself and the money you spend in building those pumped hydro projects will only be approved in terms of a business case if there is a capacity to increase our exporting across Bass Strait, which is the second connector. If the national grid and the national market is being undermined or distorted by the federal coalition government underwriting of coal energy assets, the business case does not stack up so you will not get the second tranche of money. The first tranche of money, the \$86 million, is about understanding not only the business case but what kind of technology and how it would be constructed and the approvals. That is clear.

Mrs Rylah - The underwriting agreement is for storage.

Mr O'BYRNE - No. The underwriting is not for the market, it is not for the next stage of actually building it and selling it and getting a return on investment or the business case to stack up. All it is for is to do the business case and work it out, but if the market on the mainland is underwritten by coal -

Mrs Rylah - You are wrong.

Mr O'BYRNE - Okay, I am wrong. That is great, fantastic. Even Mr Barnett said he was a massive supporter of the National Energy Guarantee, saying it was the key to building the business case for a second Bass Strait interconnector and the pumped hydro projects. That is your own minister saying that if we do not have a National Energy Guarantee none of these things stack up.

We cannot trust this Government with anything serious. It is dangerous for the state's future to leave this in your hands. It is almost criminal to allow this mob to do so because your minister cannot even turn up to a COAG meeting to defend the state's position. In Estimates this year he did not even know he was not there - 'Which meeting was that? Sorry, it wasn't the meeting I was at, it was the meeting that the now newly minted Health minister Sarah Courtney was at in December'.

The then Liberal energy minister for New South Wales wanted to move a motion supported by a number of states to talk about a net zero emissions pathway, which is good for Tasmania.

Mrs Rylah - Absolutely.

Mr O'BYRNE - By interjection the member for Braddon said it is good for Tasmania. Can you explain, then, why the federal minister Angus Taylor used a little-known technicality in COAG procedure and had two states supporting him. He did not have New South Wales, the big Liberal Party of New South Wales. The engine room of the Australian Liberal Party was proposing this motion to talk about a zero net emissions pathway, which is fantastic for Tasmania because that sends a message to the market. If we agree on that pathway, Tasmania has a market for our renewable energy. Which were the two that voted with the federal minister, Angus Taylor, to gag that debate? It was South Australia, the Liberal Government of South Australia, and the Tasmanian Government. Your own Government voted against debating a motion in our interests. This is in absence of a National Energy Guarantee because your federal government was so hopelessly divided, with Eric Abetz leading the charge with Peter Dutton, with all those troglodytes, those dinosaurs of the federal caucus who wanted to drag it back and, led by that, you completely undermined Tasmania's position.

When I asked the minister why he did not stand up for Tasmania, he said, no, he did not do that. He was not at the meeting. He could not turn up to a meeting to fight for the best interests of Tasmania. The hypocrisy of the bloke is obscene. How could we trust him with anything important? All you are doing is basking in the glory of other people's work. The Hydro, TasNetworks and UPC are doing the work. They have to go through the appropriate approvals process but their project, along with Cattle Hill Wind Farm project and a range of projects, are a fantastic opportunity for Tasmania. The best thing you could do is not move these rubbish motions to pat yourself on the back for doing nothing. The best thing you could do is ask your federal party for a better market and a better environment for Tasmanian renewable energy to be sold into the mainland market.

Do not come here with this rubbish. Point 5 of your motion states that the House should, 'recognise that Tasmania has a world-class wind resource ...'. Absolutely, we do. The Labor Party knew that in government, which is why we supported building Woolnorth. The wind from Woolnorth will go to UPC on Robbins Island, the project you are championing as well. You go on to say the wind resource is complemented by our pumped hydro. You do not yet have pumped hydro. The best thing you can do is argue against your Senator Matt Canavan, your Coalition colleague in Canberra who champions coal energy, because it is the worst thing for Tasmania.

Ms O'Connor - Hello? Have you written to your federal colleagues about the Parliamentary Friends of Coal Exports, condemning them?

Mr O'BYRNE - Seriously, the Greens talk about a climate emergency. We agree there is a climate emergency so we have to act locally and think globally. That is why -

Ms O'Connor - So we should just build any windfarm, anywhere, anytime.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, we have to act locally and think globally. That is why we are supporting approval processes around the UPC Robbins Island Project. Now, Bob and the former member for Franklin, Nick McKim, referred to Woolnorth as a parrot blender -

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - Ten years ago, he called -

Ms O'Connor - You people are so conflicted.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. Hello, Mr O'Byrne, I am over here. Ms O'Connor, please do not interrupt while the speaker is on his feet.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you, Madam Speaker. You cannot have it both ways. Will someone in the Liberal Party in Tasmania stand up to the federal Liberal Coalition? Will somebody stand up and represent Tasmania's best interests? This is outrageous. You say, 'Isn't this fantastic?'. We want you to do the work. We do not want you to take credit for other people's work. Anyone can do that and, if it makes it to that point, it will have nothing to do with what you have done.

Mrs Rylah - We have \$56 million.

Mr O'BYRNE - Federal government funding. That is bipartisan and we support that but it means nothing. It is a waste of \$86 million if you do not provide the environment for the National Energy Guarantee and the National Energy Market because it will never happen. The business case will not stack up. Talk to anyone who is investing. The current Basslink, at a maximum of 500 megawatts, is not enough to sustain export from Tasmania of pumped hydro and the new windfarm projects. None of that will happen without a second connector. The second connector will only stack up if you have a market and if you are able to sell it at a level at which we will see money coming back into Tasmania. If you are backing coal, which your federal Coalition is doing, you undermine your own business case. It is \$86 million down the gurgler. Will you please, instead of patting yourselves on the back and taking credit for other people's work, do some work and stand up to your federal Coalition mates? The last time it became a bit tough and complex you spent over \$140 million flying in diesel generators to keep the lights on in Tassie. You could not even keep the lights on in Tassie.

Mrs Rylah - Who drained the dams?

Mr O'BYRNE - You drained the dams. Did you not see the photos of 2016? In 2016, you drained the dams.

Mrs Rylah - You drained the dams and lowered the prudent water level.

Mr O'BYRNE - Let us be clear. Under Labor, the levels did not sit below 30 per cent. In 2016, when you had packed up against the advice from Treasury, which you will not release because you are too gutless - you did not release the advice from Treasury that told you not to not sell the Tamar Valley Gas Power Station because it is our redundancy if something goes wrong. No, Mr Groom, Mr Know-It-All, he knows everything, Captain Energy, said we will sell it, we will do that, it is fine. You sacked the workers, you sent some of the machinery off to be regenerated and ready for sale and there was a drought and Basslink broke down. There was an energy crisis and dam levels went below 30 per cent, below 25 per cent and below 20 per cent; this is in 2016.

Mrs Rylah - You lowered the prudent water level and Hydro managed that.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is in 2016. We were not in government. You were in Government. In 2016, it fell to single digits. You could walk up to the turbines. You damaged the turbines. Then you had to spend \$140 million of other people's money, not your money, Tasmanian taxpayer's money, flying in diesel generators. When it became tough and complex, instead of asking, 'aren't we great?', instead of responding with an appropriate, coherent strategy to keep the lights on in Tassie, you blew it and have learned absolutely nothing. All you are doing is toadying up to the federal Coalition. It cost Malcolm Turnbull his job and the great survivor, Josh Frydenberg, went from energy minister to Treasurer in a cross-factional deal stitched up by Scott Morrison.

What is Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister, saying about the National Energy Guarantee? He is not going anywhere near it because the hopelessly divided federal Coalition cannot agree on a coherent national energy policy. Do not lecture the Labor Party. The Labor Party's federal policy -

Mrs Rylah - Remind me what you were going to do when we had problems with Basslink. You called for power rationing.

Mr O'BYRNE - The Labor Party's federal policy was welcomed by all and sundry in the energy community because it created certainty and encouraged investment in renewable energy sources that would benefit Tasmania. We do not have to do the work with our federal caucus because they agree on the opportunity for Tasmania. They agree it will benefit us once the work is done to establish the business case and the market conditions on the mainland are not being distorted by Senator Canavan wanting to underwrite coal energy projects, which absolutely distorts it. You say that your mob and Angus Taylor are all tickety-boo and fired up for wind energy. What about when he said when he was newly minted federal Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction? He said, 'They did come to different conclusions on solar and ... the wind subsidies and what we know is rooftop solar in remote areas can be economic ...'.

This is the same bloke you quoted, through you, Madam Speaker, who went on to say, 'But large-scale wind it is very clear that it is not economic on any grounds.'. That is a bit awkward for your mob. The federal Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction said that, 'large scale wind, it is very clear that it is not economic on any grounds.'. Your former Liberal prime minister, Tony Abbott, said, '... the last thing we want is what I regard as the dark satanic mills of the modern era spoiling our landscape.'. What kind of knuckle draggers do you hang out with? Seriously.

In terms of this House, let us be unequivocal. The Tasmanian Labor Party for generations has supported renewable energy. We are the ones who did the work to create the environment to get stuff done. We did the hydro, we did the dams, we did the windfarms, we did Basslink, we did all of those things. We did irrigation to help your mob out. We did all of those things.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Mr Tucker and Mrs Rylah, it would be most unfortunate if I had to ask you to leave the Chamber.

Mr O'BYRNE - The Labor Party is in furious agreement that we need to give this the best chance to succeed, not just for current Tasmanians but for generations to come, but you are seriously the biggest threat to this project, which is even scarier. You do not understand. The Liberal Party in Tasmania and federally are the biggest threat to Marinus pumped hydro and the second connector. What is scary from that contribution and from the contributions of the Energy minister from time to time, who cannot even front to important meetings to vote for the best interests of the state, is that you do not know it. You do not know how much of a danger you are to the best interests, yet you parade yourself as the only ones who support it.

We know there is a number of projects being proposed around Tasmania that will have to go through rigorous planning processes and we support that; it is crucially important. The most controversial one at the moment, the one that is in the media, is the UPC Robbins Island and Jim's Plain proposal. I have been fortunate to go to Robbins Island and have a look at the proposal they put forward. The company acknowledges this is going to be a contested space in the debate and they are open and willing to consult and work with people. They have already changed. What is a worry, though, is when you have former Greens leader, Bob Brown, saying:

Robbins Island wind farm was visually, a step too far. Mariners will see this hairbrush of tall towers from 50 kilometres out to sea and elevated landlubbers will see it, like it or not, from greater distances on land. Its eye-catchingness will divert from every coastal scene on the western Bass Strait coastline.

It has to go through the proposals but clearly the former senator has made up his mind. He does not like it because it is visually unattractive. If we are to save the planet, if we are to reduce our footprint, renewable energy projects in Tasmania need to get up and running.

The Labor Party is not the challenge for renewable energy projects in Tasmania. The Labor Party is one of the key players in the Tasmanian community that will give these projects the best chance to hit the ground so that we can be 100 per cent renewable and ensure that the National Energy Market has renewable energy to use, not dirty coal, and it will not have to rely on gas because we can rely on Tasmanian energy. That is the motivation.

The motion is embarrassing for the Liberal Party because of its self-congratulatory nonsense as if you are the only custodians. We support the sentiment of continuing generations and many Labor governments that have supported renewable energy projects, but my biggest plea is to the Liberal Party. Please acknowledge that you are the biggest threat to these projects getting up by virtue of your inaction and inability to have your minister attend a COAG meeting, and the minister you did send along rolled over and had their tummy tickled by an anti-wind federal energy minister in Angus Taylor. It was a Liberal Party motion from the New South Wales government's Liberal energy minister who wanted to talk about a net zero emissions pathway, which is in Tasmania's interests. You voted against Tasmania's best interests.

Mrs Rylah - No, that is not right.

Mr O'BYRNE - You absolutely did and the fact that you do not even acknowledge it or perhaps do not even recognise that you did shows how dangerous it is to have you in government at this most crucial time in the state's history.

Time expired.

[3.15 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, what a totally sickening display of hypocrisy from both the Liberal and Labor parties. It is total duplicity that both parties can pretend that this has anything to do with concern for the climate emergency the planet is experiencing right now. The children who stood on our parliament lawns will continue to come and stand on our parliament lawns and demand that their leaders take action. Action on the climate emergency means stopping the use of coal.

The IPPC has made it abundantly clear that we have to get our existing coal usage down to zero to 2 per cent on what we are using now, immediately, within 20 years' time, yet the Labor Party and the Liberal Party are both lovers of coal and they are both champion flag wavers for the coal industry. Both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party want to open the biggest coal mine in the world.

This week in federal parliament, in case the hypocrisy that is happening here is not clear enough, the utter shame-face of duplicity -

Dear colleagues, co-chair, the Honourable Joel Fitzgibbon, the Labor shadow minister for resources, member for Hunter, and Craig Kelly, the Liberal member for Hughes in federal parliament this week have proposed an invitation to all senators and members to join the Parliamentary Friends of Australian Coal Exports for the 46th parliament.

They were calling all friends from the Labor and Liberal parties to join them in the loving of coal. The only thing the Labor Party regrets about how they approached the last election was that they were not the ones to bring the lump of coal into parliament. Bill Shorten should have done that and that would have sealed their position for the election.

Mr O'Byrne - You led a convoy of middle-class people to poke working-class people in the eye. It was the biggest mistake in the election campaign and cost the progressive side of politics. You are a bunch of hypocrites.

Member Suspended
Member for Franklin - Mr O'Byrne

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne. One of us has to go out, Mr O'Byrne, and I think it is you. I ask you to leave for 30 minutes. I make that warning to everyone else if they continue with this cross-Chamber dialogue.

Mr O'Byrne withdrew.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is pretty hard not to have to shout in this place but I have a lot to say, and behind me are all the young people in the Tasmanian community and Australia who know what they want for the future of Australia. They want us to be clean and green and that means you cannot have your cake and eat it. You cannot support the whims of your coal lobbying masters like the Liberal Party and the Labor Party do and call for clean green renewable energy. You cannot do both, because we have to get rid of our dependency on coal. We have to stop using it and we have to get rid of the old coal-fired power stations. We have to not open, Mr Tucker, the new Adani coalmine that is being proposed. We cannot do that. We simply cannot do these things.

This motion today is not about the need for climate change action. It is not about the need for renewable energy so we can bring down our carbon emissions and stop the climate emergency that is unfolding. The IPCC and the experts only last week have given us not 12 years but 18 months now. The time frame is getting shorter. This is utterly serious. This is not about political wedges. We do not have time for playing games. It is shocking and distressing for any people watching this to see that this is being treated as a joke. This is so serious.

The reason we need renewable energy in Australia is not for business, not for corporate interests and not for short-term gain. It is for the sake of our children and ourselves. I want to be able to grow old on a planet that is habitable, with plants and animals around me that can support me. I want to be able to eat food grown in Tasmania, which has a climate that can support agriculture and farming. I want to be able to go fishing and see fish in the sea and look at the beauty of the world around us. We can only do these things if we stop using coal.

Mrs Rylah - Support Robbins Island.

Dr WOODRUFF - Then do not support your colleagues in the federal government, Mrs Rylah, who are friends of coal. Stand up against the Adani line. It needs Liberal and Labor members with a spine who are not just looking at the next election.

Madam Speaker, I want to propose an amendment.

Ms Haddad - You should welcome a Labor member not supporting coal.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, there is an amendment to be proposed.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Chair, I have an amendment to the motion. I move -

That the motion be amended by omitting all the words after 'House' be removed and that the following be inserted:

- (1) Notes that the Liberals repeatedly talk about the Marinus project and use it as a political wedge, particularly during election periods, despite the fact that they have not put forward a financing proposal or a position on who should finance the multibillion-dollar project.
- (2) Agrees that the project could cost in excess of current total Public Non-Financial Corporation Sector debt, and feasibility studies and prominent economists such as Saul Eslake have raised serious concerns about the

viability of the project, which have not been addressed by the State Government.

- (3) Notes that the Liberals passed legislation to set wholesale electricity prices at a higher rate than projected, leading to energy bills decreasing by less than they otherwise would have.
- (4) Notes with alarm that the Liberal Government continues to allow Entura to engage in profiteering from immoral projects overseas such as the Karuma hydro power project in Uganda, which has been linked to killings and other human rights violations.
- (5) Condemns the Liberal Government for their lack of honesty, ethics or plan in its handling of the Energy portfolio.

It is concerning that the Liberals are approaching this issue with a deep cynicism. We all want more renewable energy, we need to protect the ecosystem, store more carbon in the ground, protect forest health and make sure our species do not go extinct. A million species are under imminent threat worldwide.

Ms O'Connor - Including humanity.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, that is right. We must look at each project with an eye to the local situation as well as the global story. We must look at the development applications. We have not seen it for Robbins Island or for many others that are being proposed. We must bring proper science and have a serious look at all the impacts.

Ms COURTNEY - Point of order. Could you circulate the amendment so we have an opportunity to read it?

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes. We cannot simply give lip service to green energy when it involves short-term massive building constructions, which is what the Liberal motion is about. It is about building, it is about business, it is about keeping corporate donations flowing. It is not about planning for where we should put renewable energy in Tasmania, how much more we need and what is the cost of a second interconnector.

Christine Milne first coined the term 'Battery of the Nation' on behalf of the Greens. It was her forward-thinking vision. The Greens have always stood up for protecting all species by addressing the heating of the planet. For decades we have been advocating to act on planet heating.

We will not be lectured to by the Labor and the Liberal parties. At the last election they were still waving the banner for the coal industry. This week they are promoting Australian coal exports. If Adani gets built, and Labor and the Liberals both support it, it will produce 705 million tonnes of carbon emissions a year from the coal that will be burnt as a result of the exports. Each year, it will produce 1.3 times Australia's annual carbon dioxide emissions. The United Nations says we must use zero to 2 per cent of the current coal usage. I do not understand how anyone in this place does not get the reality of what we are talking about.

I do not have time to speak to each part of the motion in detail. The Greens are open to hearing what the business case for a second interconnector would be and who would pay for it.

The Liberals keep announcing it election after election. It is simply being used as a cynical electioneering tool. Tasmanians are being treated with contempt when people like Saul Eslake are given no information about the business case. We are expected to take it on faith that it will produce thousands of jobs and bring \$5 billion of economic benefit to the community. Who says and on what basis? These are massive figures. Tasmania will not receive an endless amount of funding from the federal government. We have to be clear about the value it will provide us and what it will cost us in the future. What else could we be spending that money on, if it ever comes?

On behalf of Tasmanians who have rising anxiety about the climate emergency I plead with the Government to be honest and stop using this as a political wedge. We simply do not have time to be playing games.

Stand aside from your federal colleagues and what they are doing and imagine our island is not contaminated by the revolting influence of the coal industry on federal politics. In Tasmania we can do so much. We have the capacity. We have an island that is blessed with resources but we must look ahead, not just look to the short term, to the next election.

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy) - Madam Speaker, Labor is sitting on the fence. They are so uncomfortable. They are sitting on barbed wire. They are talking on the one hand of support and on the other they will not. Back Mariner and Battery of the Nation. Get on board, Labor Party. The Greens, being the world's biggest hypocrites, will not support this major renewable energy project. We have talked about Robbins Island and windfarms and yet here they are, the Greens, talking up hill, down dale, decade in, decade out, and bingo, we get a major renewable energy project and they want to oppose it. We know the Greens mean 'stop' in Tasmania. Green means stop, stop, stop - that is what they are all about.

This is an excellent motion and I congratulate Joan Rylah, the member for Braddon. She supports jobs investment. This is delivering low-cost, reliable, clean energy and \$5 million is the potential for the investment, 2000 jobs, that is the potential, and more in terms of renewable energy. I am so energised, Madam Speaker - come on board.

Time expired.

Mrs Rylah interjecting.

Dr Woodruff - We had an amendment, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - I was told you did not require a vote and because there was no vote required there is no amendment and the debate is automatically adjourned.

MOTION

Tasmanian Health Service - Budget Cuts

[3.31 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I indicate that this motion will require a vote. I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the extreme pressure on Tasmania's health system which has seen unprecedented ambulance ramping and unreasonably long wait times for patients in emergency departments across the state.
- (2) Further notes that there are long wait times for services outside the hospital, including mental health services, as well as outpatient services.
- (3) Recognises the strain this is placing on staff working in the health system and the patients and family members who are trying to access health care.
- (4) Supports our health workforce and thanks them for their dedication and service to our state.
- (5) Acknowledges the Tasmanian Health Service cannot withstand budget cuts when they are already operating with insufficient funds.
- (6) Does not support any cuts to the Tasmanian Health Service budget.
- (7) Asks that the Government quarantine Health from any budget cuts.

This is a motion that should be easy for the Government to support given the comments made by the Premier in question time today. The motion, for any members who may not have read it, essentially calls on the Government to quarantine the Health budget from any budget cuts. This is very important given the very severe pressures the health system is currently facing at the moment and the fact that we have the AMA, the ANMF, the Australian College of Emergency Medicine all jointly expressing their alarm that budget cuts might be imposed upon them when they are already struggling to deliver services in the circumstances they are facing.

I asked the Premier today in question time whether he could guarantee that the Health budget could be quarantined. I am pleased to report that this was his direct quote:

I can guarantee that we will not be making cuts, as the Labor Party asserts, to essential services, including in Health and right across government.

I am very pleased to hear that, as I am sure are many across the Tasmanian community. This motion should be easy for the Government to support because all it is simply doing is calling on the Government to confirm that with a vote in this place.

Why does this matter? It is of great importance because all Tasmanians depend upon having a reliable public health system, and especially given some of the stories that we have heard come out of different areas of the state recently that I will draw members attention to.

We heard the story of a Wynyard woman who waited 30 minutes for an ambulance that was just at the end of her street. This was a story from 11 July this year and the person spoke with the media because they were so upset. They were astonished the ambulance was not sent sooner because they could see it just down the end of their street. They waited quite a long time and ended up having to go and knock on the door. They do not blame the paramedics. They are very thankful for the support they received once they were able to access that care, but they are very concerned about what is happening in the health system right now and I think rightly so, given the experience they had.

We have the Health and Community Services Union talking about what is going on with our ambulance stations right across the state. The unfortunate reality is that many of them are not properly staffed. There was an occasion quite recently where there were 10 stations that went without volunteers on one night, meaning there were cases to which only one paramedic could respond. Mr Jacobsen from HACSU said, 'Anecdotally, the message is volunteers are as fatigued as salaried crews'. That is true. I have spoken to ambulance volunteers who are very passionate about their local communities and volunteer because they want to support them and provide help if there is ever any reason for them to be called out, but they are incredibly exhausted. Too frequently now they are being taken out of the community they love and have volunteered to support and are finding themselves ramped at the hospital, in some cases for many, many hours. That leads to a reduction in their participation as volunteers in their own community because of their anxiety that they will end up at the hospital in Hobart, Launceston or Burnie and not in their own communities, which is what they had originally signed up to volunteer to support.

These stories are not isolated to the south. I want to make that point because too frequently we only hear about what is happening at the Royal Hobart Hospital. These stories are occurring right across the state and being shared with us and I am sure the minister, as well as the media, about what is happening and the frustration, fatigue and exhaustion. That was exemplified very clearly on 19 July by an ambulance paramedic. I will not disclose the name of this paramedic but they shared a post on Facebook that has been shared over 1000 times now. This salaried paramedic turned out to their shift and there was no truck at the station. There was no way for them to respond because there was no vehicle parked in the garage. They said that everyone loves turning up to work and finding there is nothing to do, but when you are the only overnight paramedic for a city of nearly 50 000 people, including your own family, it is not such a novelty.

That post went viral because many people were taken aback by it. They expect that when they call 000 that there will be an ambulance to respond in a timely manner. In most cases that is right, but just like the case I spoke about earlier in Wynyard, sometimes that is not the case. There are occasions when we saw an ambulance crew sent from Mowbray to cover a vacant shift in Bridgewater when there are only four ambulances in Launceston, so a quarter of that resource was deployed to cover a vacancy that was occurring in the south of the state.

I asked the minister today if she could detail how many times just this year ambulance crews have been deployed from the north to cover vacancies in the south. The minister did not update the parliament but perhaps she can on this occasion during this debate, because it is really important to understand the pressure the ambulance service is currently under.

I am also aware that frequently crews from the north-west are being sent to the north to cover vacant shifts there. Again, people are being taken out of area. That makes it a very long day for people who are already working very long shifts and already incredibly exhausted. When you have paramedics who are already working extraordinarily long hours and then tacking on to that a 400-kilometre round trip or a couple of hours ramped at the hospital at the end of your shift, they are eventually going to end up in mental distress themselves.

I say that because I know it to be true of paramedics who are friends of mine. I have a great friend who is a paramedic who has been working out of the Bridgewater station which very frequently is not manned, which is why the Mowbray crew had to come down. She was actually working on shift that day. She had worked all day and at the end of her shift at 6 p.m. when she expected to be able to go home to her three very young children, they got a call they had to respond to. She did that and it was a patient in mental distress so they took him to the Royal Hobart Hospital

and were ramped there in the corridor with him not responding to support or guidance from any of her male colleagues. He was quite violent and agitated and could only be calmed down by her as a female paramedic.

She was stuck on the ramp at the end of her shift, a drawn-out day, trying to support this person in mental distress ramped in the corridor alongside a 96-year-old woman who was on an IV drip on a bed. Security guards were trying to restrain him and keep him away from this poor woman, while other patients who were intubated and in the resus bays were being trollyed past to have scans because there were no ICU beds. It is completely unacceptable. This paramedic, my friend, is now off on workers compensation because of the anxiety she is suffering trying to do the job that she loves, but she feels she cannot go to work every day and cope in this environment. She feels she is letting her friends and colleagues down because she knows that if she is not able to get to a shift someone else has to cover that. This is what is happening right now in our ambulance service, and to think this Government is considering asking them to meet an efficiency dividend, as you like to call it but everyone else knows as a budget cut, is unthinkable. They are at their wit's end. They are on stress leave because they cannot cope.

For hospital staff to be warned they have to brace themselves for a \$50 million budget cut in this environment is unfathomable. Whether that is because you are going to reduce their budget or, as I expect is probably the case, you are not going to give them enough money to do their job. They are going to have to come in on a budget you have given them for this financial year that is not as much as they had last year.

Last year, an extra \$105 million was given to the Health and Human Services department so that it could keep up with some of the demand being faced in the health system. That money was not recurrent; it does not appear again this financial year. Instead this Government requires \$450 million of savings to be found somewhere across agencies and, as the Government keeps telling us, Health is 32 per cent of the state budget. My concern is that they will have to find 32 per cent of the \$450 million in cuts and that is why this motion is so important; to quarantine Health from any further damage inflicted upon it through finding any further budget cuts. It is not fair on the work force, on patients or families. I did note closely the comments made by the Premier today and I repeat them because it gives me some hope the Government will vote for this motion and quarantine Health. The Premier said in response to a question today -

I can guarantee that we will not be making cuts, as the Labor Party asserts, to essential services including in Health and right across government.

If that statement is true, the Government should vote for this motion without hesitation and give some confidence to the health workforce, the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation and the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine, who are alarmed at the comments they have heard from this Government, particularly the Treasurer, when he said that Health can be more efficient.

I challenge the Treasurer to visit the emergency department to see what it is like there and understand the sort of circumstances our health professionals are operating in. I challenge him to speak to one of the 9400 people on the elective surgery waiting list and ask if they think the health service can be more efficient when they are waiting well beyond clinically accepted time frames for their elective surgery procedures. I challenge the Treasurer, if he thinks he knows better than doctors, nurses and ambulance paramedics, to spend a day in their shoes and rethink his statements.

I know, from the conversations the Labor Party has had with those who work in health, there is nothing left to cut.

Andrew Brakey from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation said it very well earlier this week when he commented that the Government might protect frontline workers because traditionally that has been what governments try to do, those who deliver direct services, but what that means is they end up doing all of the backline work. You cannot cut those people who work to support the nursing work force because it requires somebody to do that job. What is happening - and Andrew Brakey from the ANMF said it very clearly - is that nurses are now doing two jobs. They have to do patient care, service delivery and all the paperwork. They also have to do the cleaning up. They have to do all of that other stuff because those jobs have been cut. Arguing that you are protecting frontline services is no longer a fallback line you can rely on when you have already cut everything else. It makes it even harder for our health workforce to do their job.

The AMA has made some very strong comments in relation to the Treasurer's statements and I understand they met with the media today. I am not sure what they said and I am not sure if the minister can update the House with any of that. I do know what they said yesterday. The AMA said they were very perplexed at the comments of the Treasurer, Peter Gutwein, about the impending cuts to hospital budgets. Vice President, Dr John Davis, said -

If one thing about the problems in health is clear, it's that cutting hospital budgets in the current climate would be the height of stupidity. There is simply no room for cuts to hospitals without causing catastrophic damage to already over stretched services.

That is a very clear warning for this Government from the health workforce. We have heard from the ANMF that it might cost lives. We have heard from the AMA that it could damage patient services and staff morale and that it is reckless. This is not news to the Government; I reflect on some of the correspondence this Government received in the last few months. There was the letter written by the ambulance paramedic to Neil Kirby, who was the CEO of Ambulance Tasmania. This was a couple of months ago and it talks about the widespread and undeniable psychological injury occurring to ambulance paramedics. I have already shared a story about one of my friends who is an ambulance paramedic and who has personally experienced that.

This paramedic wrote to the CEO of Ambulance Tasmania after they conducted a survey of their colleagues, over 70 responses in the first 24 hours, which is approximately 40 per cent of the workforce in the south, which demonstrated that 90 per cent of those responders reported that ramping was having a negative impact of their mental health and 79 per cent indicated that ramping was affecting their mood out of work hours. They found that the clear impact of ramping is not limited to simple work frustration but is resulting in diagnosable mental illness. This inference is starkly confirmed by the indication from 6 per cent of those respondents that the personal impact of ramping is so great that they have considered committing an act of self-harm. It requires us to very carefully reflect on a survey such as this when people we rely on to look after us are considering self-harming. We have to think about how we are looking after them. We are not going to do that if we cut their budget.

That is one letter and it is not in isolation. We have the Health and Community Services Union, referring the issue of ramping to the regulator on behalf of paramedics and patient transport officers, highlighting concerns about a significant increase in patient ramping, which is when staffed ambulances wait with patients inside until a hospital place becomes available. They have referred

that for investigation at Worksafe Tasmania because they are incredibly concerned that the increase in ambulance ramping is having a significant impact on the health of the workforce.

We also know that ambulance ramping has escalated because the Auditor-General's report released in May this year tells us such. If the Auditor-General's report was not a wake-up call for the Government to think very seriously about how they fund Health and the support they provide to the workforce, I do not know what else they need. There is no way in the world, having read the Auditor-General's report, the Government could seriously think they could cut funding from Health. We already know the Health budget for this financial year is only \$11 million more than what was budgeted last year.

We do not know what the actuals were for last financial year and they will become clear when the annual reports are handed down but that is information the Government already has. They do not have to wait for the annual reports to be tabled in this place. They would know exactly how much was spent on Health last year and whether the budget allocated for this year is adequate to meet increasing demand. It increases every year. It is not a new phenomenon. It traditionally increases at about 5.8 per cent per annum. That is the average. If they have not accounted for that, how can we believe them when they say they are serious about acting on the Auditor-General's report?

This Auditor-General's report was damning. It identified the chronic issues of ambulance ramping. It talks about ambulance ramping across Tasmania's four major hospitals increasing significantly between 2012-13 and 2017-18 by around 149 per cent. The duration of ramping similarly increased. Instances of ramped times in excess of the 15 minutes offload target and instances where the offload delay exceeded 30 minutes grew by 197 per cent and 239 per cent respectively during that period. That means when those ambulances are at the hospital ramped with a patient, communities are left vulnerable. When ambulances come from Mowbray to Bridgewater to cover a shift and there are only three left in Launceston and they are all ramped at the hospital, how is somebody going to get out to the regions? Communities are left vulnerable. How is somebody even going to get to Rocherlea or Mayfield?

This is what the Government needs to acknowledge. Today when we asked the minister whether she could confirm that just one regional ambulance paramedic had been recruited in the last 15 months she could not answer the question. Perhaps she can now. Of the 42 that were promised, can the minister update the House on how many have actually been recruited? The information we have tells us that only one of the 42 promised ambulance paramedics has actually been recruited.

We have also seen letters to the hospital executive from the emergency registrars working at the Royal Hobart Hospital. This was a letter sent to them on 18 April, before the Budget was developed and handed down. I fear that their concerns were not appropriately heeded. They spoke about their views as emergency department registrars at the Royal Hobart Hospital and said they would like to advise of their grave concerns regarding the safety and welfare of patients and staff. They referenced extreme access block and ramping which is having a devastating effect on patients, system failures causing severe moral injury, physical exhaustion, emotional depletion, and psychological trauma amongst their registrar group. These are our health professionals, the experts, expressing their concerns directly to the Government.

The ANMF wrote to the failed Health minister, Michael Ferguson, and then had to escalate their concerns to the Premier because he did not even acknowledge their letter or respond. They wrote to the Premier on 6 June 2019 about bed block and conditions within the Royal Hobart

Hospital and said, 'Premier Hodgman, ANMF members are appealing to you to exercise your duty of care of all Tasmanians to secure a safe health system'.

Madam Speaker, I know you have read this letter. I know many members in this House have too and some of the content is quite distressing. Patients under mental health orders cannot leave the hospital. Some wait up to six days for a bed. Psychologically unwell patients have hanged themselves in the department. Others have given up waiting, only to be found hours later scaling the Tasman Bridge. Patients are literally dying waiting for care at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

If the Government is serious about finding budget cuts why can they not think seriously about what impact it will have on people? This motion is calling on the Government to quarantine Health from any further cuts. They must heed the warnings from the experts. They cannot ignore this. They cannot say they are ignorant of these matters because they have been brought to their attention multiple times in this place. They have been written to directly. It has been raised in the Auditor-General's report and yet we have the Treasurer say that they could be more efficient. Everybody knows that is code for cuts.

I know there are many members in this place who want to make their own contributions on this issue because it affects all of us. It affects our families and our friends who are working in the health system. It is incredibly important that we do what we can to make sure this Government gets its priorities right and ensures that we do not impose more cuts on the health system.

There are many matters that need to be resolved in the portfolio of Health. I have written to the minister, Ms Courtney, offering to meet with her and provide support and solutions. I have not yet received a response to that letter but I acknowledge that since Ms Courtney has taken on the role she and her office have been very proactive in responding to constituent matters that have been sitting with the minister's office. That is the feedback I have had from across my caucus colleagues. We appreciate the level of attention the minister has given to getting back to people. That is a good start.

I would be very grateful if the minister could update the House about some of the details we sought answers to earlier in the day but primarily we are asking the Government not to set this minister up to fail, not to set the health system up to fail, not cut further funding from the Health budget and acknowledge the pressures it is facing, acknowledge all the representations the Government has received from health stakeholders and experts about the strain they are under and the fact that in recent days the AMA, the ANMF, the Australian College of Emergency Medicine and others have expressed alarm at the prospect of any budget cuts. In fact they are saying they need more money, not less. It is disappointing that the access solutions meeting that was held seems to have been disregarded as a way to bring together the goodwill across parties and across the Health workforce to work collectively on solutions. I find that very disappointing.

I ask that members support this motion and send a very strong signal to the Health workforce that we hear what they are saying, we acknowledge the stress they are working under, we hear what the community is telling us and we will quarantine Health from budget cuts. A very important message we can send the community is that we hear them and support them and I ask all members to support the motion.

[3.56 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Health) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to this motion and say from the outset of my contribution that I will be moving an amendment to this motion.

I will first reflect on a few of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition, particularly towards the end of her contribution. She said that we need to get our priorities right. This is something the Government has been seeking to do. The way the Treasurer and the Government have been balancing our budget and ensuring that we have a strong economy is the very basis of how we can reinvest in essential services, which is why as a government we have seen 1000 more people employed in Health and 130 more beds.

If we look across the portfolio areas we know are very important to our communities there is our investment in education, in child protection and in other areas of essential services of government. We want to make sure that as a government we have a strong economy so that we have the ability to invest. I agree about prioritisation and that is why Health has and continues to be one of our main priorities.

There were also a couple of other things said by the Opposition Leader and I thank her for her feedback about getting back to people. I will pause on that for a moment because this entire portfolio is about people. We stand in here and there is a lot of debate about topics and issues, but at the end of the day this is a portfolio about people. It is about servicing the people of Tasmania and supporting the thousands of men and women who work within our health system every day. As a new minister I am very focused on ensuring I am supporting those within the system to be able to support our community best. While it has only been around a month or so, I am working very hard to ensure that all those people who have a view, an opinion, ideas and concerns are heard and are responded to, and I will endeavour to do that as much as possible while being minister.

The Opposition Leader also talked about the access solutions meeting and suggested it had been disregarded. I will talk about that a bit more later on because as a minister who has had the opportunity to talk to many people working within the system I have been heartened by how important the outcomes of the access solution meeting are. As a minister I am committed to making sure that we work to achieve those, we work with all the stakeholders involved in coming up with those solutions to make sure they are implemented fully to the intent of them as well. I look forward to continuing to provide updates to stakeholders and to the House and to make sure we continue to work with stakeholders to deliver those because they are very meaningful and have very real potential to make great changes for our health system. I would like to make sure the member is aware of that and my intention as minister to deliver on those.

The Liberal Government has always made Health one of our key priorities. It is important to look at the context when we are talking about Health. As I talk about some of these figures I do not suggest that I am taking away from the very real challenges we have. There are real and significant challenges in some regions and parts of our hospitals. I have spoken to staff and I understand the pressure some people feel and I want to support them. We also need to remember that a lot of work goes on in a hospital system each year. Within a year, there are 160 000 presentations to our emergency department, and that is extraordinary, 600 000 outpatient attendances, 4500 babies born; 8000 ambulances dispatched, and more than 28 000 emergency and elective surgeries performed. We have some of the world's leading clinicians in Tasmania. We should be very proud of that. I have noted in my short time as minister the pride with which everybody I have met works. They love what they do, everyone loves serving their community, and I want to make sure as a minister that I am supporting them so they can do their job to the best of their ability.

The Government has continued to support the system and more than 1000 full-time equivalent staff; that is 550 FTE nurses, 160 FTE doctors and 111 allied health professionals and these are real

men and women who are working to serve our community. These positions ensure we can keep beds open, patients are seen and the initiatives we are rolling out in the community can be supported appropriately. As a Government, it is not only about the level of investment, it is about ensuring the investment we make is making a real difference to Tasmanians. We know we have amazing staff and we look forward to continuing to work with them as we face the challenges we see within our health system.

I would like to put budget savings into a broader context. The Treasurer said in this place that we were faced with a half a billion-dollar black hole, effectively. It was something we were not predicting and it is a very significant deficit. In the context of how we look at our Budget, we heard the Treasurer mention, based on the surveys we see coming out, that Tasmania's economy is performing strongly. We are seeing business confidence that is strong. We are making sure we are retaining our credit ratings. These things are supporting our economy and supporting jobs that allow us to reinvest in our essential and frontline services. We have those things because the community knows this Government knows how to manage their budget. When we look at managing the budget and making difficult decisions, this must be done in the best interests of Tasmania and being able to reinvest in important services.

I would like to be clear with the savings being made. If we look at the coming year, these are modest savings of 50 cents in \$100. This is a very modest saving compared to other jurisdictions around Australia. While we are doing that I want to make sure the House is clear, as noted by the Premier and the Treasurer earlier today, that we are committed to protecting frontline and essential services. We know how important service delivery is for -

Dr Woodruff - Where is the report from the access solutions meeting? You were due to provide that to parliament today.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you for that interjection.

Dr Woodruff - If you are committed, do something about it. Where are the actions you were meant to deliver today? It's the end of July.

Ms COURTNEY - Dr Woodruff, I appreciate your interjection but if you listened to the beginning of my contribution I said I would deal with access solutions more fully later on in my contributions.

We have made sure we are investing in Health and we have increased the spending as a total of our budget up to 32 per cent from 25 per cent a decade ago. We have seen increase complexity and we are seeing increased demand. The Government is responding by spending more money than ever before in this important portfolio. It is simply wrong to claim there is a \$50 million cut in the Royal's budget. It is also important to recognise that the state Budget has only recently been passed, hospital budgets are currently being developed and we are committed to investing in Health. I do not want the Government to apologise for the expectation that we want every dollar of taxpayer money spent to be used efficiently and to achieve the best outcomes for Tasmanians and that is a good thing. A good government would expect it and it is something Tasmanians would expect.

The Royal has been one of the key topics of debate in the House over the past two days. Having spent a significant amount of time there, it is full of passionate staff who very much care about what they do and the service they deliver for their community. It has been a beneficiary of the record investment in Health, with more than 460 additional FTEs since 2014. That is 212 more FTE nurses

and 97 more FTE doctors at the Royal. These are significant investments that are making real differences on the ground, so the Government is responding. We are responding where the clinicians are asking us to. This is why we are providing more support to the emergency department and refurbishing and upgrading facilities, to make sure that people can have the world-class health delivery they deserve. Reinvestment into infrastructure includes the redevelopment, which will be an important facility for patients and their experiences. It will also be for those who work in the hospital, to make sure they are working in improved facilities that will deliver better outcomes for Tasmanians.

When we complete stage two over the next three years we will see a number of improvements including: lift infrastructure improvements, with a new second dedicated patient lift to the emergency department; medical imaging in J Block; the expansion of the emergency department to meet with growing demand, which we are aware of; and a comprehensive refurbishment of A Block that will provide contemporary space for additional beds. There will also be an expansion of the ICU in its current location, providing space for another 10 beds on the same floor by 2024, retaining close physical links to medical imaging, and a refit of the soon-to-be vacated J Block to meet additional demand and provide for new clinical uses.

The health system extends much further than the Royal. There are, as was mentioned by Leader of the Opposition in her contribution, challenges in the delivery of services and unique challenges existing around the state. In the north-west, we have seen the North West Regional Hospital acute medical unit receive eight new beds with 26 full-time equivalent staff. This is real money going into real facilities that will benefit Tasmanians.

Mrs Rylah - We appreciate it.

Ms COURTNEY - Thank you, Mrs Rylah, and it is appreciated by the community. While I do not diminish the challenges we have in Health or the circumstances some people find themselves in, we have a health care system that is loved by our community. The amount of positive feedback I get from the community is very heartening. I think it is -

Dr Woodruff - If they can get in - that is the problem. People want to get in. They do not want to be stuck in a hallway. We do not need a new Health minister who will just do PR and spin. You had until today to come up with some solutions. Come on, tell us what you are doing?

Ms COURTNEY - I thank you for that not very constructive interjection, Dr Woodruff, and -

Dr Woodruff - I sat at the access solutions meeting constructively engaged with the process, as did about 58 other people. We are all waiting to hear the Government's short-term solutions.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. The member will be able to make her contribution shortly.

Dr Woodruff - I look forward to trying to hold the Government to account.

Ms COURTNEY - Dr Woodruff, this is not very helpful. We are trying to talk about an important health care system. It is disappointing that you are interjecting when I am talking about the high-quality service that the people within our health system deliver and how they are regarded by the community.

Dr Woodruff - The community who cannot get in there are very disappointed and distressed.

Ms COURTNEY - I am telling the Chamber about the feedback I get every day from people who have experienced for themselves or their loved ones the high quality service, the care and attention they receive. That they go to the trouble of telling me about it is a good thing. I want to make sure that the staff across all of our facilities understand how much the Tasmanian people appreciate the care and service they provide.

In the north-west, the Government has refurbished the emergency department with significant capital works to extend and upgrade facilities and provided \$720 000 for the new North West Regional Hospital preadmission clinic, which is helping with patient flow and increasing efficiency at the hospital. We are also redeveloping the Mersey Hospital.

We are seeing a range of investments across the state in our different facilities. We are not only investing in the capital, we are investing in the people that deliver the services. That remains our priority.

To support the ambulance service in the north-west, the \$1.8 million Latrobe ambulance station upgrade has been delivered. There is a new adjoining garage, a new large lounge area with bathrooms for paramedic crews, office spaces, a training facility, and multipurpose rooms for the paramedic crews to rest and recline. These capital works have increased capacity from holding two ambulances to four ambulances and one non-emergency transport vehicle.

As well as the 12 new paramedics recruited in the north-west in 2016, three new paramedics are now stationed at Wynyard providing 24-hour coverage for their community. It was a delight to visit them recently. This will not only deliver great outcomes for the community, it will help support the paramedics who are there. They will get the breaks and the time off they need, so they feel supported in their role.

We will be constructing a \$6 million ambulance station in Burnie to ensure our paramedics are working out of modern and efficient facilities that meet their standards. We will also be getting on with the \$1.1 million Smithton ambulance facility upgrade, including improved training areas. In the future, a broader range of health services will be delivered out of the Mersey through our \$9.3 million commitment, as well as a community rapid response pilot for the north west for the first time. The air medical transfer capacity is now available directly at the hospital, thanks to the new \$2 million helipad that the local community appreciates.

The LGH is in my electorate of Bass, as well as the Deputy Opposition Leader's. More than 400 FTEs have been recruited to it since 2014, a 23 per cent increase, including almost 240 FTE nurses and 45 FTE doctors. The Government has been prioritising Health and will continue to prioritise Health because we know how important health service delivery is to the people of Tasmania. LGH is benefitting from an \$87 million redevelopment, with upgrades, expansion of capacity and a master plan for the future.

We are listening and making sure that when we plan for the future we are engaging meaningfully with clinicians, so we get the outcomes we need and want. We are making sure we are supporting staff while we do this to ensure that these additional facilities are serviced.

There was discussion this morning on ambulance services. I will put in context the support this Government has provided Ambulance Tasmania. Tasmanians should and can have full

confidence when calling triple 0 in an emergency. That is something I want to reiterate. The State Operations Centre receives about 200 to 300 triple zero calls each year. This year's Budget delivers \$438 million over the next four years for ambulance services. That is over \$200 million more than in the 2013-14 budget. There has been an 87 per cent increase in only five years. That is an investment in this important service for the community. We will always need to respond. The Government has more commitments to roll out, including more paramedics.

Having visited a range of facilities around the state, as with the entire health system, every area has its own unique challenges when it comes to recruitment. The Government is supporting people to make sure we are filling those roles and we do have paramedics on the ground. As at March this year, there were 92 more full-time paramedics and despatch officers at Ambulance Tasmania than five years ago. This is an enormous investment in people to respond to the demand we have been seeing.

I will make sure there is enough time for others to make contributions. Earlier, I said I am committed to access solutions. I thank everyone who contributed on the day. As I was not responsible for this ministry I was not there on the day. I have had the opportunity to speak to several people who were. I am very heartened by the collaboration and genuine belief of working together to get an outcome. I take very seriously making sure I carry on and help support the delivery of what came out of that meeting. As members will be aware, there are a number of actions that are due today, the end of the month. I will be making announcements in coming days and providing an update on those.

Dr Woodruff - Friday afternoon at 5 p.m.

Ms O'Connor - So you've blown out the deadline. Didn't you make a promise?

Ms COURTNEY - As I look at the bell, it is about 4.20 at the moment -

Dr Woodruff - Preciously close to you having to sit down, Ms Courtney. What a pity you won't be able to say something about Access Solutions.

Ms COURTNEY - I would really like to update the members on the immediate actions that were delivered within the two week time frame. All the immediate actions were completed within two weeks of finalisation of the Access Solutions action plan meeting, including the initiation of a project to commence prompt implementation of Medtasker for all medical staff at the Royal Hobart to streamline referral and communication; implementation of principles of timely and quality care at the Royal; establishment of a working group with the private hospitals to establish a formal interface between and public and private hospitals; and establishment of a length of stay committee at the Royal to identify opportunities for a streamlined safe discharge of patients with excessive stay. As I said, I am working very closely and have been receiving updates regularly on the implementation of the Access Solutions meeting and I look forward to providing updates to people who have been involved and making sure that members of the community and stakeholders are engaged and make sure that we deliver on what we committed to.

In terms of the motion before us today and before I move the amendment, in conclusion, I reiterate that this Government has demonstrated our clear commitment to Health. We have demonstrated over the past five years our commitment to reinvesting in Health, both in a capital perspective to ensure that we have the facilities for clinicians and patients, but also in the people. We have amazing people delivering care within our system and the Government is continuing to

invest and has been because we understand the importance of health and the importance of making sure that as a government we also manage the overall budget efficiently, which means we can deliver in all sorts of areas of government, whether that is education, child protection, or health.

Madam Speaker, I move -

That we leave out all words after 'House' and replace them with -

- (1) Recognises the significant increase in demand for health care in Tasmania, with the Royal Hobart Hospital seeing sustained growth in demand with a 21 per cent rise in admissions over the past three years.
- (2) Notes that the Government is taking action to address this demand by opening the new K Block at the Royal Hobart Hospital.
- (3) Acknowledges that these patients are sicker, with more complex needs.
- (4) Recognises the strain this is placing on staff working in the health system and the patients and family members who are trying to access health care.
- (5) Supports our health workforce and thanks them for their dedication and service to our state.
- (6) Acknowledges that the 2019-20 Tasmanian Budget includes operational health expenditure of \$1.96 billion.
- (7) Further notes that this is \$155 million more than the 2018-19 Budget.
- (8) Notes that the Government has committed to quarantining frontline services, with efficiencies to be achieved with a focus on vacancy control, natural attrition and the reduction of discretionary spending.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would like to seek some advice. In the past we have had rulings that if a motion is amended to the point that the amendment substantially changes the intent rather than changing part of the motion, that motion might in fact be out of order. In fact the previous Clerk ruled that when I was health minister and had attempted to do a similar thing to what the minister is doing just now. It was held to be out of order because it absolutely changed the intent of the original motion.

Before we get into the process of debating that amendment I would rather see whether the amendment is in order, because the minister is really changing the intent of the motion. If she has her own motion to move there are places that can be done.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - I thank the member for her point of order. I have been advised that the amendment is in order because it contains a similar paragraph to the previous motion.

Ms O'BYRNE - One similar paragraph? Can I seek advice as the Clerk is obviously providing you some advice? Can you explain which part of it makes it in order?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - The subject matter is relevant to what is being debated at the moment.

Ms O'BYRNE - That is a very interesting ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[4.26 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, having just seen the amendment there are certainly aspects of it that the Greens would support, including supporting the health workforce and thanking them for their dedication and service to Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - Can I just interrupt you for one second? I am regularly not provided with amendments, so can someone please get me a copy? Thank you, please proceed.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Speaker, I understand that position; it must be difficult. Although there are aspects of this amendment that we support, we do not support the principle of the majority of what is written here because it goes to the concerns I addressed by interjection when the minister was speaking, that what she has presented and what she is resorting to, unfortunately, is the worst of the PR and spin we have seen from the previous health minister over the last five years.

It is a deeply concerning turn of events that the new Health minister is using the same tactics and that the concerns of the health sector, patients in Tasmania and people who are concerned about being able to access the health care system when they need it, are not being taken seriously and this Government is simply not taking the issue of underfunding the hospital system seriously.

It is concerning that the minister clearly does not have what is required, what was agreed to at the Access Solutions meeting. People worked in good faith and constructively spent the day on 19 June talking about how to work collaboratively together, as she liked to say, and coming up with solutions for the crisis that we have at the Royal Hobart Hospital in particular, but similar crises that are playing out at the Launceston General Hospital on a regular basis too. Those people came together constructively and the job of the Health minister was to go away and do certain things that was agreed to at the meeting by the end of July. Clearly what we are hearing from the minister is that she is back-peddalling as fast as possible. We are probably going to get some pathetic press release late on Friday afternoon that will have a whole lot of waffle without the detail and substance that was agreed to by the Government and the then health minister, Michael Ferguson, at the Access Solutions meeting. You cannot talk in this place about collaboration and not play your part.

Let me just run through, for people who are listening and for the *Hansard*, what was agreed by that meeting to be done by today, the end of July. It was about short-term actions before the end of July 2019. For the purposes for people who are watching online or reading the *Hansard*, I am reading from the Royal Hobart Hospital Access Solutions access plan produced by the Government as an output from the 19 June 2019 meeting in which members of the health sector came together.

The short-term actions that were to be completed by today included -

- Develop a plan for the number and type of additional beds that should be open immediately on the commissioning of K Block - on top of the existing beds that transfer into the facility.
- Implement ED decision-to-admit authority, interim management plans, one-way referral, and no right-of-refusal, to facilitate the rapid transfer of ED patients to ward beds when available.

- Develop and implement policy to mandate the entry of an Estimated Date of Discharge for all patients within 24 hours of admission ...
- Develop an accountability and authority framework for each part of the patient journey.
- Develop a community/internal and external focused communications program to support patient flow in partnership with key stakeholders including PHT.
- Implement weekly emergency department debrief meetings including the relevant clinical staff, to improve patient flow.
- Schedule engagement forums to hear staff-driven solutions, including health professionals and other employees of the hospital.
- Convene a meeting with key THS staff and aged care providers to support community care options.
- Commence discussions with key stakeholders including Primary Health Tasmania and GPs, on progressing ways in which patients can be better supported in the primary sector.

And - most importantly -

- Prioritise relevant recommendations for implementation from previous reports, -

done by independent bodies into the crisis we now have in the health system in Tasmania -

including criterion-led discharge, discharge planning, support for long-stay patients, consistent admissions policies et cetera.

- To support the first 12 months of the THS Act, review the THS governance to strengthen local decision-making authority and accountability; and
- Design a cultural improvement program across the health system ...

There were all actions agreed at the meeting to be done by today, to be publicly reported and to be made available to the people who participated in the meeting. These things were agreed to and we have a Health minister who, on her first real opportunity to speak to these things, is clearly demonstrating where she is headed - into the land of inaction, which was the last thing people at that meeting expected. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot talk about collaboration, you cannot want everybody in the system to be involved and speak together if you do not play your part. This Government is not playing its part.

We know who is really in charge of Health in the Cabinet. It is not this new minister, who is put up in the backbench and does not have the ability to negotiate with the Treasurer and hold steady against the continual attacks on the public health system made by this Liberal Government. The latest of these occurred when the Treasurer demanded that \$50 million be found in the Royal Hobart Hospital's budget. He is going ahead with exacting cuts of 0.75 per cent of the Health budget, across the whole Health budget. This minister has demonstrated she does not have the capacity to push back against the tsunami, the brute force of the Treasurer, despite all the evidence, collaboration and goodwill shown at the last minute by people in the community and the health sector.

These people have been brought to their knees and went very reluctantly with their last little bit of goodwill to give the Government one last chance to do what it said it was prepared to do. People went to that meeting with good spirit. I know because I was there and I went with good spirit on behalf of the Greens. I listened to other people and, although there was scepticism, there was a true attempt to try to find solutions, to be pragmatic, to try to find non-financial solutions. There were not ambit claims for new hospitals and opening wards; all those things could have been said but they were not. People exercised restraint and they were reasonable. They were pragmatic, they used their minds and attempted to come up with solutions. You were there, Madam Speaker, and you probably felt more scepticism than other people in the room. You raised issues and look at where we are - nowhere. If you missed the very first deadline, what does it say?

I personally know a gentleman over the age of 80 who, unfortunately, needed to go to emergency. He was seriously unwell on Friday night. He lives in the Huon Valley and he was taken by ambulance. It is another example of the same story that is not changing. He went by ambulance; the ambulance paramedics were wonderful but they had to wait with him for six hours, ramped in the hallway. The volunteer and the paramedic were distressed because they could not leave and be available for anybody else who needed an ambulance in the south of Tasmania while they were stuck waiting. They could not do anything but stand there with him; that was their job and there was nothing for them to do. They knew there were people who could be on the phone needing an ambulance but there was nothing they could do about it. All night ambulances were tied up, waiting in the hallway on Friday night, just like we have heard for years. The gentleman was there for 36 hours, in the hallway, 85 years old and it turns out he had pneumonia and a serious urinary tract infection in a really desperate situation. It is fortunate he survived that ordeal. Other people do not.

Solutions were discussed. The minister has a responsibility not to palm this off in a press release. I happened to meet one of the registrars when I was walking recently. I met one of the registrars who wrote the letter to the executive, pleading for some concrete actions to be taken. Those registrars made 19 recommendations; very moderate, sensible, actionable things. Again, not calling for whole new wards, not asking for the sky but it seems that this Liberal Government is unable to put a fire in the belly and to make it happen. I wonder why that is, Madam Speaker? We find out they are stuck in an internal battle with the Treasurer, who wants to cut \$50 million on top of all the other things being managed by the health system.

The Greens can find that money; we found that sort of money in the alternative budget. We are prepared to make the hard decisions, to prioritise the money into Health, to prioritise the money into protecting the environment, to prioritise the money into Education so that we can have proper mental health support for kids in schools, so that we can have integrated mental health, which is something that looks somehow as though it has been able to carve out a niche. I am really pleased we have a Mental Health minister who has a real commitment to furthering the work the sector has been doing for youths.

The money can be prioritised. There are things that we can choose not to fund; we have to make these decisions. We have to make these priorities and we have to put the basic health for people in crisis, being able to move into a hospital bed, forward in a timely fashion. We have to sort this stuff out. It is, according to the Access Solutions meeting, something that can be done.

We heard from the Australian College of Emergency Medicine, from the gentleman who was here from Victoria, that it is being done in other hospitals in other states. It is not impossible and

not beyond the reach of well-off western countries to be able to move people into a hospital bed when they need one. We can do it. We are not choosing to prioritise that it happens.

I will not get a chance to speak again and I want to say that we have no problems in supporting Labor's motion. It manifestly describes the situation that we are in with the extreme pressure on the health system, the ambulance ramping which continues denying people in regional areas access to an ambulance when they need it because it is tied up in a hospital, and acknowledging that the health service cannot withstand any cuts. In fact, the reverse needs to happen. There needs to be more money prioritised into these areas.

We certainly do not and cannot support any cuts to the health budget.

[4.41 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate and put on the record my significant concern at the amendment that has been moved by the Government today. The motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, Rebecca White, recognises the significant pressure that our health system is under. It recognises the level of support that they require and calls on the Government to quarantine Health from any budget cuts.

It very clearly does not say that Health cannot find its own efficiencies internally and spend that money within health. It does not say they should have less money which is what the Government is effectively saying. The Government comes out and says that Health has to carry its part of the significant burden of the \$450 million that the state Budget has to find because this Treasurer and his Government is incompetent at managing their own finances. It does not say that Health should bear the burden in that.

It says that we recognise that in the challenging times that Health is under now, that it is unconscionable to take further money from them. That is a fact and something this parliament needs to reflect on very carefully. The Premier stood in the House today and said that unions have suggested there are ways we can do things better and be more efficient. That may be true. They do not say that you should then take that money and put it somewhere else. They do not say that you should take that money and write it off the debt that the Government has found itself in.

The minister stood in this House and talked about the half billion-dollar black hole that they had not expected and was completely unpredicted. I suggest that any member of Cabinet who thinks that the situation that we found ourselves in the Budget was unpredicted, should resign immediately. If you did not read the mid-year economic forecast, if you did not understand that this was coming down the line, not because of a reduction in Commonwealth revenue but because of mismanagement and decision of this Government, then you do not deserve to sit on the Treasury benches or sit in Cabinet.

This was not an unexpected financial position to find itself in. What absolute rot. This was known before Christmas by this Government. Before Christmas we knew that you were in serious trouble because you do not know how to manage a budget, because holding onto government has become so important to you that you simply do not care about delivering the things that Tasmanians need. You will say and do anything to hold government. We have seen that in the last few weeks. We have seen your ability in the last few weeks to say and do anything.

Mr Shelton - You were the one that sacked nurses.

Ms O'BYRNE - Now that you are on the frontbench, why don't you go back and read the Mid-Year Economic Forecast and understand exactly what you have done to Tasmanians. By your desperate attempt to win government, you have put us in this mess. You cannot blame a reduction in Commonwealth revenue when the Mid-Year Economic Forecast already showed you had blown the budget. You had blown the budget before you got back in. This is what you did. This is a choice that you made.

Don't you dare make Tasmanians be responsible for it. How dare you. I am the former health minister and I know better than anyone in this House how difficult it is to manage a budget when you genuinely lose revenue outside your control - a global financial crisis; not spending as much as you can to hold onto government. Not spending anything you can just to win every vote that you possibly can. We went through a genuine global financial crisis and we were honest about every decision that we made.

We did not do what this Government does and pretend everything is okay. We took Tasmanians on the journey with us about how difficult it was. In the end we made a decision to slow down elective surgery. This Government came in and said there is nothing more you can do to Health. Health is in such a terrible place. So what did they do? What did they do in their first budget? Health was so under funded they immediately cut \$210 million and they say, 'Well, this is all the fault of cuts that were made potentially 10 years ago'. The reality is, the decisions that this Government has made has put us in this mess - \$210 million in their first budget in a health system that frankly we had found every single saving that you could find. There was no more money to cut and you cut it. Since then, the not unexpected increase in demand because, for goodness sake, it happens in every jurisdiction and every country, the non-unexpected increase in demand, an ageing population - we have known that for some time and we have talked about that for some time. It is not unexpected - and that is apparently the reason things are in trouble.

What is really causing the problem was the former minister's inability to engage with his workforce because he knew better than everybody else. The minister then talked about some of our health professionals, how many of them left because they could not work with the former minister, Mr Ferguson and how many of them said, 'I cannot stay here and work under this minister'. That is the legacy that he has given the new minister - really good people who have left.

There is no capacity to find savings in Health now. If there are, if there are paper clips to be saved, if there is doctor's travel to be saved, if there are those things that can be saved, then they should not be removed from the Health budget. They should be maintained in the Health budget to meet the demand that you are currently not meeting. The minister, even in our motion picked up our lines about recognising the strain on staff working in the health system. Taking money out does not recognise the strain. It compounds it.

If there are efficiencies to found in Health then any money that is saved in anything such as administration and travel costs, and consultancies, that money should hypothecated directly back into Health. It should stay in Health to meet the demand that we are not meeting. But that is not the motion that is before the House. The motion that is now before the House does not recognise the significant demand placed on staff; it does not recognise how difficult it is to make the budget meet. In particular, it does not even really understand what the operational budget for each hospital will be. That is not clear.

What it says is that we are going to quarantine frontline services. What do the experts say about quarantining frontline services? Mr Brakey from the ANMF says what we see is that nurses

are then taken away from the bedside and are doing admin duties and needed to answer phone and clean beds and things like that. The patients are not getting the full care that they are allocated. What does the AMA say? Rather than slashing into a hospital's services and their support staff, we need to see an investment in more cleaners, nurses and doctors. It is very clear that within a Health budget there is no difference between frontline and backline in health operations. If you do not have a ward clerk on duty then a nurse covers that role. If you do not have a cleaner on duty then an enrolled nurse or an assistant nurse covers that role. The work still needs to be done. The savings that you make in Health impact on the frontline delivery of services. I know that more than most people in this House that the way the decisions we make impact on health service there is no more fat in the health system.

If you can find some in paper clips or photocopying, or however you think you can find it, then that should be genuinely hypothecated back into Health to meet the increase in presentations. By the way, presentations increase because your federal colleagues do not back Medicare. That is why presentations are increasing, because you cannot get to your GP so you end up in ED. You do not get treated straight away in ED because they are under such demand you present with more complicated health outcomes. That is what happens and it is startling that this Government does not seem to understand it.

This motion says that we will find these savings with vacancy control and natural attrition. What do you think that means? Vacancy control and natural attrition means that if someone retires they are not replaced; it means there are jobs that are not filled - and there are hundreds that are not filled right now and they will not be filled.

Ms White - There are over 200 nurses positions unfilled.

Ms O'BYRNE - Over 200 vacant nursing positions. The minister can talk about how much support they are giving Ambulance Tasmania. We talk to paramedics all the time and there are a number of unfilled positions. There are also positions that are held by people who are now too stressed and too unwell to do the job they love. You do not become a paramedic because it is a nice sounding job. You become a paramedic because you are passionate.

When you spend hours on the ramp, when you hear about the call and you hear it on the radio and you know it is not being answered because you are stuck somewhere else - and people live and die in those little moments - knowing that you are not doing the job that matters to you. That is the reason they are not at work. There is a significant number of positions within Ambulance Tasmania that are currently not filled. I received a notice the other day that there were something like six positions that they called out for. The shift is about to start and they are already that many people down, let alone with the demand that is coming down the line. That means that trucks are not filled and calls are not answered as quickly as they should be.

This minister cannot come in and talk about all the additional staff, because in reality you need to look at who is on the ground on any given day. Paramedics cannot fill their shifts on any given day and neither can nurses. I was talking to a couple of nurses. They are in a relationship and they work in one of the wards at the LGH. They do not set an alarm in the morning any more because they know that at a certain hour of the morning both of their phones will buzz telling them how many staff they are down. When they do take that call and they go in, do you know what frightens them so much? It is the number of staff on the ward who are filling the jobs who are not actually qualified yet.

We have our nurses who are in training do their professional year, their professional time in a hospital who are being relied on to provide that high level of care because we do not have enough staff. How many agency nurses do we have on at the moment? Minister, you must know this. How many agency nurses are we currently employing to try to make this work? There is no answer from the minister.

It is not conscionable for this House to agree to this amendment. This amendment says there will be less money in Health. It says we will accept whatever the Treasurer tells us. By the way, do not for a moment think that the Government members do not know how much money they are supposed to save. The Budget was brought down some time ago and some time before that it is negotiated and discussed. There is no way that the Treasurer and the minister do not know by now, because tomorrow is August, the savings that they are supposed to identify in Health.

The fact that they are not sharing that indicates to me that it is a significantly frightening number. There is no other reason that you would not own it. If you were genuinely saying that we are asking for a really small saving that we think the hospital or health system can absorb you would tell us what it is. What you are doing is doing this by stealth. Senior hospital staff are very frightened about the amount of money that they are going to save.

I am all for finding efficiencies when there are efficiencies to be found, but I tell you that Health cannot absorb another dollar less right now. If there are savings to be found that are identified by staff, that money should hypothecate directly back into Health. It should not go to cover the incompetence of the Treasurer, Mr Gutwein. An incompetence that is shared by the members over there, because they were all happy to run around the community with a little letter saying, 'Hi, I know you did not ask us for any money, but please take some so that you vote for us.' There is a consequence to selling your soul to maintain government. That consequence unfortunately is not being felt by you all because you sit in your comfy chairs and wander around saying everything is fine. It is felt by the people who are no longer employed in Tasmania. It is felt by the people who cannot get an ambulance when they call. It is felt by the people who sit in ED for hours and hours and hours. That is where the consequence is felt.

For this Government to say it is not our fault, this was just money that suddenly disappeared and we are as surprised as anyone, you all had the mid-year economic forecast. It told you what you had done and yet you progressed and progressed with it, because you would rather hold government than do the right thing. There will be a point in your lives when you have to look in the mirror and judge what kind of government you have been. You had better turn yourselves around soon, otherwise that is not going to be something that you can live with.

The decisions that you make here matter. Cutting health services matter. This motion, which sounds like a procedural process the Government is debating today is actually significant. Right now, we are asking all of you as members of parliament to make a call. It is saying, 'Will you protect our health system that is struggling from finding any further savings'? That is all it is asking. It is asking you to do that. Even during the global financial crisis we protected ambulances and protected child protection - we made those decisions. We protected areas where we knew there was no saving to be found. All of you know now that there are no savings to be found in Health anymore. If you did find them in the store cupboard or in a purchasing arrangement, then please, Tasmanians are begging you not to take any more money out of Health.

We cannot possibly support the amended motion by the minister. I do not understand why the minister cannot support the motion that was put before the House. The motion before the House is

not asking you to do something that is utterly impossible. It is simply saying that we do not support any cuts to the Tasmanian Health Service budget. We ask you to quarantine Health from budget cuts. We do not ask you to quarantine it from finding efficiencies; we ask you to protect it from further cuts. I do not understand how that could be such a difficult thing to agree to.

If you are genuinely saying that the Health budget is going to continue to rise and, frankly, it does - even during the GFC there is not a time when the Health budget has not risen. There has also never been a time when health demand has decreased. These are truisms in Health. These are matters of fact. You cannot use them as an excuse. You cannot use the federal government funding writedown as an excuse either, because you made choices about what you would fund and where you would fund them. You need to be responsible for those choices.

More importantly, you need to be responsible to those people who cannot get in to see their doctor, to those people who cannot get to ED and be seen in ED because they are waiting, to those people who call an ambulance and wait, to those people who sit in the ramped ambulance. You talk and you talk and you talk about the staff and they are - seriously, I could not do the work they do - phenomenal people who work incredibly hard. It is not okay to say that and then not back them in. If you genuinely believe that, then you have to have their back. You have to say, 'We understand the pressure you are under and we are going to maintain and support you.' Not, 'The Treasurer has said that we find savings and we are going to find it'. Find it elsewhere, find it outside of Health. Do not find it in a place where people can no longer accept any further cuts.

We already know we have had an increase in adverse outcomes. That is a very technical bit of language - a 60 per cent increase in adverse outcomes. Adverse outcomes mean that you did not get treated and that you got sicker, or that your family member died. That is what an adverse outcome is. It is not, 'I waited half an hour more to get a band aid'. It is not something simple like that. An adverse outcome is significant. When you are healthy, when you are wealthy, as every person in this House is, everyone here is doing okay, we are all doing financially okay. When you are desperately reliant on the public service to meet your needs then the public service is supposed to be there for you. In order for the public service to be there for Tasmanians this Government has to back the public service.

This motion before the House in its substantive form was to not support cuts to the Health service budget and to ask that the Government quarantine Health from any budget cuts. Anyone who does not vote for that should be ashamed. To be honest, if you vote for this mealy-mouthed amendment, which talks about committing frontline services, then do not ever go outside this House and talk about how you care about Tasmanians and how you care about Health services, because each of these things diminishes the care that is currently being provided, which is already far below the standard that Tasmanians expect. Quite frankly, minister, I know how hard it is to be a health minister. There are former health ministers around the globe who genuinely have a shared understanding of how hard this portfolio is, but there are also times that you have to make a call. If there was a genuine impact that you could not control in budget, people get that. Your Budget is a decision of your Government that you knew about before the federal government writedown. You are responsible for it. It was based on your desire to remain in government.

If you want to be in government so much then do the most important thing and back Tasmanians who need their Health service. We are only asking you to quarantine the service from cuts. We are not asking you to put more money in, although God knows it desperately needs it. We are asking you to quarantine it from cuts. You can do that. You can do that by supporting our

motion. Any efficiencies that are found in Health can be hypothecated directly back into the demand we are having in Health. That is the way you would run a good and solid system.

When you go into hospitals in your communities, whether it be the St Helens District Hospital, whether it be up the north-west coast, in Launceston or Hobart, do not dare go in there and pretend you care when you were not prepared to make a commitment in this House today that you would quarantine Health from cuts. It deserves more money, but you can at least have the decency to protect the shallow service you are currently providing.

Time expired.

The House divided -

AYES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Ms Courtney
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker (Teller)

NOES 12

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

Madam SPEAKER - The result of the division is 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, which means I have to use a casting vote. In accordance with standing order 167, I will now cast my vote. Before I do so, as is my tradition, I will make a statement as to my reasoning.

As members know, I am extremely passionate about our health system and I have regularly challenged the Government to do better. I want to see improvements to our health system and improved access to care for our citizens and families. Since my election I have talked to many doctors, nurses, cleaners and orderlies who are all working extremely hard in incredibly difficult conditions and I applaud all of these people.

But I do have a business background and I am a Master of Business Administration, so I know you just cannot keep throwing money at a problem. You must look for efficiencies and there is no better example of that than this document. I am proud to say the Government has accepted all 21 recommendations, but this document which details silos, inefficiencies and all sorts of problems, is going to be agreed to so that we can look for better efficiencies and serve more people. It is not about taking money out; we must make better use of the Health budget, which is almost \$2 billion a year, and we cannot afford for any waste.

Ms White - It's about vacancy control and natural attrition.

Madam SPEAKER - I will not have any backchat while I am speaking, if that is okay.

On that basis I will be supporting this amended motion because the Government has promised to quarantine frontline services from efficiencies and it is beholden on all of us to look for efficiencies in every single government department so that we can free up money for essential services.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Glenorchy RSL Club - Closure - Motion Negatived

[5.08 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I indicate that we will want a vote on this motion. I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes that during the 2018 state election campaign, Liberal MPs and candidates, including the Premier, Hon. Will Hodgman MP, and Treasurer, Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, stood outside the Glenorchy RSL and falsely claimed that without poker machines the venue would close, threatening Anzac Day celebrations.
- (2) Further notes with sadness the unexpected closure of the Glenorchy RSL on Sunday, 21 July 2019, the loss of 11 local jobs and a service highly valued by Glenorchy veterans.
- (3) Agrees the Tasmanian Liberal Party, the Premier, Treasurer, and Liberal candidates perpetrated a lie on the Tasmanian people in the lead-up to the state election on behalf of their gambling industry donors.
- (4) Calls on the Premier, on behalf of the Liberal Party and its elected representatives, to apologise to -
 - (a) veterans and staff from the now closed Glenorchy RSL for shamelessly exploiting them for political gain; and
 - (b) Tasmanian voters for misleading them on the impact of removing poker machines from pubs and clubs.
- (5) Further agrees that poker machines should be removed from pubs and clubs.

Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on the subject of the scourge of poker machines in pubs and clubs in Tasmania and to acknowledge upfront that there are 11 people who were employed at the Glenorchy RSL who are now unemployed, and to acknowledge that there are veterans who have

long valued the service provided by the Glenorchy RSL who will no longer have the Glenorchy RSL as a place to gather and to be together as veterans who fought and served this country.

We have brought this matter on for debate in the wake of the closure of the Glenorchy RSL. For any member who has forgotten what a shameful episode the Glenorchy RSL was, I refer them to a story that was published on ABC Online on 9 January last year which has a serried array of Liberal ministers, sitting members and candidates. I can see in the background of this photo outside the Glenorchy RSL Mr Jaensch, Ms Archer, Ms Howlett, Mr Berakhis, and Mr Brooks. There is Mr Gutwein, the Treasurer, and there is the Premier. There in the background, I think, are some of the 11 staff who are no longer employed at the Glenorchy RSL.

The Tasmanian people in the last state election campaign were fed one of the most massive lies that has ever been perpetrated on the electorate. They were knowingly, wilfully misled by the Liberal Party about the economic and social impact of the removal of poker machines from pubs and clubs. All of that was done on behalf of the gambling industry on the mainland, who as we know poured millions of dollars into ensuring a Liberal election win. That will leave a stain forever on the collective soul of the Liberal Party of Tasmania and every member who was elected to this place off the back of that blood money. It is blood money. It comes out of the pockets of some of our poorest people.

Poker machine addiction leads to family violence and breakdown, child abuse and neglect, addiction, mental illness, homelessness, abject poverty. That is the social reality of having poker machines in pubs and clubs. It is even acknowledged in the Government's own social and economic impact statement on the impact of poker machines in Tasmania. Poker machine addiction, with a person losing everything they have on the poker machines, has led to suicide. You cannot get away from that fact.

The Premier and the Treasurer, if they were decent and honest, in the wake of the closure of the Glenorchy RSL, would apologise to the staff and to the veterans. They would apologise to the people of Tasmania. It was a massive lie and a shameless exploitation of our veterans. We were even led to believe that there would be a threat to Anzac Day celebrations if poker machines were removed from the Glenorchy RSL. Glenorchy RSL kept its poker machines and it closed anyway.

We want the people of Tasmania to receive an apology from the Premier. We want the people of Tasmania to see where each of the major parties stands on this issue. We know clearly where the Liberals stand. They have barely wavered from their socially and economically reckless and toxic policy which will embed the harm caused by poker machines to the year 2043 as a result of bending over to the gambling industry and instituting, as they will when their legislation comes before the Parliament next year, the individual licensing model: the very model that my colleague the member for Clark, Mr Bacon, raised during the campaign. He stood there with the former gaming commissioner, Peter Holt, who was very clear that the individual licensing model will only entrench harms. It is one thing for a parliament to strike down the deed or allow the deed to lapse. It is quite another for a parliament to enact a policy which means that every single one of the venues in Tasmania will be individually licensed to continue the harm caused by poker machines.

We will hear, and have heard from the Labor leader, statements about sovereign risk, about the fact that Labor did not win the election, therefore they have walked away from their pokies policy. Here are some of the things the Leader of the Labor Party said about poker machines and Labor's principled position in the lead-up to the last state election. Rebecca White said Mr Hodgman had 'rolled over' to the pro-pokies lobby group. That is exactly what Ms White has done since. In the

story dated 9 January last year, the infamous Glenorchy RSL conga line of Liberal MPs and candidates, she said -

Today Premier Will Hodgman has shown he is nothing more than a coward, can't stand up to the pro-pokies lobby group.

What he is proposing to do is burden the Tasmanian community with poker machines until 2043.

The Labor Leader went on to say -

I will be 60 years old before we can have this debate again about removing poker machines from our pubs and clubs if we do not take the chance right now to do what is right.

Parliament is sovereign and parliament will be given an opportunity to do what is right when the Treasurer brings legislation into this place to give effect to the Liberal's socially and economically destructive policy. We know what happened to Ms White. We know that Rebecca White got rolled by the O'Byrnes, the federal Labor Party and the gambling industry, which underwrites it through poker machines in clubs. In fact, Ms White, it was a mortal blow to your leadership. It is only a matter of time. You cannot take a policy of that substance to the state election, make the statements that you have and then in only a little over a year after that election result, crab-walk away from it. You cannot. It is terminal to your leadership. I am quite sad about that because having David O'Byrne as Opposition Leader gives me no joy at all.

Ms White, the day after the state election, said -

I know that Labor's position is not going to change on this. We remain firm on our view that poker machines should be restricted to casinos.

That is good policy. It is socially and economically responsible policy because if even a fraction of the \$200 million or so that Tasmanians lose each year in the poker machines went into small businesses, it would give them a substantial economic lift. That was a point that was made by Ms White and other Labor members in the lead-up to the state election.

On 20 June last year, Ms White said -

The Tasmanian Labor Party remains firmly committed to the policy position we took to the last election.

On 8 September last year, Labor recognises that -

Poker machines are the source of so much pain and poverty in our community. Quite simply, it was and still is the right thing to do.

I could not agree more. It is a tragedy for the socially and economically disadvantaged people of Tasmania and those who are at risk of gambling addiction, that Ms White got rolled. It is a tragedy, because we have an opportunity in this very finely balanced parliament to do the right thing when the legislation comes before this place next year. On 8 February this year, not even a full year after the state election, on the ABC Leon Compton morning program, Ms White said -

We didn't win the election. It has taken me a while to reconcile that fact as well, Leon, but the fact of the matter is that we cannot give effect to our policy because it was a point in time.

I remember listening to that on the radio and my heart sinking, so cowardly. She goes on to say -

Which was the point I was making about the campaign that we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity here to remove poker machines from pubs and clubs if we alter the deed and give effect to that. We didn't win, we cannot do that.

That is not true. The Labor Party took a policy and a position of principle to the election. People voted for them on the basis of that policy. Less than a year after the election, Labor has dumped its policy. The O'Byrnes won and Ms White lost. That is really sad for the people of Tasmania.

We want to hear from other members in this place what their position is. We want to remind Tasmanians where each party stands on this issue. We never want to see another election campaign like the last one where powerful, dark vested interests bought an election. We never want to see Tasmanian voters misled to the extent they were, ever again. The only way you can guarantee that is to have electoral reform and donations reform in Tasmania. We await with great interest the Attorney-General's delivery of some form of electoral reform.

The gambling industry won an election and they won over the Opposition. The gambling industry won twice. What a great return on investment. They were able to buy an election and, not long after the election, the Tasmanian Hospitality Association received an extra \$4.8 million in funding; return on investment, thank you for a favour done, says the Treasurer. By any definition that is institutional corruption. It is. You had a vested interest buying an election, the money was not disclosed, the vast majority of it, and much of it was in-kind. After the election they further corrupted the democratic process by destroying an Opposition Leader and undermining her policy position, which was sound, and ensuring a tame Labor Party in this place when the Treasurer brings the legislation before the House.

I do not know if anyone has been watching federal politics lately but it is equally depressing. You have a federal Liberal Government, LNP Government, that basically took no policy to the election except for massive tax cuts that will benefit the rich. You have a federal Labor Opposition under Anthony Albanese, who has told his caucus to brace itself to vote for more Government legislation, who came in on the first week back and cut the guts out of Australia's progressive taxation system. I come from an old Labor family. My dad was dyed-in-the-wool. He worked for Gough Whitlam. He was so proud to be Labor. My late father would not recognise the Labor Party of today. Regrettably, inside the group think of federal Labor is that they have decided that rather than be brave and take good policy and put it before the people at election time they will be quislings, small targets, fly under the radar -

Dr Woodruff - Utter revisionism.

Ms O'CONNOR - Absolutely. At some level, a decision has been made by the faceless men within the Labor Party and Anthony Albanese that, if they vote with the Government, they will let them hang themselves.

Dr Woodruff - It never worked for them before.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it has never worked for them before and there is a hunger in the electorate for real leadership right now. There is an almost desperate need among many Australians to have their faith in politics and democracy restored by being certain that when you vote for a party they will stand by the policies they put before you when they went to an election.

I feel very sad for civil society. I feel really sad for the kids who gathered outside parliament twice to strike for climate that you have the two major parties in Australia that are almost indistinguishable these days. The Labor Party of today has turned into a neoliberal party. The light on the hill has been snuffed out and Labor should be held to account for that. What happened here is a betrayal of people who, following their disbelief that Labor had taken a position of principle on poker machines, entrusted their vote with Labor members on the basis of that position of principle.

They were desperate for some decency in politics and, for that brief moment, we had an opportunity. The fact is the Treasurer, if he has the courage to talk on this, and the Leader of the Opposition are members of the Tasmanian Parliament and should appreciate that parliament is sovereign.

We have legal advice from Mr Michael Stokes about the Deed, which is very clear. This is legal advice that was provided to the former Greens leader, Peg Putt, following the 2003 institutionally corrupt extension of the Federal Group's monopoly deed. The question Ms Putt put to him was, could you please provide an opinion on the power of the parliament to amend the deed between the Government of Tasmania and Federal Hotels and others of the 25 October 1993 incorporated in the Gaming Control Act in schedule 1? Schedule 1 of the Gaming Control Act is the deed itself. A summary of Mr Stokes' advice is -

- (1) There is no limit to the power of the Tasmanian Parliament to amend or repeal the deed to enact legislation which is in consistent with it.
- (2) The Government will not be liable in damages or in any other remedy to Federal Hotels or the parties to the deed if the parliament amends or repeals the deed.

That is because parliament is sovereign, the Deed was an agreement between the Tasmanian Government, the executive, and the Federal Group. The Deed was not an agreement between the Parliament of Tasmania and the Farrell family. Parliament has always the power and no previous parliament can fetter the powers of any future parliament.

If Labor would stick to its policy and vote the way it told Tasmanians it would at the last state election there would be absolutely zero sovereign risk argument on the part of Federal Hotels. That policy intent would have been flagged by Labor that, should they win the next election, they will give effect to their policy. The sovereign risk argument is rubbish and it undermines the supremacy of this parliament. We make the laws. We drive policy development in the House of Assembly. It is parliament that has the power to deal with the Deed and to save who knows how many Tasmanians now and in future from a life of misery, poverty and heartache. We have the power to do that and it is an abrogation of Labor's responsibility to hold to a policy that was sound and would have saved lives. The stain will forever be on the souls of the Liberal party but the Labor party has stained itself as well. It is very quiet over there. You should be hanging your heads in shame.

We will be calling for a vote. I reflect on the previous debate we had on the health system in Tasmania and remind all members that gambling addiction is a health issue. Mental illness caused by gambling addiction is a health issue. Children who experience neglect and or abuse as a result of their parents' addiction will become a health issue. Poverty is a health issue because if people are so poor they cannot go to the doctor when they need to or get their teeth fixed they will end up in our health system. It places a burden on our health system. All this lip service about health being Labor's number one priority - spare me.

I look forward to the contributions from whichever Government member is going to get up. Is that right, Mr Barnett, you are going to get up? I do not think I saw you in that photo at the Glenorchy RSL but I bet London to a brick you were there, weren't you? A loyal Liberal cheerleader standing outside.

Mr Shelton - I was there.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for confirming that, Mr Shelton. All of you standing outside the Glenorchy RSL cheering on the gambling industry, lying to the people of Tasmania, lying to the staff at the Glenorchy RSL.

Mr Shelton - Listening to the staff.

Ms O'CONNOR - By interjection, Mr Shelton says that when the Liberal leadership team and candidates stood outside the Glenorchy RSL and falsely claimed that the removal of poker machines would lead to the closure of the Glenorchy RSL, they were listening to staff. They were not listening to staff. Staff cannot donate tens of millions of dollars to a re-election campaign. You were listening to your gambling industry donors. There are 11 people now in the northern suburbs who until two weeks ago were employed at the Glenorchy RSL. We have not heard a single expression of sorrow or condolence towards those 11 staff who were mercilessly exploited and used in the lead-up to the state election, to the enduring shame of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Liberal colleagues, and now that shame sits squarely on Labor's shoulders.

We are going to hear some stuff about harm minimisation soon. We are going to hear some weasel words about why if they did not win the election they cannot give effect to their policy, but it will just be that. It will just be weasel words because the facts are the facts are the facts. Labor misled the electorate and then rolled over to the gambling industry.

[5.32 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Veterans' Affairs) - Madam Speaker, as Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and on behalf of the Government, we will be opposing this motion. But there are many parts of the Greens member for Clark's contribution that I would agree with, particularly with respect to reflections on the Labor Party. I will have a few comments to say about that as well.

I make clear my deep disappointment with the Greens leader's attempt to besmirch the reputation of the RSL and to bring into -

Ms O'CONNOR - I beg your pardon? Point of order, Madam Speaker. I take personal offence at that. I am a huge supporter of the RSL. I made no reflection on the RSL; in fact I expressed my sympathy for the veterans who have lost their RSL.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. This is a disgraceful attempt by the Greens to drag into debate one of our finest institutions, the RSL, into a partisan political debate. That is what you have done. This is not motivated by a high and mighty motive within the heart of the Greens. It is motivated by the fact that the Greens continue to hold a grudge that they were so comprehensively defeated at the last state election.

Let us make it very clear that this attempt by the Greens is misdirected and misguided. What they could have done is put forward a submission and a motion to this House criticising the Labor Party for its position on the pokies, and then we would have had some views very much in common with the Greens. The Greens have been using this to talk about their pokies policy, so why would you not bring in a motion on the pokies policy, talk about pokies, up hill and down dale? You have been consistent and I give you credit for that. The Greens have been entirely consistent, unlike the Labor Party, which has done a total backflip. So I say congratulations, I accept the Greens' position is consistent, but for whatever reason you have brought in the disappointing outcomes with respect to the Glenorchy RSL and that is not necessary.

I have made that point and I want to make it clear that in terms of our veteran community there is no government in Tasmanian history that has been more supportive of our veterans and their families. It is not just because of the \$750 000 record spend in support for our veterans and their families and the ex-service organisations all across Tasmania. It is because they know we have their backs. It is because our veterans and their families know that we support them.

They know that and you know that; you talk to our veterans. It is things like the Remembrance Bridge, it is the support we have given for the eternal flame and for the Soldiers Memorial Walk. It is for the Legacy Park opening just a few weeks ago. That is how committed we are, working with our federal colleagues and likewise, with the Hobart City Council, to make a difference. I have made very clear, publicly and privately, my serious and deep disappointment with the Glenorchy RSL sub-branch that it has entered into voluntary administration and subsequently closed its doors. There is no doubt about that. Do not go besmirching or trying to show some sort of disrespect to the Government's motives with respect to the Glenorchy RSL. This is absolute nonsense. It is a red herring, that is what it is. You have used that as a red herring in the debate. I understand the administrators have been engaged to assist the Glenorchy RSL to review its business model; it has been a matter for the RSL. I have met with the state RSL president and had discussions with him, and my department continues to have liaison with the RSL at both state level and through the Glenorchy RSL. An administrator has been appointed and it is disappointing, of course, for all those involved.

The skills response unit of the Department of State Growth is also available to assist as required. Decisions regarding the future of the Glenorchy RSL are primarily matters now for the administrator. There was a special meeting of the Glenorchy RSL held on 7 July 2019 when the Glenorchy RSL entered voluntary administration. I anticipate this process will take some time working with RSL Tasmania, the sub-branch's management committee and the creditors in relation to the future of the organisation.

What is important, and the Government has made its position very clear, is that we want to ensure the community can continue to have access to Anzac Day and Remembrance Day commemorative services, and I have been assured by the state president of the RSL that those services will continue and the community will receive that support. We have the Vietnam Veterans Day coming up on 18 August, and next week I will be hosting Vietnam veterans from around the state here in Parliament House, and I am looking forward to that. It is very important.

Regarding the future of the club's poker machines or the club more broadly, that is a matter for the administrator.

Mr Bacon - So there will be no help at all for the club?

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the interjection from the member for Clark, he knows that the matter is now in the hands of the administrator. Investigations are under way. Of course we want to support and help wherever possible and appropriate. My department has been in liaison and I have met with the state RSL. You have to be very careful - and you would know, Mr Bacon. I am aware of your inquiries, and I appreciate your interest and inquiry. I am glad you have made those inquiries.

Mr Bacon - So there is still an opportunity for the Government to assist, if it is appropriate?

Mr BARNETT - We will always be available to talk, to assist, to get feedback. I have had feedback through my office and directly. That will continue.

Regarding the views put by the Leader of the Greens, gambling is a lawful form of entertainment for many Tasmanians. This was the position that we took to the last election. It remains our position. The Tasmanian gaming industry is well regulated, with one of the highest standards of probity and harm minimisation. As part of the election policy, after 2023 the current exclusive arrangements should come to an end and the industry should move to an individual licence model. Our policy ensures a fairer distribution of returns from poker machines in pubs and clubs, with venues and the Government capturing a greater share of those returns. This means that venues will be in a lot better position to invest more and operate more.

The position of the Labor Party and the Greens before the last election would have cost jobs. It would have cost businesses, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania. Part of our policy was the doubling of the community support levy and extending its coverage to include poker machines in casinos. All of this was set out on the public record in The Future of Gaming in Tasmania. That was the position before the election and that is the position after the election.

We get to the Labor Party, the Opposition. This was a signature policy before the last election. The Greens and I have a similar view. The community believed it was a signature policy of the Leader of the Opposition. It was a heartfelt policy. It was the *raison d'être* of being for the Labor Party. The Leader of the Opposition made it clear and the voters had their say. There was a resounding endorsement of our policy. The voters said, yes, majority Liberal Government. We want to keep our jobs, grow the economy and provide opportunities for young and old alike. What has happened? We knew prior to the election Labor and the Greens were fused together -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 144. I ask the minister to withdraw that statement. It is a terrible slur. We were not joined at the hip. There is a vast ocean of difference between the Greens and the Labor Party. I ask you to withdraw that statement.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - I withdraw the word 'fused' and use the word 'coalition' instead.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, standing order 144. That is manifestly a lie. There is no coalition and there is very little similarity on policy, particularly when it comes to pokies. I ask the minister to withdraw that immediately.

Madam SPEAKER - I do have to ask the minister to withdraw it without qualification.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Madam Speaker, the word 'fused' and the word 'coalition'. Labor and the Greens were - on the record let us make it very clear and I am on my feet -

Ms O'Connor - Did you withdraw that?

Mr BARNETT - I have.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - I make it very clear they were in government together, a Labor-Greens coalition - in government, 10 000 jobs were lost, economic recession and the list goes on. Do not let the facts get in the way of a good argument for the Greens, the Labor Party or the Opposition. They were joined at the hip in terms of pokies policy before the last election. You were joined at the hip. You had the exact same policy. You know you were.

Ms O'Connor - No, we were not. Our policy was way better.

Ms White - It was not exactly the same. That is a lie.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr BARNETT - The public knew and they voted accordingly. What did we learn? In 2015, Labor voted with the Greens 62.5 per cent of the time. In 2018 they voted together more than 80 per cent of the time. Nine out of 10 times Labor vote with the Greens and the Greens vote with Labor. We know their record. We have this turncoat, the Leader of the Opposition. You turned big time, you did a massive backflip. What happened? Tasmanian Labor abandoned its hard-line gambling policy 11 months after the election loss. Normally after an election you listen and you learn. You committed again, straight after the election, to your signature policy. It took less than 12 months, then you did the most massive backflip of all time. At least the Greens member has acknowledged that. The ABC report said -

Tasmanian Labor has ditched its policy to remove poker machines from pubs and clubs, almost a year since the party was defeated at the state election.

Premier Will Hodgman said it was now clear Labor Leader Rebecca White's anti-pokies stance was all about politics and not beliefs.

Where do you stand, Ms White? Tell us your position, tell us why you did the backflip and where you stand now because people do not know? You have no policies, no platforms. People do not know what you believe. That is the problem for the Tasmanian people. They do not know what Labor believe anymore. They know what we believe. There are arguments for and against, there are criticisms, but Labor has no idea.

Why would you have a press conference? You had a press conference in front of a private home. You said it was a vacant Housing Tasmania property. It was not. It was privately owned. The owner came out and we could all see that. The big mistake was trying to cover it up and saying you did it in front of vacant land. Clearly you are in big strife. Changing your story and trying to cover up does not work. This is a big problem for the Leader of the Opposition. The sharks are circling. David O'Byrne is working with the union movement and those behind the scenes. I agree with the Leader of the Greens that your leadership is under stress.

It is not only Harry Quick saying you are out of touch, not talking to or listening to people; so are people like Dr Julian Amos, a former Labor cabinet minister. What about former Labor Senator Margaret Reynolds? Labor luminaries are concerned about your character and your performance. We do not know where you stand and what you think.

Ms O'Connor - Hopefully you will give them an opportunity to present that, Mr Barnett.

Mr BARNETT - I will. That is why I will wrap up now. I want to hear the Labor Leader express her views on pokies and how she took a signature policy and within 12 months had done a backflip. It will be a fascinating part of the debate, prior to 6 p.m., to hear from the Opposition Leader.

[5.48 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I am stunned because nowhere in the motion we are debating is my name mentioned. It does not mention my name or the Labor Party, yet most of this debate, for 45 minutes, has been about me and the Labor Party.

It is shameful. Eleven people have lost their jobs at the Glenorchy RSL. The minister hardly mentioned them. So many members used that club. Hundreds of people who went to the Glenorchy RSL now have no venue to attend. You said you have spoken to the President of the RSL, as have I, as have members of my team. Have you spoken to the Glenorchy RSL? Have you spoken to the many community groups who use that RSL, who are not members of the RSL but use that venue as a place to meet, a place to conduct meetings? There are community groups who might not have anywhere else to go right now because the doors are shut. Have you met with them? I am disgusted at the debate in this place. It is in your own electorate. There is an RSL club that has closed its doors. The member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, has conflated the misfortune of that club with poker machines.

Ms O'Connor - It is absolutely connected.

Ms WHITE - You have, in this motion. If you want to debate poker machines, bring a motion into the House and let us have the debate.

Ms O'Connor - 9 January last year.

Ms WHITE - You did it under the guise of pretending to care about the Glenorchy RSL, the 11 people who lost their jobs there and all of the members who rely on that club to stay open.

Ms O'Connor - We were the only party who said anything.

Ms WHITE - Who knows what is going to happen to that club?

Ms O'Connor - Ms White disappeared from the media the day after the RSL closed.

Ms WHITE - Are they going to have to sell that club to pay off the debt?

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I remind everyone why we have a Speaker in this House. It is so that the debate is conducted through the Chair and not at will. Thank you.

Ms WHITE - The members and staff of that club do not know whether the doors are going to open again. I understand discussions are occurring between the Government and the administrators and I hope the Government is able to provide some support to the members and staff. I am very concerned about the fate of the Glenorchy RSL if that club does not reopen its doors. Will they have a home, will they have a place to meet? Where will the members go? If the member for Clark, who is the local member for that community, wanted to talk about that issue she should have done that in isolation and not conflated it with the matter of poker machines. The motion clearly conflates the misfortune of the closure of the Glenorchy RSL with poker machines. You have done that deliberately and you have done it for political reasons. You accuse the Liberal Party of using the Glenorchy RSL as a political pawn during the election campaign and then you use them for your own political purposes in this place for this debate. Shame on you. If you gave a thought to the motion before this place, you would see that.

I am happy to have a debate about gaming legislation, gaming policies or gaming reform in this state but not at the expense of members of Glenorchy RSL. If you want to talk about this, do it in a different way because 11 people have lost their jobs. They are in your electorate. There are many community clubs with -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition implied that we are using the Glenorchy RSL for political purposes, which is what the Liberal Party did last year. I ask the Leader of the Opposition if she could table her response, following the closure of the RSL, to the loss of 11 jobs and a service that veterans love.

Madam SPEAKER - I do not believe that is a point of order.

Ms WHITE - Our members have been in close conversation. I would like to know what the member has done. Have you been out to speak with the club? Have you spoken to the state president of the RSL? Have you met with the 11 members of that club who lost their jobs? It is hypocritical of you to argue we should be doing those things when you have not said if you have. We have been in close contact with the members of Glenorchy RSL. We care very deeply about what is happening to them, their club and the community that relies on that club. I take great offence that the member has conflated the misfortune of the closure of the Glenorchy RSL with another issue and politicised it in this place. I will not indulge it a moment further. You cannot speak again.

[5.53 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - I can speak again and I am going to exercise my right to do so.

Madam Speaker, we did not hear a single word about Labor's position on poker machines during that contribution from the Leader of the Opposition, not one. We did not hear it.

Dr Broad - Play the wedge. Don't worry about the people.

Ms O'CONNOR - Nice try, Dr Broad. We just had five minutes of confected outrage and now we have you deflecting again.

No, this motion is an opportunity for real clarity about the positions of all parties in this place on this very significant social and economic area of public policy. There are people who still contact us who feel betrayed as a result of the Labor Party's backflip. They are uncertain about what Labor's position is now. This is an opportunity to clear the air on that question. It is not only governments that must open themselves up to public scrutiny and judgment. We all have to do it in here. We are elected to represent our communities, we are elected to act in the public interest and to always act in the best interests of the people of Tasmania. That is what we swear to do when we come to this place.

I have absolute conviction in saying that Dr Woodruff and I come to this place, concerned to make sure we vote in the best interests of the people of Tasmania on this beautiful island every single day. We are unflinching in our values and that is what makes us such a conundrum to the Liberal and Labor parties because they think politically all the time. Labor has told stakeholders, for example, that if any legislation or policy that comes through this place has the Greens name on it, they will not support it, no matter how good it is. What a fantastic message to send to your stakeholders. What are you elected for?

Every day, it is a privilege to be in here, an honour, a privilege and a massive responsibility. Every day should be a fresh start on policy, on legislation, and on making sure we speak and act and vote in the best interests of the people of Tasmania. You do not get to spend four years on holiday while you are in Opposition. You do not, because the people who vote for us are at the last election are putting their trust in us.

They will vote for the Liberal Party because they have values that go to allegedly individual freedoms but it has become more these days about the making of money. They used to vote for the Labor Party because they thought the Labor Party was at least a bit better than the Liberals on some of those social justice issues. They vote for us because they know we come into this place every day and do our absolute best to try to look at legislation, policy and motions on their merits and vote accordingly. You do not get to take a holiday when you go into Opposition. You just do not, and especially not in a parliament that is this finely balanced.

We are seeing it federally and we are seeing it down here. Labor, having lost the election, spits the dummy, goes into the corner, eats its young for a bit and comes out more diminished than it was before. That is what we have. We have two Labor oppositions, one in Canberra, one in Hobart, who think that the four years in Opposition are a bit of a holiday from acting in the interests of the people they are elected to serve. It does not work like that.

That is why we brought this motion on today. We want everyone to be really clear about where everyone in this place stands on this central, significant area of public policy. The decisions this parliament makes in relation to the legislation the Liberals will bring forward will impact on generations of Tasmanians to 2043.

You have to live with yourself. You have to wake up in the morning and think you are an okay person, you have been elected to serve and you will try to do the right thing in this place. That is the way we feel, anyway. It is a quaint notion, I know, just trying to do the right thing, but you do not spend four years on holiday when you are in Opposition. You do not get to tell stakeholders you will not support anything the Greens bring forward and not expect it to come back to us and we will say it in this place because that is something that should be on the public record.

Tasmanians should know that if good policy, for example, pill testing, is brought into this place, Labor will still to its policy and vote accordingly, not look at who is bringing it forward, see that they have green hearts and decide they cannot support it, no matter how good the policy is. That is not the way politics works and that is not why people voted for any member of the Labor Party in March last year. They put their faith in the Labor Party because they wanted the Labor Party to do the right thing. We all do, Madam Speaker. I commend the motion to the House. The Premier should apologise on behalf of the Liberal Party and his colleagues to the Glenorchy RSL, its staff, veterans and the people of Tasmania. Of course we know that poker machines should be removed from pubs and clubs in Tasmania because sitting in this place there 12 members who went to the last state election with a firm conviction and an evidence-based policy that said poker machines need to be removed from pubs and clubs in Tasmania in order to save lives.

The House divided -

AYES 2

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 22

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

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

The Importance of Language

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on a similar theme that I have spoken in this House before on - the importance of language and how language shapes reality. I do not do so to comment on the incident earlier today but to discuss broadly the reason that

language matters in the debates we have and the way we conduct ourselves in our homes, in our community and in our parliament. I do so as a woman who has served over 20 years since I was first elected. I have served in two levels of government. I am the former co-convenor of national women's organisation Emily's List. I am a former board member of an organisation that supports women who experience sexual assault, Laurel House. I am the current Australian chair of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and international vice chair of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians.

I am a firm advocate for gender equity and have been for many years. Most of the work I have done in recent years in the international space has dealt with the barriers to women's participation and how that impacts on women's safety in society. There is significant research that shows that the significant rates of violence against women - and in Australia some 30 women have died this year and 71 last year - stems from the language and cultural attitudes that are held in society.

If you disrespect women in any way you create an environment where women are seen as lesser, as having lesser agency. That ingrained perception diminishes the way that women participate and actually leads to the violence that we see against women in our society. Not all disrespect towards women ends in violence but all violence against women starts with disrespectful behaviour.

There is significant international research from around the world. *Language Influences Public Attitudes Toward Gender Equality* by Pérez and Tavits said that many women across different nations still lag behind men in several domains, particularly in politics where they are woefully under-represented and under-placed. One line of investigation suggests that patriarchal attitudes and beliefs promote and maintain gender inequality, with asymmetrical attitudes towards females affecting women's political representation even in highly developed societies. It goes on to say that:

If language sets a frame of mind for how people think, then nuances in gender markings across languages might partly account for individual differences in attitudes about gender equality. Cognitive psychologists find that language reliably affects human thinking ... with some political psychologists showing that language shapes survey response ... thus opening a door to effects on political opinions.

Language shapes reality. The things we say become the things we imagine and the things that we do.

Megan Alexandra Dersnah in her *Women in Political and Public Life* global report talked about the fact that discrimination against women in public and political life is related to the discrimination that women face in other aspects of their lives, as human rights are indivisible. Structural and systemic barriers in society such as deeply entrenched gender roles and negative gender stereotype limit women.

Another important theme is how those entrenched gender roles and negative stereotyping act as a persistent practical hurdle to women's participation in political and public life. Entrenched gender roles and stereotypes serve to reinforce discrimination against women through the persistence of harmful norms, practices and traditions and patriarchal attitudes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women in all spheres of life. Women's participation in political and public life can be significantly limited by patriarchal culture where women are considered not socially fit to enter politics. This limiting factor is broadly related to women and men's entrenched gender roles in society.

As a state we recognise that disrespect starts with the beliefs and attitudes that we inherit from a young age. We have as a state signed up to Our Watch. The work of Our Watch deals with the language with which we choose to speak about women from the time they are very little. If a boy hits a girl, it is okay because he likes you. If a girl is hurt outside, we usher her in and say she should not play with those rough boys because boys will be boys. If a woman is abused by her partner, we say, why didn't she leave? Was she drunk? Why does she dress that way? Even the words 'she was assaulted' rather than 'he assaulted her' places the action on the woman.

We teach our girls that violence and discrimination is excused. We tell our boys that their behaviour has no consequence. We say that she was out late and had been drinking, and what to people hear? He hears that she asked for it, it is not my fault; she hears, I am to blame. If we tell women they need to act in particular ways, then we give licence to responses when they do not act in that way. Even the word 'lady' presupposes a certain standard of behaviour that some women do not deserve to receive. It is discriminatory in its very nature.

International research shows that gendered violence does not occur suddenly because it is built on the most fundamental beliefs that women do not have such agency or freedom as men. The United Nations General Assembly has found that gender inequality and discrimination are the root causes of violence against women, influenced by historical and structural power imbalances, which exists in varying degrees across all communities in the world. It is related to their lack of power and control as well as to the social norms that prescribe women's roles in society. Inequalities for women cut across public and private spheres of life and across social, economic, cultural and political rights and are manifested in restrictions and limitations on previous choices and opportunities. If we say something, we can imagine something and we can do something. That is why language matters. Language shapes reality.

When we talk about what we can do, Our Watch stands as a guide for all of us in society about the sorts of things we can do. We can change the language we use if we wish to have a safer and better society. If you want to make women safer, act to increase women's participation, act to increase women's empowerment, act to always ensure women have agency and have respect. Call out the behaviours when you see them, do not participate in the jokes, do not make decisions for women, do not dismiss fears and do not talk about political correctness and do not be offended because, frankly, women do not have time for hurt feelings. We need to be safe.

Members - Hear, hear.

Tasmania's Native Wildlife - Protection

[6.12 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I speak tonight about the native wildlife in Tasmania that are treasured by everyone who visits the state and by those of us who live here. We have unique flora and fauna because Tasmania was once part of the super continent of Gondwana that split apart 200 million years ago. The Australian continent had our tiny little southern tip of Tasmania, which was the last to separate from Gondwana. We left the Antarctic continent a mere 45 million years ago. While the rest of Australia drifted closer to the equator and became warmer and drier, Tasmania has stayed cool and because of that we have kept our Gondwanan legacy.

We have rare and beautiful plants and animals here that exist nowhere else on the planet. We still have the *Anaspides tasmaniae*, which is a mountain shrimp that looks like Triassic fossils that

are over 230 million years old. We have alpine trees, like the *Nothofagus gunnii* that grew in the Antarctic before it was ice.

The intrinsic value of our native wildlife, however, is totally lost, it appears, on this Government. We have seen some really horrendous examples of the lack of value this Government holds in native wildlife. Native animals are treated by the Government as an inconvenience, a pest, a crop destroyer and a nuisance. Permits to kill them are being handed out by DPIPW, it seems, like lollies to kids at a party. The Launceston Golf Club's owners did not like animal excrement dirtying the soles of their golfers' shoes, so DPIPW gave them a permit to kill the ducks, possums, native hens and wallabies. It was only thanks to the passionate outcry of Tasmanians about the killing of this wildlife that reached as far as Hollywood and gave Tasmania such bad press that DPIPW, eventually, withdrew that authorisation.

Native animals in Tasmania are meant to be protected but the meaning of that word is totally lost on the Government. This is the same Government that lifted the ban on 1080 poison permits, the barbaric and cruel poison that the Greens effectively banned when we were in government.

The lack of rigour in authorising crop protection permits has led to negligent decisions that endanger native populations. For example, permits were granted to kill wombats, even when the local populations in the Narawntapu National Park were being devastated by sarcoptic mange. Three permits granted by DPIPW to kill wombats in that area were recently withdrawn after lobbying about local extinctions. Since then, distressingly, we have heard that mange remains uncontrolled and wombats have been all but wiped out in that area.

This week we learned that permits for so-called crop protection has been issued to shoot native black swans across Tasmania and the Government has been caught sanctioning the killing of 8000 swans in the last three years. Thousands of beautiful, graceful swans are being killed and maimed by guns under permits issued by the very same department that is responsible for protecting them. Outrageously, two farms a stone's throw from a key biodiversity area, the Tamar Island Wetlands, have been granted permits to kill 460 swans in the past three years. We tabled photos today from eyewitnesses to a 7 June shooting of swans on a farm that borders the wetlands and it shows a swan with a missing wing, unable to take flight, seemingly maimed from that shoot.

Apart from the obvious cruelty involved for those swans that were maimed and did not die, what is so disturbing is the total lack of assessment of the impact on the local swan populations being done by DPIPW. We know this because ornithologists who volunteer their time to count birds, resident experts on the swan population, have said the data does not exist because no proper studies have been done. The permits were issued to shoot these black swans, who mate for life, with no diligence or care. I received an email this afternoon from a gentleman who owns a property overlooking the extensive, prime swan habitat of the Swan Bay Wetlands, further up the Tamar River from where the swans were shot. He had already been very concerned about what was happening to the swans this year. He said -

My family has lived here for almost 40 years. In our experience it is normal to see dozens and sometimes hundreds of swans feeding and nesting in Swan Bay. They are vital part of this natural ecosystem. Of late months, on most days, there are now between zero and sometimes two swans only. We are utterly devastated to learn the Government has authorised a secretive killing of the swans that we should be protecting.

He is extremely dismayed and angered by what he perceives to be a clear-cut case of legal negligence that has directly resulted in the catastrophic collapse of the natural swan population in Swan Bay. It has now become, he said, 'a swan-less bay'.

The Government's complete disregard for the welfare of our native wildlife when they issue permits to kill is an outrage and a disgrace. The Greens will continue to push for an investigation into the process for issuing crop protection permits or, as they should be called, native wildlife kill permits, and the animal welfare and long-term impacts of this. We are facing a global mass extinction event with one million species directly threatened worldwide and we are in a climate emergency. All Tasmanians who are concerned about these realities and who treasure our protected native animals would want the Government to stop handing out licences to kill.

Samantha Connew and Stargazer Wines - Tribute

[6.18 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I welcome winemaker and vineyard owner, Samantha Connew, who is in the gallery today. An accomplished industry identity, Sam comes to the Tasmanian wine industry with an impressive background. Sam has racked up a series of exceptional achievements commencing with Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts degrees, majoring in political science and English literature, from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, showing her chosen future direction in obtaining a postgraduate Diploma in Oenology and Viticulture from the Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand, where I also went.

Sam moved to Australia, undertaking the Advanced Wine Assessment Course at the Australian Wine Research Institute in 2000, being chosen as a scholar at the 2002 Len Evans Tutorial, winning the George McKay Award for the wine exported from Australia in 2004 and in 2007 and named international red wine maker of the year at the International Wine Challenge, London. After a successful and lengthy time as chief winemaker at Wirra Wirra and then in the Hunter Valley, Sam looked to Tasmania to make the first wines for her own business, Stargazer, something she said she would never do. Sam was made the youngest and first female judge appointed Chair of Judges at the Sydney Royal Wine Show in 2014.

The name Stargazer commemorates Abel Tasman, who sighted Tasmania before proceeding to the South Island of New Zealand, navigating by the stars. Sam has owned the vineyard since 2016. Stargazer produces pinot noir, chardonnay and riesling. It currently consists of three hectares with another two to be added next year. Sam's vineyard Stargazer at Tea Tree in the Coal River Valley has won the 2019 Gravitas Tasmanian Vineyard of the Year. This program is an initiative of the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania, to promote excellence in Tasmanian viticulture management. Judges undertook vineyard inspections as part of their judging process. Everything from soil management and pruning to canopy management and spray programs were assessed.

Following a vineyard inspection and review of vineyard records, the judges gave a tick to Stargazer's performance in pruning and terracing, soil management, irrigation management, vine health and disease control. Vine balance, canopy management, spray control and yield management also rated well. Vine wounds were painted, which the judge described as excellent. Also described as excellent was leaf health. Vine health was described as great and there was no notice of pest or disease issues. The judging panel summed up that having inherited a challenging site it has been well managed and expanded.

The ground is Jurassic dolerite which is high in calcium and vital to the production of high-quality grapes. Calcium is important for several reasons, including improved berry quality, improved firmness, storage potential and a reduction in the disorder known as stalk neurosis.

Vineyard of the Year is sponsored by Gravitas Energy in conjunction with Bennett's Petroleum, GeoTas and Wine Tasmania. Stargazer wines are exported to the UK, Hong Kong, the US and Singapore.

Sam is an exceptional example of where true dedication is rewarded. Excellent management skills, long hours and hard work has established an award-winning name. Congratulations to Sam and her award-winning vineyard, Stargazer. It is an honour for Tasmania and we wish you all the success in the future.

Listeria Outbreak

[6.23 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, I rise to comment on outrageous and irresponsible behaviour from the Tasmanian Greens. It is in response to unfortunate news that two people died after potentially eating smoked salmon. We heard from the Greens an immediate call for salmon to be removed from shelves, making comments such as -

Ms O'CONNOR - That is not true. Could you source that statement? Point of order, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, that is absolutely untrue. We did not call for product recall. Dr Broad has not done his homework. I ask him to withdraw that false statement. Standing Order 144, I have taken personal offence.

Madam SPEAKER - Dr Broad, I ask you to retract that.

Dr BROAD - I retract that, Madam Speaker. The member who resumed her seat after that point of order did say there is salmon on the shelves that can kill people. If that is not a strategy to drive salmon sales through the floor and use whatever means possible to destroy the salmon industry, then I do not know what is. The member should have had a more responsible attitude to the issue. If there was a danger from listeria, there would have been a recall.

The Greens, having an epidemiologist as part of the team, would understand listeria, the impact of listeria and the reasons why warnings are given to people about eating a number of products, including smoked salmon.

Listeria below detectable levels can be deadly to some people. One or two individual cells of listeria can be enough to kill people with compromised immune systems. For people with compromised immune systems, whether from chemotherapy or other sorts of problems, listeria can be deadly. That is why there are standard health recommendations that people with compromised immune systems, or who are pregnant, should not eat some products, including smoked salmon, soft cheeses, packaged lettuce, rockmelons and so on.

I did not hear from the Greens when there was an outbreak of listeria at detectable levels in soft cheese from Bruny Island. The Greens did not call for all soft cheeses to be stripped from the

shelves. The Greens are now clouded by their ideology, trying to use every instance they can to bring down a Tasmanian industry.

We did not hear from the Greens when there was a detectable outbreak in rockmelons. That was only last year. We did not hear the Greens calling for rockmelons to be stripped from the shelves.

We did not hear when there was an outbreak of listeria above detectable levels in packaged lettuce. That is why we have to call out this hypocrisy, especially with an epidemiologist on board with the Greens.

You should know the specific issues of listeria. They should be explaining to people who have compromised immune systems or who may be pregnant or attempting to get pregnant that they should not eat soft cheeses or eat uncooked meat products, they should not have gravlax or smoked salmon. It is not safe to do so because there could be listeria present at undetectable levels that may cause harm.

It is very disappointing that the Greens would use a very important issue like this, instead of trying to educate the community on the dangers of listeria and being realistic about it, they used a strategy to try to strip all the salmon from the shelves of Australia and drive listeria hysteria. They are clouded by their ideology. I found that particular strategy from the Greens disgraceful.

Listeria Outbreak

[6.27 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, Dr Woodruff came in on the adjournment last night and talked about listeria, the risks to people and the fact that it is a ubiquitous organism. For Dr Broad to patently again demonstrate that he is part of the protection racket from a favoured industry is unsurprising, but it is highly regrettable. You can talk about lettuce all you like, Dr Broad, but how many people died as a result of eating lettuce with listeria on it? There is a difference.

So the House is really clear, in some jurisdictions, when there is a listeria outbreak detected, when there is an impact on human health or, tragically, a death, they find the source of the contamination.

Last year there was a listeria outbreak in rockmelon on the mainland. Five people died as a result of that listeria outbreak. It is worth reminding Dr Broad, because he failed to mention the fact, that two people died on the mainland after eating salmon that is confirmed came from Tasmania, and one was gravely ill.

What did the New South Wales department of Primary Industries do in response to the listeria outbreak that claimed five lives? It found the source of the outbreak.

Dr Broad - There is constant testing in salmon but there is not constant testing in cantaloupe. That is the point. There is a food safety system in products like smoked salmon; they test every batch, but they do not do that with cantaloupe.

Ms O'CONNOR - Madam Speaker, between 16 January and 10 April, there were 22 cases of listeria which occurred across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania which led to seven deaths and a miscarriage. A report released on Thursday 11 October last year by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries confirmed those cases were all linked to consumption of rockmelon packed at Rombola Family Farms in Nericon, New South Wales. The report said that the farm's hygiene and sanitary procedures were on par with or better than most other rockmelon growing operations across Australia. The report goes on to say:

Despite this, heavy rains in December and dust storms that followed covered the farm's paddocks in dust and significantly increased the amount of listeria on the fruit.

As we have acknowledged, and Dr Woodruff acknowledged last night, listeria is a common bacterium found in most environments, but it can be dangerous for people with poor immune systems, people who are very unwell, the very young or the elderly.

It is recklessly irresponsible for Dr Broad to come in here and so glibly accept the assurances of the Premier and deride the Greens because we quite rightly pointed out that the source of the contamination has not been found. Why is it that in New South Wales the Health department can track back the source of that contamination that led to those deaths and be transparent about it?

Dr Broad - It's at detectable levels.

Dr Woodruff - We don't know it is not at detectable levels. They haven't been revealed.

Dr Broad - They batch test.

Dr Woodruff - It has not been revealed.

Ms White - It's the science.

Ms O'CONNOR - At one level Dr Broad's blind faith in the salmon industry and in the science you have not seen, Ms White, is commendable. You have accepted an assurance from the Premier on the science, Ms White.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, order. This has been the ghastliest day in this parliament I have endured because of the temperament or whatever is going on today. Everyone is so grumpy. Could you please be more respectful of each other?

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you for your wise counsel, Madam Speaker. I was simply pointing out to Ms White that she can talk about the science but if you have not seen it there is no transparency about the source of this contamination, none whatsoever. All we got was an assurance from the Premier that everything was okay. We have not seen evidence of the testing or seen evidence of the response from the Health department. It might be okay for Ms White to take the Premier at his word for once, but we retain a healthy scepticism about everything that comes out of the Premier's mouth and particularly in relation to industries which are routinely protected in Tasmania.

Madam Speaker, it is an entirely responsible thing to do, when two people have died on the mainland and one is gravely ill, to question the source of the contamination and question the process

of determining the source of the contamination. Because we know that Labor and Liberal members in this place will bend over backwards, do double backflips and roll over with their legs in the air to the salmon industry, it is only the Greens who will say these things and ask these questions. Someone in this place has to do it. Two people died on the mainland who had eaten Tasmanian salmon so there are questions to be asked. We do not take the Premier at his word; people have died.

Dr Broad - Tassal, Huon, Petuna - we do not know the source but hopefully the cheque is in the mail to you in the lead-up to the next election and the donations will start rolling in.

Dr Broad - It's not ideological at all, is it?

Mrs Rylah - It is a poor comment.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why?

Mrs Rylah - Because it is an allegation that people are being paid to get an outcome and you know that is not right.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I am not finished, thanks very much.

Madam SPEAKER - I am going to ask you to sit down because I do think that was borderline and not very parliamentary.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, okay, thank you, Madam Speaker, but it is a well-known fact that corporations in Tasmania can send cheques to the Labor and Liberal parties and get exactly the policy outcome they want.

Time expired.

Parkrun - Geeveston

[6.35 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I understand you referred to the mood and the attitude in the room today. On a happier note I want to reflect on an event in my community which improves people's mental health, their physical activity and their sense of community. I want to acknowledge the Geeveston community. I attended on 20 July their first birthday Parkrun, which was a cracking event. Parkrun is a magnificent organisation that is now going global.

Mr Shelton - Attend or participate?

Mr O'BYRNE - I participated, around Platypus Park at Geeveston. It was a very chilly 9 a.m. start. There were people in a whole lot of costumes and it was a fantastic event. It brings people together. I did three laps of Platypus Park. I was breathing pretty heavily by the end of it, I can tell you. It was not a personal best, although it was my first Geeveston Parkrun.

Mr Shelton - Did you break 30? That is the question.

Mr O'BYRNE - I nearly broke 25, so I think I did all right. Parkrun is now starting to open up across Tasmania but this is the southernmost Parkrun in the country and the organisers do a magnificent job. It is a community that really supports each other and this event is fun. It is good for people to come together and build a sense of community. They had 253 registered runners in the small town of Geeveston and surrounds, which was magnificent. They average about 30 runners each Saturday at Heritage Park. It is a three-lap 5-kilometre run, jog or walk around the park with your family or your dog or whatever. There were all sorts there on the day, with lots of costumes and lots of fun. There was a cake at the end, which was fantastic, and because we were running around Platypus Park they also had baked some platypus biscuits as well, which were magnificent.

I want to acknowledge the volunteers. Volunteers run Parkrun across the state. At Geeveston I acknowledge Emma Fraser, the race coordinator, Nina Coops, Melissa Pollard and Molly the wonder dog, Telina Selwin and Tanya Steenholdt amongst a number of volunteers who do that work in the community.

I regularly do the Bellerive Parkrun. Parkrun across Tasmania is growing. I have had a number of conversations with Brooke van Newton about the work that she is doing. There are close to 2000 people parkrunning each weekend in Tasmania. We have 13 events across the state, in Launceston, Windsor Park, Devonport, Burnie, Railton, Port Sorell, Wynyard, Hobart, Bellerive, Montrose foreshore, Queens Domain, Geeveston and they are about to launch Parkrun in Kingborough and Sorell. We think this is having a huge impact on people's wellbeing, their physical health and their mental health in bringing them together.

Across the country there are about 359 of these events, over a half a million runners and there have been over 7 million runs, which is fantastic. It was a fantastic celebration and a good sense of community at Geeveston, so congratulations to everyone and continue to turn out on the Parkrun. On a brighter note, Madam Speaker, here is to Parkrun and happy birthday Geeveston.

Tasmanian Junior Beef Expo Committee

[6.38 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to acknowledge the hard work of the Tasmanian Junior Beef Expo Committee. The Tasmanian Junior Beef Expo Committee held a junior beef expo in March this year at the Deloraine Showgrounds. I acknowledge the work of Courtney Hardstaff, the secretary, the president, Tim Dobson, the vice president, Chelsea Rayner, and everybody else who is involved with that community for all of their work.

I was able to be a sponsor of the event again this year and I know probably many members were asked for support and to provide sponsorship. They raised \$10 000-worth of prizes and sponsorship. That was possible because of the generous support received by the community. That enabled 62 participants aged between 8 to 25 to participate at the beef expo for juniors in Deloraine this year. They attended from all regions across Tasmania, including from King Island, with one participant also attending from mainland Australia.

During the expo participants took part in a range of different workshops, including cattle preparation and handling for shows and sales, assessing cattle for structure, muscle and fat, overviews of the current commercial market, a rumen dissection, team fitting competition, marking, tattooing, dehorning and a farm tour. It is a terrific way for those participants to learn more about

the red meat industry and to understand how they might take up a career in that sector or our economy, which is a really important part of Tasmanian community.

Growing up on a farm, I had the privilege to show cattle at the Hobart Show on one occasion and it was a terrific experience to work with other producers from across the region and experience the discipline required in preparing an animal to take to show and then the thrill of getting a ribbon if you are lucky enough to do so. I appreciate this expo gave these participants a much broader opportunity to experience the different elements of what it is like to work in the beef sector and I congratulate the committee for their hard work. This is something they run annually. It requires them to seek support from sponsors each year to enable them to put the event on because they could not do it without donations. It has been a great pleasure and a privilege to support them in their endeavour. I am a very strong supporter of the work they do and the opportunities they give to young people to participate across the state. I look forward to continuing to support them in the future.

New Town High School - Activities

[6.41 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I rise on the adjournment to thank two students from New Town High School who gave me a beautiful tour of the school recently, Max and Chanel, along with their Principal, Dave Kilpatrick. I visited the school to hear about their activities and the school's priorities. Those two school leaders, Max and Chanel, are outstanding leaders of their school. They gave me much more of their time, as did the principal, than I expected and gave me a thorough tour of the school and were incredibly proud to be in those positions of school leaders and to tell me about the programs going on at the school, the school community, the priorities, different, interesting programs, future plans for the school and their own personal passions and interests.

I saw the building and construction class for grades 9 and 10, who were using a whole lot of woodwork skills that many of us would be familiar with from our own high school experiences but they were also learning real-life construction skills by designing and building a small kitchen. When I saw it, they had marked out, cut and secured the floor joists and the timber floors, then they were going to be installing stud walls, learning how to plaster the walls and fit out the kitchen.

Chanel's personal passion was rugby. New Town has a long tradition of supporting and participating in the sport of rugby union. That had been reinvigorated in recent years, led by the principal. Last year, New Town High School formed a senior rugby union team to play against the best players from other schools in the Adam Coleman Rugby Cup. The pertinent fact is that Adam Coleman is a former student of New Town High School and is a current Wallaby and Melbourne Rebels player. New Town High School went on to win the Adam Coleman Rugby Cup and they are now affiliated with the Melbourne Rebels. They have received some generous donations from the Rebels of playing tops, polo tops, jackets and other sporting equipment. They are very excited to be representing their school as part of the Melbourne Rebels and they were interviewed in *WIN News* recently.

Another exciting activity - which, sadly, I will not be able to watch because we will be here in parliament - is the school play. The grades 9 and 10 drama class will be performing the play *The Ship That Never Was*. Anyone who has travelled to Strahan has probably seen that amazing production. It is the longest running play in Australia and the school was fortunate enough to

borrow the set formerly used in Strahan because a new set was built in recent years. The grades 9 and 10 students have the opportunity to use that set and to perform that play next week on Monday and Tuesday. Tickets are \$5 if people want to go along next week, or five doubloons as it says on their flyer. I hope it goes really well.

While we are talking about schools, I will mention that on the last sitting night of the last session of parliament, I actually raced out at the end of parliament with my tired kids who had walked down here to parliament after school, but with great pleasure got to watch the Claremont College production of the musical *Grease*. It was great. As I said, my kids were tired, they were not sure if they wanted to go out on an excursion, but by the end of the night, they were saying to me, 'Mum, that was so cool; that was so much fun', and they just wished that the play had not ended. It was lots of fun. They did catering of 1950s-style snacks for the opening night, like little hot dogs, burgers, and that kind of thing, and it was really good fun.

I want to quote some of the words of the director of the play, Bill Powell. He said to the group -

The question is, is it easier or harder for students these days to performs in what is one of the best-known musicals, which is all about themselves in probably the most vulnerable stage of their life. There are definitely as many cons as there are pros. These brave young people are out on stage, teenagers acting like teenagers. They have answered the challenge, working these past months developing characters, living in the past, a past that we older people know well. We have tried to stay true to those themes. Most people will recognise them from the movie which thrilled audiences over the years.

Musical theatre is by nature a complex and demanding undertaking and *Grease* is no exception.

He mentions, and we met them on the opening night, not just Claremont College, but also partner schools, Montrose Bay High and Jordan River Learning Federation had students involved in the production and they were great ambassadors for their schools and took on their roles with energy, focus and commitment.

What I thought was really lovely on the night is that we heard that across those three schools, everybody who wanted to be involved with the musical, was able to be involved in one way or another, and it was a very inclusive production.

Well done to the key staff. I know my time is limited so I will run through just a few of the key people who were involved in bringing it to life: Bill Powell, the director; Greg Souter, musical director, and Sharon Reibel, the producer, and it was noted that her name rhymed with the high school in *Grease*, Rydell High School, and the key cast members who performed the main roles: Aaron McGrath, Cheyenne Nichols, Ella Tapping, Emily Noyes, Jordan King, Jade Jackson, Naomi Wakefield, Nikki Hallet, Phillip Tabor, Tyson Butler, Shaun Turner, Matthew Stanton, Hannah Hudson, Curtis Thorpe and Abby Robinson. They played those key characters that we would all remember from the movie and for anyone who has seen the stage production anywhere else, and well done to Claremont College and the other schools involved, and particularly also to Montrose Bay High School, who hosted the play in their fantastic facility at Montrose Bay.

Aluminium Cladding - Fire Risk

[6.48 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I rise on the adjournment to further discuss this morning's matter of public importance today and the important risk to the public associated with aluminium cladding, polyethylene core. Simply put, I will not be bullied, ridiculed or stood over by the Government and their vested interests in relation to ACP.

Of note, in each summarised quote, that the Government referred to in their speeches this morning and the references to my calls to remove cladding, not one of these people accused me of actually being wrong. That is because I am not wrong. I understand the issues, the research, the science and the risk, and my reasoning is legitimate and in the interests of the Tasmanian people.

We have an obligation to fix a dangerous problem and your Government would prefer to make personal attacks, undermine my integrity, ridicule my intentions, and create a propaganda campaign against me instead of just actually fixing the problem and governing, what you are meant to be doing.

There has been a Senate inquiry and recommendations and that is to fix this problem to replace cladding, and that was in 2017. If you had done some reading before you stood up and just said a speech that someone had handed you with two minutes' notice, you would know this.

There will be an incident with one of these sites in the future and it will be on the Government. When the fingers are pointed, the Government will be to blame. I honestly do not know how you can sleep at night knowing that ACP sits there and you will do nothing to mitigate it. Shame on you for not putting the public interest and their safety first. Shame on you for continuing to sign off on buildings after the first building ministerial conference in 2014 after the Lacrosse building fire and the Grenfell fire. You were still signing off on buildings after the Grenfell fire and you knew the risks.

Associate Professor Derek Viner, a world-renowned specialist in occupational health and safety models for evaluating industrialised building systems and occupational health and safety and risk, discusses control measures around risk. He says that risk, especially building risk and the practice of categorising risk into low and high risk, is all about probabilities. In addition, quite frankly the greatest control measure for negating risk is removal. All occupational health and safety best practice is about removing risk. If the Tasmanian Government has known since 2014 that ACP is a risk, why did they not invest in best mitigating the risk entirely? Why play the game of probabilities? Why is it always down to human judgment? Why not just remove the potential risk? That is what governing and leading is all about.

Other states in Australia have started on a comprehensive strategy to do just this. I also point out that one of the members who spoke today could not even say the word polyethylene properly yet he is an expert in the area. It was quite disconcerting. If you are going to get up and go on things and make personal attacks at least do your research and know how to pronounce the names properly. Just do some research before you get up and try to have a crack at me on a personal level.

One building does not cut it. You have not removed the risk or cleaned up the mess. You have documented the mess and then stopped.

Mr Tucker interjecting.

Ms BUTLER - It is not funny. It is a very serious issue.

I also do not understand why the Government has not begun proper combustion testing on all cladding and why the buildings have not been reassessed since the Neo200 building caught fire in Melbourne this year. The Victorian Government has agreed to reassess all buildings due to that fire and give a risk probability of low-medium and then burning as you would expect a building with petrol to burn, very quickly when it has a shell of petrol around it. It is quite easy to understand why this is such a risk. There is no such thing as a high risk or a low risk, it is just risk, and anyone who thinks it is not an issue or a problem is simply fooling themselves.

You can publicly accuse me of scaremongering and rubbish my name and reputation but I will continue to represent the public interest and make sure the public know they are living or working in a building with cladding. The list of at-risk buildings must be released for public awareness and the Government must begin to work to remove the risk completely. Do not think for one minute that I will back down on this. I am not going away. I will keep going because I have been elected to represent the people of Tasmania's safety.

The House adjourned at 6.53 p.m.