



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 24 August 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Wednesday 24 August 2022

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

QUESTIONS

Electricity Prices - Energy Saver Loan

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

On 17 June following the announcement that power prices would be soaring because of your broken promise, you said:

The Tasmanian Government is taking immediate action to assist Tasmanians through a new winter energy assistance package.

You went on to say:

The Tasmanian Government understands it is going to be a difficult winter for many.

You then listed four initiatives, one of the most significant being the \$50 million Energy Saver Loan scheme. Can you confirm that, with only one week of winter remaining, Tasmanians are still unable to access this key part of your winter energy assistance package or even apply for it? What do you say to Tasmanians who believed you, only two months ago, when you promised this assistance for this winter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. What we have delivered is a \$17 million investment into our winter bill buster of \$180. Also, we have delivered on a \$5 million cost of living package to support our organisations that support vulnerable Tasmanians. We acknowledge the price increase will place pressure on Tasmanians.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - That is why we announced the Tasmanian winter assistance package, which includes a \$180 winter bill buster discount, a boosted and expanded \$50 million Energy Saver Loan scheme and no charge for aurora+. That is a \$17 million investment in terms of the \$180 fuel buster payments.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. There have been continual interjections from the Opposition since the Premier got to his feet. You have asked the question. Please allow the Premier to answer it in silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The \$180 bill buster payment provides a better outcome for most concession customers than the 2.5 per cent price cap, which is what the Opposition has put forward, albeit a very flawed policy.

Annual bills for typical Tasmanian residential and small business customers remain among one of the lowest in the nation when compared to bills under regulated tariffs in other jurisdictions. We remain committed to our goal of having among the lowest electricity prices in Australia.

I well recall the time between 2010 and 2014 when power prices went up 65 per cent under the Labor Party. Not only did they go up but 10 000 people were sent to the dole queues at that time, placing further pressure on Tasmanians. We will always be in Tasmanians' corner when it comes to putting downward pressure on power prices but we will also be flexible and agile when it comes to cost of living measures.

Following the success of our Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme (TEELS), which is part of our winter energy assistance package, we announced a bolstered Expanded Energy Saver Loan Scheme.

Ms White - Can anyone access it?

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Ms White, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Relax, I am answering the question. The Energy Saver Loan Scheme has been increased from \$30 million to \$50 million for loans of up to \$10 000 over three years to assist more Tasmanians to reduce their energy costs.

Ms White - How many have you rolled out?

Mr SPEAKER - Ms White, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I understand the pressures that Tasmanians are under when it comes to cost of living. That is why we have been so agile and flexible in delivering the \$180 energy bonus bill buster. I understand the pressures. I am pleased to update the House that I am advised that competitive process to secure a vendor to provide this larger scheme is progressing very well and nearing completion.

Mr Winter - No one can access it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I expect to be able to provide a further update to the House in the coming weeks. In the meantime, people are able to pre-register for the new scheme on Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) web page and they will be kept up to date as the service becomes available, Mr Speaker.

We have invested \$17 million into the winter bill buster package of supporting Tasmanians with a \$180 bill buster payment and also the \$5 million on the cost of living package, supporting organisations that do such a wonderful job including our Neighbourhood Houses: a \$1.75 million into our Neighbourhood Houses as an example - \$50 000 for each

Neighbourhood House to support the people in our community who are vulnerable, particularly people who are on low or fixed incomes. That targeted assistance supports organisations that support vulnerable Tasmanians and our \$180 bill buster payments to support Tasmanians with cost of living pressures.

Electricity Prices - Energy Saver Loan

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.09 a.m.]

You have just confirmed more than a year after announcing the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme and two months after announcing the updated winter version, you have been unable to find a delivery partner for either the original or the updated scheme. Not a single person in Tasmania has been able to access this \$50 million program and it sounds like no one will be able to access it before winter is over. Isn't your broken promise to deliver the winter assistance program before the end of winter, yet another example of your complete failure to get the basics right?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is clearly evident that when it comes to this Government there has been downward pressure on power prices since 2014. Under the previous government between 2010 and 2014, power prices increased by 65 per cent. We have been agile and flexible and responding to Tasmanians' needs when it comes to the \$17 million investment and the \$180 bill buster discount. I have mentioned the \$5 million package to support organisations and vulnerable Tasmanians, so we are in Tasmania's corner when it comes to this matter.

All you have been demonstrating is the dysfunction of your organisation. You cannot even represent Tasmanians or organise a state conference to listen to your members' views. You could not run a chook raffle.

We have been flexible. We have been agile. We are responding to Tasmania's needs and will continue to do so.

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Closure

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUTH, Mr JAENSCH

[10.11 a.m.]

The National Children's Commissioner has joined Amnesty and UNICEF in calling for Ashley's immediate closure to prevent further harm to children and young people. In the wake of evidence to the commission of inquiry, all have expressed their horror that the place is still open, after all we have learned about the harm it has caused. Can you give them, and the parents of children and young people at Ashley right now, any reassurance juvenile detainees are safer there now? Will you answer the question you did not yesterday and confirm Ashley will be closed and alternatives will be in place by September 2024?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Ms O'Connor, Leader of the Greens, for her question. I can confirm our decision is clear. Our commitment remains that Ashley will be closed and we will have new therapeutic alternatives in place by the end of 2024. That has not changed since the commitment was made in September 2021.

I empathise and sympathise with those who are calling for an end to the Ashley story as soon as possible. We have committed to a pathway for delivering that. If there were alternatives available now, we would be taking them.

The Ashley that is being talked about in the commission of inquiry, as it needs to be, painful as it is, brings together experiences across decades. The picture of Ashley being painted in people's minds now is horrific and unacceptable at any time for anyone.

The Ashley operating today is not all of that. There has been a lot of change made and undertaken and, most importantly, there are young people in Ashley now who have been put there by courts who need dedicated, skilled, trained care and supervision and management, and there are people in Ashley now whose job it is to give them that.

Regardless of the storm raging around Ashley, our first consideration needs to be the wellbeing of those people who are in Ashley and those who are there charged with the responsibility of giving them care. If there were better alternative sites and services available, we would be using them. In fact, what is happening is we are bringing them to Ashley, as the most suitable site we have to provide these services right now.

There are layers of safeguarding and supervision. There have been structural changes made to that facility, which I have relayed here, over years of investment we are making to improve the safety and safeguarding of Ashley. However, we must never forget that in there right now are young people who the courts have put there for the safety of the public and for their need for secure therapeutic attention. There are people whose job it is to do that, who care deeply about doing their job well. For all those people and their families, this time is extraordinarily difficult and we need to ensure that we are now giving them the supports as well as the safeguards to keep doing that job.

We can make decisions and announcements about closing Ashley but it does not make that difficult job go away and we need to ensure we are doing that to the best of our ability. I commend our department staff, our workers in our youth justice system and the other services that support them and which are supporting them through this difficult time doing their difficult job, which does not stop when a decision is made to close something.

Regarding the pathway we are on, the decision and the announcement was made that we are going to close Ashley and establish new therapeutic youth justice facilities. Very clearly, we do not want, and we do not think the public expects us, to build two new smaller Ashleys in different postcodes, as if that makes the whole thing go away. Work is being done on working out what it is that we need to build and what we expect it to do. That involves deep analysis of who is in Ashley and why, both because they are sentenced but also because they might have been referred there as a remand option while their sentencing and other matters are taken into account. There are some young people in Ashley who do not end up being sentenced to be in detention. These are the sorts of matters that are going backwards and forwards

between me, my office, my department, our advisers, our consultants and the people we have engaged in round tables and forums on developing our new blueprint for our new youth justice system, in the hope that what we might design and build is a facility for a smaller group of young people.

We already have the lowest rate of detention of young people in Australia: on average, fewer than 10 kids on any given day in Ashley. The vast majority of young people who come into contact with our youth justice system are cared for and directed to community-based youth justice, diversion and rehabilitation options. We want more of that. That is why we have announced that we are going to raise minimum age of detention to 14. That is why we are taking more time, not just finding two sites and designing two buildings but working out how many kids they are for - what type, what age, what their needs are, who they are not for, what other services need to be co-located with them; ideally in terms of secure mental health, drug and alcohol services; and other types of support for the smaller number of people who actually need to be in that facility.

If, as a result of that, I can deliver a smaller, more specialised facility for an even smaller cohort of people, complemented potentially by new bail house-type options in communities in different parts of our state where remandees might be able to spend their shorter period of time in something which is not a detention environment, I will go for that. I believe that is what people expect us to be doing.

For those who are calling for the closure of Ashley, I get it. If we could just turn this off and make it go away we would. However, I am the guy responsible and we are the Government with responsibility for making sure that we are providing the best care and therapeutic solutions for these young people and ensuring there is an appropriately trained workforce around them and that they are supported to do the difficult, messy, horrible work that they sometimes have to do to support these young lives and try to get them on better tracks.

If those options existed right now, we would be on them. At the moment, Ashley is the worst and the best option we have available to us. We will wrap support around that until something better exists. We are going to get there as soon as possible. What we will get to is not going to be decanting Ashley into two smaller packages just to make it go away. Hopefully we will end up with nation-leading, best possible care for the fewest possible kids entering detention as a very last resort, with the services they need to try and turn those lives around. Meanwhile, the vast majority continue to be diverted into other forms of therapy and care that mean they do not end up in incarceration.

Budget - Time Frame for Submissions by Community Organisations

Ms JOHNSTON question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[10.20 a.m.]

I understand that last week you wrote to community service organisations to inform them that Budget submissions would be due on 14 October. This is about two months earlier than the first or second week of December, which it has been in the past few years. Bringing the date forward will affect an organisation's ability to properly consult with their members and consequently submit complete and considered submissions to you. The risk to government is that budget allocations will be misguided, hence not delivering the best outcomes for Tasmania.

Will you reverse your decision to require community organisations to submit their funding requests in mid-October, a mere two months away, and reinstate a December closing date?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Ms Johnston, for the question. The Government is keen to hear from the whole community. In particular, I have written to a number of organisations that are invited to make submissions to the Government to inform consideration of our options as we develop the 2023-24 Budget. I have written to them with a desire to see that submissions are informed as to future Government priority-setting. One I have highlighted is initiatives that will support the Tasmanian community and have an alignment with the Government's agenda to support cost of living initiatives.

We took the view that two months is a good period to encourage those submissions. It is longer than often other initiatives or bills are consulted in the community. For example, we have a standard five-week period for local government. It is certainly not a black-and-white matter. The Government is already indicating to organisations that late submissions will still be accepted. Naturally, the earlier the better because it allows Government to get its thinking around the desires or good ideas we expect to come forward, not just from community sector organisations but from business and a range of other voices in the community.

In short, the Government will not be having a hard and fast deadline. It certainly is not a situation where a submission that came in after the date in October would not be accepted or that they have missed the cut-off date. That is not how we work. It is certainly not how the Budget development process works. If more time is required, I am already letting those organisations know that is okay. Nonetheless, we ask them to think about their submissions, put forward ideas the Government can and should consider to build a stronger economy, to grow jobs, to grow economic security, as I discussed yesterday. This is so that we can protect the very good things that are being achieved right now in our state with the best employment data in our lifetimes, best employment data, in fact, in the state's history.

Inflation is a global challenge. Have a look at some of the British and American tabloids at the moment: they are facing double-digit inflationary pressures. Our country is not in that position. We are about half what some other countries are seeing. However, our people are feeling cost of living pressures. You have heard already throughout the week, Ms Johnston, that the Government is taking a targeted approach. It is supporting our economy, our community and families with initiatives to support them.

We would love to see the federal government come on board because I am still puzzled and wondering why we have not seen any action from the federal government with cost of living relief. They have been in office now for a couple of months. They came into office -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - You do not actually get a say. You are under administration, Mr Winter. The Labor Party has now been in office since late May. They came in on a platform of reducing power bills. They actually said that they would reduce power bills by \$275 a year.

We are not seeing any seriousness about that. In fact, the early evidence is that they are walking away from those commitments.

In a more targeted sense, the Labor Party in Tasmania, at least, does not seem to want to pressure their federal colleagues on this matter. We would like to see further relief at the bowser. The current fuel taxes -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45. He is now speaking about petrol prices, which has nothing to do with the question asked.

Mr SPEAKER - As far as standing order 45 goes, the Treasurer is on his feet. He has addressed the question and he is allowed to fully answer the question.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Winter, I would like to see as much energy and as much spring in your step in supporting us to ask the Albanese Government to extend the fuel tax excise rebate past September.

Ms JOHNSTON - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 48, sufficient time. The minister has answered my question. He is now moving far beyond the scope of my question. I ask you to wind him up.

Mr SPEAKER - I take the point of order but I cannot tell the minister what to say, when to say or how to say it.

Mr FERGUSON - I have a few more things to say. I will wind up.

Ms BUTLER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 48 says that when the Speaker considers a minister to have had sufficient time, they shall call for the next question. I put it to you -

Mr SPEAKER - When I consider that the minister has had sufficient time I will ask the minister to sit down, unless he takes his seat before that. I ask members to allow me to control this House and not interject and cause the minister to have additional time added because the members are using up his time.

Mr FERGUSON - That behaviour demonstrates that one side of this House wants to support Tasmanians with real cost of living pressures.

I thank Ms Johnston for her question. The reason we have written to the community service organisations is to encourage them to focus their submissions to align with Government priorities. Government priority: cost of living pressures.

Regarding the jacks-in-the-box over there springing to their feet, I would like to see as much energy to support us with our lobbying of the federal government to get on with their \$275-a-year energy relief and extend the fuel tax rebate relief past September.

Rock Lobster Industry - Actions of Minister

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER

[10.27 a.m.]

It was reported in *The Examiner* that the pro forma letter you mistakenly sent to rock lobster fishers was sent to four fishers, only four. Yesterday, you said:

Last week you highlighted an administrative error that came out of my office and I thank you for that because I was able to pick up the phone straight away and apologise to the people I had done that to, and they were fantastic. They were quite surprised I had picked up the phone and we ended up having lovely conversations.

Minister, I have picked up the phone and I have spoken to two of these fishers, Adam and Geoff, who are doing it really tough with the massive stress of this process. They both told me yesterday that you did not call them personally. You say the only thing they are surprised about, to quote you yesterday, is that you would try to pretend that you had spoken to them when you have not. They feel, to quote Geoff, like they have had a kick in the guts. They have lost their confidence that you would genuinely consider their interests, their families and the community in your upcoming decision.

Why did you say you called them? Why did you mislead the House?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass her question. She is right. I should have said 'my office and I' reached out to the four people. I apologise, particularly to Adam and Geoff. If they would like to contact me any time, I am more than happy to do that.

As soon as I left the Chamber and attended to my business, I made a point of making sure those people were contacted as quickly as possible. However, you are right - it was me and my office, which is an extension of me. I certainly hope that Adam and Geoff will feel comfortable to reach out and talk to me, as so many others have -

Ms Finlay - You could reach out to them, minister. The impact of this is distressing.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms PALMER - Mr Speaker, I am disappointed by this line of questioning. I cannot understand why anyone would want to throw mud at such a genuine attempt to reach out to the people of Tasmania who are involved in the rock lobster industry. It really does not matter how much mud you throw at me in this place, I will not change the way I act.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms PALMER - I will always make an attempt to reach out to Tasmanians and try to engage. I will do that and hold those conversations in confidence.

Ms Finlay - But you do not have the conversations you refer to.

Ms PALMER - I just have to do me. Others can do as they wish, but this is the way I operate. The biggest concern I have in this space is that amongst all this mudslinging, I am very concerned that we have forgotten the people at the centre of this conversation, those who work in this industry and the families that are supported by this industry.

As there is such concern around consultation, I take this opportunity to inform the House of the extensive consultation process that has taken place. I am advised that in the lead-up to and during this consultation process 12 000 licence holders were emailed directly in relation to the proposed rule changes, while 11 000 TasFishing Facebook followers and 34 000 subscribers to departmental fishing news emails were also made aware of the proposed rule changes. The department convened 10 recreational rock lobster consultative meetings and conducted six port visit meetings. Further, while the proposed rule changes were out for consultation, there were over 90 000 views of video animations describing the rule changes on the departmental website.

Mr Winter - Yes, 90 000 views, zero phone calls.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms PALMER - I am advised that 188 submissions were received by the department from commercial and recreational fishers, peak bodies and members of the community.

Mr Winter - Zero trips to jetties.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, you are warned.

Ms PALMER - The public consultation paper included a range of proposed rule changes and potential management options, including introducing regional minimum size limits that align with rock lobster growth rates and size at maturity to improve stock levels and spawning options; the use of vessel monitoring systems on all commercial rock lobster vessels; setting new rebuilding targets and timelines; limiting the total catch in line with rebuilding targets; determining catch levels and sharing arrangements for the recreational and commercial fishery; enhancing rock lobster stocks through translocating slow-growing lobster from the south coast to the faster-growing waters of the east coast; and exploring stock re-enhancement initiatives such as collecting lobster larvae on growing and releasing juveniles.

I am very aware of the challenges facing our rock lobster fishery and I understand that the 60-pot proposal has been consulted on and is certainly a longstanding issue with really diverse views within the industry. It is important that this process consider and assess the proposals on their merits, how they may impact stocks and both commercial and recreational fishers. The preferred number of pots for an individual fishing business is contingent on their particular operation. An owner/operator may be differently impacted by any proposed changes than a fisher who leases all their quota. I understand that access to quota is an important issue in the fishery. I also understand that the fishery has faced severe economic challenges, as so many other industries have under COVID-19, and the restrictions to access the key China

market with corresponding reductions in the price of lobster. Increased operational costs such as fuel also impacts fishers. Understandably, some operators see increased efficiency and reduced operational costs as key.

Mr Speaker, I had the opportunity to hear these diverse views from many stakeholders. I have had conversations with fishers across the state, both in person and on the phone, from as far south as Southport to our northern islands, from east coast fishers to west coast fishers, from young fishers just starting out in the industry, putting it all on the line, to those who have been in the industry for decades. I thank them for their open and honest conversations - at times difficult conversations - and I remind them that those conversations have been in confidence and I will not betray them or what they had to say. If there is anyone who feels their voice has not been heard through this very extensive process, please just reach out to my office.

Education - Working Together Program

Mr YOUNG question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.36 a.m.]

Can you outline how the Tasmanian Liberal Government is expanding the delivery of the successful Working Together program and how this will complement our significant investment into education since 2014?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Since 2014 I have often stood in this place and said that every single Tasmanian child has the fundamental right to access a quality education irrespective of their circumstance or their background. I have maintained that commitment through seven years as minister for Education and now as Premier.

We have done all we can to try to reduce the barriers to education through employing some 435 more teachers into our schools since coming to government in 2014 and by investing in key areas such as trauma-informed practice and a nation-leading model for supporting our students with disability. It is a fundamental basic right of every child to have access to quality education.

I remind those opposite that at every single turn you have opposed extension of universal education in this state, whether it be earlier access or years 11 and 12, extending universal education in our public system. You lot have failed to step up and support the Tasmanian community. We have put investments on the table, extending our high schools to years 11 and 12, which this year has demonstrated how successful that has been. You opposed it. You opposed early access as well, and that is well on the record.

What I am pleased about when it comes to years 11 and 12 is that it is having a hugely positive effect on participation and TCE attainment, but we must still be courageous, move forward and continue our reform, continue to make change in education to give Tasmanians the best chance of living a better and more rewarding life.

We know that high-quality early learning experiences improve outcomes for children in their early years and throughout their lives, particularly if you want to give every child the best possible opportunity, irrespective of circumstance or background. That is why I am appalled at those opposite who have at every turn failed to support key initiatives and key investments when it comes to extending the universality of our education system.

That is why our Government introduced Working Together, an early learning initiative that supports three-year-olds to access free high-quality learning in early childhood education and care settings in the year before kindergarten. Since 2019, Working Together has enabled over 400 children to access early learning through 19 partner early childhood education and care services, and I am pleased it is progressing well. However, despite having improved access to quality learning, more than a third of Tasmanian three-year-olds still do not have the access that they deserve. Our Government has an aspirational goal for Tasmania to be able to provide universal access to preschool in the year before kindergarten for every child to help them set up for a great start in life and learning.

Often the challenges we are facing when it comes to health literacy and the youth justice system can be overcome with earlier access to education. That is why as Premier, I am so passionate about this because a dollar invested now into access to quality early learning can save many dollars and lives, frankly, down the track.

I was passionate about this as Education minister. I am passionate about this as Premier and I am sure that is very obvious to you all.

Requests for expressions of interest is underway with the early childhood education and care sector to grow the number of available places in working together from 2024. We are very keen for this sector to continue to play a leading role in the provision of this program to complement the delivery of working together in early childhood education and care settings. We will also look to expand its delivery to child and family learning centres. In areas where there are no early childhood providers or child and family learning centres we will explore how earlier learning in the year before kindergarten can be delivered on a school site or at a local library where there is community support and where there is the capacity to do so. It is the right thing to do, and I am determined, as a government, that we will deliver it.

I am pleased at the initial and positive response we have had from stakeholders. I look forward to working closely with the early childhood education and care sector and local communities to make the Government's goal of universal preschool a reality.

We are not afraid of reform across every area of government. Education clearly is an example of that.

Mr SPEAKER - If you could wind up please, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will continue to be courageous, to do what is in the best interests of Tasmanians but the challenge is for those opposite. Are you going to continue your opposition to education reform, which gives people the opportunity early on in life to have the best possible chance of accessing quality early learning? The challenge is up to you.

East Derwent Highway-Piper Road Intersection

**Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,
Mr FERGUSON**

[10.42 a.m.]

In the gallery today are residents from Geilston Bay who are at their wit's end because of your Government's lack of action over a clear road safety issue on the East Derwent Highway-Piper Road intersection. To get to their local bus stop, residents of the Clarence Lifestyle Village and surrounding areas have to walk across a four-lane unlit section of highway, often at night, dodging traffic travelling around the bend at approximately 100 kilometres per hour and more. The section of road is also very dangerous for traffic passing through. It is clearly not safe.

They have contacted your office and previous ministers' offices many times over many years. They have signed petitions. They have made appeals through the media. They have done all they can to get you to listen but their concerns have fallen on deaf ears. The community is so fed up with your lack of action that they feel they are left with no other option but to consider starting a protest just to get your attention, as is their fundamental democratic right.

If you cannot commit to meeting these concerned residents and listening to their concerns and responding, will you at least commit not defying or even arresting them if their actions fall within the web of your Government's anti-protest laws?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr O'Byrne for his question. Now that you have informed me, I certainly welcome residents of the East Derwent Highway community who have attended question time today.

The last part of the question, Mr O'Byrne, you know to be a flagrant abuse of privilege in respect of that other legislation, which is entirely irrelevant to the matter that you have raised.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'Connor - These people would be captured by your laws, if they were doing it in front of a workplace which could be a road construction site.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr FERGUSON - What you have done is incorrectly linked a road safety matter, which is legitimate, with an invasion of businesses legislation protecting workplaces from aggravated trespass. I will leave that commentary there.

On the matter of the East Derwent Highway safety, Mr O'Byrne, you should know that infrastructure ministers do not have the power to decide speed limits. You should know that because you worked in my role. It is against the law for the minister to try to force the matter

with the Transport Commissioner. I am not allowed to, Mr O'Byrne, and if I would, you would probably have me on a different question. Why did you interfere with that process?

The claim that you have made, however, I am very sympathetic on any matter in any part of the state on improving and enhancing road safety. In fact, that is precisely why we are investing so much of taxpayers' funds around our beautiful state, to improve infrastructure and to help people get about their business.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Member for Franklin, order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am very aware of those concerns because I have responded to people in writing. I have responded in the media. Of course, I have engaged with my department, including in its engagement with the Transport Commissioner, who is independent of me and of Executive Government in relation to the speed limit of that section of the East Derwent Highway.

Mr O'Byrne - If you've done all of those things, why are they here?

Mr SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am advised that the department was first engaged with the local community on this matter in August 2018. The department carefully considered the suitability of the current speed limit of 100 kilometres per hour against road engineering guidelines, which is how you should do it. It is what you are supposed to do. The site has been inspected by qualified and experienced traffic engineers. I am not one and I know you are not. The engineering assessment did not support a reduction in the speed limit which would apply to the whole community at this section of the East Derwent Highway -

Mr O'Byrne - What about lights? It is a bus stop.

Mr SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, order.

Mr FERGUSON - setting realistic speed limits and ensuring road users obey the speed limit. Setting low speed limits in higher speed environments results in poor compliance, as well as impacts on productivity travel time and frustration on the part of commuters.

It is also noteworthy, that the community broadly, Mr O'Byrne, was consulted on this matter in 2018.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I do not think this is quite right, Mr Speaker. I am just trying to get the facts out on the table. I am advised that the community feedback did not support a reduction in the speed limit.

Mr O'Byrne - The community did not support the speed limit reduction on Vines Saddle, but you did it anyway.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, the minister is trying to put some facts on the table. He will be heard in silence. The next one to speak on this issue, will only be the minister. Anybody else will be asked to leave the Chamber.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, I am advised that 430 submissions from members of the public were received by the department in 2018. I am advised that a large majority opposed speed limit changes. As a result of the engineering assessment and community feedback, the department did not make an application to the Commissioner for Transport to reduce the speed limit.

Those concerns that have been raised are not uncommon around the state. I am often challenged by members of different communities to raise or lower speed limits. As a minister, my proper role is to listen to people, take on board their concerns and respond as responsibly as I can, always on advice. In relation to the infrastructure itself, you need to have speed limits that are determined in accordance with what the infrastructure is capable of safely doing.

We rely on AusRoads guidelines in this respect. I will come back to the point that the minister of the day does not, and I will argue should not, have the power to arbitrarily lift or reduce the speed limits on his or her own whim.

Mr SPEAKER - If you could wind up, please minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I will also add that the department has taken note of safety concerns at the site. It has in fact banned right turns from Piper Road to mitigate the risks due to the issues raised in respect of the Clarence Lifestyle Village and the risk posed by increased turning traffic due to its access via Piper Road to the highway.

I appreciate the question. I appreciate the opportunity to get those facts on the table and as I always am, Mr Speaker, always happy to take further feedback from that community or any other community.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome year 10 St Mary's College Legal Studies students into the Gallery.

Members - Hear, hear.

Rock Lobster Fishers - Rule Changes

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER

[10.49 a.m.]

At the first sign of trouble you chose to mislead the parliament. Knowing how distressed fishers are across Tasmania, can you please announce when you will make a decision on these changes?

Mr FERGUSON - Point of order. The member is not entitled to make that allegation except by a substantive motion. I asked that it be withdrawn?

Ms O'BYRNE - On the point of order, Mr Speaker, that is actually not true. She is not allowed to say the minister lied without a substantive motion but the minister admitted in her statement that she had said something that was not true.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order and it is not an argument point either. In this day and age we should be respectful of each other. I ask the member to withdraw that allegation or personal reflection and continue her question.

Ms FINLAY - I withdraw the comment, Mr Speaker.

Minister, at the first time of trouble, your first instinct was to not tell the truth in the parliament. Knowing how distressed rock lobster fishers are across Tasmania, when will you announce the decision on these rule changes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. When you are part of a team, as I am, in my office and with all these people behind me, we work as a team. I made a very clear statement that the conversations were had. My office spent quite a considerable amount of time and, to be honest, throw what you wish. Throw what you wish.

I am focused on the rock lobster fishers of our state and their families and what they need from this Government, which is to come out of the muck and to be focused on the job that needs to be done, and that is what I am doing.

In making that decision, I will follow proper process. I will consult, I will listen, I will get the advice, I will analyse that advice and then I will make a decision.

The people of Tasmania deserve ministers and a government that follows process and does it properly.

Housing Challenges - Legislative Action

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for STATE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION and HOUSING, Mr BARNETT

[10.52 a.m.]

According to the latest data from your department, the social housing waiting list has achieved a new high of 4453 applications. Your stated target for the list is to increase to over 5000 by the end of this financial year. Shelter Tasmania recently released a major report showing how short-stay accommodation is reducing home availability and fuelling rent increases. Rents continue to skyrocket. Hobart is leading the way, with a 50 per cent increase in just five years.

Tens of thousands of Tasmanians have been pushed into financial hardship and a new report today shows real-world economic consequences of the housing crisis. In your backyard,

minister, Launceston businesses say they are suffering a \$200 million a year hit because they cannot find staff, with the lack of housing and high rents being major factors. This is after eight years of Liberal government. The Greens agree that we need to build thousands more homes, but you know much more can be done. Will the Government you are part of consider any type of legislative reform that tackles other critical issues in housing, such as soaring rents, the lack of protections for tenants and the rapid expansion of short-stay accommodation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest in this matter. As a former minister for housing she knows how important it is. She and members in this place and people across the state know what a priority our agenda is to address the housing and homelessness challenges in this state, which is why we have such a big and ambitious plan to grow our housing assets by 10 000 by 2032. It is a very ambitious plan. We have \$204 million in this year's budget and \$438 million over the forward Estimates. We have big plans and I am pleased to be able to get feedback from the community services sector and the building construction sector to make the changes that are necessary.

I will not comment and reflect on the Homes Tasmania bill but make it very clear that it is important that we have a housing authority. We have to do things differently in Tasmania to make a difference and we are very determined as a government to do so.

The question also spoke about short-stay accommodation, and I appreciate the reflection on that. Tasmanians have embraced the home-sharing economy and our Government is committed to ensuring that plays a pivotal role in our visitor economy and the community. It was in 2019 that the minister, Mr Jaensch, delivered and introduced nation-leading short-stay legislation to develop a clearer picture of the sector and ensure everyone is playing by the same set of rules. We need to get a balanced approach and I believe that is what we are delivering in Tasmania. We already have the strongest short-stay regulations in the country.

I must say, it is not a simple matter. It is not a quick fix. The advice I have is that short-stay accommodation comprises less than 1 per cent of all dwellings and less than 5 per cent of all rented dwellings.

Ms O'Connor - Hobart has more Airbnbs than any other capital.

Mr BARNETT - We have a whole range of initiatives in place to roll out more homes. In terms of rental affordability, we acknowledge that, which is why we have a range of initiatives in place to address that, including a private rental incentive scheme with more than \$9 million in our budget this year. I thank the Treasurer for that.

Ms O'Connor - You need to get out more.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, if you interject again I will ask you to leave.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Speaker, there was a reference as well to Launceston City Council and the responses there. I acknowledge that the member for Bass, Ms Finlay, was a former member of the Launceston City Council who objected to some housing supply to support more housing in Launceston. It is on the public record; you just have to read the *Examiner* of a few days ago. That was appealed and the Tasmanian Planning Commission threw out the decision

of the Launceston City Council and the views of the member for Bass were clearly noted on the public record.

Ms Finlay - Bring it on, minister!

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - We as a government want to roll out more housing and here we have a member who did everything in her ability at the time to block that social housing rollout. We do not want this to happen.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. The question that related to the impact on Launceston businesses is about the here and now and they will not be happy with that answer from the minister deflecting blame.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. An explanation is not needed. It was raised in the question and the minister is quite appropriately dealing with that issue.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. There was a reference to the Launceston City Council and what was happening in Launceston and the rollout of social housing. As a government, we are for it and we have initiatives in place to deliver it. Certain councils from time to time make decisions which are not in the best interests of their local community and in this place they have been caught out with the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, again on relevance, Mr Speaker. There was no reference to Launceston City Council in the question.

Mr BARNETT - It was a reference to Launceston, Mr Speaker, and a decision has been made by the Launceston City Council with respect to housing and homelessness in their municipality. I am just drawing it to the member's and the public's attention. This is a decision for the Labor Party. Of course the federal Labor Party does not have confidence in you because of your -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, come on. There is moaning and groaning. You are politically bankrupt. They have removed all decision-making from the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party in Tasmania. You are in strife.

Mr Winter - Oh, come on.

Member Suspended

Member for Franklin - Mr Winter

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Member for Franklin, you have been warned before. I ask you to leave the Chamber until 12 o'clock.

Mr Winter withdrew.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will wrap up and make it clear that on this side of the House we have a very strong and ambitious plan to roll out our housing initiatives to make a difference. We have more work to do but we have a very big agenda. I appreciate the member's questions and note that we continue to work with the community services sector and all key stakeholders to make a difference in the lives of Tasmanians, particularly vulnerable Tasmanians.

Student Wellbeing and Learning - School Lunch Program

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, CHILDREN and YOUTH, Mr JAENSCH

[10.59 a.m.]

Could you please explain how this Government is supporting student wellbeing and learning, particularly in relation to accessing fresh and nutritious food at school?

ANSWER

Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank my colleague, Mr Tucker, for his question. We certainly know the value of having good tucker.

The Government is committed to ensuring Tasmanian children have the best possible start to life and learning, which will allow them to lead happy, healthy lives and reach their full potential. Today, Mr Street and I will be visiting Warrane Primary School to check in on one of the school lunch programs being piloted in 15 schools across Tasmania.

The extended school lunch pilot has been running since May this year and is a joint initiative with the Department of Education, Communities Tasmania and School Food Matters, with support from the Department of Health through dietician expertise. Currently, more than 3000 healthy lunches are served each week to over 1600 students across 15 Tasmanian government schools, and that is just the beginning.

A new EOI process opens today to select a further 15 government schools to participate in this important initiative from next year, taking the Government's financial commitment to \$1.87 million across an extended pilot of 30 schools focused on the health and wellbeing of our students. This includes an additional \$350 000 for the pilot as part of this Government's \$5 million cost of living booster package to help those who need it most, as recently announced by Mr Street.

The successful schools receive support from School Food Matters to purchase kitchen equipment to run the lunch program. School Food Matters also works with schools to develop food plans and implement a healthy lunch program with dietician support. Schools have the flexibility to tailor food provision to the needs of their students.

The two-year pilot will be independently evaluated by the Menzies Institute of Medical Research to understand whether there are benefits to student learning and school readiness to scale up the pilot.

The wellbeing of children and young people is a priority of this Government. This includes ensuring children and young people have the material basics, such as access to nutritious food, to thrive in learning and in life. The Government supports healthy eating and physical wellbeing in schools through a range of programs and funding commitments, including: the 24 Carrot kitchen garden program, which builds gardens in schools where children learn to grow, cook and eat healthy food; Move Well, Eat Well, which promotes healthy eating and physical activity; and School Food Matters, which assists school canteens to achieve accreditation, provides advice and resources to school communities on food selection and menu planning, and assists with the development of school food plans.

This is in addition to the many school-based, community-supported school breakfast programs that run across a large number of schools across Tasmania. We thank everyone involved in delivering these. Our kids cannot learn on an empty stomach. Providing good food in our schools sets our kids up to learn, and we are measuring the benefits of that.

These programs in schools also build health literacy and understanding of nutrition for children and families, which are essential life skills they will have for the rest of their lives. I thank everyone in our community service and our support sectors for working together with our schools to ensure our young learners get the sustenance they need to learn and grow.

Debt Reduction Taskforce - Update

Dr BROAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.04 a.m.]

Your Government is borrowing \$3.5 million every day. In the Budget papers you stated that you had 'tasked Treasury with providing advice on strategies to ensure our debt levels remain within manageable limits'. In an article published in *The Australian* you reiterated your belief in the need for a medium- to longer term debt reduction strategy.

Can you provide an update on the work of the Treasury record debt reduction task force? Can you confirm, as you promised in Estimates, who is on your Cabinet's Budget subcommittee?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. We are using our strong balance sheet to invest and support jobs. Respected economist Saul Eslake, the Reserve Bank and the International Monetary Fund have all highlighted the role of fiscal support and debt to recover and build. We are turbo-charging infrastructure investment in Tasmania with an investment of \$5.6 billion over the 2022-23 Budget and forward Estimates. As we invest record levels for critical infrastructure, net debt will grow but, of course, it is manageable and within the Budget's capacity.

I also point out to the member that Tasmania's net debt is forecast to be the lowest on a total basis over the forward Estimates and the second-lowest on a per capita basis, Queensland being the lowest. The outcome reflects strong growth in the economy and substantial growth in our own revenue sources.

It is important to note that a significant proportion of this is due to the cost of responding to COVID-19, that is, keeping people employed and keeping people safe and well. Treasury estimates that the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 response and recovery measures will be in excess of \$1.5 billion. The pandemic has impacted on the debt position of all states and territories. It was an important factor in our response, which has supported businesses and the community through what is a very difficult period.

The member often mentions debt in this place. I would like him to point out where he would not have invested should he have been treasurer. Would you not have provided business support? Would you not have invested in vaccination clinics, for example? Would you not have invested in our health system? Would you not have invested in COVID@home? The member might like to inform the House exactly where he would have placed his investments or, as the case may be, taken investment away from supporting businesses, our local communities and keeping people alive and well.

In the 2022-23 Budget Speech the Treasurer stated:

I have also tasked Treasury with providing advice to me on strategies to ensure our debt levels remain within the manageable limits into the future so we can use balance sheets to shield Tasmanian jobs and families should external shocks to our economy occur in the future.

Treasury has commenced work on this task. Any report prepared by Treasury on debt management will be considered by the Budget subcommittee and Cabinet as well. You have the opportunity to put forward policy suggestions and ideas.

Dr Broad - Who is on the committee? You said in Estimates you would name them.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am on the Budget subcommittee, the Treasurer is, the Attorney-General and the Leader of the House in here.

We look forward, as we prepare the next state Budget - and, indeed, I support the Treasurer in his comments this morning around Budget submissions. That key engagement with the community sector is so important as we lead through the recovery. I see very much my role as Premier in supporting the recovery of our community as a result of the disruption of the pandemic. We brought forward the Budget's submission time frame and we will continue to allow submissions to be received -

Mr SPEAKER - Would you wind up please, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - in terms of Ms Johnston's question, to engage the community sectors at an earlier timeframe to ensure we do have the appropriate time to listen, to learn and understand the challenges facing the sector and how we can support key organisations that support our communities.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The member for Bass has the call. No one else should be speaking.

Renewable Energy Projects in Tasmania

**Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for ENERGY AND RENEWABLES,
Mr BARNETT**

[11.10 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the outcome of the recent registration of interest process for the new renewable energy projects in Tasmania? Are you aware of any alternative proposals to support renewable energy development in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her keen interest in this important matter. Tasmania is a renewable energy powerhouse. Under the Tasmania Renewable Energy Action Plan, we are delivering a world-leading legislative target. We are already at 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in clean energy, electricity, in Tasmania. We are going to 150 per cent by 2030, 200 per cent by 2040. It is delivering 100 per cent affordable, reliable, clean electricity. What this is about is creating jobs, opportunities for families, particularly in rural and regional communities. It is delivering on Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and green manufacturing.

The \$2.7 billion north-east wind project is one such example. Significant employment opportunities in the Dorset region; 400 jobs during peak construction, 65 ongoing; 210 turbines, 1230 megawatts. Thanks to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning, a major project has resulted in the north-east wind proponent as an energy delivering on that. The Dorset mayors have been very positive about the prospects for the north-east.

Tasmania is the cleanest, smartest and most innovative state. That is our vision. That is our plan. We are delivering on that: jobs, renewable energy, cheaper electricity, renewable energy supporting growing investment and tackling climate change.

The Renewable Energy Coordination Framework was released earlier this year. The framework is to implement the register of interest process and to help us plan and prepare for new opportunities such as green hydrogen, green manufacturing, and to identify a pipeline of renewable energy generation across the state to help fuel this new investment.

That register of interest process has delivered a large number of potential renewable energy projects. Around 25 000 gigawatt hours of potential renewable energy projects are currently seeking approval and aiming to start operation by the end of 2030.

What does that mean? It means that we are on track to deliver on our generation opportunities under our Renewable Energy Action Plan. We are on track to get there by 2030. We are on track to get there by 2040. Our plans are working and delivering. Part of that pipeline includes the north-east Nexsphere Bass Strait Offshore Wind Energy project. It includes the UPC's Robbins Island Wind Farm.

All this information will help to inform us in building out and implementing our first renewable energy zone later this year and supporting matching of new generation to more growth, for existing businesses, the major industrials on-island to create more jobs and grow

our economy. You need a growing economy to deliver those essential services. That is a fundamental principle that we, on this side of the house, believe in. Those on the other side of course believe in magic puddings.

I was asked about alternatives. Tasmanians are fed up with Labor's relentless negativity. We are fed up with it. The Tasmanian Labor Party wants to exit the NEM. This is putting at risk Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. In fact Mr Winter wants us to exit the NEM and take us back to the dark ages. That is the policy of the Labor Party, taking us backwards. We want to move forwards.

I will wrap up, Mr Speaker. The other side are busy chasing cheap headlines. There was a failed stunt last week with their flawed bill. They have been caught out. They have a track record of 65 per cent increases in electricity prices. This is all from a party that is now in administration until 2025.

Vacancy Management Control Committee

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

[11.15 a.m.]

Can you confirm that less than a fortnight after you were elevated to the ministry, your Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management reconvened the vacancy management control committee with the intention of identifying savings by not filling vacancies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to take the broader question on notice. We will get back to the member. I am grateful for her interest in this matter.

In terms of making sure that our police are discharging their duties to protect Tasmanians and keep them safe, it is enormously important that those roles are filled. It may be through, for example, the Country Station Relief Program, which this Government implemented to make sure that police stations in rural and remote areas are staffed well, that those communities are served whether it be the 24-hour policing that we have delivered in terms of safe staffing levels.

This is a government that is employing 329 new police officers because we are a government that believes in keeping Tasmanians safe, and believes in law and order. We all remember the dark old days when the O'Byrnes were in government and they sacked 108 police officers.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask that the member refer to people appropriately. Previous Speakers have called members to account for that before.

Mr Speaker, can I ask that you direct the minister to come back by the end of the day with the answer to my question? I find it unbelievable he does not know he has a vacancy management control committee.

Mr SPEAKER - On the point of order, as you well know, Speakers cannot direct the minister to do anything. The minister has committed to come back on the broader point. I will allow him to continue his answer and wind up.

Mr ELLIS - Thanks, Mr Speaker. I will finish up, but it is telling how sensitive the other side is about its own record when it comes to sacking 108 police officers, when it comes to literally defunding the police. The other side were doing it before it was cool. They sacked 25 per cent of the state service employees

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Member Suspended

Member for Bass - Ms O'Byrne

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The member for Bass can leave the Chamber until lunch time.

Ms O'Byrne withdrew.

Mr ELLIS - Mr Speaker, of course I commit to getting back to the member as soon as we possibly can with the information that she was after.

However, it does speak to their record. One of the interesting things about being a new minister is that you get briefed on the history of some of these things and the devastating austerity measures that were brought in under the former Labor government - cruel, swinging cuts to some of the best people in our society who were thrown on the scrapheap along with 10 000 other Tasmanians. The police have not forgotten. We are continuing to employ more police officers and that is delivering better employment outcomes for all in our police service.

Child Safety Workers - Recruitment and Retention

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.19 a.m.]

Today, staff in child safety are walking off the job to highlight the recruitment and retention crisis. Workers have developed solutions to address the unmanageable level of vacancies, which put children at risk and push staff to breaking point. They have written to you to request a meeting to discuss these solutions and to date, you have not taken them up on the offer. Will you commit, today, to meeting with workers to discuss their solutions to these incredibly serious workforce challenges?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. We recognise the critical role played by our child safety staff in meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable members of our community and thank them sincerely for what we know is a very challenging job. We thank them for their efforts to protect and improve the lives of the most vulnerable Tasmanians.

We have increased child safety staffing by around 40 per cent since 2014 and as part of the 2022-23 budget we committed a further \$5.4 million for an additional 10 full-time equivalents to be added to the child safety workforce around the state. Our minister highlighted just the other day our successful recruitment campaign, with 60 child safety officer appointments made and staff to begin in August. My understanding is that another round of recruitment will now be immediately progressed to address remaining vacancies.

We recognise the ongoing investment to further boost the child safety workforce and that is why we are progressing a number of initiatives in terms of recruitment of additional relief positions, new case coordinator positions and enhanced student pathways being developed with the University of Tasmania to enable fourth-year social work students to be employed as case aides during their final placement.

Ms White - Will you meet with the workers?

Mr ROCKLIFF - The member mentions meeting. Yes, I have responded to correspondence from the Community Public Sector Union, Ms White. What I said in that letter is that I would be pleased to meet with you together with the minister for Children and Youth to discuss these and further ideas to assist the recruitment and retention of this important workforce. I signed off on that letter which I believe was sent yesterday to Ms White. I have just read out the last paragraph in that letter.

Local Government Reform - Learning and Development Framework

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Mr STREET

[11.22 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Government is progressing with local government reform, including promoting a positive culture in local government and developing a statewide learning and development framework for elected officials?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his genuine interest in the local government sector as a former member of Launceston City Council. Over the past four months as minister I have met with 28 of the 29 mayors and GMs across the state in some form or another and visited more than 20 council chambers to meet with just not the mayor and GM but also with councillors who generously made their time available to meet with me. I have heard first-hand from councils about the issues they are facing and their aspirations for their future.

The Government is committed to supporting the local government sector to ensure they have the skills required to make sound decisions on behalf of the communities they represent. That is why we partnered with LGAT to implement a statewide learning and development of framework for elected officials. This is the first time that such a formal set of arrangements have been developed in Tasmania. A pre-election learning package has recently been available online and a post-election online learning module will go live over the coming weeks.

As we have seen only too clearly in the media, unfortunately there are occasions where councils behave poorly and fall well short of the standards expected of them. Our Government is committed to ensuring the right forums and tools are available to appropriately address misconduct. Last week the independent code of conduct panel suspended a Waratah-Wynyard councillor for three months for a serious breach of their code. This suspension comes on top of other successful actions taken recently to address the poor behaviour of some councillors. A former councillor was recently fined \$2000 and banned from running for council for five years for releasing confidential information. I recently issued a performance improvement direction to a councillor to prevent a repeat of aggressive and destructive behaviour at a council meeting.

The Government has agreed to a number of changes to the code of conduct framework and we released a draft Local Government Amendment (Code of Conduct) Bill 2022 for public consultation on 1 August 2022. Changes proposed in the draft bill include a standard code of conduct for councils, mandatory local dispute resolution policy in councils, an improved process for the initial assessment of complaints and the disclosure of management of interest by code of conduct panel members. Public consultation on the draft bill and the draft prescribed information is open for five weeks and ends on 5 September 2022. It is this Government's intention to introduce the bill into parliament this year.

This work is continuing in parallel with the Future of Local Government review being conducted by the independent Local Government Board. Stage 1 of the review commenced on 20 January and the interim report was released for public comment on 21 July. In the first consultation stage of the review we have heard that councils need to be sustainable but also genuinely represent their communities. The priority areas identified within the report are council's role in the twenty-first century; local representation and governance; strategic and regional capability; efficient and effective infrastructure and service delivery; sound and consistent planning and regulatory services; and operational sustainability.

I am looking forward to the upcoming local government elections in which voting will be compulsory for the first time. This is a landmark reform and I believe it makes a strong statement regarding the importance of the sector. The TEC is putting the final touches on a campaign to promote compulsory voting in the local government elections and that campaign will commence soon.

As Minister for Local Government, I am committed to working with our 29 Tasmanian councils, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Director of Local Government to continue to find ways in which we can provide support for the sector. As a state government, we recognise that the performance of the local government sector is vital to the future of the Tasmanian economy and the wellbeing of Tasmanian communities.

Time expired.

SITTING TIMES

[11.27 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) (by leave) - Mr Speaker, I move -

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

Very briefly, we would like to try to get the climate bill finished today. It is obvious that we are not going to get that done between the end of the MPI and midday when Mr O'Byrne's private members' time starts. We will cede our private members' time at 5 o'clock in the normal process to go back to the climate bill and then work from 5 o'clock to hopefully the completion of the bill tonight.

[11.27 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, we are happy to support that but I am seeking guidance from the Government around the intention to complete the climate change bill. From recollection, there are 59 amendments and we are up to number 19 of those 59 amendments. We are trying our very best to get through it but it may take some more time than what I believe had been intended for tonight, which was to sit again until about 8 pm. If we are planning to sit later than that, I would be grateful if the Government could indicate that, particularly for the staff in the building.

[11.28 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, there is certainly no intention to curtail debate on the climate bill. If we have to sit past 8 o'clock we will, but I will be in contact with Mr Winter, Ms O'Connor and the two independent members across the evening.

Ms White - We will be here until midnight.

Mr STREET - I do not believe it will take until midnight but we will make an assessment as the evening progresses.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishery

[11.29 a.m.]

Mr SPEAKER - I need to make mention that the private member's time of the member for Franklin starts at 12 o'clock so we now have only 30 minutes for the MPI. I cannot say that we reduce everyone by six. I am in the hands of the House, but if members who are speaking are conscious of that fact to get seven through in the time, we need to reduce each of our times to a degree. I am not limiting the time; you still have seven minutes if you need it.

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: the Tasmanian rock lobster fishery.

I rise on this matter of public importance because there have been exchanges in the House this week and last week around this issue. More importantly, I rise to bring some awareness to

this place and share with Tasmanians the importance of this fishery. This is not only to the people who go out day on day, in horrendous conditions sometimes, often overnight for many nights, away from home, but for the families that support fishers, for their communities and the regional economies of Tasmania, and also for the fish and biomass.

I am not sure that there is a deep and broad understanding in this Chamber of the importance of this fishery, and the impact that the process over recent months has been having on the fishers of Tasmania. There have been some interjections in the questions that have been asked recently about whether this is actually important, so I felt it important to rise today and talk about that.

Earlier this week, the Premier rose and talked about how important regional communities are to the economy of Tasmania, how important local jobs are, and the people in those communities. There are no more deeply invested and passionate members of regional communities in Tasmania than our farmers and fishers.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet with rock lobster fishers right across Tasmania, from as far north-west as King Island. I have spoken to fishers in Wynyard, across the north of the state at Bridport, on Flinders Island, in St Helens, down the coast in Triabunna, met with fishers in Lindisfarne, Hobart, and with fishers not in Southport but from Southport. There are very few sectors that have as direct and significant impact in the regional economies right across Tasmania.

There is a proposed rule in the rule changes for the rock lobster fishery to expand the 60-pot area. For those unaware, at the moment, in the wild waters of the west coast, large boats have capacity to fish with 60 pots and the biomass over there, although questionable in some areas, has the capacity to carry that - the people who fish there and the fisheries.

There is a proposal to expand that 60-pot area up over the north-west coast and north east of Tasmania. There is deep concern about this proposal. It has caused major distress and is having a monumental impact on the mental health of these fishers and their families.

This proposal was brought to the attention of the minister as early as May. In the upper House, we raised through the President a question to the minister and brought to her attention that she must know that there was a problem in the fishery. She needed to get across it quickly. There was a vulnerable fishery and a disgruntled fleet of fishers.

That was reinforced by Mick Tucker, the Mayor of Break O'Day, who formally submitted to the process. He said this review of the rules was of particular interest, that Break O'Day strongly opposed the rule changes, which were reactive and ill-advised. It was going to be detrimental to the viability of small operators, but not just the fishers. It was going to have an impact on local businesses. He understood the impact on slipways, on boilermakers.

I have met with the slipway operator in St Helens and the boat builder in St Helens. I have spoken to local shop operators in those communities. They all understand the impact, not just on the fisher, their families and their communities.

For instance, in St Helens and also on King Island, you devastate the fleet in Tasmania that underpins one of the great international brands of Tasmania. We go to all these wharves and see these great craypots, and we love that and promote it but you devastate this fishery by

implementing this rule change, families that have been generational on the east coast or King Island, as an example. Their partners and wives work in the local medical centre, the school, the IGA, the bakery. They are deeply embedded in their community. If they have to move out of these communities, those communities will be devastated, both socially and economically.

This has been known by the minister for a long time. There has been a lot of commentary and, as the minister herself explained this morning, there has been a lot of engagement on this.

The fishers, to this point, are still concerned that the real impacts, the devastation, is not just for them. They are concerned for their families, for the generations of their families that have invested in this. They are concerned for their communities and the economies of Tasmania of supporting this expansion to support quota holders and investors.

I have met with the chair of the Tasmanian Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association. I have spoken to investors and quota owners. I understand both sides of this complex conversation and I have been up-front with both sides of this conversation.

If this rule change is implemented, it will have a massive impact on the economies of Tasmania and the people of Tasmania. The minister has known this for some time. She has said that she understands the stress, the impact on the mental health of the fishers across Tasmania. I am receiving correspondence daily from people checking in and asking for us to check in on their mates out on their boats, at night, overnight alone. They are worried about when this decision will be made because they know that it is going to affect masses of investment they have made and support they are making for their families.

We called on the minister this morning to ask her directly: when will you make this decision, when will the outcome of these rule changes be made public?

Night on night, day on day, these fishers do not feel they have been heard, do not feel they are being represented by their body, their minister or their Government in a way that is really understanding the devastating impact this rule change will have on them. They want to know when the decision will be made. When will they be put out of their distress and concern so they can make decisions about the investments they will make when these rule changes come in on 1 November?

Time expired.

[11.36 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the rock lobster industry and the importance of it to Tasmania, particularly our rural and regional communities.

Before I address that more specifically, and the importance of process and policy, I will say how disappointed I am, on behalf of the Government, with respect to the questions and the criticism of Jo Palmer, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, consistently being misaddressed as the Minister for Primary Industries and Water. The criticisms, mudslinging and personal accusations are unfounded. You would not find a more hard-working, diligent, genuine and devoted minister in this space. The answers that the minister has provided to this

House both today and yesterday were genuine and personal, and clearly attempting to answer the question.

Then we have a question from the member for Bass saying, 'when you responded to and met with these fishers, which wharf were you sitting on when you spoke to these fishers? How many fishers and when?'. Seriously, this is a genuine effort on behalf of the minister to connect, relate and consult. It is an inane question and it is irrelevant to what is important. That is the importance of the rock lobster industry and its sustainability.

Ms Finlay - In this place she made the statement that she met with people on wharves.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Ms Finlay you were heard in silence. Please let the minister be heard in silence.

Mr BARNETT - It is irrelevant to the importance of the rock lobster industry, the jobs in the industry, the sustainability of the industry and its viability. Labor is distracted, no doubt, by the fact that they are in administration. There has been a federal takeover until 2025.

The questions are effectively pre-empting the process, pre-empting the decision, which the minister has said not only today but yesterday that she will undertake and follow due process.

You know the process and you should know, as a shadow minister, there is a process in place. Good process leads to good policy and good outcomes for Tasmanian fishers and the Tasmanian community. The minister is following due process, is engaging with the community, engaging with the fishers. You would not get a more dedicated hard-working sincere minister than Ms Palmer. She is delivering on her responsibilities and she has made it very clear yesterday and today. No doubt tomorrow, if you ask further inane questions, she will deliver the same response.

Mudslinging and personal criticisms will not help. What will help is a focus on what is best for the rock lobster industry.

You should be focusing on what is best. Even you indicated that there had been community engagement. You need to have engagement. You need to have consultation. That is the process. I was the minister for three-and-a-half years. I know the process. The fishers know the process. You mentioned the TRFA. They know the process. The key stakeholders know the process. How is it you do not understand the process?

Ms Finlay - I'm clear about the process.

Mr BARNETT - You do not know. You know that there is a statutory time frame?

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Dr Broad - He's inciting interjections. He's asking for interjections.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr BARNETT - The minister is following due process. She is consulting. She is out there getting the feedback. This is a really important decision in terms of the rules.

The statutory rules apply to the rock lobster fishery. In terms of the future of management operations and options for the fishery on the east coast, they need to be implemented over time as well.

We know that it is a very important fishery. We know that we have a rock lobster rebuilding strategy and that is important. We are implementing measures to ensure the viability and sustainability of the fishery. In terms of that rebuilding strategy, I am advised there is a consultation process. It will be looking at a 10-year east coast stock rebuilding strategy, due to expire in November 2023. Of course, there needs to be consultation about the future.

With respect to the process, there is a process in place. For the Opposition to suggest that consultation has been forgotten -

Members interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - You are basically saying there should be an immediate decision now. The minister is going through due process. The minister is getting the feedback.

Can I do a shout out for the department, Mr Deputy Speaker? Can I say to the department, the department is getting the feedback. They go through due process. They do a great job. I know them well. You have credible, competent, capable people out there interacting with the stakeholders, with the fishers, getting feedback on the wharves, on the water, in the offices. I appreciate their work. I pay a tribute to them today.

There is a process, there are consultations taking place -

Ms Finlay - When will it come to an end? When will the announcement be made?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms Finlay.

Mr BARNETT - When the minister goes through that process - and I am sure she will have more to say once that decision has been made. She will make that available, not just to the fishers, but to the public as well. There is a process in place.

I presume you are simply distracted by the federal intervention into your party in Tasmania. Please focus on what is important to the Tasmanian people and Tasmanian fishers. Just realign your efforts, focus on the fishers and what is best, and follow on the process and the policy and you will get a good outcome.

[11.43 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I listened to Mr Barnett's contribution. I think he said it himself - good policy leads to good outcomes. The problem in this situation is that the Liberal Government has utterly failed Tasmania's rock lobster fishery. Consequently, it has failed the people who are fishing today.

The member for Bass has made a number of statements about people's anxiety and stress. I understand how hard it must be for them because they have been strung along for a very long

time. I know that the Labor Party has been actively supporting and following the Government's overall approach to the management of the rock lobster fishery but both the Labor and Liberal Party deny the reality of what is happening in our marine environment.

They deny the reality of climate heating and the impact it is having on warm waters. They deny that the climate heating is the fundamental driver for the shift southwards in the Leeuwin Current on the east coast of Australia that has brought long tongues of warm water and an increase in feral species, particularly the spiny sea urchin that has devastatingly preyed on lobster beds. It has devastatingly impacted on the fishery.

Both parties receive major subsidies from fossil fuel companies from the oil and gas industries. We have right now the biggest ever exploration licence being sought by two enormous oil and gas companies, seeking to explore in the Bass Strait, around the coastline of Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria. It is, according to their evidence, the biggest ocean area that has ever been explored by two companies. It is bigger than the size of Tasmania.

We have already heard from rock lobster fisheries and from scallop fishers off the north-west of Tasmania. That scallop fishery, I understand, has basically been killed off by the impacts, they say, of seismic testing. We have already had a massive seismic testing that has done irreparable damage it seems to our fisheries.

Yet we have a disconnect where we have two parties that are encouraging the exploration. This party is encouraging exploration licences for these companies. On the one hand, they are saying they are trying to do their best by working with Tasmanians and fishing industries. On the other hand, they are opening up the opportunity for more multinational corporations to send huge columns of energy down through the water column to hit the seabed, in the process killing off marine life that is in the way, sending shock waves to scallop fishers. It impacts, we believe, on rock lobster fishing as well.

We have the disconnect at the federal and at the state level still pushing to support the expansion of the fossil fuel industry, totally in denial of the inexorable connection between mining more fossil fuels. These companies, TGS and Schlumberger, do not plan to start for 15 years. Right now, they are pushing the federal government. What is the position of Tasmania's Government? Radio silence, like it was with the previous companies that were seismic testing.

We have a convergence of a perfect storm in our marine environment. We have two parties - the Labor and the Liberal parties - that are totally against any increase in marine-protected areas yet the science tells us that when we have more marine-protected areas, they demonstrate that rock lobsters can flourish. The population of rock lobsters in healthy marine areas provides the potential for a sustainable fishing industry by giving the opportunity for real growth of the juvenile and mid-staged and large lobsters that are needed to perpetuate a functioning ecosystem.

We have had a failure to regulate the fishing quotas earlier and so what we have now is a recognition that we are in a desperate place and the rules that are coming in are really severe.

Ms Finlay, you are nodding your head. I do not think I have heard the Labor Party pushing for these quotas to be reduced 10 years ago or five years ago, and yet the scientists

from IMAS have been talking about the collapse of the rock lobster industry on the east coast and -

Dr Broad - Scientists here have helped the quota rate, which is fair enough.

Dr WOODRUFF - No. You get the answer to the questions that you ask. It has been very clear that the impact on our rocky reefs and consequently on the rock lobster fisheries, of sea urchins and all the other factors, including over-fishing that has occurred at times, means that we have the need now to put in these very strong quotas.

Unless there is forward thinking from this minister and the Government, I am afraid for the rock lobster industry and for all the other fisheries in Tasmania that we are going to be in a situation where nature will decide what happens. We do not get to decide whether there are rock lobsters. It is not up to us. You cannot just buy them. They grow in the ocean. They are affected by warming waters, by feral species and they are affected by being overtaken and over-fished at the times when there are not enough juveniles and older lobsters in the population to successfully reproduce to the numbers that we are used to. We have to reduce. That is what nature is telling us in this industry. The Government is belatedly catching up with quotas and rebuilding targets and all the other things the minister talked about such as regional size limits, but that is a last-minute last-ditch effort to try to keep control of an industry, which the Government is failing.

Time expired.

[11.50 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the rock lobster industry is very important, especially for our regional communities. We have a government that is proposing a very significant change to the rock lobster regulations that will have a big impact on regional communities. We have been highlighting that for a number of weeks now with questions in question time and I find it quite insulting that the former minister for Primary Industries characterises these as trivial questions. Our shadow minister Janie Finlay, the member for Bass, has done an amazing job in connecting with rock lobster fishers all around the state and getting feedback from them about the distress that this pending decision is causing them. That is why we have been asking questions in question time.

One of the fundamental facts about parliament is that when a minister stands up and gives an answer, we have to have confidence that that answer is the truth and is exactly what the situation is. The minister characterises this as mudslinging, but we have a minister who clearly got it wrong. These are not trivial matters. The rock lobster industry needs to have faith that what comes out of the minister's mouth is indeed the truth. What we have seen over the past few weeks is a minister who, when she gets under a bit of pressure, clearly makes stuff up.

We had the embarrassing situation of a form letter that went out that included parts that were supposed to be inserted if somebody was against this proposed rule change to the 60-pot rule. The minister spoke yesterday about it, saying:

Last week you highlighted an administrative error that came out of my office and I thank you for that because I was able to pick up the phone straight away and apologise to people I had done that to and they were fantastic.

There are four individuals that the *Examiner* reports this administrative error went to. This is the important bit:

They were quite surprised that I had picked up the phone and we ended up having lovely conversations.

The issue with this is that was clearly wrong. That was clearly not the truth. That did not happen, because Ms Finlay got some very distressed calls and communications from some of these people, at least two of them, who were supposed to have got a call from the minister, and apparently the minister picked up the phone and they ended up having lovely conversations. This is clearly not true. It did not happen.

The minister came to the lectern today, a day later, and responded that that was in error and that it had actually been someone from her office who had made the calls to at least these two individuals. It is clearly wrong when a minister does not take the opportunity to update the House and to reflect on an answer to a question and realise they might have got something wrong. There are opportunities for that minister to come back into this House and update the House on that error. That is the standard practice. The standard practice is not correcting the record when you have been caught out. That undermines the confidence of the parliament. It undermines the confidence of the public, including the rock lobster fishers, that when the minister is responding to the concerns of the rock lobster industry, how do they know now that the minister is going to provide a truthful answer, given that only under questioning did she admit that she had made an error? She had got it wrong. She clearly made stuff up and that begs the question, what other stuff has she made up?

The minister talked about going down to the wharves and waiting for fishing boats to come in. Who has she spoken to? The reason we ask that is because we cannot find anybody that she did speak to. Was that the truth as well? This is very concerning for the rock lobster fishers because this is a significant change. The minister is coming into this place detailing that she has consulted, yet when we pry into the details we find the answers wanting, because she clearly got it wrong. She made something up yesterday and made it sound like she was a great minister for picking up the phone when she clearly had not. What are rock lobster fishers supposed to think about that when the minister is clearly making stuff up?

The proposed rule changes to increase the area where the maximum number of 60 pots can be used and carried by commercial vessels is a significant change because it means that the bigger players can come in and smash areas where previously they would not have gone, because it was inefficient. I know that the Government is pushing this idea of efficiency, but these are areas that were previously, in effect, farmed by the local fishers who know the areas and manage them between themselves and keep the catches sustained.

What we will end up with is the same thing that we see in the abalone industry, where you get this a pulse fishing effect where the big ships will come in and smash an area. We already have catch caps in the north-east and the east. The last thing that we want is catch caps in other areas. This is a significant change that is causing some distress to rock lobster fishers. We had three days on King Island, and Ms Finlay and other Labor members, including myself, Leader Rebecca White and Anita Dow spoke with some of these rock lobster fishers, and they are distressed about this change.

This will be a significant to their regions, their regional economies and to their industry. It does not just affect them, it affects everybody involved - their families, the people they buy diesel from, the people who supply them with product, and in an area like King Island you take that money out of the community and it makes a big difference.

That is why this is such a significant issue and that is why those rock lobster fishers, and indeed the Parliament of Tasmania, needs to have confidence that when a minister steps up to the lectern to give an answer about consultations she is supposed to have undertaken, that it indeed happened. It should not take a question from us to get the real answer.

Time expired.

[11.57 a.m.]

Mr WOOD (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I start my contribution today by saying to the member for Bass that the integrity of the minister, Ms Palmer, should not be in question here. We all know the marvellous, honest person that Ms Palmer is. To call into question her integrity in this place -

Dr Broad - Details matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr WOOD - is unbelievable. Tasmania's highly sought-after Southern Rock Lobster fishery is a major Tasmanian seafood sector, providing significant benefits for the commercial fishery. It is a highly popular, iconic recreational fishery and an important Aboriginal cultural fishery.

Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania have been undertaking consultation on two aspects of the rock lobster fishery. The first relates to the statutory rules that apply to the rock lobster fishery and the second relates to the future management operations for the fishery on the east coast.

The existing rules that apply to our rock lobster fishery are due to expire in November this year and it is a legislative requirement that they be remade. The department has been consulting on proposed changes to those rules in recent months. The proposals include some key changes, including regional size limits to better align size limits to growth and maturity by area and provide increased resilience. The proposal also seeks to introduce vessel monitoring systems on all commercial rock lobster vessels.

The 60-day statutory public consultation process on the proposed changes to rules ended on 30 May 2022. I would like to thank, on behalf of the Government, all respondents who have taken the time to lodge a submission for more voices, because the more voices that are heard the better. The rules must be remade by 1 November 2022, and the Government considers a report on all submissions and recommendations from NRE Tasmania -

Time expired.

Matter noted.

MOTION

State Service - Wage Negotiations - Motion Negatived

[12.00 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I indicate from the outset that a vote will be required.

I move - that the House:

- (1) Notes -
 - (a) workers across a number of core State Government services including healthcare, education, child safety and emergency services have commenced, or are soon to commence, industrial action in protest of their treatment by the Government;
 - (b) the Government's current wages position will deliver a real pay cut to tens of thousands of Tasmanian public sector workers; and
 - (c) Tasmania's health professionals, teachers and firefighters are some of the lowest paid workers in their careers in the country.
- (2) Recognises -
 - (a) the Tasmanian community depend on the services that the Government provides and it is important that those services are delivered by professional and skilled public sector workers; and
 - (b) that public sector workers deserve so much more than platitudes and words of appreciation from this Government.
- (3) Acknowledges that staff shortages continue to impact many key government services, which is exacerbated by staff becoming over-worked and under-valued.
- (4) Commends the hard work of Tasmania's public sector workers who have faced unprecedented challenges in continuing to deliver core government services through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (5) Calls on the Government -
 - (a) to undertake wage negotiations in a good faith and ensure issues such as safe workplaces and job security are addressed; and

- (b) to commit to a pathway to achieve competitive public sector wage parity during the current enterprise bargaining negotiations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the motion in and of itself tries to bring together in a concise way the challenge that this Government faces and the Tasmanian community faces in responding to what is a major issue across our state.

I know in some quarters, it is very easy to criticise public sector workers. Public sector workers are sometimes hidden from the view of the community and in some forums and in some places they become a bit of a whipping person for the community to blame - someone to blame or someone to denigrate. However, we know the public sector workers across the entire public service play such an important role in ensuring that our community functions.

I liken the issue around wages and conditions and how we treat our public sector workers to the warning that you get when you get the speech from the flight attendants when you fly. They basically say if we lose oxygen and the oxygen mask falls down, please fit it to your face first before the parent fits it to the face of the child. Look after yourself first because if you are in trouble, you cannot look after your children, or the people who need your assistance. I compare that to the role of the public service, which is to support our community, and if we do not support the workers who deliver essential public services, who suffers? The community suffers.

Over the past two or three years, during the pandemic, we have seen the importance of a good high quality, skilled, committed public sector workers, diligently going about their work, providing not only support but also key services at acute times that the community relies heavily on. It is the fundamental role of the state Government to ensure that the services across Health, Education, in our national parks, in Service Tasmania provide good quality service. From a simple task of getting a licence to being confronted with an unfortunate circumstance if you are in the emergency department of a hospital or your child is going through some challenges at school, you rely on public sector workers to deliver good quality support to you and your family.

I challenge any Tasmanian to think of a day or a moment in your life where you have not relied on a public sector worker to look after you. Some friends have gone through a very tragic time in the last few days in their family and they have relied heavily on paramedics and health professionals in assisting them to get through that circumstance. When you are at your most vulnerable as a person or as a family, who is there to support you? Tasmanian public sector workers. If we do not look after them we cannot look after the state so that is the key message in terms of how we value our public sector workers.

We know that we have a number of our public sector workers taking industrial action against this Government. When you listen to them and hear their stories about some of the challenges they face, there are legitimate concerns. We know, from time to time, there will always be some tension around industrial negotiations.

As far as the eye can see, across the public sector, across the state, you see workers standing up together, taking legitimate industrial action for just causes. We have some of the lowest paid teachers and educators in the country, some of the lowest paid firefighters in the

country, we have some of the lowest paid nurses in the country and we have some of the lowest paid health professionals in the country. That is not a sustainable position.

Going back to my analogy, if you cannot have the oxygen to look after other people, then people will suffer. If we are undermining our public sector workforce by not valuing them, by not paying them competitively to either the private sector or to mainland and other states' public service workers, you undermine the Government's ability to deliver the services.

Nurses and midwives walked off the job in each of Tasmania's major hospitals, the Royal Hobart Hospital, Launceston General Hospital and the Mersey in recent weeks. Last week paramedics walked off the job. While looking at the footage of paramedics walking up the ramp, which is usually chock full of ambulance vehicles, I could not recall a time in my adult life in Tasmania where I have seen paramedics walk off the job. Firefighters are currently taking industrial action to try to get negotiations going. The Government is refusing to negotiate with them, despite people believing that 'we put a fair offer on the table'.

The misinformation that was circulated by the minister in question time yesterday, around offers being presented to them, is not appropriate and it is not in good faith negotiations. Firefighters are having to write on their appliances to send a message to the community. These things do not happen because people are a little bit grumpy. They happen because they are frustrated and they are at their wit's end. They happen because the Government is not listening.

Teachers and support staff walked off the job at Launceston College recently citing the Government's refusal to address the unfolding crisis in the education sector with critical staff shortages skewered by low pay. More industrial action in the public education sectors is most likely to follow.

Today and last week we had child safety officers working at the soon-to-be abolished Department of Communities. They are taking industrial action. Chronic under resourcing has led to an inability to attract and retain staff which has resulted in over 200 at-risk children being unable to access a child safety officer, according to the report that was leaked. In the north-west of the state 70 per cent vacancy rate for child safety officers lays bare this recruitment and retention challenge.

There has been a surge in psychological injury claims in the Tasmanian public sector workforce. We saw in the budget last year that it forced the Government to chip in an extra \$105 million to the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund.

If you talk to these workers across the public sector, they are not trouble makers, they are not radical people; these are nurses, teachers, firefighters. They are people who are committed to their careers and their professions and the delivery of high-quality service to their community. They are not radicalised members of our community. They are passionate public sector workers who deserve respect.

The problem with this Government is wage austerity. Again, there is no blank cheque. I understand that, but the cost to the Tasmanian people by undermining public services, by having chronic and systemic failure in many of our key issues, is more expensive for the community. The cost borne by the Government and the community is far greater than coming to terms with a fair wage parity argument, decent conditions and secure jobs. It is not just about the pay, it is about the kind of jobs you build in the public sector that will attract people

to work in the public sector as opposed to going to other states. We know other states are throwing bonuses around and, in some cases, \$20 000 to \$30 000 more in annual wages. If you do not create those good jobs you cannot deliver the crucial services. The cost to the Government is significant and the cost to the community and the people across our state, particularly in regional areas, is profound. If you do not deal with this you have a problem. It is more expensive.

We know for the last 12 years or so there has been a policy of wage austerity. For a period of time a workforce can accept that and unions in good faith accepted wage austerity because of the state of the Tasmanian budget, but at some stage it gets to breaking point where you need to recognise and acknowledge as a matter of priority that the Government needs to respond and deal with it because it will create catastrophic failure of delivery of services, and we are seeing that.

I have a history of this in representing public sector workers along with other public sector unions in my time in my previous role in the trade union movement. I remember negotiating with the Labor governments which was not easy. It was pretty tough. We took industrial action but again we were never frozen out of the table. The minister for Emergency Services claimed in parliament recently that the negotiations are at arm's length. With the Labor government I dealt and negotiated with, and even previous Liberal governments in the late 1990s, at no stage did they say it was at arm's length from government and not their role.

Whilst the ministers and the government members of the day may not always have been at the table, they eventually got there, but the people at the table always spoke with the authority, knowing full well that they carried the responsibility of the government's position of the day and the government was very clear about its accountability in that role. It did not contract it out or absolve its responsibility ultimately by saying, 'It is at arm's length, it has little or nothing to do with us; we'll sort that out later and it is a matter for the departments'. That is clearly not an appropriate way to negotiate.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s the issue of pay parity was a challenge for Tasmanian workers for many years, because it has always been said that in Tassie you have cheap housing, it is a good place to live, the cost of living is much lower and that is a part of the benefit of being in Tasmania and therefore the wages do not necessarily need to be comparable to either the private sector or our mainland counterparts. We know that is no longer the case with rental affordability, with housing affordability, with inflation going through the roof and the cost of day-to-day living in Tasmania, which is comparable if not in excess of some of our capital cities. It is no longer acceptable to say that there is a Tasmanian discount for Tasmanian workers, if that was ever acceptable, but that was an argument that was thrown by previous governments of both colours. I have never really accepted that but the underlying principle of that defence argument is no longer sustainable because the cost of living is so tough in Tasmania.

In coming to government in 1998, the incoming Labor government at the time inherited significant debt from the previous Liberal government and during that time, in negotiations that I was involved with the government of the time, issues such as wage parity were on the table but there was an acknowledgment that there needed to be a period of time of budget repair. At some stage, however, they knew that they were getting to a point where critical service delivery, particularly in our education and health professional sectors, was coming to a point where it would break, so the government had to act.

In negotiations around 2004, the issue of wage parity was accepted by the government and negotiations and agreements across elements of the public sector were signed up to. There were some significant wage increases because it was catch-up - a massive catch-up in some professions - for our correctional officers, police, firefighters and nurses as well from memory. A whole range of professions had a massive catch-up because of the lack of wage equity and an equitable wage outcome in the previous years.

The government knew they had to respond to this. It was probably before time. They argued pretty heavily that they needed more time but, at the end of the day, I think they accepted the arguments of workers in the public sector and the unions that represented those workers that unless they invested in their workforce there would be a crucial moment - a collapsing moment - in service delivery. They got ahead of it and responded with good wage increases and an agreement to a pathway to pay parity and linking wage outcomes and salaries to that of comparable public sector mainland occupations.

It was not at the top level, it was not the highest paid in the country, it was a mid-band point - I think that is an industrial term - in terms of the classification structures; there was an agreement around the mid-band. That was maintained until we hit the time after the global financial crisis where the Tasmanian budget was under pressure and, in agreement with unions, there was wage restraint shown.

Again, those times have gone. I recall sitting in this place listening to the previous treasurer, the former member for Bass, Mr Gutwein, talking about the golden years - 'We have done the hard work and these are the golden years. This is the time where we can invest in Tasmanians and in the Tasmanian community'. At no stage did the then treasurer acknowledge the challenge of this growing problem and concern. I am sure Treasury would have been able to have predict to say, 'Unless you start to deal with wage parity, unless you start to deal with the kind of decent jobs you need to create in the public sector, there is going to be a catastrophic failure of service delivery'. That was four years ago.

Yes, there is context to the pandemic. We acknowledge that the Government is taking on more debt. We acknowledge budgets and the budget position has to be sustainable, but that does not divorce you from the challenge you face when you are having catastrophic failure of service delivery. This is a matter of decision and choice for the Tasmanian Government today. We are seeing that catastrophic service delivery failure in our health system, we are seeing challenges in our child protection system, we are seeing challenges in our education system, we are seeing firefighters challenged as the lowest paid in the country. At the end of the day, that is an unsustainable position for the Government to place their workforce in.

The motion says very clearly that this is not about a step, jump and a major hit in one budget year. This is about calling on the Government to agree to a pathway to wage parity, a pathway to security for not only those workers but true value for the work and service they provide to the Tasmanian community. A commitment to that pathway does two things. It says to the people that currently work for you: 'We value your work, the Tasmanian community values your work, we value you as an individual contributing to Tasmania'.

It also speaks to those workers who look to Tasmania, and the Government has to attract workers off-island, particularly professionals in a range of occupations. You look off-island to attract them to Tasmania. What you are saying to them is: 'Yes, you may have to take a

short-term pay cut to come to Tasmania. It is a beautiful place. It is a great community. Come here because we have committed to a pathway to parity, so you will not be punished economically for moving to Tasmania and providing your skills, your professionalism and all of your corporate knowledge in support of the Tasmanian community.'

The motion also talks about the kind of jobs, safe jobs and job security. We are hearing stories of minimum-hour contracts across the public sector, contracts that barely reach 12 months. You hear stories of people who are put on endless rolling 12-month contracts. How can they provide for their family and make lifelong decisions in terms of home loans, car loans, putting down roots in this place, if they are not sure about their future economic prosperity and getting a secure job?

If the work is there - and clearly by their work pattern the work is there - they are secure jobs. Why would you not want to give it to those people? We know it is good for the economy. A good strong public sector workforce which has secure jobs, guarantees of work and decent, equitable wages and conditions means we have a stronger economy because they have the confidence to spend and invest in Tasmania, to live and grow families in Tasmania and have a fulfilling life. It is not just good policy in terms of your own workforce, it is excellent policy in terms of the Tasmanian economy.

I only have an hour and I have a fair bit of time to go. I have spoken now for just over 20 minutes. I know other members will want to speak. If there is any time left, I will sum up. I have made the argument.

This is a motion that should be supported by the Government and members in this House because public sector workers deserve more than they are getting from the Government today. You need to bargain in good faith. You need to acknowledge that unless you are in the ballpark of wages and conditions, you lose. You lose out to people leaving; you lose out to people not coming here and other states will just pick the eyes out of our great workforce. We are seeing it in education and health, and we will see it across other professions as well.

It is a challenge for the Government. You cannot kick it down the road when you have so many public sector workers, across so many professions, now concurrently taking industrial action. It is not a one-off. It is not just a grumpy bunch of workers in one area, as some people may dismiss them, which we can find a way to resolve. This is public sector-wide now.

We have seen the value of good public sector workers delivering great services. I have seen it all my life but it has been crystal-clear in the minds of Tasmanians through the pandemic times. They have seen nurses, health professionals, teachers, cleaners, child protection workers, our first responders all step up in the most extraordinary of times. To deny them fair wages and conditions and job security is a slap in the face to not only those workers but to the tens of thousands of Tasmanians who rely on and value public sector workers in Tasmania.

Pay parity is good policy. It is good workforce policy, good economic policy, it is good for the state and I urge the House to support this motion.

[12.24 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will make a brief contribution because I hope to hear from the Treasurer, who certainly did not leap to his feet after Mr O'Byrne's contribution. I am sure Ms White will want to say a few words too.

The Greens support Mr O'Byrne's motion because it is fundamental common sense and it acknowledges that our nurses, firefighters, teachers, child safety workers who are striking today, are the glue that holds our society together every day.

I am certain that every minister in government who works with public servants in their portfolios recognises the quality of the people we have here in the State Service and in our essential services. We often hear government ministers acknowledge the great work of the public servants who work to them and, more importantly, work to the people of Tasmania.

It is important that we do not feed these Tasmanians lip service. There must be evidence of commitment and substantial effort on Government's part to make sure that our state servants, essential services workers, have fair pay, are moving towards pay parity with the mainland, have good, workable conditions, unlike the nurses who have been forced, in a very co-ordinated and safe way, to walk off the job because their working conditions have become near-impossible. A situation that was bad before COVID-19 is compounded now.

This Government has spot fires going off across the industrial landscape - nurses, firefighters, child safety workers, teachers. I cannot quite get to the bottom of why, except an unwillingness to listen, perhaps. There is deep disappointment and, whether it is true or not, a feeling that they are undervalued by Government, which counts on them in times of crisis and otherwise, but at this point is not showing enough signs of approaching negotiations in good faith.

The Community and Public Sector Union put out an excellent publication, which was launched in this building last week, *100 Plans for a Better State Service*. Tasmanians still need a pay rise. I will read into the *Hansard* what some of the CPSU members, at least, are saying:

It is time for us Tasmanian workers to get the same work agreements as our mainland counterparts. We are needed in the classroom. We are specialists in our field. We break our back and hearts to give the children of the future our best so they can become custodians of this great country.

That is a CPSU member who works in our public schools.

Another member, who works in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, said:

Sad that we are not respected by the Government and that even keeping up with CPI is such a huge battle. We are all tired, exhausted, and over it with the past few years of COVID-19 related projects and intense workload.

From the Department of Justice:

Our wages are slipping behind other states while they do more to retain and attract their staff. We need parity with the mainland or else Tasmania will be the low-wage, high-cost state.

Another schools member:

We need to make the awards more consistent in their entitlements. Linking entitlements across all awards would assist. This includes how public holidays are paid for staff who work on them, how leave is accrued, how carers leave can be accessed, et cetera.

We also need to look at models to identify staffing requirements for support staff, instead of relying on successful business cases before additional staff are employed.

In the Child Safety Service, the workers of whom for many years have been savagely under-resourced and live with a level of vicarious trauma through their work that I think many people in this place would find hard to fathom and certainly not want to live with. From a Child Safety Service CPSU member:

The past couple of years have been difficult with the pandemic and we have been hit in the hip pocket, as well as mentally and socially. We should be adequately rewarded for doing the hard yards and the Government must not be stingy.

An employee in the Premier's Department:

We live in a world of digital communication and I feel that it should not be up to the employer to tell me whether I need to be sitting at a desk in the office or working from a coffee shop, as long as I am meeting my work obligations.

As we know, the pandemic changed the way we see work and opened our eyes to what is possible. I have heard from a number of people who work in government agencies who are immunocompromised or clinically vulnerable or live with a disability, who have asked if their employer, the secretary, the department, can allow them to work from home and some have got a flat 'no' and for others it has been a battle just to access that right - and I think it is a right - to work safely during a pandemic.

There are mixed signals coming from Government, a government that relies on and knows how reliant it is on quality state servants and people who work in our essential services, and yet for some reason is resistant to sitting down and having those conversations with the representatives of workers in the unions. I am sure there are budgetary challenges for the Government. The pandemic response was extremely expensive. We understand that, but investing in your public servants, investing in the pay and conditions of your essential workers, is a very solid investment.

It has economic and social benefits that are enormous, so we are very comfortable supporting Mr O'Byrne's motion and thank him for bringing it on.

[12.32 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Government to respond to Mr O'Byrne's motion, the member for Franklin, and thank him for bringing it forward. I will explain during my contribution why the Government does not support the motion he has put forward, and hope to make some sense of that for the House. Quite clearly I want to associate myself with much of the debate that has already taken place

this afternoon, in particular the very strong view that our Government has taken to acknowledge and pay tribute and thanks to our many state-employed public servants who, right across the policy and portfolio spectrum of our Government, have worked so hard alongside us to deliver some great outcomes for our beautiful state.

The evidence is really clear, whether it is in health or in education or in my portfolio areas, for example, in State Growth or Treasury. In my case, speaking for myself as a minister with eight years' experience, it has been fantastic working with senior public servants who do a great job of getting the very best out of their teams and workforces in all parts of Tasmania. It is not a platitude to express things like that and it should not be ridiculed and cast down.

I also note that it can be a cheap shot that is offered by individuals, in particular the Leader of the Opposition who has taken shots at the Health minister and Premier and senior health staff who want to make small, humane gestures of thanks like morning teas for their staff. We should see that sort of approach being supported and encouraged.

Mr O'Byrne has been an employer. I guarantee he has put on morning and afternoon teas for his staff after a significant achievement, for example, or where there has been some tragedy, or where somebody has needed support. It is the sort of thing a good employer should do. Rather than ridiculing it, as we have seen, cheap shots do not actually make for workforce harmony. I make those brief comments and say that the Government has a lot on its hands.

It is true that we have budgeted for 2.5 per cent indexation in the budget previously, and I hope members will remember the budget has provided for 2.25 per cent increments. That is not the wages policy but it is the funding that the House and the parliament has provided through the appropriation bills to give to the agencies to then run their departments. Of course the biggest share or component of any agencies budget is salaries and wages that are paid to employees and their range of entitlements, including superannuation.

The Government is committed to ensuring that we negotiate with our workforce on behalf of the taxpayers of Tasmania and that is how it should be. In so doing, the way we conduct it is that we have negotiating teams on behalf of each agency depending on the employee group with their respective union. Not all employees are union members it has to be said. However, in our industrial relations framework in Tasmania, the unions are nominated as the partner with which to make agreements for future setting of pay rises. That is the case and we are embarking now on the process of updating agreements that are expiring at different dates.

Most public servants achieved a pay rise last December as per their various agreements, although not in all cases. I am not going to try to go through them individually but most of those pay increments in December were 2.35 per cent. Notably, the firefighters have not been able to receive the pay rise that nominally they would have expected at that time because the Government and that union have not been able to make an agreement. What this points to is the reality that in the absence of an agreement you cannot move forward. It takes two to tango, as they say, and it takes goodwill on all sides. In the main, in my experience there is plenty of goodwill from government and unions bargaining on behalf of their members.

I intend to speak plainly about this. It is no surprise that when agreements are expiring or have expired you start to see public advocacy, lobbying and even industrial action from unions that want to make as much noise in the media and get attention to try to force the Government to a stronger negotiated outcome for their members. Mr O'Byrne has made a

career out of it. That is what union delegates and organisers are paid to do; that is the system. It is therefore not a great surprise that you will start to see more of this as you see a lot of agreements expiring during the course of this year and as we nominally look to approximately December when you would expect the next pay increment to be provided.

We need to see agreements made. The Government and the union could make as much noise as they want but in the absence of an agreement there is no path forward. That is why the Government wants to continue to conduct ourselves professionally and diligently in this matter and not bring a negotiation that should happen quite properly and in goodwill at the negotiating table onto the Floor of this House, nor in the newspapers. It is not where those negotiations can and should take place.

I note as well that the member who moved this motion has been a minister in a government. Prior to being in parliament he was a union organiser and secretary. In government he has been on the executive side of the table. It is not all as easy as he made out in his earlier contribution, because Mr O'Byrne was part of a government that had to negotiate with quite a range of unions and workforce representatives. In terms of pay parity, Mr O'Byrne was part of a government that ended pay parity for Tasmanian teachers. There was an agreement in place between the government of the day and the teachers' union, the AEU, and Mr O'Byrne was part of a government and Cabinet that for whatever reason - I was not privy to their private conversations in their public sector industrial relations or the Cabinet - ended that parity. Mr O'Byrne did not mention that in his contribution.

Mr O'Byrne - I did. I talked about austerity in the agreements.

Mr FERGUSON - You did not mention why you ended it, though. You talked about how it had been struck in the early 2000s but you did not mention that you ended it.

Mr O'Byrne - That is not true.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr O'Byrne, I say to you with considerable respect, I think that reflects that every government has to do what we are now doing. I am trying to be fair and reasonable here. This Government is having to work with our counterparts and the unions to find an agreement which is affordable. To your credit at least, Mr O'Byrne, you did go to this point and so did Ms O'Connor. Mr O'Byrne you said, and I quote you: 'There is no blank cheque'. However, part (5)(b) of your motion really is, to me, language that approaches blank cheque writing.

You also said: 'The Budget has to be sustainable'. I agree with you. The Budget does need to be sustainable. I hope I do not need to point out to the House that we are in deficit right now. This financial year, the Budget is more than \$400 million forecast deficit. We were really pleased with the preliminary outcomes report for 2021-22, which saw an improvement largely based off a revenue uplift in the previous financial year but we are forecast to be in deficit with net debt, which Dr Broad does raise from time to time. In the next financial year, we are forecast to have a \$19 million operational surplus. When you reflect on that, it points to the problem that is raised in this House by the Opposition who are in administration right now.

Dr Broad uses questions and comments to imply that the Government should spend less but his Leader asks questions and makes comments that imply that we should spend more.

Dr Broad - It is about priorities.

Mr FERGUSON - Sorry, did you say it is about priorities?

Dr Broad - Yes.

Mr FERGUSON - Dr Broad, you are in no position to say that because you refuse to publish an alternative budget. The member who has left the Chamber, Ms O'Connor, has published an alternative Budget.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Dr Broad, if you do not have a contribution to make, please do not interrupt. It is rude.

I looked at the Greens' alternative budget and there is no mention of the Greens lifting the government allocation to agencies of their indexation above our 2.5 per cent. No mention of pay, no mention of wage, no mention of agreement, no mention of negotiation. The Greens were silent on this in their alternative budget, only to accept the Government's budgeted amounts.

Previously, I have made it clear that while we are committed to negotiating with unions in the upcoming bargaining round in good faith, we do acknowledge the need for wage increases. It is my view, it is my attitude, that we want to see our state Government employees provided with a wage rise. Also, we recognise quite fully, and the record reflects this, that there are pressures on our workforce that is resulting in a compound of a few issues, one of which is on a very low level of unemployment has led to a situation where most economists describe Australia, and Tasmania, as experiencing full employment. That is a good thing in respect of people being looked after with their household budgets but it is a challenge when it comes to recruitment. Every business is facing that and the Government, from time to time, faces the same. However, I can say that we have been very successful because the record demonstrates that we have employed thousands of extra employees in our state public service under our Government.

Wage increases must also be reasonable and sustainable for our state going forward. That was the word that Mr O'Byrne used. I remind members that the reality of life is you can move, support and speak to any motion that you care to, but if you apply a 1 per cent increase in wages above the Government's indexation of 2.5 per cent - I am being very transparent about this - you need to put \$396 million onto the Government's income and expend statement over the Budget and forward Estimates.

That is the cost. You might legitimately argue, Mr O'Byrne, that you would like to see it to be 3.5 per cent. I dare say you would like to go higher. However, if you said 1 per cent extra, you would need to be prepared to back yourself and say, 'I accept that the Government should spend a further \$396 million'.

The Labor Party - and I do not think Mr O'Byrne has said this, he may have - has said the Government is going to give workers a real wage cut. What does that imply when Ms White, Ms Dow and others say that? I do not think I have heard Dr Broad say it. He may have.

If you are going to challenge the Government that this is unacceptable, then what you are saying is that the Government wages policy should be between 5 and 6 per cent. Remember, for every 1 per cent above 2.5 per cent, you have to put \$400 million of government expenditure against your claim. Clearly, you are now speaking circa \$1.5 billion. If, from the Labor Party's point of view, you are saying that government wages should keep up with inflation, what you are actually saying is we want to see the Government spend a lot more money than the Budget can provide. What would that mean? I hope it would be self-evident. We would have to borrow to pay for wages in that scenario. I put it to you that that is not sustainable management of the Budget. Even the federal Government, which is now a Labor government, has admitted that it cannot and will not be funding its public servants' wages to keep up with inflation.

It is important then that we find a balance and that we find a way forward but you do not negotiate wage rises on the floor of the House of Assembly. I still look forward to hearing what the Labor Leader will have to say about this because they have not been prepared to produce an alternative costed budget. It is important that if you want to nominate a percentage amount, you need to allocate the dollars as well.

Of course, the Government will be doing everything that we can to negotiate in good faith. What that means is that you are prepared to sit down, accept a log of claims, take it away, examine it and, ultimately, make an offer. That is the way we are engaging right now and that is the way it should be.

Importantly, there is a long history of wage negotiation in Tasmania. To put it into some perspective, the Government does not accept the claims that are being made by Mr O'Byrne in his motion, in particular, where he talks about the Government wanting to deliver a real pay cut. He talks about the Government in terms of our support for our employees - he describes those as platitudes. I do not believe that any Government, Labor or Liberal, when in government ever supported a policy of public sector wage parity without looking at the impact on the Budget because somebody has to pay.

When you negotiate properly, it also means that you ask the union to come to the table and you lay aside your industrial action in a real negotiation. That is how it works. I believe it has always been that way. That is one of the preconditions of a negotiation; that you have a genuine sense of goodwill. It also means that the Government does and should make offers. An offer being made to the union does not mean that the union members get to vote on it, unless the union executive decides that they can have a vote on it. That is something best worked through in a confidential process because the negotiations are intended to be confidential to allow good people to find common ground as much as possible.

Our Budget does provide for an increased level of indexation than was the case last year. In previous years we have made payments to our employees, higher than the prevailing inflation rates at the time. We have not crowed about that because we have not ever, I think, linked the two. We are going through extraordinary times now, in the recovery from the pandemic. There are many factors globally and domestically that have led to an increase in the inflation rate for Australians and for Tasmanians. While we will do everything we can to provide fair wage rises for our workers that we want to provide an increase to, it obviously has to be affordable. That it has to be affordable for our state ought to be something that we could agree on in this House. Clearly, members will agree, even if they do not say it, that is a challenge to be met.

That is the reality of being in government, rather than the convenience of spectators and commentators, including the Opposition, who have, up until this date, not been prepared to put a percentage figure out there and have not been prepared to put a dollar amount next to it in terms of an alternative Budget.

Mr Speaker, I agree and the Government agrees with the part of the motion that calls on the Government to undertake wage negotiation in good faith. That is our intention presently and going forward.

For the reasons I have outlined in my address, we will not be supporting this motion as it is worded. We will continue to work as best we can to provide our employees with competitive pay rates that the state is able to afford.

[12.50 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I indicate on behalf of the Labor Party that we will be supporting the motion moved by Mr O'Byrne, member for Franklin.

I am, unfortunately, not surprised by the response from the Government in their opposition to this motion. It is entirely predictable and it illustrates again their lack of imagination when considering how they appropriately remunerate public sector workers, who are the essential workers who deliver our essential services.

The questions must be asked of the Government: who do they think are going to deliver these services if they do not pay people properly? We are already seeing enormous vacancies across the State Service. We are seeing people quit.

The Premier has received a number of letters now from State Service employees. I have seen paramedics, nurses and child safety officers write to him, outlining the stress they are under, the concern they have for their ability to deliver services safely, the concern they have about being safe at work and calling on the Government to properly support and resource them. This includes paying them a wage that keeps up with the cost of living because the alternative is that they are going to quit. We are seeing that already.

The Government is creating a false economy. The Treasurer claims he cannot afford to pay people but if you do not pay people, you will have no one to deliver those public services. This is just another example of the Government's failure to get the basics right. They cannot understand that none of those things exist without people and, if you do not respect them and pay them in a way that recognises their value, and helps them pay their bills, you will lose them.

You have already outlined that economists are declaring we are, essentially, at full employment. There is so much competition for workers across the Australian economy that Tasmania is losing people at a rapid rate. The Victorian, New South Wales and ACT governments - governments of every other stripe across the Australian continent - are crying out for workers and enticing them with packages that are far more attractive than what this Government is coming up with.

Their lack of imagination and lack of urgency to address this issue is not only putting at risk our current workers in the State Service and putting them under enormous pressure - we are seeing that with the public statements they are making, which of itself is quite extraordinary

- but it is also putting at risk our ability to deliver essential services because we are not going to have the people left to do that.

The Government fails to think about the way it could address some of these challenges by looking at how we are currently spending money. There was \$33 million spent on paying nurses overtime last financial year. The number of shifts nurses are currently doing above and beyond what they are rostered to do to try and fill the gaps is extraordinary. They are under so much pressure. If the member is oblivious to that, I encourage any member of this House to have a look at the ANMF Facebook page. Every week they publish exactly what is happening with shifts across this state. In the past month or so there has been an uplift in the number of nurses working overtime and double shifts. That costs the state millions of dollars, let alone the mental health and stress impact on those workers. The Government could use that money to properly recruit and properly pay the staff we have in Tasmania.

We have also seen evidence that came to light through Estimates that showed ramping is costing an extra \$1 million a year, paying paramedics to be on the ramp to look after patients in an environment that is completely unfit for looking after patients. We all heard the harrowing story recently where a patient died in the Launceston General Hospital ramped for seven hours.

These are the human consequences of the Government's failure to get the basics right, to recognise that if they do not properly reward, remunerate and respect their workforce, they are not going to retain them.

This Government has now set up its own razor gang. It will be the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the House and the Attorney-General making decisions about what is in the upcoming state Budget. They are making those decisions based on what the Treasurer told us in the speech he gave when he delivered the Budget. The Treasury is being set up to have a look at debt reduction strategies. How are you going to manage that debt forecast, which in the medium to long term is pretty horrific?

This is a Government that fails to get the basics right. It cannot manage its budget and it cannot manage the Public Service. That is clear for everybody to see. They are failing to recognise that unless you pay your essential workers, you do not have essential services.

Last week there was a great opportunity for members in this House to meet with some of those workers here in the reception room. The CPSU organised it at the lunch break, so it was possible for every single member to attend, to go and hear from some of those workers about the issues they are seeing in their workplace, the challenges they have identified and the solutions they have brought to the Government in their log of claims to deal with some of the pressures across the Tasmanian State Service: to improve it, make it safer, make it a better place to work, to help provide better outcomes for the Tasmanian community, particularly in some of those core people-facing services like child safety, health and education.

Not a single member from the Liberal Government went. Not a single member bothered to go in their lunch break to hear from those workers. That is so disrespectful. Those workers had given up their time. Some had driven quite a long way to come to Parliament House to meet with their elected representatives. We are elected on their behalf, after all, to make decisions. We are not an executive government but you are. You should have been there because you are the ones who are striking those deals right now about how much they will be paid. You are making judgments about how much they are worth and how they will be

resourced and supported to do the job of supporting our community and economy. Not a single one of the Government went to speak to them. Talk about weak leadership from the Premier.

It would have been a much better sign from this Government and this Premier if they had taken the time to go and meet with some of those workers to understand how they could work together collaboratively to negotiate agreed outcomes that are in the best interests of our State Service employees and our state.

I have seen the hard work of Tasmania's public sector workers over my lifetime. I am a product of public education. I am very proud to have been able to go through the public education system in this state and very grateful for the work of those educators, very grateful for the support of our health staff. I am a mum of two kids who have been able to benefit from access to services like the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) program.

I am very thankful for the work of our fires and police officers. I saw the way they supported the Dunalley community when the fires ravaged that area in 2013. I have seen incredible acts of bravery and heard incredible stories of anguish from paramedics, child safety workers and nurses who are at their wits' end, struggling every single day to do their job because the environment they are working in is not supported by this Government. This Rockliff Liberal Government is failing those workers, failing to get the basics right and failing to do their job. They are failing to manage the Budget. They are failing to manage the Public Service. They are now failing to support this motion, which would have been the first step in recognising the worth of public sector workers in this state.

Mr Speaker, I reiterate our support for this motion brought forward today and again highlight the Government's failure to support it. It would have been a very good sign for them to have stepped forward to support this in the interest of explaining how they are going to help Tasmania's Public Service.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Mr SPEAKER - The result of the division is Ayes 12, Noes 12. In accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

Motion negatived.

The sitting suspended from 1.05 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY (RENTAL MARKET REFORM) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 30)

Second Reading

[2.30 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

I can indicate that we will be calling a vote at the end of Greens' private members' time on this bill.

The Residential Tenancy (Rental Market Reform) Amendment Bill 2021 makes four overdue reforms to the Residential Tenancy Act of 1997. Much like the Greens' earlier Residential Tenancy (Rent Control) Amendment Bill 2021, the bill replaces the current unworkable, unfair rent control provisions in the principal act with rent control measures similar to the model used in the Australian Capital Territory. This is tried and tested policy.

Under existing provisions, a tenant can be evicted solely on the basis that their lease has expired, commonly known as no-cause evictions. This provides a strong disincentive for tenants to assert their rights, as once the lease expires the tenant can easily be removed with no recourse available to them. Our bill removes this ground for eviction and provides greater housing security for Tasmanians who rent their homes.

We also introduce provisions that reflect the recent Victorian standards for energy efficiency. These standards apply to the replacement of any appliance, fitting or fixture that uses or supplies water, electricity or gas.

Finally, our bill requires an owner to acquire permission from the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to refuse to allow a pet to be kept on the premises, so it reverses the onus. This is also similar to provisions in the ACT legislation, again tried and tested policy that recognises the great bond between people and their pets and how important animal companions are to mental good health.

Mr Speaker, as we all know, Tasmania is currently and has been for some years in the grip of housing and homelessness crisis and soaring rents are key. During my second reading speech for the Residential Tenancy (Rent Control) Amendment Bill 2021, I pointed out that between September 2016 and September 2020, the weighted medium rent per week in Tasmania increased from \$266 to \$357, a 34 per cent increase over four years. Since then it has increased even more by a further 18 per cent to \$420 a week, and this during a pandemic.

Data from SQM Research shows that between March 2017 and March 2021, the weekly rent for houses increased by 42 per cent in Launceston, 41 per cent in Hobart and 29 per cent in Burnie. The SQM Research data also shows an increase in rental costs for units of 43 per cent in Launceston, 32 per cent in Hobart and 20 per cent in Burnie over the same period. Rents are becoming increasingly unaffordable for everyday Tasmanians.

The 2020 Rental Affordability Index produced by SGS Economics and Planning, Bendigo Bank, National Shelter and the Brotherhood of St Lawrence, found the average rental household in Greater Hobart would pay 31 per cent of its total income for a median rate dwelling. Thirty per cent is the commonly used threshold for housing stress, and this housing stress is being felt right across the island.

Opponents have claimed that a rent control model similar to the ACT's would not resolve supply issues in the rental market and would have unintended negative consequences on rental availability and affordability. This bill is not a silver bullet to the housing and rental crisis, nor is it intended to be one. The supply issues in the housing market need to be resolved with further government investment in social housing, addressing the tapped-out construction workforce and, critically, regulating short-stay accommodation. These are actions the Greens support but their absence should not be used as an excuse to avoid making fair and balanced rules in the rental market.

In terms of speculation about unintended consequences, the ACT model has operated in some forms since 1997. SQM Research data shows that in the ACT between August 2009 and March 2021, rental prices for houses increased from \$501 to \$660 a week, a 32 per cent increase over 11.5 years, while rental prices for units increased from \$372 to \$494, a 33 per cent increase over 11.5 years.

In Tasmania, rents have increased more over three years than rents in the ACT have increased in 11.5 years. The claim that this model will perversely result in increased rents is not substantiated; the evidence suggests the reverse. In terms of availability, census data shows that between 2016 and 2021 the proportion and gross number of those in the private rental market have both increased in the ACT.

Under current provisions in the Residential Tenancy Act, rents can be increased if a written residential tenancy agreement allows for an increase, or if there is no written residential tenancy agreement. This bill would allow for rent increases in the case of a fixed-term lease if the lease allows for it, or in any other case if the increase is not above CPI plus 10 per cent or is above CPI plus 10 per cent, but the agreement allows for the increase, or the tenant agrees to the increase in writing, or if the landlord applied to the commissioner and an order allowing the increase is issued. These provisions notwithstanding, under both the current and proposed arrangements, rent increases can be challenged as unreasonable by a tenant.

As it currently stands, under section 23 of the principal act a tenant may apply to the commissioner for an order that a rent increase is unreasonable. The proposed new framework has similar provisions but they are more robust. The current arrangements allow for an application at any stage during a 60-day notification period. The proposed amendments require the request to take place at least 14 days before the rent increase would come into effect. The bill also provides for rents to be frozen while an assessment takes place and contains provisions to retrospectively allow for payments to take place based on the decision of the commissioner.

The recent *Muddyman v Nest Property* decision of the Magistrates Court of Tasmania makes it clear that under the current system the burden is on a tenant to establish that a rent increase is unreasonable. The court noted:

While neither the act nor the minor civil regulations expressly allocate any burden of proof, legal or evidential, to the tenant, it was common ground that it is for the tenant to establish that the rent increase is excessive.

The model proposed by this bill provides a fairer and more considered allocation of the burden of proof. If a rent increase is below the rent increase limit that is CPI plus 10 per cent of CPI, then the burden of proof is on the tenant to prove that the increase is unreasonable. If the rent increase is above this limit then the burden of proof is on the owner.

One of the current issues with the principal act is highlighted in the *Muddyman v Nest Property* decision which notes that section 231 makes it clear that the issue is whether the rent increase is unreasonable, the issue is not whether the result in rent is unreasonable. Our bill, consistent with provisions in the Australian Capital Territory act, allows the consideration of the amount of rent payable before the proposed rent increase. This will in effect allow the question of the reasonableness of the rent after the proposed rent increase to be considered. The current provisions also only require the commissioner to have regard to the general level of rents for comparable residential premises in the locality or a similar locality, as well as any other relevant matter.

We have seen this where the commission has been asked to make a determination. The commissioner has looked at the current rate of market rents and has seen that a landlord's increase to a particular tenant's rent within the context of an overheating market is reasonable, because that is what the market currently tolerates.

While the provisions have a catch-all of any other relevant matter, the *Muddyman v Nest Property* decision makes it clear that it is up to the Commissioner or the court to determine what is relevant. The absence of a prescribed list also fails to provide a guide to tenants, owners, the Commissioner and a court on what matters may be relevant.

Under the proposed new framework, the commissioner is required to consider a range of matters including: current rent and past rent increases; costs, services and repairs provided by the owner; works carried out by the tenant; the general state of the property; rental rates for comparable premises; and any other matter the commissioner considers relevant.

The bill allows for the commissioner, on application from a tenant, to issue or refuse to issue a rent reduction order. A rent reduction order must be issued if the tenant's use or enjoyment of the premises has diminished significantly as a result of: the loss or diminished utility of a feature of the property supplied by the owner; the loss of the use of all or part of the premises; an interference with the tenant's quiet enjoyment of the premises or the tenant's ability to use the premises which has been caused by the owner/the landlord. This order can also be appealed for a fresh decision.

Under the current provisions of the Residential Tenancy Act, a tenant can be evicted solely on the grounds of lease expiration. This bill removes these grounds for eviction. A person can still be evicted after a lease expiration for any number of lawful reasons, including

any number of lease violations, or if the owner of the property simply wishes to put the property to a different use.

Under current law, if a tenant enforces their legal rights, an owner can easily evict them in retaliation at the conclusion of their lease. We know this happens. The result of this is that the current arrangements strike a poor balance between tenant and owner rights by allowing owners to effectively quash a tenant's ability to enforce their rights.

These amendments require lawful grounds for eviction to be sighted if an owner chooses not to renew a lease which could be for a range of reasons, including:

- the tenant violated the lease agreement;
- the tenant has caused nuisance at the premises that is substantial;
- the premises are being sold;
- the premises are no longer intended to be a rental premises;
- the premises are to undergo significant renovations; and
- the premises are to be used as a residence by a family member of the owner.

This still provides the owner with extensive rights to determine how they are to use their property.

In correspondence from the CEO of the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania, Mr Mark Berry, in respect of this bill, it was put to us that similar changes in residential tenancy legislation in Victoria and the ACT have seen investors not only walk but run from their investments in those areas. He claims over a 10 per cent reduction in the private rental market in the ACT.

No-cause evictions were abolished in Victoria on 29 March 2021. To quote the Homes Victoria Rental Report for the March quarter 2022:

Lending to residential property investors in Victoria was \$8.541 billion in the March quarter 2022, 50.2 per cent higher than in the March quarter 2021.

While it is true that the number of active bonds decreased in the same period, it was by less than 0.1 per cent.

As for the ACT, their bill to end no-cause evictions is still undergoing public consultation. It was a 2020 bill that ended the ability of a lease to be cancelled with 90 days notice without cause. This is not a provision the Tasmanian act allows for. The ACT act was also amended in 2017, 2018 and 2019 for a range of purposes. We do not often see amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act come into this place unless they are brought in by the Greens. While there is no data available for 2022, according to Sensis data, both the proportion and gross number of those in the private rental market have increased in the ACT.

Property sales volumes have also been increasing over this period. Put simply, there is no evidence to corroborate the claims from Mr Berry, in particular, the claim that investors are running from their investments in the ACT and Victoria. It is demonstrably false by a substantial margin.

Mr Speaker, the bill also introduces a new Part 3C to the act. These provisions effectively require an owner to acquire permission from the Tenancy Commissioner to refuse to allow a pet to be kept on the premises. This can occur if the commissioner is satisfied that one or more of these conditions applies: the premises are not suitable to keep a pet; keeping a pet on the premises would result in unreasonable damage to the premises; keeping a pet on the premises would be an unacceptable risk to public health or safety, or the owner would suffer significant hardship; and keeping a pet on the premises would be contrary to a law of the state. The commissioner may also allow for conditions to be placed on pets being kept on premises. Proposed new section 36Q makes it clear that the tenant is responsible for any repairs or additional maintenance to the premises required as a consequence of keeping a pet.

Finally, the new section 360A proposed by the bill adopts the recent Victorian Standards for energy efficiency. These standards apply to the replacement of any appliance, fitting or fixture that uses or supplies water, electricity, or gas. This is a key cost of living measure.

These standards are reasonable, and in most cases are a three-star rating under the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Scheme (WELS) for water appliances, and a two-star rating under the Australia/New Zealand Standards (ASNZS) for electrical appliances for heating. There also exists a range of exemptions including if circumstances make costs prohibitive.

I want to briefly go back to the correspondence I received from Mr Berry after speaking on ABC radio a couple of weeks ago. This letter, which arrived a few hours after I had been on *ABC Mornings*, was very unusual correspondence from a person who is leading a stakeholder organisation. To paraphrase, it basically said that our proposed amendments were ill-judged and childish and that we did not understand the real world of the rental market and how hard life can be for property owners. I did not have time to write a personal letter to Mr Berry, but I refute his accusations and his misjudging of our intent, and what seems to me, to have been a failure to read our amendment bill and its supporting material.

Mr Berry claimed that these amendments would drive more people to short-stay accommodation. It is no secret that the Greens strongly believe the short-stay market should be regulated to limit new listings in tight rental markets. We already have the highest concentration of short-stay accommodation of any Australian capital city right here in Hobart, in the middle of a housing and homelessness crisis.

Mr Berry also claims it is the purview of government to provide social housing. He apparently has not engaged with our outstanding community housing providers, who have done so much, working with government to increase the supply of quality affordable housing. This is a sentiment, of course, echoed by other people like Louise Elliot, Hobart City Council mayoral candidate from the Tasmanian Residential Property Owners Association, which let me remind the House, received \$100 000 from the Tasmanian Government apparently to work with landlords, but a year before local government elections. We still have questions about that.

Dr Woodruff - Absolutely disgraceful.

Ms O'CONNOR - Absolutely disgraceful, Dr Woodruff - \$100 000 for an organisation that had no governance structure of any robustness that we could determine. Certainly, someone who put it together is very much a representative of the propertied class and is very,

it seems to me, pro-development at any cost. Ms Elliot just serendipitously, apparently, announced her pitch for council not long after 100 000 taxpayer dollars were handed to TRPO.

To these people, the Greens say, you have constructed a convenient narrative for yourselves. Rental prices have gone out of control, meaning far more people are struggling to find affordable property than just those on the lowest of incomes. We have all met these Tasmanians, or people who have moved here from interstate, working families on median incomes who cannot find a place to call home whether they want to buy into the Tasmanian market or want to rent here. With rental costs going up and property prices soaring, many people are now unable to ever save up for and afford the same opportunities to buy a home as those of us - most of us in here - who were lucky enough to already have property before prices massively inflated. Tasmanians are being priced out of their own paradise. That is a heartbreaking truth.

I wonder if Ms Elliot and Mr Berry would have felt the same if their cost of living unreasonably skyrocketed, if food prices were to skyrocket and supermarkets told us the cost of living was not their problem, and that is what food vans are for. I wonder how they would take it. If energy and water utilities were not regulated by the Tasmanian Economic Regulator and their bills went through the roof, I wonder if they would advocate for price regulation.

We know for a fact that the tears flowed freely when their increased property values led to increased land taxes. Our hearts broke for them but not for long because the Government came in and moved two pieces of legislation, twice, that eased the land tax burden on the propertied class.

Dr Woodruff - Gross.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes. It is disgusting. Funny how people like Mr Berry and Ms Elliot expect the Government to pay for the costs of property inflation but cry about taxes marginally eating into their profits.

Members know that the Greens are passionate about housing. We recognise that every Tasmanian has a fundamental right to a secure and affordable home. We see the suffering in the community that is the consequence of years of underfunding, under the Hodgman then Gutwein governments, both Liberal governments.

We see that there is more attention being paid to this portfolio now and more resources because the suffering being caused by neglect of the housing portfolio is glaringly obvious. We all have constituents who are living right on the margins now because their rent keeps going up. We all have constituents in fear of eviction. That is why, when their rent goes up, they are not so inclined to go to the Tenancy Commissioner for relief because they do not want to be evicted at the end of their lease. We have all had tenants who have had to give up their beloved dog because their landlord would not allow a pet. We all know tenants whose cost of living is soaring through their utilities. These measures around energy efficiency can bring real relief.

We will soon hear from the minister and Attorney-General a number of reasons why they will not be able to support our bill. That is very predictable and regrettable because this is good policy, it is well-drafted legislation, there is a clear evidence base for it and there is a clear need.

If we cannot appeal to the Liberals' sense of fairness in terms of tenancy, perhaps they might look again at the front of today's *Examiner* newspaper. We have hundreds of homes empty in the Launceston City Council municipality, we have Launceston businesses suffering, saying they are losing about \$200 million because employers cannot find staff due to low vacancy rates and high rents. This is the real-world social and economic fallout of failed housing policy, underinvestment in supply and a lack of courage to regulate short-stay accommodation.

These amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act are not the be-all and end-all but they would make a real difference to the lives of people who are right now living on the margins or living in fear of a rent increase or eviction. We know this is a good bill. We know what a difference it would make to the lives of Tasmanians. We hope to have the support of the whole House, but I am a realist. The minister surely understands what we are proposing is good policy, well-drafted, that would make a difference and surely, that is why we are all here.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

Dr Woodruff - Hear, hear.

[2.56 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak to this bill. Ms O'Connor said she was a realist. She knows our position because it is well-stated in the House. As recently as this session, we have already had something we have spoken to in relation to this so I may get a bit repetitive. I also note that this is the reintroduction of the Greens' defeated bill from 2021.

Ms O'Connor - No, it is not.

Ms ARCHER - That is the information I have. It includes the provision to cap rents to prevent lease contracts ending when there is no intention to renew, prevent owners from offering pet-free properties, and other ideas we say are destined to drive rental properties out of the long-term rental market.

I know Ms O'Connor will have distinctly different views to the Government but it is our view that the amendments proposed are extremely weighted in favour of tenants to the detriment of landlords. Ms O'Connor used the word 'fair', and that is what the Government is about. We want to strike the right balance so that it is fair for both tenants and landlords.

There is no greater example of that than during this COVID-19 period, where enormous restrictions needed to occur for people's health, safety and wellbeing. However, these had a distinct impact on landlords and tenants as well, because we want to be able to keep a roof over people's heads. With people not being able to go to work and, therefore, earn an income, there were difficulties. We put in place support packages for both tenants and landlords. The sum of that financial support was significant - \$4.356 million in total, out of our specially created COVID-19 Rent Relief Fund and COVID-19 Landlord Support Fund. We extended those funds on numerous occasions.

We also provided other supports in relation to repaying rent when there were rent freezes. We did a significant amount of work which was welcomed by the Tenants' Union of Tasmania at the time, and we enjoyed a good relationship during that period. I would like to think that

Government could continue that good relationship with the Tenants' Union of Tasmania and other stakeholders in this area.

We are not supporting this bill, as predicted by Ms O'Connor, but that does not mean we are not reviewing the act. I have said publicly that we are reviewing it and I will get to the points I want to make in relation to that in a minute. We do not want to create an imbalance, which is what this bill proposes -

Ms O'Connor - It certainly does not.

Ms ARCHER - that will exacerbate the already very tight rental market, we all know that, and also undermine the efforts by our Government to increase rental housing supply.

What we do not want is the perverse impact of making properties in the market less secure for tenants, because in the event a landlord needs to increase rents, for example, to deal with increased costs of owning and maintaining a property and increases in interest rates, which we are seeing - we have to be realists in this situation - or to come in line with market rates, they will only be able to do this by terminating an agreement at its expiry and finding new tenants. This is likely to see tenants, including very vulnerable tenants, forced to move more frequently than they otherwise might have had to. This is an outcome which can be more costly and difficult to manage than the increase in rent.

In distinct contrast to that, our Government has committed to ensuring a balanced approach to this issue and thereby improving the supply and affordability of housing. That is why we have committed to building 10 000 new social and affordable homes by 2032. This comprises an unprecedented investment of more than \$1.5 billion. No Tasmanian government has ever previously made such a strong commitment.

Ms O'Connor - That will not make any difference to tenants' lives now.

Ms ARCHER - Mr Speaker, I sat in complete silence for the Leader of the Greens' contribution so that I could in return, hopefully, have the same good faith from the member.

The cornerstone of our plan is creating a new housing authority, as members know, to build those houses, ensuring it can be more responsive and agile, and address some of the barriers currently being experienced in getting houses built quickly. That new authority will also deliver the most cohesive approach to homelessness and housing services in the country.

Our Government has also reset land tax calculations to reduce costs and put downward pressure on rents. This comprises \$220 million in tax relief over four years and will assist 70 000 Tasmanians save on average \$800 per year. As Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, with the Consumer Affairs portfolio being the relevant part of the portfolio, I will also continue to support both tenants and landlords by striking a fair balance for parties under the Residential Tenancy Act.

Removing the right for landlords to choose not to renew a lease on a property which they own sets a very dangerous precedent in what should be a free market. Our Government is about a free market and improving the supply and affordability of housing, not putting a cap on rents, thereby producing a perverse outcome for tenants because that is not fair for tenants and it is certainly not fair for the landlords either.

Our Government stood shoulder to shoulder with tenants and landlords during the very significant challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I was very proud to ensure that Tasmania was the first jurisdiction to legislate significant protections for tenants as the risks became known in March 2020 and to have provided one of the most generous financial support packages for tenants and landlords across Australia.

During the pandemic we took swift action to manage the impact it had on our businesses, our community and our economy. Key amendments we made to protect tenants and landlords included, but were not limited to, preventing residential rental evictions, protecting residential tenants experiencing hardship from the loss of income as a result of COVID-19, and limiting property inspections and certain repairs from taking place for the health and safety of tenants. We also helped tenants pay their rent and assisted landlords with their loss of rent. We also ensured rent reductions and a freeze on rent increases to commercial tenancies.

I am immensely proud of that work in keeping Tasmanians safe without impinging on the rights of either parties. There were restrictions. It was very difficult, but on balance, we tried to manage the situation so that it was fair for both tenants and landlords. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our Government provided one of the most generous assistance packages as well, and I have already outlined that.

In this year's Budget, our Government invested \$538 million into social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, with \$204 million for this financial year alone. This is in addition to the 1105 social housing and supported accommodation properties that have already been built by our Government.

Tasmania's new housing authority, Homes Tasmania, will be tasked with building and acquiring these homes, as well as partnering with our community housing partner organisations to increase supply and deliver more affordable homes than ever before.

Our Government also wants to make it easier to get into the housing market, which will in turn reduce the reliance on renting for those wishing to purchase their own home. I know that is the desire of many people, particularly our young people. That is why we have extended the \$30 000 First Home Owner Grant until 30 June 2023. We will also continue to underpin the Ancillary Dwelling Grant Program with \$2.5 million to the program to add 250 new homes to the rental stock.

Our Government has also increased the property value threshold for stamp duty concessions to \$600 000 to reflect increases in property prices and ensure assistance is available to those entering the market. We are expanding access to safe and affordable credit to cover rental bonds and initial rental payments through the No Interest Loan Scheme or NILS. Significantly, we are also helping Tasmanians on lower incomes to buy their own home with enhancements to our shared equity program, which reduces the deposit needed for a home loan to only 2 per cent.

As the Leader of the Greens would be aware, Tasmania currently requires newly built homes to have a minimum six-star energy efficiency rating, which is consistent with or ahead of the rest of Australia. In fact, I think it is ahead. This means that houses built in Tasmania already have a high standard of energy efficiency. They include insulation in roofs and ceilings and under raised floors, windows that -

Dr Woodruff - Talk to someone who lives in Europe. What an absolute joke.

Ms O'Connor - It's a new house.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, there should not be any interjections. The Leader of the Greens was listened to in silence and I expect the same for every member.

Ms ARCHER - do not lose heat in winter and reflect heat in summer, and internal and external shading of windows and walls in summer.

The Residential Tenancy Act also sets minimum standards for rental properties in Tasmania which include that a premises must be weatherproof and structurally sound, not subject to significant dampness, and must contain an electric heater or a gas heater as a fixture.

Tasmania is working with other state governments and the Commonwealth on issues relating to energy efficiency in rental properties as part of the trajectory for a low energy homes project. The commitment is for the development of energy efficiency standards and the adoption will be a matter for state and territory governments. I note that this work is due to be completed in 2023.

Our Government has also taken several actions to help households reduce their energy costs, including providing financial assistance to low-income earners in relation to energy usage. This support helps low-income tenants meet the cost of their power bills during winter. We are also relaunching the \$30 million Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme program, providing \$2 million to boost the NILS Energy Saver Loan and Subsidy program and providing winter energy bill relief of \$180 per household for concession customers, which I note totals the sum of \$17 million.

It is important that the cost impact of any proposed energy efficiency changes is very carefully considered because all of this has a flow-on effect to the housing market, and indeed the building of homes. As I have said on numerous occasions, Australia currently has the highest rate of home building on record and our Government knows the significant pressure that this has placed on our home building industry, while the cost of home building is also rising.

We are very aware that now is not the time to impose an additional burden on the industry and pass it onto consumers - first home owners, in particular - through costly changes to building standards and energy efficiency.

I want to also address the issue of unreasonable rents. Our Government, as I have said, continues to support both tenants and landlords by striking a fair balance in the Residential Tenancy Act which I will refer to as 'the act'. For the benefit of members, I would like to outline the existing protections regarding rent increases in the act, which is namely a rent increase must be given in writing with a minimum of 60 days' notice before it is to take effect. Rent can only be increased once in a 12-month period and a tenant who considers that a rent increase is unreasonable can apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner for an order declaring the rent increase unreasonable.

As I have said on numerous occasions, if a tenant believes a rent increase is too high, they can apply to the commissioner to determine if the increase is unreasonable. Many people do but I accept that Ms O'Connor has also noted that many people might be scared to do that.

The law is the law. Nobody is beyond reproach in that regard so I strongly urge tenants to utilise their rights and report to the commissioner. The commissioner may order the increase as unreasonable and prevent it entirely or determine it is partially unreasonable and reduce the value of the increase accordingly, which is really important. They are tenants' rights. They are legislated, just like we have legislation to protect people from discrimination, which may be applicable in this situation as well. In many cases in the 2021-22 financial year, the commissioner reduced the amount of the increase permitted.

In the interests of time because others will want to make a contribution, I will not go through the statistics of the applications that have been received and their outcomes. I made that contribution very recently in the House and I refer people to the *Hansard*. I strongly urge any tenant who believes their rent increase to be unreasonable to apply to the commissioner and utilise their rights under the act. They should feel able to use the law like any other law.

Proudly, Tasmania was also the first state to introduce minimum standards for rental properties. These became a model for other jurisdictions. The minimum standards amendments were the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders. The Residential Tenancy Commissioner's office investigates complaints to establish breaches of the legislation and facilitates resolution between the parties when necessary and possible. Again, I urge tenants to utilise those rights. The commissioner investigated 104 complaints in the 2021-22 financial year, resulting in 43 compliance actions and 11 penalties; 58 per cent of these related to repairs, 23 per cent for the non-lodgement of bonds and 13 per cent to quiet enjoyment or rights of entry.

In relation to presumptive rights of pets, our Government recognises how important it is for people to have their pets. I understand that some tenants rely on the comfort, interaction and companionship of their pets for their own wellbeing, as we all do. That is why I recently announced that we will consider amendments to the act such as introducing pet bonds. We are currently investigating that. I have asked my department to look at how we could best achieve this, including any potential amendments to the act so we construct the right balance between the rights of landlords and tenants, and on other issues as well.

Our Government acknowledges that property owners have the right to choose how to use their property. Many landlords will choose not to rent their properties if they are unable to determine who they can rent their property to; how long for; how much rent they can charge; and how their rental property is used. This is a critical point to make because this might put the additional pressure to which I was referring in an already tight rental market. This bill's right to pets is, unfortunately, in our view, a misguided measure that will have the perverse outcome of driving landlords away from the long-term rental market.

We need to strike a balance. This is why I said I want to look at pet bonds. I believe that the biggest risk to landlords and what they see as the risk is the damage to their property, so we want to look at a pet bond. I think it is not unreasonable to look at something such as a two-week payment, representing two weeks of rent to cover damage that may occur to a property.

Our Government remains committed to further improvements to the residential tenancy legislation, including forms of tenancy that are not covered by the act at present. We continue to work with and listen to stakeholders, including Shelter Tasmania, Communities Tasmania and Tenancy Union of Tasmania. We will consult, as I do with all my legislative reforms, to allow all Tasmanians to have their say on this very important matter.

This bill, however, in my view has not had the proper and extensive consultation. Obviously, as part of any review to the act, we need to consider amongst other things:

- modernising the definition of tenancy to include other forms of tenancies and introduce sub-letting provisions - I get a lot of correspondence on that issue. There are no rights for people who sub-let properties;
- providing altered rental payment options where rental property damage is due to events outside the control of the tenants or the landlord;
- amendments that would provide further protection to group homes and special supported accommodation, including specialist disability accommodation under the National Disability Insurance Scheme; and
- an expansion of the exemption from holding an occupational licence for the property managers of social housing and properties or residential premises subject to a specialist disability accommodation management agreement.

Again, any changes to the act will be informed by consultation with stakeholders and the wider Tasmanian community.

In summary, our Government is providing support to Tasmanians looking to enter the property market and delivering targeted economic and social supports for Tasmanian renters to assist with the overall cost of living as well. We have listened to Tasmanian pet owners and we will ensure that more pet-friendly properties become available. We are committed to further improvements to the residential tenancy legislation in consultation with tenancy stakeholders.

We do not want to devastate the long-term rental market in Tasmania and it is our view that is what this bill would achieve. Accordingly, we will not be supporting this bill.

[3.18 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I will truncate what I had to say. I know that this is an incredibly important issue. I have done quite a bit of preparation that I now will not use in its entirety, other than to start by recognising that we are in an unprecedented housing crisis right now. We have spent a lot of time speaking about that in the parliament in recent times.

It is the Government's responsibility to prioritise tight social and government housing. I will not run through the statistics. You have all heard me do that many times before, but we know that the Government is failing when it comes to the provision of timely, safe government and social housing. They also are not providing when it comes to providing support to people who are trying to get into the private rental market in any way. They are failing in every sector - in shelter accommodation, in social and government housing, in private rental and private market.

For people trying to buy property, prices are becoming astronomical with median increase in rents in just the last 12 months of 50 per cent. There are instances of rent bidding. Increases are large. They are unsustainable amounts that are pushing families to the brink. All this is on top of the cost of living crisis that we are also in, with increased costs of energy, fuel, and groceries. We know real stories of people who are making unimaginable choices between paying their rent or paying to feed their family or putting petrol in the car or buying medicines that they need for their family. People are being squeezed out of the private rental market.

Often it is easy to think that there is a fall back; the social housing waitlist, albeit a burgeoning and growing social housing wait list.

That is not a solution for many of the Tasmanians being squeezed out of the private rental market because many of them are working people who do not qualify for social or government housing. Those people are being forced into completely unacceptable living conditions and simply cannot afford to keep renting.

As was shown on the front page of *The Examiner* today, that is having a long-term and lasting effect on our economy as well. There are quotes on the front page about the effect that this is having on businesses in Launceston, where people are unable to find staff to work in their businesses because of the lack of available housing.

I recently met with the Migrant Resource Centre. They are struggling to keep up with the responsibilities Australia has under our humanitarian arrivals obligations because there is nowhere to place people in the private rental market.

It is clear that things need to be done. Labor has had a clear position for many years now that there needs to be a full review of the Residential Tenancy Act. The minister is not wrong; there are protections in it but the act is not fit for purpose. We have been calling for a review of the RTA, full regulation of the short-stay market, and a pause on any new permits for new whole-home dwellings moving to the short-stay accommodation market. We know that those numbers are increasing. Anyone who says they are not is simply wrong. In December 2021 there were 481 such whole dwellings in Hobart municipality. In just six months that increased to 533. The numbers speak for themselves. We know that people are moving their rental properties into the short-stay market. That market needs regulation. The Hobart City Council is acting and other local government areas will, no doubt, follow suit. The Government needs to act too.

Much of what is in this bill deserves consideration. Much of it is incredibly fair. There should be more balance between the rights of landlords and tenants. When it comes to things like the right to have minimum energy efficiency and minimum standards, the minimum standards are too low and we all know people who are living in properties that do not meet them now. The things put forward in this bill around energy efficiency, the rights of tenants to apply to have pets, there are protections suggested in the bill for landlords as well, which are fair. Similarly, with security of leases, there are protections for landlords. I do not agree that this bill would completely reverse that onus and favour tenants over and above landlords.

I will finish by quickly talking about rent controls because that is one part of the bill that needs more investigation. The 2020 parliamentary committee report talked about rent controls and rent caps. There were many pieces of evidence, which I will not read into the *Hansard* although I did intend to, including people in the sector expressing concerns about how that

would be rolled out. For that reason, I believe that what would solve this problem is to start with a full review of the RTA, which we have been seeking for some time.

It is my intention to move an amendment to move the bill to a committee. I know the Government will not support it but it is in line with what the member for Clark put up in her private member's bill last week. Moving a bill like this to a committee would allow the parliament to fully scrutinise the things put forward in this bill, the many recommendations put forward in the 2020 committee and everything else affecting the private rental market right now. I am sorry that I did not get to circulate this beforehand:

- (1) A Select Committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers and records, to inquire into and report upon -
 - (a) the Residential Tenancy (Rental Market Reform) Amendment Bill (No. 30 of 2021); and
 - (b) other matters incidental thereto;
- (2) The Committee shall consist of 6 Members being: 3 from the Government nominated by the Leader of the House; 2 from the Opposition nominated by the Leader of Opposition Business in the House; and 1 from the Tasmanian Greens nominated by the Leader of the Greens.
- (3) The Committee report by Thursday 24 November next.

There is much in this bill that deserves consideration but there is a lot we need to get right in one hour of private members' time. It does not give us enough time. It is not a problem with the bill, it is a problem with private members' time being so short for opposition parties.

We know we need time to scrutinise - not scrutinise in a negative sense but to look at all the things now affecting Tasmanians in the private rental market. We know there is a high number of properties moving into the sharing economy and this will likely accelerate without parallel reforms to the sharing economy. That needs to be a part of the review that Government considers.

[3.25 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON - Mr Speaker, in the short time I have I will indicate my strong support for this bill. Having worked in a previous life in tenancy advocacy, as a manager of the Tenants' Union back in 2004, I know how important these reforms are. I spent many hours on the advocacy hotline providing advice to tenants who were daily facing these kinds of dilemmas back in 2004 and 2005. It has only worsened since then.

I reiterate that housing is a basic human right, yet we continue to put investors' rights over the rights of vulnerable Tasmanians. I heard the Attorney-General speak before about the need to strike the right balance when it comes to the Residential Tenancy Act. I thoroughly agree. We do need to strike the right balance, but at the moment that is tipping very much in favour of the investor.

I ask people in this House to consider: we have one party in this situation who is seeking a basic human right, they are seeking to have a house over their head, and the other party who is wanting to make money. That is what it comes down to when we are talking about people experiencing the private rental market at this moment. While I commend the Greens for bringing it forward, this bill is not rocket science, it is not difficult or tricky. It is something that has been done, as the Leader of the Greens pointed out, in many other jurisdictions. It is very simple.

The kind of things this bill looks to address go hand-in-hand with one another.

Unreasonable rent increases and the prevention of that: landlords can still increase their rent under these provisions. There is no problem with that, but it is about the reasonableness of that. Landlords' rights are still protected. They can still increase rent where they see significant increases in their own costs and are wanting to pass it on. However, it is about the unreasonableness of increases. There are protections there for the landlords but, most importantly, it provides stronger protections for tenants.

It goes hand-in-hand with the prohibition of no-grounds evictions. I point out that we do not see people coming forward to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner at the moment to complain about their existing rights under the RTA because they do not have protection against no-grounds evictions. That is the problem we are experiencing right now.

When you put these provisions together, you start to see a fairer distribution of protections. You start to see the tenants being able to exercise their rights under the Residential Tenancy Act without fear that another clause in the Residential Tenancy Act might come back to bite them on the backside.

These are not unreasonable provisions. They are provisions in many other jurisdictions.

The improvement in the standard of housing: as Ms Haddad said, the standard of housing is far too low already. We see people living in appalling conditions but they do not come forward to make complaints because they are frightened about their security of tenure. A roof over your head, no matter how bad it is, is often better than no roof at all. That is what the Tasmanian community is having to decide and face at this particular moment.

I commend the provisions around energy efficiencies. It is critical. We have seen data released only this week about what the temperature is in Tasmanians' homes. We see that people are living in appalling conditions, where they are freezing because they cannot afford the cost of electricity. They are trying to make the decision about whether they pay their rent, which is going up and up, put food on the table or pay for medication, and they are fearful that if they complain they will lose their home. It is simply not good enough.

I say again that these provisions are not rocket science. They have been done many times before. The bill is well-drafted. It sets the evidence and advice from other jurisdictions and its simple commonsense provisions will make a massive difference to Tasmanians right now. I ask the Government to give it serious consideration.

[3.29 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, we do not support the amendment because the bill we put forward is evidence-based policy, tried and tested. As the mover of the bill, I do not like seeing stuff like that 30 seconds before a vote.

I would also like to withdraw the request for a vote on the bill today, after the amendment is put.

Ms Archer - We wouldn't put the vote on the amendment, then.

Ms O'CONNOR - Put the vote on the amendment and then I will withdraw the vote on the second reading.

Ms Archer - We wouldn't, because there could be other speakers on the amendment.

Ms O'CONNOR - There could be.

Mr SPEAKER - Because the debate is almost completed, as far as the day goes, you need to seek leave to withdraw and the House needs to vote on that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do we vote on the amendment?

Mr SPEAKER - Yes, we will be voting on the amendment today but you can withdraw, unless somebody else wishes to speak to the amendment. The time has now finished, so I will allow you seek leave.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Speaker, I seek the leave of the House to withdraw our initial indication that there would be a vote on the second reading of our bill today.

Leave granted.

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

Amendment negatived.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION

Electricity - Pricing Structure - Motion Negatived

[3.32 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Agrees with the Tasmanian Liberal Party State Council that, 'The Tasmanian Government has greater discretion to determine the price at which energy is sold to the national grid'.

- (2) Acknowledges that Tasmanians are under unprecedented cost of living pressures, even before power prices went up by 12 per cent.
- (3) Notes the advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance that, in the event of further volatility in mainland National Electricity Market prices in the future, the Government retains the ability to reintroduce previous policy instruments to protect Tasmanian households and businesses.
- (4) Calls upon the Government to immediately commence work to implement a pricing structure so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power.

We bring this very important motion on again today as we continue to fight for Tasmanians who are now paying 12 per cent more for their electricity than they were last financial year and for businesses that are paying too much, not just in the small and medium business space, but our major industrials are paying far too much for their electricity because of the Government's broken promise and its failure to deliver and get the basics right.

In 2018 when the Government announced its lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation policy, Labor supported that policy and in particular the Government's ambition to delink Tasmania from the National Electricity Market (NEM), breaking the link with mainland pricing. We could see that was something that was not just important to the Government but it was something the Government was being called on to do by industry, in particular, by business groups and major employers in Tasmania, because they could see the chaos in the National Electricity Market could get us to this point where we are at today.

The National Electricity Market continues to see inflated prices, in fact record prices over the past three months, and Tasmanians are paying for nine years of coalition mismanagement on energy, nine years of no coherent national energy policy from the former coalition government, and because of that, despite Tasmania's historic and important investment in renewable energy, Tasmanians are having to pay for chaos in the national market through no fault of their own.

We can see this on the ground right now. We can see it in households that are already under stress from the 6.5 per cent cost of living increase that we saw last financial year, but we need to understand that does not take into account the 12 per cent increase in prices for Tasmanian consumers over this year.

I was criticised for saying that prices will keep going up, but I want to explain exactly what I mean. With council rates, for example, there is a quarterly rates notice and all ratepayers get their notices at the same time. In Tasmania, most Tasmanians are on different cycles when it comes to their bills, so every day Tasmanians are getting different lots and are getting more bills. Over the next six weeks we are going to see Tasmanians getting bills that are going up and up and up. As time goes by, Tasmanians are going to continue to pay more for this quarter, to the point where over the course of this year, prices will be up by 11.8 per cent, almost 12 per cent, as we have been saying for a long period of time.

The Government had a plan to avoid exactly this situation. They said that they could foresee issues within the national market and my read on this - lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation and the Tasmania First policy they had - was that they believed Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. That is something that has been important to Tasmanian Labor for 100 years now. It has been really important to us as we fought to save Hydro Tasmania and keep electricity assets in Tasmanian hands. We continue to do that because we believe Tasmanians should get a dividend from our historic investment in not just Hydro Tasmania but in TasNetworks and its assets, in renewable energy assets, not just hydroelectricity but also the investments that Tasmanian Labor governments have made in wind farms, for example, with public investments in wind farms across the state. They were joint ventures with the private sector, albeit ensuring that there was public ownership in those generation assets. We felt that was important then and we still believe that Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power.

It was incredible, as the motion reads, that the Tasmanian Liberal Party State Council only on the weekend said:

The Tasmanian Government has greater discretion to determine the price at which energy is sold to the national grid.

That was an important motion from that council that undermined the Government's change in position they have had over the past three months, at least, potentially more, and I will get to that later.

The Government has changed position from the one it announced and the one it still held, as we understand it, at the election last year, to delink and ensure that Tasmanians paid Tasmanian prices, but this was the Tasmanian Liberal Party membership telling the Government to go back to this policy of the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation. That should be the ambition, but everything I hear from this minister is that it is more important to him to build Project Marinus than it is to keep electricity prices low for Tasmanians. He is making it a choice when he has been standing up on this issue over the past eight weeks. He is telling Tasmanians that it is a choice. He seems to be saying that we cannot have low prices, we cannot pay Tasmanian prices and have a growing vibrant, renewable energy sector in Tasmania, but he has not explained why.

I would love to hear him justify his position that we cannot have both, why we cannot pay Tasmanian prices and have jobs and investment in renewable energy in Tasmania, because Labor supports that and has been supporting it for decades.

It is Labor governments that have made the big investments in renewable energy infrastructure. We have not just talked about it, like this minister talks about his plans for renewable energy. Labor governments have delivered on big projects - on gas pipelines, on Basslink, on hydroelectric schemes - across Tasmania's history. We want to see a government that actually delivers, one that gets the basics right and does not just come up with plans, but actually delivers, and that is not what we have today.

That motion from the Liberal Party was an attack on the Premier and the Energy minister and their decision to walk away from their promise to Tasmanians on something that was obviously important for their membership for them to have supported it through their state council. It says that the state government has greater discretion to determine the price at which

energy is sold to the national grid. That is also in line with very reasonable advice that is sitting on the Treasury website. It says:

Treasury has completed its review of the Tasmanian Wholesale Electricity Market Regulatory Pricing Framework.

As a result of the improved pricing environment in the National Electricity Market and the feedback received from stakeholders during the review, the Government has determined that it will not seek to make changes to the Framework at this time.

It goes on to say:

The Government delinked from the mainland wholesale market volatility when it was required by capping regulated power prices through a legislated wholesale electricity price order and through the use of commercial and industrial customer rebate schemes. In the event of further volatility in mainland National Electricity Market ...

This is the important bit:

... prices in the future, ...

Which has happened:

... the Government retains the ability to re-introduce one or both of these schemes in order to protect Tasmanian households and businesses.

The date is important - 17 September 2021. I cannot be absolutely certain that that is when these words were put on the website, but it is highly likely that is the date. That was only eight days after the minister sat in Estimates and told us that Treasury was still working on it and that the Government was still committed to it. I will read the exact quotes so I get it right:

I asked the minister: Are you still committed to that policy ... ?

That policy being this policy: the lowest regulated electricity price in the nation policy, from 2018. Mr Barnett said: Of course.

I said: And so, what specifically ... In terms of -

Mr Barnett said: As Mr Terry says, Treasury has been working through that and there has been an effective delinking.

He goes on to say: I am happy to say it again, it has progressed. Treasury has progressed that policy. It is being implemented and we are now delivering lower prices.

'Being implemented'. At that time the minister was saying that they were still committed to delinking from the National Electricity Market. That was on 9 September. Then eight days later we see an announcement on the Treasury website which, unless I missed it, was not publicly announced anywhere else. Stakeholders I have talked to certainly did not know about

it. I cannot find a media release. There was no update to the House that the Government had abandoned its energy policy that it had held for a long time, more than four years.

We knew nothing about the fact that the Government had completely changed track when it came to their plan for electricity in Tasmania. It had a policy that it spruiked hard at the 2018 election. It promised Tasmanians that prices would go down between 7 and 10 per cent. Here we are with prices that have just gone up by 12 per cent.

How could it be that a minister could make such a very significant policy statement - a big change that would affect Tasmanian households, small businesses, medium-size businesses all the way up to major employers, major industrials - without telling anyone about it? It took the Premier of Tasmania - this is one of the reasons we ask the Premier energy questions because he occasionally answers questions, where the minister for Energy does not. It was he who had to update the House and tell us that that they were not going ahead with their policy that they had been spruiking, promising to Tasmanians for at that stage, five years.

This is a significant change. When he speaks on this, I challenge the minister to explain why we cannot have both. Why can Tasmanians not pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power and deliver on new renewable energy projects? That was your position for a long time. You told Tasmanians that you could do both. Your position was both to build Marinus and to build new renewable energy projects. You said you could do that and also have the lowest regulated electricity price in the nation and cap power prices.

He stood in this place in 2018 and challenged the then Labor Opposition to back in his plan to cap electricity prices. He was passionate about it. He continued to be passionate about it four years afterwards about his plan to keep power prices low. Now all he can do is attack Labor for holding the same position as he did for four years.

What is it? How can we understand their position without the minister being prepared to stand up and explain what this energy policy is? What is the energy policy now, now that the lowest regulated price of the nation has been effectively torn up? Now that they are not doing Tasmanian prices, now that they do not want to see prices go down, they want to see prices go up, up, up. What is the policy? Is it just to build project Marinus? No matter what the cost, no matter who pays for it, is that the policy?

Until they actually outline to Tasmanians what their energy policy is, how can we know? All we are asking him to do is, instead of repeating the same rhetoric and the same lines we hear every time, explain what this policy is.

Perhaps you could write it down and release a new energy policy, minister. You could say: this is what our position is now. Maybe your position now is that building Marinus is more important than keeping prices down for Tasmanians. If that is what it is, you should say it. Until we hear anything else, that is what it sounds like at this point in time. It sounds like he has hitched his entire political career to building project Marinus, and he will do anything to make that happen.

We are still waiting to hear details on project Marinus. We are waiting to see the rule change get submitted. As I understand it, it is overdue to be submitted. We are waiting to see what this means for Tasmania. Is this something that is good for Tasmania? I want to see the details. I want to see what he is going to do for farmers who are concerned about what the

easements will do to their properties, what restrictions that will place on Tasmanian farmers. We know that in Victoria it is a very significant issue as they try to build new transmission networks.

I want to know who is going to own the cable. I am very interested to know what the ownership model is going to be. I want to see what this rule change in emissions looks like. I want to understand what are the chances of that actually succeeding. He has been talking about this for a very long time and we still do not know much about it.

It is very important that Tasmanians understand who is going to pay for it. I do not just mean the upfront capital costs. It is a very large amount - \$3.5 billion. I am also interested in whether Tasmanians will have to pay for the ongoing operational costs of this link. Will Tasmanians see it in their energy bills? I do not know the answer to that question. I am not claiming they will but I want to understand it. We do not want to see Tasmanians worse off from an energy policy, especially when an energy policy seems so difficult to find. If it has not been explained, how can we support it?

I believe Tasmania has an incredible opportunity when it comes to renewable energy. We have a world class wind resource. In fact, some people will tell you it is the best resource anywhere in the world. It makes sense for Tasmanians to continue to use the competitive advantage that we have as a state and that is our renewable energy assets, be that hydro, wind or whatever the opportunities we have. Tasmanians want to know that they will be protected from any adverse consequences of that, just as they want to know that they are protected from the adverse consequences of the National Electricity Market. The Treasury website says:

In the event of further volatility in the mainland National Electricity Market prices in the future, the Government retains the ability to re-introduce one or both of these schemes ...

I talked about that earlier.

Now that prices are at record highs, I cannot work out for the life of me, why they have not done anything about it. What was so wrong with the policy instruments from 2018 that they used? What was so wrong with it that they no longer support them, that they are willing to oppose them? They oppose Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power? What was so wrong with that policy in 2018 that this place supported that they cannot do it again?

The Treasury advice that I am reading says that they can do it and retain the option to do that in the event of further volatility. This volatility has seen the market have to be heavily regulated. We have seen generators across the country bidding out of the system, we have seen Basslink intermittently not operating during that time, as the Government explained, due to commercial reasons. We have seen unprecedented volatility within that market. We have seen gas prices going up as a result of coal generators not operating as a result of the war in Ukraine and other international factors, so we have high gas prices leading to high electricity prices from those generators and Tasmanians are having to pay for that. It is not just this year potentially, it is in future years as well.

Analysis we have read says that this is not something that is going to be here for a short period of time. This could be something that is with us for a very long period of time. If that is the case, I believe the Government's current position that Tasmanians have to pay mainland

prices is unsustainable, maybe in a political sense but what I mean is it is not sustainable for Tasmanian families. We are already in a cost of living crisis. Some of the things that are hurting Tasmanian families are things that this Government and this parliament cannot control, things like interest rates, petrol prices and grocery prices.

Some of the things they can control, however, are water and sewerage prices. The Government now has a mechanism through its ownership model and partnership through TasWater and its ability to change through the corporate planning process, where they need to approve corporate plans so they can influence TasWater pricing. In fact they have influenced TasWater pricing by insisting that TasWater increase prices by 3.5 per cent every year for the next four years. That is \$450 extra on bills over the next four years courtesy of the Tasmanian Government, whose MOU insisted to TasWater that that is what they had to do.

This Government has the ability to control energy prices. We know that because they did it only four years ago, so it is not something new to this parliament or this Government now or historically. Having the ability to do that is something we have, and this Government understands it because it has done it. Labor understands it because we have supported it. As far as we and the stakeholders were concerned, that was going to be the Government's position for a long period of time, not something that was there for three years and then they would abandon.

The Government is now saying in the last few days that it is committed to having Tasmanians paying the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation. It does not feel like it to Tasmanians. It does not feel like we are committed to that, although that is something we can control. The Government going off on this tangent in the last week about petrol prices and saying, 'Why don't you pick up the phone and ask another government to do something about the cost of living?', is a bit ridiculous. It is a bit rich to talk about energy prices and say, 'The federal government that has been there for two months should do something about energy prices because in almost nine years we have given up', or 'You should ask the federal government to do something about petrol prices because the cost of living is too difficult for us'. They are already deflecting to a government that is a couple of months old. That does not cut the mustard; it is not a reasonable thing to do.

Last week, the Premier got it right when he talked about federal Labor's plan for energy and to lower bills over a period of time. Then I hear the minister and others saying that the policy was for an immediate reduction in prices. Obviously that is not what the policy was. I am interested to see whether the Minister for Energy and Renewables in Tasmania will repeat that claim today. Nationally, having an Energy minister like Chris Bowen, who understands the future of energy in Australia and that renewables are a huge part of that, and having a coherent energy policy in Australia for the first time in nine years is very welcome and presents huge opportunities for Tasmania that were not available to Tasmania under the former coalition government.

This minister was unable to get a deal done on Marinus with the former government. We know that former premier Gutwein wrote to then prime minister Scott Morrison with an offer, wanting to do a deal on Marinus for that last federal election but they could not get it done. All they ended up with was \$75 million and a letter from the then prime minister saying you cannot get your rule change through when you say you can when you want to. You cannot do what you say you will do. Despite that, he pushes on with his rule change approach, even today. I do not know what the new Commonwealth Government's view on the rule change is but

I suspect it is not much different. Achieving a rule change by 2024 by FID is highly unlikely, so what is his plan?

If we were dealing with a minister who wanted to keep Tasmanians up to date and who had a plan, he would get up here and tell us what it is. What is the plan for Marinus? Apart from using the same rhetoric that we hear over and over no matter what, what is the plan? Why can we not pay Tasmanian prices and have a plan to build a bigger renewable energy sector here in Tasmania?

Mr Speaker, the motion agrees with the Liberal Party State Council. It acknowledges that Tasmanians are under unprecedented cost of living pressures. It notes the very good and solid advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance, which is in line with the Liberal Party motion as well but, importantly, it calls on the Government to immediately commence work to implement a pricing structure so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. That is what Tasmanians want to see.

I speak to many people who have worked in Tasmania in government businesses, in Hydro, TasNetworks, Aurora, whatever the energy business is, who have worked for their contractors, whose parents have worked in Tasmania's renewable energy industry and whose grandparents have, who are so proud of our incredible investment in renewable energy in Tasmania. Tasmanians understand that there is a huge opportunity for it here and that we can be part of the solution for Australia when it comes to bringing down prices over time; that we can be a part of the world's climate solution, but we just need a minister prepared to have a plan, to explain the plan and deliver the plan. We do not have a minister that has been able to do any of those three things.

He has not explained to this place, let alone Tasmanians, what the plan is anymore, and that is concerning. Also, like most things this minister talks about, he has not actually delivered anything. We hear about hydrogen plans, we hear about windfarm proposals, we hear about Project Marinus, but nothing ever really happens. How long can he keep this up? He keeps talking about it but nothing ever happens. The hydrogen action plan is well behind. He has businesses now writing reports raising concerns about the hydrogen action plan that was not ready. He lured proponents from interstate and overseas investors who were willing to take part in what Tasmania had to offer when it came to cheap electricity, plentiful water and ingenuity and expertise in a Tasmanian workforce that was prepared to participate in that. Again, for all the talk about these projects, they do not actually happen.

At one point in time, the Government was talking about 2025 being the date when Marinus would be ready. Now they are saying '2024 investment decision'. In order for that to happen, we would need to see a real change, which the Commonwealth Government has told the state cannot happen.

It is this failure to deliver, failure to get the basics right. It goes all the way from Tasmanians doing it tough, trying to choose between heating and eating, Tasmanian small businesses we have heard from who are seeing astronomical increases in their power bills, which is driving up their costs and making them less viable, putting pressure on them. It goes up to medium-sized businesses that have significant power increases all the way up to major industrials that are telling me, and probably telling the minister, that they are up for hundreds of thousands of dollars per month in increased costs due to the instability of the National Electricity Market. I mean that in a pricing sense, not an engineering sense - the volatility in

those prices. Those trying to re-contract at the moment are having a very difficult time in getting the prices they need to remain viable if they are already going or to start up if they are a new business, or restarting a business. These are very important employers who, as I said, drove that decision by the Government to commence work to delink from the National Electricity Market.

All this goes down to the one point, which is point (4). This parliament should call on the Government to immediately commence work to implement a pricing structure so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. That is what Tasmanians want to see, what they need to see and what they deserve. This is an important question for the Government: will they tell Tasmanians and their party, the Liberal Party, that they are committed to Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power, or are they going to stick with the same old rhetoric that tells us we have to make a choice between Tasmanians paying Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power and an expanded, exciting renewable energy future?

[4.02 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this motion, which the Government will be strongly opposing. Mr Winter has belled the cat in the first line of the motion, where it states that he is calling on the House to agree with the Tasmanian Liberal Party State Council. Why is he doing that?

Mr Jaensch - He does not have one of his own.

Mr BARNETT - Because he does not have one of his own. I thank the member for Braddon for the interjection. It is because you do not have one of your own. The federal Labor Party has intervened and removed you from any decision-making, a vote of no confidence in the leadership of the state Labor Party in Tasmania. You have belled the cat in the first line of your motion.

It is incredulous that Mr Winter and the state Parliamentary Labor Party keep coming back to the well for more. They are talking about the Tasmanian Liberal Party State Council because you do not have one of your own. Why is that? It is because there is a total lack of confidence. This is not just for a day or a week or a month, or until the end of the year. This is for three years, through to 2025. The administration is removed. They are embarrassed with the state Labor Party and how you have been behaving because you are not focused on what is important to the people of Tasmania.

You are not focused on jobs, growing our economy and delivering the essential services that the people of Tasmania need, whether it is health, education, providing support for our police, or building our roads. These are the things that are important and the poor old Tasmanian Labor Party is in a parlous and shambolic state because they have been at an internal civil war. The first line of the Labor Party's motion today, the administration has been removed, the management team has been stood down. You are not even allowed to make a decision about your own political party until 2025, unless you ask the administrators, now Nick and Dougie. Let us put it on the record, former senator Doug Cameron, former -

Ms BUTLER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 151. This is highly irrelevant to the motion and the debate. I request that you ask the member to stick to the motion's contents.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, these are free-ranging debates. The member, when putting a motion, went to a number of issues and I must allow that same leniency to the minister answering it.

Mr BARNETT - As I was saying, the administrators, former senator Doug Cameron, who I served with for a time in the Senate, and former senator Nick Sherry -

Ms Butler - Why did you call him Dougie? That was disrespectful.

Mr BARNETT - I am referring to them by their correct names. I have indicated that I served with Doug Cameron and, in fact, had lunch with former senator Nick Sherry at a homelessness event just a couple of weeks ago in Devonport.

My point is that the management team in Tasmania has been stood down, and it is for three years. The first line of the motion talks about the Tasmanian Liberal Party's state council; they cannot have a state council, they cannot have any discussion -

Ms O'Connor - Tedious repetition. You have made that point three times. You can move on to the substance now, surely.

Mr BARNETT - I have a lot more to contribute and I hope that you listen in silence, as I shared in silence to your slapping the Government around with a wet lettuce leaf.

The increasingly unhinged attacks by Mr Winter on our renewable energy projects such as Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen are not appreciated,. Why the state Labor Party is pursuing that policy, why they are opposing our renewable energy plans for Tasmania - we know that federal minister Chris Bowen is up-to-date on Marinus Link, and they support Marinus Link. The previous government was funding it and, going forward, we had meetings in Canberra over two days, Thursday and Friday, a couple of weeks ago. What we know is that Mr Winter and the Labor Party have been terrifying Tasmanians; they have been scaremongering. Enough is enough.

Mr Winter has referred to a website. What about his own website, where there is no reference to a media release he put out saying that there would be blackouts in Tasmania? Where is his media release? Why is that either removed or not on Dean Winter's website? That is my question to him because that is scaremongering? I am concerned. It is not just me. It is members of the public. Someone in Tasmania on life support contacted my office expressing concern. This is the sort of alarm and scaremongering the state Labor Party is pursuing. I say enough is enough.

Even today, talking about further increases in power prices, yet Mr Winter and the state Labor Opposition know that it is set by the independent regulator and it goes for 12 months, from 1 July through to 30 June each year. This is the independent regulator, it is not me. The ongoing scaremongering with respect to increasing electricity prices must stop. The Opposition must stop unnecessarily scaring the Tasmanian public. They should have learned their lesson. They should stand up in this place and say, 'I apologise for scaring the public and I withdraw those comments and then stick to the facts.' Let us have an argument about policy with respect to the importance of renewable energy.

There is one thing that I do agree with. Mr Winter made a reference to our world-class wind resource, and our world-class water resource. I have been saying that for years. You have come on board. That is good news. We are leaning into what is really positive and a comparative advantage in Tasmania. It is a world-class water resource, a world-class wind resource. When I talk about water, Tasmania is 1.0 per cent of Australia's land mass, 12 per cent of Australia's rainfall, 27 per cent of Australia's water and storage. Hydro Tasmania is the largest manager of water in storage in Australia. We are proud of that. We have 30 power stations and more than 50 lakes. This is all because we are a renewable energy power house. We are very grateful for decades and decades, a hundred years of pioneering effort in Tasmania to deliver hydro industrialisation to Tasmania. It is fantastic.

Likewise, we have a world-class wind resource that we are taking advantage of. Just today I announced that we have now 25 000 gigawatts in the planning stage through to 2030 of further renewable energy projects in Tasmania through our Renewable Energy Coordination Framework plans and through the register of interest underneath that framework.

We are on track to deliver not just the 100 per cent fully self-sufficient renewable energy, but deliver 150 per cent by 2030 and 200 per cent by 2040. People said, 'Can it be done? Are you sure it can be done?' We legislated across the parliament with support from 100 per cent to 200 per cent by 2040. This is the only jurisdiction I am aware of in the world that has legislated to increase and deliver on that. We are one of the very few jurisdictions in the world that is 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy. Very few jurisdictions in the world are in that same place.

We can deliver on our affordable, reliable, clean electricity. When I talk about reliable, I mean dispatchable. That means we have that hydroelectricity, press the button, bingo. That is what they need on the mainland, and that is what they need across the world. It is good when the sun is shining and when the wind is blowing, but when they are not, what do you do? Tassie has the answer. We have dispatchable energy. Eighty-five per cent of our energy source is from Hydro Tasmania and we are very grateful for the decades of contributions.

Let us just touch on some of the other key remarks before I address the other point made in the motion. We have big plans in terms of the development of renewable energy which will deliver jobs for future generations, delivering the cheapest form of electricity, which is renewable energy, and growing investment, new industries in Tasmania. I am not just talking about green hydrogen - I will come to that. Yes, we have the Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, which we delivered and released some years ago at Bell Bay by Michael Ferguson, who was the minister at the time. It was a joint release at Bell Bay. It was a very good place to do it. Bell Bay is strategically placed because it has access to road, rail, and port, and key ingredients to success, electricity and water. There is much more that could be said about that but we have a proven track record of delivering and putting downward pressure on electricity prices and that is delivering affordable, reliable 100 per cent clean electricity.

It is disappointing that Mr Winter and the state Labor Party appear to be opposing the renewable energy agenda that our Government has set. They certainly seem to be at odds with federal Labor through their lack of support for Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, and green hydrogen. Why is there a relentless negativity towards the plans that we have for Tasmania to grow our economy, create more jobs, deliver opportunities for families - particularly in those regional communities - and a cleaner world? Why is it that they are so negative? Why are they knocking all these initiatives that are taking place to grow our economy and create more jobs?

It is the scaremongering and we have had enough. We are saying to the state Labor Party that enough is enough. Your claims saying that the lights will go out, electricity prices will continue to increase - enough is enough. It is not the truth so put the facts on the table, not irresponsible comments like that.

There was a reference to the website. It is like getting slapped around with a very wet lettuce leaf. He was referring to a Treasury website of the second half of last year, and bringing this up in a question to the Premier earlier this week. Seriously, with respect to that website, it has been there since last year yet he is now bringing in this information as though it is brand new and it is fresh, an absolute knock ring dinger, a knockout blow for the Premier. I do not think so. This has been on the Treasury website since mid-last year. That decision was made at the time and it is on the website. Suddenly Mr Winter is quoting a Treasury website article which was put up mid-to-the-second-half of last year.

Everybody knows that the Tasmanian electricity prices are set by the independent regulator, the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, so it reflects the efficient costs of supplying electricity. That is the situation. The average wholesale energy price over those three years - 2017-18 to 2019-20 - I am advised was \$83.67; the price determined by the independent regulator. This year, it is \$81.82. Even after allowing the 11.8 per cent price rise for this year since we came to government in 2014, what has happened? Electricity prices for Tasmanian residential customers have increased only 5.8 per cent in nominal terms and actually decreased 15.4 per cent in real terms for residential customers. They have gone down for small business over that time since 2014. That is a pretty good record.

What was the Labor record when they were in government? It was a 65 per cent increase - up, up, under the Labor-Greens government.

The Premier outlined it very well earlier this week on a number of occasions. Tasmanians do not want to go back under state Labor with the Greens. They do not want to go back to a 65 per cent increase in electricity prices. They do not want to go back to 10 000 job losses, impacting rural and regional communities. They do not want to go back to when the forest industry was brought to its knees and when we had a recession and the productive industries were copping it in the neck left, right and centre. Tasmanians remember that. They will not forget. Mr Winter is attempting to erase this evidence from history. It will not happen. Tasmanians know that a Labor-Greens government is a disaster for our economy and for jobs and for higher electricity prices.

Over the winter break Mr Winter attempted - a serious attempt I would say - he put a fair bit of effort into publicity stunts. He had a number of publicity stunts. One of those stunts was last week. That was a flawed bill which would have created chaos for our seven energy retailers and there was not enough thought of who would be paying for that because the Labor Party thinks there is a magic pudding in the budget and they can just pull out the money here and pull out the money there.

We had a question from Dr Broad, the shadow treasurer, this morning. He could not identify which government initiative he wanted to cut to save money. You were complaining about the government investment in the economy and your reference to the debt - well, which initiative do you want to cut? Identify it.

Dr Broad - What are you talking about? You are inciting interjection.

Mr BARNETT - A big vacant hole, a vacuous hole from Dr Broad and the state Opposition because we know they cannot deliver on the budget. They have never delivered an alternative budget since we came to government in 2014.

Labor's price cap bill would send a signal to investors that you want to interfere in the marketplace. You would have an impact on our renewable energy investment and you would be unable to service further investment and business growth and leave us more exposed to weather events. That is a concern to the Government and a concern to the community. There is no magic pudding.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr BARNETT - You have done it before in the state election in 2010. Labor took to the election in 2010 a power price cap of 5 per cent. Guess what? They get into government in 2010 and it all fell over. They could not do it. They did not get their sums right. They knew they could not get it right. I would not talk about what happens in a brewery, but they cannot do it. They cannot even organise a chook raffle - that is the best way to express it, Mr Speaker.

They failed to deliver on capping power prices at 5 per cent in 2010 because they had not done their sums. The costs were too high. Now they are calling for an even more onerous 2.5 per cent cap. We have delivered a very targeted approach, as the Premier has outlined, a \$17 million commitment. He outlined it last week and this week. It is a very targeted, fair-minded approach to those vulnerable Tasmanians, those most in need, in fact 94 000 Tasmanians with the \$180 winter bill buster discount. There is no magic pudding.

Things have changed since 2018, Mr Winter. There is a fast-moving transition in the energy market and you are caught in the past. You are caught in the dark ages. Come on board, move forward. We have a vision for the future, we are delivering and we have plans to grow.

Let us refer to the last couple of weeks. There is a \$2.7 billion plan for a wind energy proponent, ACEN Australia, in the north-east for 1230 megawatts, 210 turbines. This is not my plan, it is their plan. This is a private sector entity. How about that?

Mr Winter - I can't keep up. Is it your plan or not your plan?

Mr SPEAKER - Mr Winter, order.

Mr BARNETT - It is part of our Renewable Energy Action Plan and ACEN Australia -

Mr Winter interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Mr Winter, I understand the minister may be inciting you, but it is the strength of your will not to interject. I will remind you that you have left the Chamber once today and it would be very embarrassing to have to do it twice.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Speaker, I am asking the rhetorical question with respect to being asked about what is happening. In the last few weeks the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning has announced that ACEN Australia can progress through the major projects assessment process for their \$2.7 billion wind energy project in the north-east with 210 turbines

and 1230 megawatts. I have been asked about that and the plans for the future. We are talking about the hundreds of jobs in particular during that construction phase and no doubt over many years in the north-east. When I get asked those questions, that is just one example.

Mr Winter was at Robbins Island with no doubt Dr Broad, I think it was last year, and they were on Facebook promoting the jobs from Robbins Island and saying this is a great thing for the north-west coast. Then they come back in here some months later into the parliament and attack the Government's plans for being part of the National Electricity Market. Seriously, your policy is to exit the NEM. That would kill off Robbins Island windfarm, so you are duplicitous. You are saying one thing on one hand to the north-west coast workers and saying another thing on the other hand to the Parliament of Tasmania. You have been caught out because it is on the public record; it was on your Facebook page and we can see that. We know what is going on and you have been caught out saying one thing on one hand to a particular target group on the north-west coast, supporting the workers, and then coming into the parliament saying you want to exit the NEM, no more Marinus, putting at risk Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. That is not a good policy.

On top of the targeted winter energy assistance package, the Premier was on the eastern shore with Mr Young, the new member for Franklin - and congratulations to Dean on his elevation; he will be a great advocate for small business, families and his local community - and Greg Brown, Brownie. He is the Liberal candidate for Pembroke. He is standing up for his community. He wants a good outcome and he knows that cost of living is front and centre. He was there with Nic Street and the Premier announcing \$5 million of funding support to address cost of living issues in Tasmania. That was very encouraging. It was great catching up with Brownie just last week and I know how committed he is to his local community. We were at the Shoreline where a lot of people know him. The feedback was very positive and the doorknocking was very interesting as well. I support his candidacy 100 per cent.

There were questions asked about the other parts of our policy. We have a very much boosted and expanded \$50 million Energy Saver Loan Scheme and no charge for the aurora+ app. There is more to be said about all of that. Let me make it very clear that we are not going to take the lectures from the other side just because they are having an attack at us and they are criticising us for having a Liberal Party State Council, when they cannot have their own.

This motion talks about a Treasury website. This is something removed from his own website. There was a reference in the motion to the unprecedented cost of living pressures and the power prices. Over the course of our Government since 2014, they have come down in real terms for both residential and small business customers. We will not put up with the lecturing from the other side. They have a lot to be responsible for and I hope they will come in here and put these matters on the public record.

We will always act responsibly. We have done that during the course of our Government. We will monitor this. We get feedback from the business community and consumers in Tasmania and I appreciate the feedback. It is important, not just in my electorate of Lyons, which I appreciate getting out and about in and enjoying the community efforts there, but I appreciate the feedback because we want to ensure that cost of living pressures are maintained and responded to in a responsible way. We will always do what is responsible and we will have the state's best interests at heart.

We know there have been some increases; that is no surprise to us. We will respond as appropriate, as we have done in the past. We will not give up on cost of living and cost of doing business. I have made reflections on Mr Winter's power price cap bill, which was flawed. Even during the debate, he said he knew it was going down. That was because it was flawed. He made reference to 2018 when we had two retail energy businesses in Tasmania and now we have seven.

Things have changed. We have two new windfarms. We have Granville Harbour and Cattle Hill. I was at the opening of both those windfarms. It was at the opening of the Granville Harbour windfarm where we hit the 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy in November 2020, a very proud day indeed. As I said, we are on track now to get to 150 per cent by 2030 and 200 per cent by 2040 with today's announcement of the extra 25 000 gigawatts that has been identified through the registration of interest processed by 2030.

There is a lot more good news to come. We have big plans. We will not give up, despite the criticism and the relentless attacks from the state Labor Party.

I will share a couple of final points for the state Labor Party because they attacked us, the Liberal Party, in the first part of the motion and spoke specifically of the Liberal Party State Council, which was held last weekend. I congratulate Chris Gatenby, the new president of the Liberal Party in Tasmania. He will be a fine president. I know him well; a good farming lad and his family has grown Black Angus cattle for some time. I wish him well and look forward to working with him as I know others do on this side of the Chamber. Thanks, and congratulations to Rod Scurrah for his service to the party over so many years as president and formerly treasurer as well.

What we have not heard of so far in this debate from the Opposition is their efforts to convince the federal Labor Party and the federal government to ensure that their \$275 electricity price reduction gets implemented. They could phone them and say, 'Please implement your promise'. You said, through you Mr Speaker, 'What is the point of raising this? They have only been in government for a few months now'. The point is that they promised it. They made a commitment of a \$275 decrease.

The Premier has raised petrol prices in this House, as has the Treasurer. Petrol prices have been high. This is an opportunity for the federal Labor government to make a difference to the cost of living. The question is: will they? We will have to wait and see where that goes.

We know what members of the Labor Party have said about their own organisation. Tim Jacobson said, 'The party is at an all-time low. No one can deny there are massive problems'. We know about the internal civil wars, the dysfunction. We know that the former member and upper House member for Huon described the other side as 'toxic'. The attacks of Labor and Mr Winter on this Government and the fact that we had our State Council were because you could not have one yourselves. Mr Speaker, what did the Leader of the Labor Party say last year? Ms White said, 'Today marks a full stop in a very difficult chapter for Labor'. The only full stop, of course, has been by her own party, because nationally they have no trust in this party. Disunity is rife in the Labor Party if you think of federal intervention.

Ms BUTLER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 151 - irrelevance.

Mr Ferguson - The first line in the motion talks about the Liberal Party's State Council.

Ms BUTLER - No, it is also irrelevant as well. Continued irrelevance and tedious repetition. This is a standing order. I would like you to listen please, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - Thank you, if you could take a seat, thank you very much.

On the point of order, I will remind the minister about relevance. I cannot put words in the minister's mouth. If the member does not take a seat then she will be ejected from the Chamber.

Ms Butler - Thank you for confirming that you understand.

Member Suspended

Member for Lyons - Ms Butler

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Thank you, Ms Butler, you can leave the Chamber.

Ms Butler - May I ask, Mr Speaker, on what grounds?

Mr SPEAKER - Because I control the Chamber. You have disrespected the Speaker's ruling. I have asked you to sit down and you did not, so you can leave the Chamber until 5 p.m.

Ms Butler withdrew.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Speaker, as I say, the first part of the motion talks about the Liberal Party State Council. We encourage and support debate and discussion in the Liberal Party. We welcome that. That is something that the Labor Party cannot do right through to 2025. I have made the point. The division in the state Labor Party has caused federal intervention and removed the leadership in the party.

A former president, Ben McGregor, threatened to sue the current leader Ms White. Mr McGregor was scathing of the party. He said on local radio in March this year:

We have had horrendous decisions made in this party for years.

For years, Mr Speaker. He went onto say:

The working people of Tasmania have got an Opposition that is ineffective at best and actually you know, complicit at worst.

They were some pretty big statements by the former president, who had been removed from that role. Let us be clear, we have state councils, we have discussions, we welcome it, and differences of opinion are expressed. The Premier was asked questions about it earlier last week and again this week. The administration in Tasmania has been removed from the state Labor Party because it is politically bankrupt. You were not even able to make a decision about your own party or your party conference.

I totally oppose this motion by Mr Winter. It is not on. There has been a range of publicity stunts over the winter by Mr Winter over that winter period. You have become increasingly unhinged in those publicity stunts and those attacks on our renewable energy projects.

The question for the State Labor Party is: why do not you come on board and support Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and now plans to grow our economy, create more jobs, deliver a cleaner world? You are good at throwing the criticism and throwing the knocking, the knock, knock, knock. I made reference to Marinus Link just last week in the parliament delivering 140 million tonnes of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere altogether. A million cars taken off the road. It is on the public record. In terms of a cleaner environment, a Marinus Link will deliver. Why do you not get behind it? Why do you not support it?

Ms O'Connor - Why don't you tell us who is going to pay for it?

Mr BARNETT - That is a rhetorical question.

Mr SPEAKER - Before you sit down, I will make that point to the minister. These questions are all rhetorical, but please do not create a situation where you are asking the members to interject.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much and we would not want that. I appreciate your guidance which I respect.

My concern for the state Opposition is why they do not come on board, and why they want to exit the National Electricity Market. There was a reference to Basslink by the member in his contribution. If you want to close that down as well, does the Labor Party want to cut us off altogether from the National Electricity Market? Do you want to do that? It is a fast-moving transition and they do not get it. They are caught in the Dark Ages, back years ago. You need to be taking your blinkers off. You have your blinkers on; take them off. See the vision we have for renewable energy generation in Tasmania based on our world-class water resource and world-class wind resource. This is a key to our economic and environmental prosperity, not just for next year or two - we are talking for decades to come.

We are on track and we want the state Opposition to acknowledge that, to come on board and support our efforts to grow our economy and create more jobs. The publicity stunts of the most recent months showing the unhinged approach from the state Opposition is not helpful. Frightening vulnerable Tasmanians is not helpful, whether it is to do with blackouts or increasing price rises, which we know are set for 12 months through to 30 June next year; they are locked in. The fatally flawed price gap bill from Mr Winter and the state Labor Opposition - you have been caught out and you would create chaos for our seven energy retailers, sending them all to the wall.

There is no magic pudding. You know your state Labor Opposition has a track record of magic puddings and not being able to respond in a responsible way to the Budget. You have no credibility when it comes to energy policy and supporting our renewable energy sector and more jobs and more opportunities for families - particularly in rural and regional communities - and a cleaner world. Come on board. This is your opportunity. We will not be supporting the motion.

[4.42 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, Dr Broad might like to make a closing contribution so I will keep my comments relatively concise.

If there was an award in this place handed out for tedious repetition - the Standing Order 151 Award - it would undoubtedly go to Mr Barnett. Six times that I counted he talked about the Labor Party's internal challenges, the Labor Party's state conference challenges, and it took him a good 10 minutes when he first got to his feet to even come to the fact that we have a motion before us that relates to his portfolio.

It struck me that he was struggling to infill and provide a coherent vision for energy policy on this beautiful island of Tasmania. I would have liked to hear - and I guess this is the mystery question in this debate so far: how can it be that this minister so strongly championed, until a short time ago, policy that is very much like what is contained in this motion? My recollection is that Mr Barnett was all for effectively cutting the cord, all for Tasmania leaving the National Energy Market. Then something happened a couple of months ago. I feel like he has gone off to an energy ministers conference under a federal government that has much more focus on renewables, and actually has an energy policy, and he has been mugged or something. I cannot understand why there has been a sudden reversal.

We need to have the sort of politics where a minister or a member - or even yourself, Mr Speaker - if there is a situation that arises where we have had a position and we change it - or we have had a position and we know we were wrong - we can just come in and say, 'Yes, I was wrong', because that is the grown-up thing to do. I always taught my kids to fess up. It is much easier.

A member - He pretends he did not hold the position for four years. It is incredible.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know, and that is where the bafflement from my point of view comes from. It is a completely different read on reality. Tasmanians know that the biggest champion of the policy that is outlined in this notice of motion put forward by Mr Winter was, in fact, minister Barnett until a few short months ago, and we have not had honesty about that. There is a whole story being told to the Tasmanian people about delinking from the mainland by this Energy minister who suddenly does not have that position and has not had the courage to be upfront about it with the people of Tasmania. It is poor and also completely unsurprising.

I am quite amused - and it has come up a fair bit - that it is really clear that on 21 May this year the Tasmanian Liberal Government realised we had a federal government, because before 21 May this year, you did not hear a peep out of these ministers on actions the Morrison government took that shafted Tasmania. Not a peep. When the Abbott government ripped up the carbon pricing framework, Hydro Tasmania overnight was about \$70 million a year worse off, as I recall it - \$70 million a year gouged out of Hydro's bottom line because the troglodytes in the Abbott government smashed up the carbon pricing framework - silence from the Liberals on that. Silence.

Mr O'Byrne - They cheered it on, did they not?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, they cheered it on. In fact, one year they had the hide to present an alternative budget. It was probably the last one they did. They forgot the black hole that was in Hydro's budget that they had supported. Silence from the then premier, Will Hodgman,

when in the first Abbott budget more than \$1 billion was cut out of the state's health funding over 10 years. Not a word. We are still paying the price for that first Abbott budget - in health and education, and indeed in housing. Perhaps the greatest perfidy was when the Morrison government stitched up changes to the GST distribution to try to shore up votes in Western Australia, which has become a mendicant state. A terribly failed effort at the last federal election to shore up votes in Western Australia that ripped Tasmania off in the years ahead. Silence about fundamentally the end of horizontal fiscal equalisation, knowing that Tasmania will be ripped off.

Every day now in question time there is some acknowledgement that we have a federal government in Canberra never heard of for the previous eight years.

Mr Speaker, there is nothing to disagree with in this motion. The Greens are very comfortable supporting it.

I note that at the Tasmanian Liberal State Council there was an acknowledgement that the levers to put downward pressure on power prices are held by this Government. That is just a statement of fact.

This motion acknowledges rising power prices - power increases of up to 12 per cent. We know this is one part of the terrible cost of living pressures that Tasmanians are experiencing now, from their power bills to their rents, to the food they buy, the petrol they put in their cars, to the costs of transport more broadly. The cost of living pressures on the people of our island are enormous, and they are growing. It is really good to see that there is a focus on cost of living from Labor, and it has evoked a response from Government, which has talked more about cost of living in recent times because of the pressure coming from Labor over power prices. That is good.

The motion notes the advice from Treasury and Finance that in the event of volatility in the National Electricity Market, the Government retains the ability to reintroduce previous policy instruments, one of which Mr Barnett introduced not much more than a year ago to put downward pressure on power prices. What is wrong with the Government starting work to implement a pricing structure so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power? I cannot see that there is anything fundamentally wrong with that. The issue here is that we either have an economic regulator or we have an economic regulator part-time and sometimes parliament intervenes through a legislative instrument, tipping down power prices, or we do not have an economic regulator. This motion does not go to the substance of that, but why would you not do the work within government?

The minister has been talking about Marinus Link and Battery of the Nation for more than three years now. We have been asking who will pay for Marinus? When the state goes to the Commonwealth with its hand out and says, 'You pay for Marinus', and the Commonwealth rightly turns around and says, 'We are not paying for all of it', ultimately we know the flow-on effect will be on people's power bills. The money has to come from somewhere and this minister has not made the case for Marinus Link. He has had at least four years to sell that story and I think Tasmanians are not buying it.

There is great scepticism when Marinus Link comes up in conversations that I have out and about in the community in various parts of Tasmania. People think it is a chimera, a pipe dream. The money has not been secured. The case has not been made. We know that on the

mainland, states and territories are investing in renewable energy, big battery technology. We have Snowy Hydro. Mr Barnett can say that Snowy Hydro and Marinus are complementary. I genuinely do not know about that. However, the mainland is steaming ahead with its own renewable energy investments and sometimes I wonder if Marinus will become redundant even before the first sod is turned.

As Greens, we worry when you have a minister talking about an island of this scale being the Battery of the Nation. That is delusional. The future of renewable energy is in a broadly distributed energy generation network where you have wind, solar, geothermal, and some hydrogen, as long as it is green hydrogen that is not cooked up by coal or oil. This notion that an island of the scale of Tasmania could be the Battery of the Nation is just propaganda.

Of course, we need to increase renewable generation but we also need to answer the question about what is in it for the people of Tasmania. What is the benefit to the people of Tasmania from Marinus Link? What is the benefit to the people of Tasmania from not having a coherent energy strategy or coherent policy around where you put wind turbines? What is the benefit to the people of Tasmania by industrialising the north with transmission lines and wind turbines everywhere? Why is there no conversation with the Tasmanian people about where they would like to see wind turbines?

I personally love wind turbines. I love birds more but I do love wind energy. Why is this minister and this state not going up and having a chat to Chris Bowen about more generation in Bass Strait? Why are we not putting turbines offshore, out of migratory bird pathways, so that you do not have the impacts on communities? We know that communities get alienated when corporations come in and say, 'We are just going to put all these turbines here'. No conversations, all just stitched up. There should be conversations with the people of Tasmania because they are the key stakeholders here.

Yes, we need to contribute to bringing down emissions on the mainland, and we already are. Yes, we can do more. The question that has never been answered by this minister is: what is the benefit to Tasmania from Marinus Link? Who pays for it, from 200 per cent renewable? This minister has not made the case for it. I would be interested to hear if there are any new developments or any certainty around funding, rather than just announcements.

We will not be opposing this motion. We encourage Labor, as part of its cost of living focus, to also look at those other cost of living factors affecting the lives of Tasmanians and think about the things we might all do together to bring down that cost of living across various parts of household and individual expenditure. The wording of this motion is not something we can fundamentally disagree with. On that basis, we will not be opposing it.

[4.57 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in favour of this motion. What we are debating here is the cost of living pressures that have been driven by increases in power prices. We are seeing it not just in households but also small businesses and, indeed, large businesses. Why are Tasmanians, households, small businesses and even large businesses struggling with power prices? It is because this policy, the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation, the policy the Government has held for four years, has been abandoned - and there has been no real explanation as to why it has been abandoned.

It is not just us calling out the Government on this. The Liberal Party State Council put up a motion that the Tasmanian Government has greater discretion to determine the price at which energy is sold to the national grid. That is a vote of no confidence in this minister, that is telling this minister not to abandon the policy to disconnect from the national market. It is saying that Tasmanians deserve to have more control over power prices.

That is why this motion should be supported by this House, especially the last point, which calls upon the Government to immediately commence work to implement a pricing structure so that Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. It can be done because the Government has done it in the past. Indeed, as we look at point 3 in this, it notes the advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance that in the event of further volatility in mainland electricity prices, the Government retains the ability to reintroduce previous policy instruments to protect Tasmanian households and businesses. Why will the Government not do this? Why will this minister not stump up and do what they promised they were going to do?

Instead, the defence we get from this minister is the 'Labor, Labor, Labor' defence. 'It is Labor's fault, it is federal Labor's fault, it is state Labor's fault'. Then he goes on a ramble saying, 'you have been caught out'. It is this minister that has been caught out because his state council caught him out and tried to redirect this minister back onto the right course of action. What is going on with this Liberal Party when they do not even respond to their own state council's motion, a motion trying to pull them back on track?

This Government comes in and talks about all the things they are doing but we know that they cannot even implement a winter support package. They put \$50 million on the table for a winter energy assistance package. What did we hear about it today? It is not even going to be implemented by winter. This Government needs to step up.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Mr SPEAKER - The result of the division being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes.

Motion negatived.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Waiver of Government Private Members' Business

[5.05 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, in accordance with standing order 42(e), I indicate that Government private members business is waived for today's sitting.

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

In Committee

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

New clause A -

[5.07 p.m.]

Ms WHITE - Chair, I need your advice. The amendment that I am seeking to move now is very lengthy. It goes to a number of pages and it would be preferable to not need to read it. I am sure there has to be a mechanism for me to ask for -

Dr Woodruff - We sought the indulgence of the Chair on the same matter. Seek the indulgence of the House not to read it all. That was the advice we were given.

CHAIR - Is the Committee happy, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, to go down that path and not read it out completely? Everyone is happy?

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms WHITE - Thank you.

Mr Chair, I move that new clause A be made part of the bill.

[Editors Note: Please refer to the Votes and Proceedings for text of amendment]

I will explain the intent of these amendments. There is a number of different elements to this. It is a new clause (A) to follow clause 5 in the bill. The proposal is for there to be, again, some very clear statements about what the guiding principles for a fair and equitable transition looks like. There is also the establishment of the joint House committee, which would be a joint standing committee on climate change, as well as the creation of a climate change advisory council. Each of these amendments provides a significant level of detail about the membership of those bodies, how they would operate and how they would report their functions.

In bringing our support to this bill, one of the things the Labor Party was clear on is that we would like to see protections for the most vulnerable - a very clear recognition of the need to support a just transition that is fair and equitable, and for there to be much greater independent oversight of the work and functions of the climate change act, once it is enacted.

The amendment before the Chair at the moment not only provides some clarity around how we would describe, and how you would enact, a process to help decarbonise the economy that is fair and equitable in that transition. I will not go through the further details there; they are available for the Chair and others to see. With the joint standing committee on climate change, I note the Greens have a similar amendment. I will just make the point that in the drafting of the Labor amendment, we asked the OPC for advice, and the drafting that is before the Chair is based on the way the Joint House Committee on Integrity operates. The language, the functions, the powers and the way it reports, are exactly the same.

If there are any questions about how we came up with those particular elements of the establishment of that committee, hopefully that explains it. As is outlined, the joint standing committee will consist of six members of parliament - three members of the Legislative Council and three of the House of Assembly. It would have the responsibility of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing performance of the Government against the objects of the act. This includes the various reports produced under the act once they have been produced to parliament. There was confusion we dealt with yesterday that it would somehow receive reports before the parliament. It would not. It would evaluate progress against the targets, and review and report on a further independent oversight option for the act within two years. That goes to another amendment I will move later. Actually, it is part of this.

It is the establishment of the climate change advisory council, which would provide advice about the establishment of a rigorous independent authority that would be a transitional authority. I note the Greens have a similar concept, which they have called a climate change commission. For us, the name is not as relevant as its intent and functions. There are some differences in what the Labor Party and the Greens propose but I think we could come to an agreement.

Dr Woodruff - Why did you change the name from commission to advisory council, because it is basically based on our model?

Ms WHITE - It is not based on your model. It is based on the New South Wales model and it has different functions as well. Nonetheless, I think they could be combined. As I said, the name is less important than what it does.

Dr Woodruff - I agree with that.

Ms WHITE - It is about the independent oversight.

The climate change advisory council, which is the third element of the amendment before the Chair, would consist of at least five and up to seven members, including at least one member appointed by the minister after consultation with the peak body representing trade unions, at least one member appointed by the minister after consultation with the people or bodies that the minister considers represent the interest of relevant industries, at least one member with relevant scientific expertise and at least one member appointed by the minister after consultation with the peak body representing local government. The areas of expertise in

members of the council are to cover as many of the following as possible: environment, climate change policy, technology development, economic analysis and forecasting, regional development and environmental determinants of health and civil society.

It outlines what the functions of the council would be, including that within 18 months of the commencement of the bill, it would inquire into and report to the minister on the establishment of a transitional authority.

Chair, I expect that the minister will get up and say he has announced in his second-reading speech the intention to create a ministerial reference group. As we discussed in the earlier part of the bill, in debate yesterday, it is very unclear how they will be appointed, what skills they will need to have, what their terms of reference will be, how they will operate, how frequently they will meet and what powers they will have. The lack of detail leaves a lot to be desired. They are also not enshrined in law by inclusion in this bill.

It is necessary that independent oversight is a fundamental part of this legislation to make sure that we are keeping an eye on progress because it is a greater task than just government undertaking this work. It is not just the parliament's work. It is on behalf of all of Tasmania. As I said in my second reading speech contribution, data can be interpreted in different ways, depending on what kind of narrative you are trying to achieve. That is a big risk when we are talking about climate change and the data available to governments when they are thinking about how they demonstrate action or not. We need to make sure there is no ability for the government to spin what is going on because this is too important. The independent oversight function also makes sure that there is proper scrutiny, transparency and accountability to provide for reliable information to the community that cannot be used by any government of the day to present a particular narrative.

It is also why we think the joint House committee should be established because, again, this is a much bigger responsibility than just leaving it to executive government. It is something that the parliament should be considering. As the member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, said earlier in the debate, we have a joint House committee for libraries. If that is important enough to have a joint House committee, then we should have a joint House committee for climate change.

Mr Jaensch - What about one for health or education?

Ms WHITE - As we discussed, we used to have standing committees for those things and your Government cut them.

Mr Jaensch - But not specifically for those things.

Ms WHITE - Well, we could. If you think they are important enough that we should, you are a minister in Government and I would support those things and -

Mr Jaensch - Libraries is perhaps not your best, your strongest -

Dr Woodruff - It would make a really important point about how important climate change is and there is no reason not to have one.

Ms WHITE - Chair, we have a joint House committee for integrity, which is the basis for the amendment before you now, drafted by the Labor Party. The Integrity Commission is an important independent body. We have a joint House committee that supports the parliament to understand how that act is operating and what improvements might need to take place. There should be a joint House committee to make sure the Climate Change Act is operating in the way intended. It should not be controversial. If the minister thinks we should also have joint House committees for health and education, I fully support that. I look forward to the Government bringing any motions to establish joint House committees for those matters. Or, if we bring those motions to the parliament, I look forward to their support for those matters here as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - I thank Ms White for bringing on this amendment. It improves the Government's bill. We have already tabled an amendment for a body not dissimilar to the Labor Party's proposed joint standing committee and advisory council. We have a bill tabled before the parliament, the Safe Climate Bill 2021. That has comprehensively outlined what is in our amendment and there are quite a lot of similarities. I will go through some of the differences and I have a few questions. Can I clarify what clause we are on?

Ms White - New clause A to follow clause 5. It was page 8 in the Labor Party -

Dr WOODRUFF - I have several questions on the proposed new section 4A, Guiding principles for fair and equitable transition. You propose a number of guiding principles and we have no concerns with most of them. I have some questions about subsection (1)(d), which is in relation to determining whether the transition towards a low-carbon economy and a low-emissions future is fair and equitable.

... regard must be had to the following principles:

- (d) equity for households, businesses, workers, communities and rural and regional areas, taking into account the social, cultural and economic differences;

What do you mean by equity between all those different groups?

I have some queries and potential concern with part (g), which is:

allowing reasonable time for the implementation of transition solutions for those communities;

I would be happier if allowing reasonable times for the implementation of transition solutions was conditioned by the context of the climate emergency. The Greens are the first to push very strongly for meaningful consultation and engagement. Nonetheless, this bill is really about the fact that we are in a climate emergency and we will have to make some changes. It might not always be within some people's ideal time frame. Can you talk to, and whether you would agree with, the sentiment that within the context of the climate emergency, we do need to allow a reasonable time for the implementation?

Subclause (h) is:

for a worker who is unable to pursue transition opportunities - the provision of a mechanism for compensated redundancy or voluntary redeployment of the worker to another site where the worker wishes to continue working, without undermining the incentives for transition;

Could you please give us some more information about what 'incentives for transition' means in the context of subclause (h)? I am wondering how this fits in with the urgency for transition; some industries will urgently need to transition and 'undermining the incentives for transition' - does that mean if there are incentives on the table, then they should be left for as long as the industry wants to take them up? I do not understand what it means in that context.

Proposed section 4B - Joint Standing Committee on Climate Change. You have described having the detail of political parties. I note that there is before this House a statement from the Premier that we will be restoring the numbers of the House. Subclause (3) of 4B on page 10 describes the number of people who could be on a joint standing committee. It includes that at least one member of any political party that has two or more members in the House of Assembly is to be a member of the joint standing committee. With an extra 10 members in the House, it is possible that there might be several political parties with more than two members, and the joint committee is only able to account for six members. I wonder whether there should be a bit of flex in the maximum number that the joint standing committee could have, in order to be able to fulfil the requirement that there could be three or four members for political parties that satisfy that criteria in this House, for example.

Finally, proposed section 4C - Functions of the Joint Standing Committee. These differ quite reasonably from what the Greens have in our amendment. A significant difference is that the Labor Party's proposed joint standing committee's functions are to review and report, to evaluate progress, to examine. There is a gap, which is what we have in our joint standing committee. What we have outlined is something that is more about the capacity to undertake inquiries and to do self-motivated investigations to develop materials or programs or partnerships, to commission or conduct or publish research. These are all much more active and it is a different function with the community.

As I am saying this, I realise that we are talking about the joint standing committee, not the advisory committee. My mistake, sorry. Disregard that. We are getting to the advisory council.

I am very happy with the Climate Change Advisory Council, proposed section 4H, subsection (3), the expertise of members of the council. It is very important that the skills include environment and climate change policy at the top of the list. Environmental determinants of health, again, is very important to be represented there.

I do not understand why we would elevate trade unions in this instance above scientific. There is only one member with relevant scientific expertise, and I am concerned that is a pretty low weighting, given the sorts of topics that would need to be considered. We think having more members with scientific expertise would be good. It could be that there are people within trade union roles, people in local government, who have scientific expertise. Some weighting of scientific expertise would strengthen that body.

We are happy to support this and it definitely improves the bill.

Time expired.

Ms WHITE - I will respond first to the member for Franklin. I will start from the last point first. The climate change advisory council is to consist of at least five and up to seven members, including at least one member of each of the groups described. It does not mean that any one of those groups has a higher weighting than the ones also listed beside them. It does not prohibit the minister from appointing at least two members with relevant scientific expertise. It is up to the minister of the day to make those decisions - to not only make sure there are at least those bodies represented, but also those skill sets represented.

The member looks a bit busy and may not be listening.

Mr Jaensch - I listened.

Ms WHITE - Thank you, minister. It is very kind of you to acknowledge that I am speaking. No-one else cares.

Your question about 4B, the Joint Standing Committee on Climate Change. You asked why that has not included scope to reflect a parliament that is 35 members as opposed to the current number, which is 25. That is simply because we do not have 35 members. It would be a bit presumptuous to create a bill that assumes this would occur, when it has not yet occurred. Like all the other joint standing committees that exist in this House, if we increase the size of parliament there will need to be amendments made to change the makeup of all those committees, and that would be no different in this instance.

The member asked some questions about 4A and the guiding principles for fair and equitable transition, and what does equity mean for households, businesses, workers, communities in rural and regional areas, taking into account their social, cultural and economic differences when considering a transition to a low-carbon economy. I am surprised that question was asked because we have discussed this a lot over the course of this bill. I feel like it is inherent in your knowledge of what is required to have a sustainable transition for our economy, to help decarbonise in a way that does not disproportionately impact people who are most vulnerable, for instance.

Dr Woodruff - Sure, I understand that. I did not understand how it is was meant in the context of that part.

Ms WHITE - It goes to that core principle that I outlined the Labor Party seeking to address with some of our amendments - that there is not a disproportionate impact felt by the most vulnerable in our community. It is an attempt to capture that in this section.

The further question was to (g), about does allowing reasonable time for the implementation of transition solutions for those communities take into consideration that we are in a climate emergency? I think it is not explicit there, but the intent of this bill, would make that clear. Certainly, this parliament has - I might be wrong - but I think we have passed a motion declaring a climate emergency, have we not?

Dr Woodruff - No, we have not.

Ms WHITE - We should have. Many other places have and many other parliaments have, including, I believe, the federal parliament. It would not be unreasonable for you to view that in that context.

The other question you had was about the incentives for transition, which is in 4A(h) of this amendment. The question was around, what does it mean to say 'without undermining the incentives for transition'. This is language that was adopted through consultation I did with the CEPU, one of the unions that has been very closely involved with the drafting of the bill and some of the work that is happening in New South Wales.

The idea and the purpose of it is to make sure that when those transitions are occurring that workers are not displaced from employment and that we support them to transition to other decent and fair jobs, without undermining the incentives for transition. By that, it means we have to transition. That is my interpretation. Perhaps it could be more clearly worded but we have to transition. There are clear incentives for us to transition. If we do not, we are in perilous danger. Perilous danger may be not be the right way to describe that, Chair. I hope *Hansard* can make me sound smarter than I am.

CHAIR - Perilous danger, is that it?

Ms WHITE - It does make sense? Right. That is the incentive for any of this work, I would have thought. I hope that answers the member's questions.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, thank you for that.

Mr JAENSCH - We spent half an hour in here debating a single definition earlier in the debate. Here we have a lot of big concepts loaded into this one amendment. I will try to follow the matter through as though we are presented and provide our response to them.

The top of the amendment is reference to adoption in the legislation of guiding principles for fair and equitable transition. As we indicated previously, we believe that there should be principles guiding government's actions to respond to the priorities identified in the Climate Action Plan. The principles that we propose to adopt are those proposed in the report of the review of the act. We propose to adopt them in the context of the whole-of-government policy framework, which guides government's actions that we take and decisions and policies that we make that have consideration for climate change and to ensure that they do.

Amongst the principles you referred to, the first of our principles addresses that most directly - the principle of sustainable development and social equity. That principle is explained as:

Climate action, and any government action that has a direct impact on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, it should provide benefit to both current and future generations of Tasmanians. In particular, consideration of vulnerable communities and First Nation's practices should occur.

I think we agree that there needs to be guiding principles for how we go through the change as an economy and society in relation to climate change. We believe that those sort of principles should be adopted in the whole-of-government's policy framework, rather than in legislation for reasons I have explained previously in terms of their changing nature over time

and the need for flexibility in working across all of government in delivering government's functions with a view to climate change considerations.

The other thing that I question is that Labor is proposing that accountable government authorities must apply for their employment transition principles when making decisions that may impact employment and industry. I think that the idea is that these are the principles that would come into play when you are doing something that can affect industries in employing people.

This is where we were in our discussions about the involvement of unions and the just transition provisions. It assumes that under the powers of this legislation, government will be making decisions or giving direction that may mandate loss of employment and/or cessation of economic activity in industry. I need to draw this back to an assumption that the Greens, I think, have made that that industries are going to have close down. We do not believe that. Our analysis, our modelling and our pathways do not suggest that it is the case at all. Our economy, under the actions of our review and our emissions pathway proposals, will grow and the sectors that it references will grow. There is no reflection that we will be closing industries down. Therefore, in this legislation, we believe, there is no need to create a whole range of safeguards to protect people from this act doing its job.

We are not going to be closing industries down. We are going to be working with industries and sectors of our economy to work with them to reduce emissions for the benefit of all Tasmanians and to contribute to the global challenge of climate change. We are not in the business of closing things down. We do not have specific protections in this act to look after the people who we make redundant. In the principles that you have raised, Ms White, you have talked about redundancy and people needing to retrain and move and be compensated for decisions that we make under this act.

We do not propose that this act is going to be driving decision-making that will put people out of their jobs. That is not how we roll. That is not what we intend. We never will. While we are the Government, we will not be doing that. We do not see that there is a need to build those protections into this act because we do not think there are those situations to protect against. On the other hand, they suggest that Labor thinks that there are and that this act should be closing down industries or radically diminishing their activities.

We want to do transition in a way that is beneficial to our state, our economy, and we do that by working with industries that own the emissions. I know that others take offence at that but we will set about working with them to reduce them.

The other way of looking at this, when I say this is not the act for these sorts of protections to be locked in: Labor has not given us clear examples of where they may be needed and what other comparisons there might be in other legislation, where there are, say, regulations on businesses and industries - environmental ones, planning constraints and those sorts of things - that do limit business activity. Where is the just transition or protective guiding principles for those? If this can apply to any regulation that is more directive and deliberative than what we are planning here, where are these protections in other parts of legislation?

Again, it is a bit of a worm hole, sorry a rabbit hole - worm holes serve a different purpose. I do not want to get lost in it, but I think we do not need to be building into this act protections for people losing their jobs or being unfairly carrying the burden of transition to a

lower emissions future. We see this as prospective for Tasmania, a positive, needed, beneficial and something which creates significant opportunities for us.

I want to speak briefly now about some of the other governance and oversight and scrutiny structures. Amongst what Labor has proposed and the Greens, in Dr Woodruff's response, is a joint standing committee of parliament, some climate change council or committee or advisory structure, transition authority or a commissioner - lots of machinery of scrutiny and governance to oversee this work whereas, we believe that the parliament and the people are where we report and where scrutiny is applied.

Dr Woodruff - Aren't you going to set up an advisory committee, minister?

Mr JAENSCH - I will come to that. In terms of our approach, again we are creating the requirement for the Government to produce a climate change action plan, climate change risk assessment, emissions reduction and resilience plans for each sector, an annual greenhouse gas emissions report, an annual climate activity statement, all of which will be tabled in this place for the public to see and for the parliament to consider and to scrutinise. In the case of the action plan, the risk assessment and the emissions reduction and resilience plans, we are also intending that those would be in draft form available for public comment, scrutiny and feedback before reaching their final tabling form for the parliament. There is a lot of access to information and evidence of the Government's action or inaction and how effective that has been for anybody who wants to apply that scrutiny.

We believe we do not need extra committees of our parliament to do that, as we said earlier. The precedent is not very strong. The Library Committee is a very busy and productive committee. The community eagerly awaits their report each year and they do important work to look after that institution of our parliament.

The other examples of joint House committees we have are slightly different. Integrity, Public Accounts, and Subordinate Legislation committees all play important roles but they are not built around subject matter expertise or policy on a particular topic. They are procedural and administrative parts of the machinery of our parliament, providing scrutiny on the operations of our parliament rather than any particular area of great policy, interest or importance. Library is clearly an exception to that.

Ms White - We are going to be here until midnight, aren't we?

Mr JAENSCH - Really? I was only just starting. Time has run out. I think I have given the feeling that we will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms White - I have to have a chance of a right of reply to that. I will try to be brief.

On the joint House committee, because that is what you were speaking about, minister, you made the point that MPs are not subject matter experts, so it would not operate similarly to how the Integrity committee operates. The thing committees do, is that they call witnesses. They call subject matter experts. It would also have an important role in making sure in what you say you are doing, you do and that we could evaluate our progress against reaching particular objectives that are stated in the bill and also make sure the act is functioning appropriately. It would have that mechanical administrative function as well as the ability to call subject matter experts. That is what committees of parliaments do all the time, to get expert

evidence to make decisions. At the end of the day none of us are subject matter experts in everything but we are still responsible for a variety of things, yourself included with a litany of portfolios but you get expert advice and hopefully that guides your decision-making.

To your other point around your pessimistic approach to Labor's push to have just and fair transition provisions included in this bill as though we are trying to shut everything down, it is not the case. It is also about opportunities. You and I have discussed that but can I draw to your attention that things are changing now. There are industries, as you say, and your forecast predicts that they are expected to grow but they will change as they grow. People who are currently employed doing certain things in those industries we will have to reskill, retrain and potentially be made redundant because they do not have the skills that the growth in those sectors requires. There will be changes as there is growth as you predict. There are also changes that you cannot manage or control that the Government will be required to respond to.

We talked yesterday about the changes that are inevitable at the coal mine in Fingal and how the Government acts to support that community and those workers in the transition when it comes. There are also communities who are dealing with change. This is why local government wanted to be recognised in a particular way. There are communities and industries and sectors that are being confronted with things like inundation. We have seen that across low lying areas of Australia and in other areas of Australia recently, which is making people redundant. It is not because of government policy but it is because of climate change.

Then you have fire and the impact it has on the landscape. You look at the southern fires we had in Tasmania and what that did to the forestry estate, what that has meant for wood supply and what that means for the Government in decisions it will need to make come 2027. You look at warming water around Tasmania and what that currently means for our fisheries, shellfish, aquaculture and the way they operate and how that is going to change as those waters warm.

There are things that are happening now that government is aware of and is already responding to. The inclusion of a just transition principle in this bill is not just to deal with circumstances where government policy is creating those changes but also to help government to respond to change because of a change in climate that is impacting on industry and business and employment. I hope that provides some explanation. I do not want to have to keep debating this at length. We will be here until midnight if we are. I wanted to give further explanation to those amendments.

Mr JAENSCH - I thank you, Ms White. I go to areas like 4A(2) when after the list of guiding principles, it says:

The accountable authority of a Tasmanian Government entity must apply fair employment transition principles when making or implementing any decision, policy, program or process in response to climate change that may affect employment in an industry or geographic region.

Ms White - It should.

Mr JAENSCH - I agree with you that there is always change going on in our economy and industries, the performance of those industries changes over time and that there is a need for adjustment and change. Governments are constantly in that space. We are doing it now

with skill shortages in the building and construction sector, for example. We are driven by forces outside the control of the individual and those businesses but we are investing heavily in making sure we have got the right sort of people to support that \$27 billion pipeline of work that is coming down the track. I do not think that this act needs its own provisions included for those matters. I believe we disagree on that. I thank you for arguing your case and I will argue mine.

On another level with the proposals for there to be a joint standing committee, the Climate change advisory council, the transition authority commission, et cetera, under slightly different models in what is proposed, the thing I do not understand is how having all of those structures informing and advising and inquiring helps us reduce emissions. They are not the things that have been missing in terms of the challenge of reducing emissions in our economy. What has been missing is the work with the sectors that produce the emissions to really hunt down and modify those emissions, and the processes that create them.

When we start to talk about climate emergency, if we are to be on that emergency footing, we have to get on to the emissions part of this really quickly. With the resources of government, in the time we have, and the people we have to do our work, all of these structures take a lot of feeding. They take a lot of meetings and procedures and paperwork, and they all give their own thought and consideration to a range of matters - but none of them, as I can see, are about saying, 'How do we get Chas Kelly in here and talk about how to electrify his truck fleet or get hydrogen vehicles on our highways?' They are the things we actually need to do. All of the people you have been talking about in this group are being set up to look at me and my team and make sure we are not somehow not doing our job.

The way we propose to do that is to report every year on a whole range of matters - including foundational things like our plan; the risk assessment and the science basis for it; the industry-based sector plans - and bringing all of that here, so everyone can see what we are doing and not doing, and have a say on that.

That is why we are doing this, putting it into this glass case of the parliament, that everyone can see into, and everyone can see through, so that there is ultimate transparency. Every four years - an even shorter period than the time frame for the creation of our successive plans - this parliament has the obligation to review this act and to consult on it, and make sure it is up to speed. That scrutiny and that requirement to be accountable and transparent is adequately designed into the bill as we have presented it.

The question has also been, where are we going to get our climate advice from? Is it our Climate Reference Group our advisory group? No, it is not. It is very different. I see that the Climate Change Advisory Council, as it is being proposed in Labor's amendment - and there is a different version of that in the Greens' - has one scientist and one union person, and someone with some community background and the rest, and that that is providing advice to the Government, and obviously calling on other expertise as well but it is all way up here; it is all at the level of working out what the Government's obligation should be - not how to reduce emissions.

We believe we need to bring in specialist expertise and advice, and we will bring it in on specific areas of activity. There will be subject matter specialists brought in to work on the down-scale climate projections - Climate Futures Tasmania type work that gives us insight into the future that we are planning for, to adapt to and to work with, and be resilient in.

We will bring in specialist advisers on the risk assessment process that will guide our actions. In every single sector emissions reduction and resilience plan - and individual activities within those - we will be working with engineers and researchers, and commissioning research where we need it on the wicked problems of how to reduce emissions in our economy. For example, as I mentioned before, how do we fix the problem of greenhouse gas emissions from ruminant livestock?

That is where we want to buy in our advice; where we have talked about a Climate Change Reference Group. It is not within the legislation. It will not have statutory decision-making advisory roles, but it will be a structure that captures our engagement with key stakeholders who we would otherwise be meeting sporadically through the year - to catch up on what they are doing, what we are doing, to socialise ideas with them and let them know what is coming up, get their feedback, ask for their contacts or whether they have a source of information.

They are groups like the University of Tasmania, Climate Tasmania, the Commissioner for Children and Young People. This is a way of creating a stakeholder forum, not for the purpose of simply advising us with particular roles under the act, but to share our plans and information with, and to hear about theirs; to provide a forum for sharing information and ideas about what is happening in Tasmania, what each of us is doing in our different spheres to address climate change and reducing emissions; to give some oxygen and space for that to happen, for the benefit of the Government in doing its work under this act, but also for all the other stakeholders to have access to each other and to create a room for that to happen in.

We do not want it to be onerous. We do not want them to have to compile a report, but we want to be able to have a conversation with those organisations and people who represent networks of interest and knowledge relevant to climate change and emissions reduction.

We are very clear about, again, not overburdening this whole process with lots of processes when we should be directing our energies to being on the ground with farmers, engineers and manufacturers, finding new and better ways and reducing emissions in our economy.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that the new clause A be made part of the bill, to follow clause 5.

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street

Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Mr CHAIR - The results of the division being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 257, I cast my vote with the Noes.

New clause A to follow clause 5 negatived.

New clause B -

New clause B presented by **Dr Woodruff** and read the first time.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am moving the amendment on page 8 after clause 5.

Insert the following new clause:-

A. Section 4A inserted

The following section is inserted after section 4 of the Principal Act:

4A. Guiding principles to be furthered

- (1) It is the obligation of any person on whom a function is imposed or a power is conferred under this Act to perform the function or exercise the power in such a manner as to further the guiding principles to inform climate action.
- (2) The Government of Tasmania will incorporate climate change considerations across decision making and in the development and implementation of any policy, program or process if it is relevant by having regard to the objects of this Act, and the guiding principles to inform climate action.

I remind members that the guiding principles we sought to have accepted into this bill to inform climate action, which we moved earlier, were early action on climate change and the protection of carbon stores in the marine and terrestrial spheres. We reintroduced energy efficiency and conservation, which is in the principal act but has been removed in this bill.

These are simply about ensuring that climate change considerations are taken across all agencies, departments and statutory bodies, and that any decision made - policy, process or program - must take account of those guiding principles so that we get a better whole-of-government approach to taking action on climate change.

Mr JAENSCH - We will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, could you explain to the House why you will not support that? It is about ensuring that there is a whole-of-government approach to taking climate action.

Mr JAENSCH - As the member has absorbed from previous contributions I have made, our preference is to adopt a series of guiding principles in our whole-of-government policy framework rather than in the legislation. I note that the seven principles we intend to adopt, as proposed through the independent review of the act, are sustainable development and social equity, transparency in reporting, science-based approach, integrated decision-making, risk management, community engagement and complementarity.

These map quite strongly and overlap quite strongly with a set of principles proposed by the University of Tasmania in its submissions on this topic as well. While there is no completely right set of principles, we believe that the ones that have been proposed through our review process reflect the advice and guidance of some other submitters whose opinions we respect. We will stick with the ones that we have landed on and our intention, I reiterate, is to adopt those in our whole-of-government policy framework rather than in legislation.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I point out to the minister and to people who are watching or reading *Hansard* at a later date that you have presented an inconsistent argument here because your argument for -

Mr CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, you have already had two opportunities to talk on this so you cannot talk to it a third time. Thank you.

The question is that clause B be made part of the bill to follow clause 5 be agreed to.

Mr Jaensch - Can you reiterate what the question is that you are putting to us?

Mr CHAIR - The question is that new clause B -

Mr Jaensch - You are referring to the clause as proposed by Dr Woodruff?

Mr CHAIR - Correct.

The question is that new clause B to follow clause 5 be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street

Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

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

New clause B negatived.

New clause C -

New clause C presented by **Dr Woodruff** and read the first time.

Dr WOODRUFF - This is seeking, through the Chair, the indulgence of the House to excuse the requirement to read this clause out.

[Editor's Note: Please refer to the Votes and Proceedings for text of amendment]

This introduces a new clause C, which inserts a joint standing committee on climate change and a climate change commission.

We have been through the Labor Party's approach to these structures. Ours is similar but different. The joint standing committee is quite similar in how it is established with some differences that are minor, not major. It is functionally very similar. We have had our Safe Climate Bill with these clauses tabled for some time now.

The climate change commission is different. The important difference is that it functions more like the UK Climate Commission, which was the gold standard established more than 20 years ago and has been world-leading in its independence from government but connection with government, and its independent and fearless scientific advice. The relationship between the UK Climate Commission, the community and industry has been incredibly important in moving the United Kingdom on in action on climate change and transitioning their industries.

Minister, you said before that what has been missing, in your view, is working with industries and that we do not need more committees and more machinery. We do not agree with that. We do need to talk with industries but, along with the scientific and wider community, we understand that there needs to be a body independent of government which is connected and committed through legislation to working on climate action. We cannot get that when the work is left to the government of the day to progress the matters because we have seen what has happened when the government of this day has had the responsibility of progressing the Climate Change (State Action) Act and there has been no important progress on that - not real progress relative to the scale and urgency of the issues we are confronting.

The objectives of the commission are quite clear: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Tasmania, to protect our carbon stores and increase them, and to develop and implement climate adaptation measures. It has a range of functions that are much more about providing advice and promoting action, particularly with industry, the community sector and households. It can develop materials, programs and partnerships. It can commission, conduct and publish research. It can encourage public participation in climate change advocacy and promote peaceful protest and the right to that. It can advance the objects of the act.

This is a body that does things. It is also a body with the powers to have independent oversight and eyes on how the government is tracking towards our emissions reduction targets and adaptation measures.

I know that you are not comfortable with this, minister, so I understand you are not going to support this. We need to be very clear about what gold standard is in climate change action. In order to get action from governments, we need an independent commission that is not subject to the direction or control of the minister of the day in respect to how it performs. It is responsible and appointed by the Governor, with recommendation from the minister. The board and the commissioner are both appointed by the Governor with recommendation from the minister of the day.

Critically, the board is made up not of individual community groups, so not trade unions, or local governments, or even a spot for a scientist, but is comprised of people with expertise. Our Division 2, subsection (k), part (4) says that the minister has to ensure, when recommending membership, that the board and the chair collectively have three members with expertise in climate science and also that the membership collectively has experience in legal practice, local government and planning, public communication, public policy, emergency response and environmental regulation. In other words, it does not prescribe a position that is representative of a body. It prescribes a board that has a set of skills needed to do the work provided to it.

It has a full range of powers and I want to talk about the functions. The functions of the commissioner who is appointed by the board is to, be first and foremost, a public advocate for climate action and secondly, to assess and evaluate and publicly comment on government climate policy. It is the independent body that commission's research and draws on the expertise and has an eyes back at the government of the day, and to advise and comment - not to prescribe, but to advise and comment - on government compliance with the act, and to advocate for certain policy and legislative reform that will improve climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes.

I understand why this Government would not be comfortable with this structure but the Greens are putting it as an amendment to this bill because it is global best practice. We have the urgency and we have the imperative to have as much assessment, eyes-on, non-cumbersome machinery but actually a body that is tasked with working with industry and with all the sectors to make sure that we are safe and we are drawing down emissions. I will not say any more now. I would like to hear the minister's comments and also to hear from the Labor Party.

Mr JAENSCH - I thank the member and the Greens for raising this amendment. We will not be supporting it. As reflected before, we do not see that, for the purpose of this bill, and to grow the urgency and the level of activity in reducing emissions in Tasmania, we need to establish separate new statutory commissions that are independent of everything and accountable to no one, arguably.

Dr Woodruff - They are accountable to the parliament, just like any other statutory body.

Mr JAENSCH - We believe that the Government is accountable to the parliament and, through it, the people. The Government is elected by the people to work in their interests and be accountable to them. We can go directly and cut out the middle man.

Without a commission of this kind in place, and some of the other structures that you have referred to, right now this Government is managing a \$300 million program of investment in climate and emissions reduction-related initiatives - even without a body like this in place to make sure that we do our job.

We believe we need to stay lean, nimble and focused and aggressively chasing down emissions, working with those who create them, to reduce them and meet our objectives. On this basis, we will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms WHITE - The amendment moved by Dr Woodruff is an improvement on the current bill. It helps uphold one of the principles the Labor Party outlined we would like to see in the bill, and that is independent oversight. We think that is very important, and do not agree with the minister's observations about how the Government is responsible to the parliament and that is how the oversight occurs. That is one way, but it is certainly not the best way.

Mr Jaensch - It is very important.

Ms WHITE - Yes, it is one way. You are the minister, and you will be held accountable for the delivery of the objectives in this act, and that is appropriate under the Westminster system - but there are other models in other jurisdictions that have created independent authorities to oversight progress against meeting targets, or measuring progress to implement different objectives of climate change bills.

I am not going to repeat the arguments I made when I moved Labor's amendments. They are essentially the same in this instance, but I can indicate that we will be supporting the Greens amendment, because we think it is an improvement on the bill and helps to achieve the objective of independent oversight.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that new clause C be made part of the bill, to follow clause 5.

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

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

New clause C negatived.

Clause 6 -

Part 2, Division 1 substituted

Ms WHITE - Chair, I have an amendment to page 8, clause 5(1):

Leave out "30 June 2030".

Insert instead "31 December 2023".

This is in relation to Tasmania's emission reduction target under this act. Currently, the objective is to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions or lower in Tasmania from 30 June 2030. This amendment seeks to bring that forward to 31 December 2023, based on advice and recommendations we have received through the consultation we have undertaken - and I suspect the minister has also received a submission from Climate Tasmania - but also, the evidence that demonstrates, through our greenhouse gas reporting, that Tasmania has achieved net zero in the majority of, I think, six of the last seven years, or from 2014.

The point is that we are currently at net zero, and it is not particularly ambitious to meet net zero in 2030 when we have been net zero for the large part of the last decade. I think I said when this bill was first tabled and included this particular clause that it was a little like having a deadline to hand in your homework in seven years' time when you have already handed it in. We have met this requirement. We have met this target. It is something to be incredibly proud of and we should be more ambitious for Tasmania.

Having read some of the research and listened to the minister's contribution in this place, I do recognise there is a necessity for further work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions based on the modelling across the rest of this decade in order to maintain the net zero by 2030. That is no reason to aim low. We should be more ambitious than that. I am pretty confident we have the support of the House to do so. I am not entirely sure what the Government is afraid of, given that for most of this decade we have been net zero and why you would not seek to be more ambitious about sending a very clear signal to the community, industry and business that we seek to maintain that status for the remainder of this decade.

Therefore, by including the target as at 31 December 2023, to make that very clear, otherwise, it is not entirely clear what you expect to happen for the remainder of this decade. Do you expect the state to start to becoming an emitter again?

Mr Jaensch - Yes.

Ms WHITE - You do?

Mr Jaensch - Yes. That is the risk at 2030.

Ms WHITE - Yes, and that is why we must do this right.

Dr Woodruff - That is why we have to do something about it now.

Mr Jaensch - That is right.

Ms WHITE - That is if you do nothing.

Mr Jaensch - Finish your contribution and then I will make mine.

Ms WHITE - Okay. Please minister, could you tell me why the Government is not more ambitious? Could you explain why you have not set a target in this bill for net zero to be achieved sooner than 2030, given that we have achieved it for the large part of the last decade? We should aim to continue to maintain that status for the remainder of this decade and beyond.

Mr JAENSCH - Tasmania's net emissions are currently minus 3.73 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, 121 per cent below the 1990 level. The Tasmanian Emissions Pathway Review clearly shows that as our economy and population grow our emissions are gradually increasing. The pathway review clearly found that if we do not take action to reduce emissions, Tasmania is likely to become a net positive greenhouse gas emitter from 2030 in years when a major bush fire is modelled to occur.

We need to focus on flattening our emissions curve to ensure we avoid net positive emissions in 2030 or thereafter. That is why the target is net zero emissions or lower from 2030. The 2030 time frame is not arbitrary. It is clearly identified in the modelling as a tipping point we can avoid through targeted action. I note that other speakers in the debate have called for a target of net zero emissions by 2023, saying that our 2030 target lacks ambition. That is the substance of this proposed amendment. There are many problems with this, the main one being that the modelling shows we would achieve this target next year by doing nothing. In 2023 our emissions will be increasing, but they will still be negative overall, as they have been for the last seven years. Then, there will be no longer-term target to drive further emissions reductions.

Our target needs to be ambitious but feasible and there has to be a reason to achieve it. For the reasons I have outlined, a 2023 target is pointless. Our 2030 target, by contrast, is about Tasmania avoiding becoming a net emitter of greenhouse gasses in the future and that is worth achieving. We do not support the amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Greens do support this amendment. We have a similar amendment, which is coming up shortly. It is a nonsense argument when you are in a climate emergency to talk about there being extra pressures in the system and it is going to be hard for us to maintain our position. Get used to it, minister, that is basically what it is going to be like for the rest of your life if you stay in this role.

We will all be fighting to do everything we can to keep control of rising emissions. Also, we have to accommodate the fact that there will be increasing pressures on production of emissions. That is what the Government needs to manage and get on top of. We have been net zero for seven years. It has been a lazy target that we have achieved because it has not involved any active effort to deal with the sector emissions that have increased over that time.

We are a laggard now relative to other jurisdictions in Australia on this matter. Other jurisdictions have been working much more strongly and closely with industry sectors. For example, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia have achieved considerable reductions in their non-land use, land use, and forestry sectors in recent years. Our growth emissions have been largely static. In fact, they have been slowly rising. If we do not pursue aggressive emissions abatement opportunities, if we do not do that, then it is true that more ambitious mainland jurisdictions will have lower gross emissions ahead in the near future. I am

reading this in the *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Update* that the University of Tasmania just released in August. It is an annual progress report for the 2020 reporting year.

It is clear that we are at a juncture. We have been sitting on the large land use and land use change and forestry sector, which has provided us with the situation of having a negative emissions profile. It is mostly explained by the renewable electricity generation we have and the significant increase in the removal and storage of carbon dioxide from forests and soils that has occurred in the last decade since 2012.

You pointed to this previously when you talked about bushfires, the rate at which the forests are sequestering or drawing down carbon declines as they get older. The amount of emissions that are being removed from the atmosphere through our native forests is expected to decline over those next seven years. The modelling that has been conducted by Point Advisory for the Tasmanian Policy Exchange suggests that without ambitious reductions in other sectors, Tasmania could be a net-carbon emitter again before 2030.

These matters of absolute emissions targets, sector targets, and the net-zero target are all obviously interlinked. We are talking in this amendment just about being real and strong and recognising that in 2023, we have already been net zero for seven years, let us stick with that and work hard to maintain it. However, your Government does not want to do that. You want to take the soft option, the non-climate emergency option, and not do what we can to cut the emissions from those sectors by putting in sector targets and by doing a whole range of other activities much more swiftly, urgently and actively and, essentially now to make sure that, with all the other factors that are increasing our emissions up to 2030, we do not blow the net-zero target or worse.

We strongly support this amendment. I will say some more in our amendment about the other things that we think need to be in this bill, but we will support it.

Ms WHITE - Thank you, minister, for your explanation. It is still not clear to me why you are afraid of inserting a target that is more ambitious than 2030, because as you explained, the research shows that if we do not do anything in particular from 2030, we might see a change in our emissions profile that means we do not reach net zero. Not sooner than that. Could you clarify whether that is what you said?

Dr Woodruff - It is going to go up then, and it is going to go up now. It is just putting it off into the future to do the things that we should do now.

Ms WHITE - I do not disagree with you. I am just trying to understand the logic.

Mr JAENSCH - Our emissions pathway analysis which everyone can see - it is a public document and on our website - traces the likely natural growth in our net emissions over time. From where we are now, at minus 3.73 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents per year, rising over time, on a curve, to a point where they become perilously close, at around 2030, to net zero - with the potential, if there are particularly extreme bushfire seasons, of going over that line and into positive emissions territory.

We are here, there is the curve; there is the line of net zero. This is not very helpful to people reading *Hansard*, but we are on a trajectory to become net zero or positive at around 2030. Our challenge is to make changes to Tasmania's emissions profile every day

between now and then, to bend that curve flatter, and to bend it down so that we never reach zero.

It is not going to be that we do nothing until 2030. That is a very simplistic understanding. Any action taken immediately now will take some time to implement and take effect in our emissions profile overall. We need to be working every day between now and 2030 so we never get to that tipping point of crossing the line into positive territory again. If we change the emissions structure of our economy sufficiently, it will keep us in that negative territory longer term. That is why we are aiming for it. We have eight years. It is not a long time.

Having a target for net zero emissions or lower next year has lots of problems. We are already going to be there, and therefore why make that your target? The other thing is, we will only know that we actually got there two years later. It will be 2025 before we have the data that proves that we are below net zero at 2023.

Dr Woodruff - That is the same as every other state that makes a target.

Mr JAENSCH - Dr Woodruff was trying to suggest that our approach suggests we do not take any action until 2030. That is completely wrong. The rationale that we are putting is that it may be too late to prevent us becoming net positive emissions at 2030, according to the modelling that we have seen but we need to do everything we can between now and then to change the trajectory of our emissions, so we do not risk getting into positive territory again at around 2030 - where we would be, in a do-nothing scenario.

Ms WHITE - Minister, it is very insightful to understand the way you are thinking about this. Essentially, what you are saying is there is no point putting a target for net zero by 2023 because we will be there already. Therefore, we need to have a target for 2030. We can do both.

Mr Jaensch - When we risk not being.

Ms WHITE - There is no reason the Government cannot put in a target to be net zero by December next year, because you are very confident we will achieve it anyway - plus, you will not know for two years after the fact whether you have, based on the way we measure greenhouse gas emissions.

There is no reason you cannot have a target for next year, and then set another absolute target, followed by another absolute target. That is what the submissions have called for, because even if we get to 2030 and we are under net zero, as you described it, we will not know that for two years. Who knows what will happen in 2031-32. We need to be thinking beyond 2030. We should have a target for next year that helps to maintain our commitment to net zero, which will make us the most extraordinary place in the world.

Think about what kind of brand advantage that gives Tasmania, too. You think 2030 is something to hang your shingle on and be proud of your reputation. Imagine if you legislate for 2023, and then you have another absolute target for 2030.

In addition to that, we need to think about targets beyond, to 2035 to 2040, and have absolute targets in place too because this bill still might enable emissions to continue on the

profile that is in the research that you referenced. Then we get to 2031 and 2032 and the data comes in, and we say, yes we met 2030, but gee, in 2031 we did not, and 2032 is looking pretty bad - we have not changed this trajectory enough, and we do not have any other further targets to meet. How lucky. We got over 2030 by the skin of our teeth, we are in a position where no one is going to hold us accountable for our failure to maintain that zero beyond that because the bill does not have any absolute targets beyond 2030.

That is also one of the failures of this bill. I do not have an amendment to that fact but I would be very happy to bring one to the table of our extensive amendments, or move it upstairs, to have additional absolute targets included in this bill, so we do not have to keep coming back to this parliament to include them at a later date. We also provide certainty for people making business decisions, and who are investing in our state, about the kind of environment they are going to be operating in.

That is really important too. It is a bit of a cop-out for the Government not to support this amendment, but also to think you can just breeze on through to 2030 and not have any other requirements beyond that date. I am interested to understand why you have not included provisions for other absolute targets in this bill.

Mr JAENSCH - Our 2030 target will be the most ambitious in Australia, and one of the most ambitious in the world on a like-for-like basis with other jurisdictions around the planet. Importantly, our target that is proposed in this bill is net zero or below from 2030 - in the knowledge that we are negative now and will be under any modelling up to 2030.

Therefore 2023 is a do-nothing target, and would be seen as such. The net zero or below from 2030 means we have to turn the curve around, not get into positive territory - and if we do that successfully, we will be net zero from 2030 into the future, if we can reshape our economy to a low-emissions economy.

The other thing you mentioned about currency of targets in the provisions as we have proposed them, our bill - our act - would be due to be reviewed twice within the time frame between now and 2030. Within that eight years, every four years there will be two more chances to review and update the target in the legislation.

We are proposing that our legislation is subject to independent review every four years, which would include looking at how ambitious or otherwise we are when we are around this table again in four years' time and eight years' time, when we are looking at these numbers again.

Again, we do not support the amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - You put your finger on it. The reason you are having to do it this way is because this bill fails to introduce sectoral targets. You are failing to put in place what is needed to make sure we do not blow out our zero target that we are already meeting and have met for seven years.

Instead of doing the ambitious, strong climate action that we are able to do because of the luxury of having such a large amount of carbon stores and renewable electricity, we should be taking advantage of that and doing what other states and countries are doing: putting targets on sectors. Because we are not putting the targets on the sector, you are quite right in saying

that we do risk blowing out the 2030 target because of the growth in those sectors that are not properly managed, and directed to be controlled by a sectoral target. That is what other states are doing. That is the way that they are making their commitments to achieving a 50 per cent or an 80 per cent reduction depending on the state. We could be doing that too, but this bill is not doing that.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The question is that the amendment to clause 6 be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The result of the division there being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 257, I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am going to introduce the Greens' amendment. It is our major amendment to tighten this bill and bring it into a true world-leading standard. Future generations of Tasmanians expect us to do no less at this juncture. It is an amendment to clause 6, page 8, proposed new Division 1, Section 5. Mr Chair, I move -

Leave out section.

Insert instead the following section.

5. Tasmania's emissions reduction targets

- (1) Tasmania's emissions reduction target under this Act are:
 - (a) to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions, or lower, in Tasmania from 30 June 2023;
 - (b) an absolute emissions reduction target declared under subsection (4)(a);

- (c) a sectoral absolute emissions reduction target for each sector, declared under subsection (4)(b), for which a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan is required to be prepared under section 5C(1) of this Act.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a) ***net zero greenhouse gas emissions*** means a balance between the amount of anthropogenic emissions into the atmosphere and the amount of anthropogenic removals from the atmosphere in each year.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) and (c) ***absolute emissions*** means the amount of anthropogenic emissions into the atmosphere in each year only, and does not include the amount of anthropogenic removals from the atmosphere in each year.
- (4) The Minister must declare, by order -
 - (a) an absolute emissions reduction target for the purposes of subsection (1)(b); and
 - (b) sectoral absolute emissions reduction targets under subsection (1)(c) -

within 12 months of the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent, as well as within 12 months of the conclusion of a period to which the target relates.
- (5) If an emissions reduction target, or targets, under this Act is not met, the Minister must, as soon as is practicable, present to Parliament a report setting out -
 - (a) why the target, or targets, were not met; and
 - (b) what action will be taken to meet any subsequent target, including how the action will differ from any action that was taken for the target that was not met.

Minister, this is really the big kahuna. This brings in together the 2030 net zero target as we discussed with the Labor amendment just then. It requires the declaration of an absolute emissions reduction target and requires the declaration of sectoral targets. It also requires that those targets are declared within 12 months of the bill receiving Royal Assent and that further targets should be declared at the conclusion of the period to which a target relates.

It requires the Government to respond to a failure to meet a target with a report. Minister, you will note that we have not prescribed what those targets should be. It is a moving feast. We accept there ought to be a process of assessment that is undertaken by government with scientific and industry advice, obviously, but targets must be set.

We require absolute emissions targets because in Tasmania we have a unique emissions profile which has a very high reliance, as you know, on the land-use forestry sector. We rely on that to achieve the net zero target we are already at. What we need to do to be ambitious and world-leading is give consideration to complementing that net zero target with an extra commitment to reduce absolute emissions, gross emissions across each of Tasmania's emitting sectors. This would put us among the first in the world. There are others that have done this already; a Danish island, Bhutan and Suriname have also taken this step.

It would provide a clear target to decarbonise the Tasmanian economy over the next decade. It would help future-proof our industries in markets where investors and consumers are increasingly seeking climate-positive options. It helps safeguard our ongoing net zero status and our claim of being one of the few jurisdictions on Earth that is removing more greenhouse gases from the atmosphere than we are emitting.

You have just talked about the fragility of that net zero claim. This is the sort of action we need to be taking to shore up and exceed that net zero. We need to be setting those targets. These are targets that will be set by the minister, so it is not prescribing the target but it is prescribing that we take action on the total amount of emissions in the atmosphere emitted each year by industries.

I referred earlier to the fact that the land-use and land-use change sector has camouflaged a lack of action over some significant sectors in Tasmania. The transport sector is one which has increased at the last greenhouse accounts by some 19 per cent since 1990. You questioned my figures the other day.

Mr Jaensch - I think the figure we used was 9 per cent in Tasmania.

Dr WOODRUFF - I beg your pardon. It was a 17.4 per cent increase. The greenhouse accounts, the emissions by sector 1990 to 2019, the latest accounts was an increase of 17.4 per cent. That is page 10 of our greenhouse gas account.

Mr Jaensch - The latest is 2020, not 2019.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, this is the 2021 greenhouse gas emissions report.

Mr Jaensch - Which would have been for two years before that.

Dr WOODRUFF - That is right.

Mr Jaensch - The latest figures are for 2020.

Dr WOODRUFF - If that is what is published, yes. The point is that the transport sector has been going up very strongly, as has the industrial processing and product use sector, which has gone up 19.5 per cent. We are talking about big increases in these sectors. At the moment they are being camouflaged by the drawdown from the land-use sector.

The reason we should not keep relying on the land-use sector and we should disaggregate the emissions and have absolute targets, as well as sector targets, is because the Government has a number of policy strategies that you have indirectly referred to having an impact on our capacity to maintain net zero by 2030. These include the population growth strategy, the

Agri-Food Plan, which may substantially increase the land-use change and substantially increase associated agricultural emissions. It includes the Government's commitment to reinvigorate and continue native forest logging. It also includes biomass projects that have been discussed and are in the pipeline. We do not have a clear regulation on the table yet about the source of biomass. If they are native forests, that is going to compromise our land use/land-use change in forestry profile. It is going to reduce it.

We also have ongoing native forest logging. As I have pointed out before, Dr Jennifer Sanger's report makes it very clear that industry is the largest emitting industry in Tasmania, equivalent to 1.1 million cars a year. There could be 75 million tonnes of carbon absorbed by the forests being logged by 2050 if they are protected instead of logged.

You have pilloried Dr Sanger's report and her evidence but you have never presented a refutation of her assessment. I invite you to do that or else accept them as the best information we have on the table at the moment about this very high-emitting sector. The emissions are high because of the Government's drive to continue deforestation in that area.

The other thing we have is the risk of bushfires. That is very highly likely during the increasing heating and climate change.

I will leave it with you, minister, but the trifecta of those three will put us in the most ambitious place worldwide.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Deputy Chair, I will respond to a couple of matters there. For interest, I have just had my advisers give me a few figures from the *2020 Greenhouse Gas Report*, which I tabled last week, which are the latest figures for Tasmania. From 1999 to 2020, emissions in our transport sector had grown 8.2 per cent; emissions from waste management has declined by 35 per cent; emissions from electricity has declined by 74.8 per cent; and energy overall decreased by 9.4 per cent.

When you are talking about the gross emissions, there are fluctuations in those things over time. It is not all up and up; there are some swings and roundabouts. This is why we need to be able to get our emission savings wherever we can in the system without trying to apply a blanket rule to everybody.

In terms of the three areas of targets that you have mentioned, the net zero by 2023, absolute reduction target and sectoral targets, the first and last of those we have already debated. I have laid out our reasons why we are going with 2030 rather than 2023 and why we choose not to go with sector-based targets.

In terms of the absolute emissions reduction target, the understanding is, and in terms of not confusing people and sticking with the way most people regard emissions objectives, in terms of net emissions, we want to stay with net. Net because net emissions are what actually matters. The atmosphere does not care how you get there. It is what the difference is from year to year in how much greenhouse gas is in the atmosphere.

We need to get there by reducing our emissions, but we are also open in our planning to increasing our sequestration as well. The net benefit of that is what we want to measure as our target. It surprises me to some extent that the Greens appear to be discounting further sequestration as part of the solution, whereas I think that is entirely possible.

Dr Woodruff - No, I am not. I am just following what the majority of submissions called for, absolute emissions.

Mr JAENSCH - Our focus is on net, it is on 2030 and beyond, certainly flattening the curve between now and then. We have no intention of doing nothing until 2030 is on the doorstep. Anything that is going to make a change then, needs to be in train now, so we are going to work hard on that. We do not support the amendment as it has been proposed.

Ms WHITE - I appreciate the intent behind the amendment moved by Dr Woodruff, but we have debated two of those elements. Of course the Labor Party supports the ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse emissions or lower from 30 June 2023. We moved an amendment and lost that one. We have also had the debate around sectoral targets and indicated the Labor Party does not support those.

Given the majority of this amendment goes to give effect to that outcome, we can indicate that we will not be supporting this amendment from the Greens.

Dr Woodruff - What is your position on absolute targets, though?

Ms WHITE - We talked about that in the last amendment as well.

Dr Woodruff - Not really. Do you support absolute targets?

Ms WHITE - We had that debate already on the last clause.

Dr Woodruff - What was your view?

Ms WHITE - I am not the minister of the day, but I did say, if you want to look back at *Hansard* -

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 21

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff

Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Tucker
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Amendment negatived.

Ms WHITE - Before I move this amendment, I will ask minister a question about this particular clause 5A. The reason we drafted an amendment that the climate action plan had to commence within two years of the act passing is because there was nothing compelling the Government to do anything. All it says is for the Government to prepare a climate action plan at least every five years. It does not say when the first one needs to be delivered. Can you give an explanation about what compulsion exists within this bill to make sure you do any of things that are outlined within it, and actually start work on that climate action plan?

At the moment, my reading of it is that you are going to do a whole range of different things which I agree with, but if you do not start, what power is there to hold you accountable apart from shaming you?

Mr JAENSCH - We are pre-emptively supporting your amendment.

Ms WHITE - You are supporting my amendment?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Ms WHITE - I have not moved it.

Mr JAENSCH - Quickly move it and I will support it.

Ms WHITE - You could knock me over with a feather.

I move that on page 8, proposed new section 5A, subsection (1).

Leave out 'at least every 5 years'.

Insert instead 'within 2 years after the commencement of this Act and at least every 5 years thereafter'.

We want to be very clear that the work has to start soon, and that it therefore will, with this amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Deputy Chair, we support the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - Ms White, your amendment was about -

Ms White - To commence the work within two years following the act.

Dr WOODRUFF - That was the commencement date.

Ms White - My amendment was number 24 in the pack, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Deputy Chair, I move the following amendment -

Page 8, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, subsection (1).

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection :

- (1) The Minister must prepare a climate change action plan at least every 3 years.

It was the time frame. Minister, many submitters felt that five years to prepare climate change plans is far too long a time period in between. Every three years, at least, is far more appropriate. The rapidity of change that we are seeing is really astonishing and not something that 10 years ago would have been predicted by few climate scientists, even people who are all over the science. We are very concerned, along with the people who have made submissions, that local communities, local government and all the agencies of state government really need to have action plans updated much more frequently than five years and that three years is a minimum. We hope you can support that change.

Mr JAENSCH - We will not be supporting this amendment. I have reasons for you. The intent of setting a five-year cycle for not only the Climate Change Action Plan but also the risk assessments and the ERRPs, the Emissions Reductions and Resilience Plans, at five years is to follow a convention of a few things.

A few year time frame de-couples a policy document from election cycles and brings it into sequence with international cycles, such as the submissions process for countries to pledge nationally determined contributions. The IPCC is currently in its sixth assessment. Shorter time frames limit the ability to, after having developed those plans, effectively deliver and then assess actions to a high standard. There would be some resourcing issues with it because we would be almost constantly in the process of developing plans.

It is noted that new sub-actions can be added to plans during the life cycle of a plan. Again, if we changed the time frame for action plans, we would be out of sync with some of those other elements of the bill with the risk assessments and the ERRPS.

I understand the interest in keeping them current but the five years aligns with other cycles that are important, including the risk assessment and the emissions reduction plans as well as international cycles of IPCC and others and that matter of de-coupling from election cycles as well for whatever that value brings. We understand the issue. We believe that there is scope for important parts of those plans to be maintained and updated throughout their life with addition of actions. We do not support this amendment.

Ms WHITE - To speak to the amendment moved by Dr Woodruff, the Labor Party will not be supporting this amendment. We agreed that three years is a very short time to do this work. Five years means that you can actually get your teeth into achieving the outcomes that you hope to before the work commences again in having a new one in place for the following five years. It provides certainty for people making decisions.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, minister. We do not agree with your arguments. It already is de-coupled from the election cycle. The election cycle in Tasmania ought to be every four years, except when your Government calls a snap election early. I mean, that is really up to you. We cannot control what your Government does. It is de-coupled from our election cycle. I do not think it will ever get in sync with all of the different cycles. I do not think there is any benefit for Tasmania to be in sync with the IPCC reports.

Mr Jaensch - You don't?

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I think we will always be fitting into the science. That is the whole point. The IPCC is an international agreement on the basis of science. We should be always responding to the science, having a mechanism for being updated with the most current science. This is why we have proposed a climate change commission. That is exactly the sort of role that a body like that ought to provide. It is not something that is more important to be in sync with than to be in sync with the reality of the changing climate system that we will be confronting. As a society and especially as governments, we have to get used to being much more proactive about these plans and to be much more responsive to the changing conditions.

The actions we will take in five years' time will need to be far, far stronger and far more robust in terms of resilience support for communities than they are today. We have just seen in the last five years incredible changes with flooding and bushfires. We do think, yes, it will have resourcing issues. That is what we need to be doing. We need to be directing resourcing into preparing society to be safe with the evolving climate conditions. That is short-sighted. I am disappointed that you will not support this. In the agencies and departments of government, it also makes it much more pressing to, as you say, keep up to date with continual assessments and continual remaking of targets. There will have to be a mechanism to involve science directly in the assessment of where we are up to and where we need to change. It should be an ongoing continual process, not something that is a set and forget once every five years.

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 21

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

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

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, the next amendment we have is page 8, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, after subsection (1).

Insert the following new subsections -

- (A) Subsection (1) notwithstanding, the Minister must prepare the first climate change action plan within 12 months of the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.
- (B) Before preparing a climate change action plan under subsection (1) or (A), the Minister must cause a draft climate change action plan to be published online and call for public comment.

This is a pretty obvious amendment. There is not anything in the bill as it stands that requires the first climate change action plan to be prepared at any time, so it could, as it stands, be prepared in five years' time.

Ms White - We approved the Labor amendment that says it has to be done in the first two years.

Dr WOODRUFF - In the first two years? This would bring it forward by a year. Two years is better, but one year is required. It is a long time to prepare a climate change action plan.

As you have been repeatedly saying, minister, it is not as though your Government has been doing nothing. Surely, you cannot argue that the Government is doing stuff in this space already and then say it is going to take two years to prepare the first climate change action plan. That does not make sense. We have a climate change office. There is a lot of work that has been done. I do not think it is reasonable to put off preparing this very important plan for that amount of time.

The other part of the amendment critically provides that public consultation must occur on a draft climate change action plan. That is critical. There must be public comment on such an important document, and it also needs to be published online. Again, this is just basic stuff.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, Dr Woodruff. I have a deal for you.

Dr Woodruff - Prepared to treaty?

Mr JAENSCH - I would like to propose an amendment to your amendment.

Dr Woodruff - Right.

Mr JAENSCH - The purpose of our amendment would be to replace the word 'must' in each of those two paragraphs with the words 'is to'. This would give this the effect of saying that the minister is to prepare the first climate change action plan within 12 months, as you say, and that before preparing a climate change action plan, the minister is to cause a draft to be published online, et cetera, so I have those amendments drafted.

Dr Woodruff - I am very happy with that.

Minister, would you explain what the functional difference is between 'must' and 'is to'?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Dr Woodruff - You do not like being told what to do?

Mr JAENSCH - The advice from OPC is that for legislative purposes 'must' is mandatory whereas 'is to' is directory.

The convention is that where 'must' is involved, not doing it means the thing cannot happen; there is a fatal flaw effectively. Generally, where 'must' is used there is a corresponding penalty referenced in the legislation. I will foreshadow that through other clauses in the bill, we will oppose the turning of 'is to' into 'must'. I do it with a gift of agreement. This means we produce our first plan within 12 months and thereafter every five years so we default to the cycle that was referenced in the bill as it stands and in Ms White's previous amendment and that we adopt the practice of ensuring that there is a public comment period on draft documents before tabling. That is our proposed amendment to the amendment.

Amendment to the amendment agreed to.

Amendment as amended agreed to.

Dr Woodruff - Great. If you do not do it by those dates it will be the court of public opinion.

Mr JAENSCH - This shows how prepared we are to be accountable and scrutinised through our parliament.

Ms WHITE - I have an amendment on page 9, proposed new section 5A, subsection (2) after 'adopt':

Insert ', and numerical estimates of the emissions reductions the climate change action plan will bring about'.

This is in relation to the development of the climate action plan where it details what it must include. At the moment it says:

The climate action plan must include details of the emissions reduction measures that Tasmania will adopt.

Then it sets out other measures that it must include. I note there are no penalties for those. It is interesting given your previous statement, minister, but I will not go down that rabbit hole. We are proposing that an amendment be included to say that:

It must include details of the emission reduction measure that Tasmania will adopt, and numerical estimates of the emissions reductions, the climate change action plan will bring about.

This amendment is being proposed through some of the submissions that have been to government and to us. It provides for greater transparency about what is intended to be achieved by the plans and also gives the public and the parliament a way to measure progress towards achieving those outcomes. It is rather self-evident, so I will not add any further to the discussion.

Mr JAENSCH - We are sympathetic to this view. It was something we discussed at some length in a session with Climate Tasmania, and they have reflected in their submission as well.

However, we do not support the amendment, the reason being that while everything we propose to do through the action plan and in our emissions reduction and resilience plans is intended to reduce emissions and advance adaptation or resilience, some of them are not directly quantifiable, in terms of a numerical measure of emissions reduction.

As I mentioned in my second reading speech, if we are talking about an initiative to divert waste from landfill, organic material from landfill, and compost it through a commercial process that does not result in fugitive greenhouse gas emissions, we will have a basis for being able to calculate the volumes that we are talking about, and the achievement we are seeking from an initiative like that.

If, on the other hand, in another part of that plan there is an initiative which is about investing in research and market commercialisation of a feed supplement to reduce emissions from livestock, we know what the emissions of livestock are generally as a component of our emissions that we want to reduce. We know this is potentially a solution for that, but we are not going to claim that our initiative of investing in a research project with a developer is going to directly result in X tonnes of greenhouse gases avoided.

In our plans, we want to be able to account for why we are doing things, and what their impact is intended to be, or how they advance towards our objectives, but a numerical figure that is reasonable and credible is not something we are going to apply to every initiative we undertake. We do not want to create a commitment to do that when we will not be able to do it. We would hope to, where we can - for example, with the new organics processing at Barwick's or Dulverton, but not so much with the Asparagopsis trials and some of the other initiatives we would be anticipating.

We do not support the amendment on that behalf, but the record can show that we do intend that everything we do is aiming towards our objectives and targets, and the text of those plans will reflect that.

Ms WHITE - Minister, the amendment is not restrictive. It does not require the numerical estimates for emissions reductions for each of the different initiatives that might be contained within the climate action plan.

It could be interpreted more broadly than that - that it instead sets out what the emissions reductions might look like over the period of the plan, which is five years. That gives you a fair bit of leniency in how you might like to interpret this amendment to therefore be reflected in the plan. Given your statement that you essentially support it in principle, it seems unreasonable not to support the amendment, because you are going to arguably be doing that by the sound of things.

Mr JAENSCH - As I said, it does refer that we provide numerical estimates of the reductions. I am confident where we can, we will. Sometimes in this place we are accused of being a bit loose or flexible with our figures, and what you have just suggested might be something that gets us into trouble here. I would not want that. I would want to be able to table in this parliament a factual report, with quantified estimates where we can confidently make them, on a basis that is transparent, and that people can understand. I do not want to be accused of gilding a lily or claiming emissions that you or I cannot prove.

Again, because the amendment goes to numerical estimates, you would not believe how hard it is to get people who really know this stuff to give you a confident projection on something like a future emissions profile. I am not confident we could deliver faithfully on that, just because of the range of different types of initiatives we are going to have. I would prefer to avoid it and instead give a factual description of what we are doing. Thank you.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Greens will be supporting this amendment. It is very sensible and it provides the extra detail, which is important, to know what we are heading towards. The concerns the minister has are really taken care of with the word 'estimates' - because, for example, when you are talking about the waste emissions, it could be a range. It could be an estimated range - so I do not think it is functionally a problem. I understand it is difficult and that there is variability, but it could nonetheless be a range. It gives us more of an idea about where we are heading towards, what we are expecting and hoping to do.

Mr Jaensch - I understand. It is science, though, to me, and precision is important.

Dr WOODRUFF - Science is not always able to be precise.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, I do not know whether your staff have picked this up, but in our view it is a drafting error. In section 5A, Climate change action plan, subsection (3) says:

The actions in the climate change action plan must -

And it lists the actions.

Everywhere else in the bill it is a climate change action plan, not a climate action plan. Clause 5A calls it a climate change action plan, so it seems as though that is drafting error, in our view.

Mr Jaensch - It is a typo. Thank you for picking it up.

Dr WOODRUFF - I move that on page 8, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, subsection (3):

leave out 'climate action plan'

insert instead 'climate change action plan'

Amendment agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - We have discussed our next amendment with the minister previously, with that other amendment.

This is an amendment to page 9, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, subsection (4):

Leave out 'is to'

Insert instead 'must'

It is worth putting on the record that we think it ought to be mandatory, not just a direction, that the minister must take account of the objects of the act; our state emissions reduction target; the greenhouse gas emissions for Tasmania contained in the latest greenhouse gas inventory; the latest and best available science on the projected impacts of climate change in Tasmania; and must consult with relevant business, industry, scientific, environmental and community bodies, local government and the Tasmanian community - and the other things in the rest of that section.

We think those things must be done. I think we have already made the point and discussed this previously, but I want to put on the record that there ought to be no capacity for any government to squib from doing those things as written into this legislation at each time they could use a climate change action plan.

Mr JAENSCH - I will confirm as per previous discussions and foreshadowed by Dr Woodruff, we will not be supporting the amendment for the reasons I have made before.

Amendment negatived.

Ms WHITE - This is an amendment to clause 6, page 10. Proposed new section 5A, subsection (4) paragraph (e), after 'bodies,'

Insert 'children and young people,'.

Mr Jaensch - I think it is my amendment, but thank you, you are welcome.

Ms WHITE - I have the same amendment. I read it nicely for you.

Mr JAENSCH - Did you move the amendment?

Ms White - I did move that amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - I am happy to support the amendment, Mr Chair.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms WHITE - This is to page 10, the same proposed new section, subsection (4), paragraph (e), after 'government'

Insert ', relevant unions'.

We had this discussion yesterday. I will not go over the same points except to reiterate very clearly that unions are not industry or business bodies, as the minister tried to claim. I can tell you right now they were very surprised to hear themselves described as such, minister.

Mr Jaensch - Pleasantly surprised?

Ms WHITE - I do not know if you could describe it that way. Nonetheless, the reason for inclusion of relevant unions in this group is to ensure that they are consulted, along with the other bodies who are listed, as we discussed yesterday. We have not come to this debate with a shopping list of different groups we want to include. We have been really specific about the inclusions we would like to see made, including children and young people, which has now been agreed to by this House. We believe it is important that workers' voices are heard. They are not the same as industry or business bodies, as the minister tried to claim yesterday. I hope that overnight you have had time to think about it and you can support this amendment, minister.

Mr JAENSCH - I have thought about it overnight but the position stands and we will not support the amendment.

For clarification; the intent of the list and the descriptions there, and the reference to where we believe that unions are included in the umbrella terms, is that our intent is to engage with sectors of the economy, and the sectors involved with the emissions reduction and resilience plans for each sector. We see that the workforce, through unions, is a very legitimate voice in that and we would welcome their engagement but, as I mentioned yesterday, we believe that unions have access to these processes in their own right. While they have not availed themselves of those in the process so far on this bill or related matters, the door is open to them and we would see them included, certainly not excluded, by the current definitions. We do not support the amendment.

Mr CHAIR - The question is that the amendment to clause 6 be agreed to.

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

Dr Broad (Teller)
Ms Butler

NOES 12

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer

Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms Johnston
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms White
Mr Winter
Dr Woodruff

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

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

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, we made the case for this earlier and we make the case for it again. In a climate change action plan it is important to consult with the groups that will be fundamentally affected by what is being proposed. The first peoples of Tasmania, the palawa/pakana, are among those people. They ought to be formally listed in the consultation groups. We have community bodies, environmental, relevant business, industries. I believe you have already indicated that you will add children and young people to this group?

Mr Jaensch - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - We think it is deeply disrespectful not to have Tasmania's first peoples in this list.

Our amendment is page 9, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, subsection (4) paragraph (e),

Leave out 'and the Tasmanian community'

Insert instead 'Tasmanian Aboriginal people, children and young people, and the Tasmanian community more broadly'.

Mr JAENSCH - We had a considerable discussion on this yesterday and I indicated my utmost respect for Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Our consideration is that they were very much included in other definitions included in this list. We do not support the amendment to include them. This would also make this list inconsistent with previous lists that we discussed yesterday and amended, so we do not support the amendment.

Ms WHITE - I put on the record the Labor Party's support for this amendment, as we did when it was moved earlier by the member. We make it very clear we think that it should be expanded to include Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Dr WOODRUFF - Again, to put business and industry groups first above Tasmania's first people is unacceptable, particularly in a year of treaty, truth telling and justice. Shame on you, minister.

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Mr CHAIR - The results of the division being Ayes, 12, Noes, 12, therefore in accordance with the standing order 257, I cast my vote with the noes.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - We are up to amendment 33. Page 10, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5A, subsections (5) and (6).

Leave out the subsections.

Insert instead the following subsection:

- (5) As soon as practicable after preparing a climate change action plan, the Minister must cause the climate change action plan to be -
 - (a) published in such formats as the Minister considers appropriate to ensure easy accessibility to a wide range of audiences, including children and young people; and
 - (b) tabled in each House of Parliament.

This amendment is because there is no requirement currently in the bill for any time frame for either the publishing of the climate change action plans in accessible formats and the tabling of climate change action plans in each House of parliament. You have made the strong point, minister, that these are really about parliament doing its work. We feel there is a gap in the bill when it does not say anything about the time frame. We considered putting a time frame within which they must be tabled in parliament but instead -

Mr Jaensch - You have that, 12 months.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, that is when they have to be prepared. It was the preparation must be done within 12 months but that does not say the tabling of them.

The reasonable compromise we have come up with without putting a hard number of days or times is so that it can be done 'as soon as practicable'.

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, thank you. We do not support the amendment for two reasons. The first reason is that 'as soon as practicable' is a very woolly requirement -

Dr Woodruff - It is drafting language, yes.

Mr JAENSCH - We do acknowledge that this is a large and complex document and they are going to be seeking to have whole of Government impacts and involvement. Our process of preparing a climate change action plan needs to involve taking it through Government to ensure that all of the moving pieces are dealt with. That is part of preparing the plan and thereafter we would be releasing it. What we have done in the last hour, although it seems like more, is agree that we would be producing our first plan within 12 months. Our view would be that implies that we are undertaking to produce a plan to the point where you can see it, the public can see it, at least in draft form.

Dr Woodruff - Is that not what this is about?

Mr JAENSCH - I think what you are implying is that we will have an obligation to prepare a plan but not show anyone.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, it is just that this bill says, that the minister is to publish the climate change action plan. We understand, from the way it is written, that the Government prepares the climate change action plan and after preparation, we understand this to say that the minister is to publish the climate change action plan - but there is no timeframe for when that is to be done.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you. Mr Chair, we do not support the amendment, which is substantially about the 'as soon as practicable,' but for the record our intent would be where we have had a time frame of production of the first climate change action plan, that would be the production of it in its final form, not just drafted and held internally without being tabled. If that is any comfort to your constituents, then that is the undertaking we give. We do not support the amendment.

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Ms Johnston

NOES 12

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch

Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms White
Mr Winter (Teller)
Dr Woodruff

Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

Mr CHAIR - The results of the division being Ayes, 12, Noes, 12, therefore, in accordance with the standing order 257, I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

Ms WHITE - I move an amendment to page 11, proposed clause 6, proposed new section 5B, subsection (1).

Leave out "at least every 5 years".

Insert instead "within 2 years after the commencement of this Act and at least every 5 years thereafter".

I expect the Government to support this, given their form.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, I confirm we support the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - I move an amendment to page 11, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5B, subsection (1).

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection:

- (1) The Minister must prepare a statewide climate change risk assessment at least every 3 years.

This is a similar issue to the climate change action plan. A statewide risk assessment ought to be done at least every three years. We have an evolving risk environment and it is highly volatile. It has impacts, not only on people's safety, but on infrastructure and the road transport network and the capacity of local councils to plan ahead. We are really concerned that a five-yearly risk assessment cannot keep up with the rapidity of change in the atmospheric system and will leave us very short-changed. We are recommending that this is done every three years.

If you think that this is too much time to be spend on assessing risk, I put it to you that this is the sort of expectation we have of people working in fire and emergency services. We expect there to be evolving risk assessment and, given the high order of risk to human life, property and our wild places, we need to habituate ourselves to undertaking ongoing risk assessment. Changing it from five to three years is providing the updated information that

ought to be being collected in real time. It is essentially the drawing together of what ought to be a fairly real-time assessment and reassessment of risk around Tasmania.

Mr JAENSCH - We do not support the amendment. We understand the interest in it being up-to-date but it also has to be very accurate. The bill currently requires at least every five years for the development of the risk assessment. This aligns with the IPCC cycles so that we can build each risk assessment based on new data, so that it updates with the IPCC's assessment. Each time we do this, the risk assessment project itself can take up to 12 months and cost around \$200 000 to do. In order that we are using the most up-to-date data each time and because the work takes up to 12 months to do and the cost involved, and that it feeds into the emissions reductions plans, the climate change action plan et cetera, we want to keep locked into this nominal five-year cycle. For a range of different reasons, we do not support the amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, can you please clarify that we get this information that only occurs every five years. You referred to those cycles. Can you clarify them in a little bit more detail?

Mr JAENSCH - I am advised that the data we would be looking at is produced through the IPCC every five years based on updated models. It is refreshed and reset and most accurate at the beginning of each of those cycles. That is the cycle we would like to synchronise with so that we are not using five-year-old data to build our five-year risk assessment; we are using the latest available data when it is new to inform our risk assessment.

Dr Woodruff - Are you talking about global climate change models like the climate change models of risk about climate?

Mr JAENSCH - Yes.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Our next amendment is page 11, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5B, after subsection (1).

Insert the following new subsection -

- (A) Subsection (1) notwithstanding, the Minister must prepare the first climate change risk assessment within 12 months of the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.
- (B) Before preparing a climate change risk assessment, under subsection (1) or (A), the Minister must cause a draft climate change risk assessment to be published online and call for public comment.

Minister, you supported our similar amendment to this effect in relation the Climate Change Action Plan. This is the same amendment in relation to the Climate Change Risk Assessment. Given that it only occurs every five years and because it is an assessment of the risk profile for the community, yes, it does use climate data sets but it is very important that there be the possibility for public comment on the risk assessment. The risk assessment will

include a lot more than the latest IPCC climate models. It will take those models and make assessments of risk. A whole lot of responses to that will be based on the assumptions underlying the final risk assessment. That really needs public comment and to be done within the next 12 months.

Mr JAENSCH - We have supported a two-year timeframe for the first risk assessment to be produced. For reasons of availability of data and also mobilising the relevant providers of the service of delivering the risk assessment, I am not prepared to limit us to within 12 months for the first one. We do not accept the amendment on that basis.

Regarding the second part of the amendment, I am advised that the risk assessment is a very technical document developed by an external party. It is a piece of work that we commission and will ultimately table and publish but it is not one that we are going to put out in draft form seeking feedback. There are no negotiables in it. It is information from a qualified source that we will commission then use. We will publish it but there is no benefit to be had from publishing it in draft form and seeking comment on it. We do not support the amendment.

Dr WOODRUFF - I accept what you said in relation to part (A) but I encourage you to consider making an amendment to this amendment to remove part (A) because part (B) still stands, despite what you said. I was a scientist in my previous life and was published in peer-reviewed international journals. There is no such thing as an independent report that is 'just fact'. Every report has decisions about what goes into it and what does not go into it. It has assumptions about how things are analysed and how risk is assessed. That must be critiqued, given that it will be the basis for making really important decisions about Tasmania's future, the climate change action plan and the response at all levels of government. It must have the eyes of the widest number of people with relevant technical expertise. It is not something that the general public might necessarily engage with but it does give us the opportunity, as we have talked about, to have the widest scientific eyes on these important matters.

We have the best of the best global scientists living in Tasmania; climate change scientists. Why not publish the draft risk assessment to get their input, to make sure that the assumptions, the definitions and the assessment process is rigorous and credible?

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 3

Ms Johnston (Teller)
Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff

NOES 21

Mrs Alexander
Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Ms Haddad
Mr Jaensch

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

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - Page 11, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5B, subsection (2).

Leave out 'is to'.

Insert instead 'must'.

Mr Jaensch - We can make this quicker.

Dr WOODRUFF - I have made this point and I think it stands as it is. This is in relation to developing a statewide climate change risk assessment and the matters that must be taken account into. As we said previously, we think there should not be an option to do anything other than to take account of all of those things.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, we do not support the amendment for reasons as debated earlier.

Amendment negatived.

Mr JAENSCH - Mr Chair, I move the following amendment.

Page 11, proposed new section 5B, subsection (2), paragraph (c), after 'change',

Leave out "on future generations;".

Insert instead "on -

- (i) the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians; and
- (ii) future generations;".

I think we have established the rationale for this. This was a little bit of a re-engineering but rather than add 'health and wellbeing' we needed to separate the language a little so it was clear, with commas in the right places.

This is to accommodate the effect of the Object in taking regard of the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians in the bill. I put that to the committee, thank you.

Ms WHITE - We support this.

Dr WOODRUFF - We heartily support this amendment.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr WOODRUFF - I move the following further amendment. This is page 11, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5B, subsection (3) -

Leave out the subsection.

Insert instead the following subsection:

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

Minister, you would remember the points that I made previously. Obviously, the risk assessment would have been completed. There is no time frame that requires the minister to table it in parliament. It is actually not normal in legislation not to have the words 'as soon as practicable'. That is standard across bills in parliament, I think you will find.

There is some requirement generally to table as soon as practicable, so I urge you to follow the standard to make sure that there is a clear imperative to do that in a timely fashion.

Ms O'Connor - Particularly as it is a risk assessment. It is not something I would dither about.

Mr JAENSCH - We note the previous discussions and the points you made. The points I made hold as well. We will not be supporting this. We do not see 'as soon as practicable', as particularly prescriptive. It just describes what we would do if we have a report that we are due to table, and we should table it - so it does not add anything. I do not know what circumstance this protects the public from, or requires the Government to do, or what situation it anticipates that it then does not actually deal with, because it says 'practicable'. It is a very subjective thing in the hands of the person who is holding the report.

Ms O'Connor - It means as soon as you can, basically.

Mr JAENSCH - Yes. It is not clear what the problem is or the solution is with this. My arguments from the previous discussion stand, so we will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms O'Connor - Why would you sit on a risk assessment?

Mr JAENSCH - Exactly, why would you?

Dr WOODRUFF - I guess your argument is that this Government is not going to be bringing in any other bills that have the words 'as soon as practicable' in them, because it is so

standard. This stands starkly on its own for not having the words in there, so it is surprising on that level.

We do have a history of governments sitting on reports. That is, unfortunately, what happens. You, as minister, may not do that, but this legislation is for future ministers, and we have just had federal governments sitting on reports like the State of the Environment Report. You might remember that they sat on it. They finished it and they did not release it. This is important. You hope there would be no problems with doing it. That is why you have these things in legislation; to require ministers to do it in a timely fashion.

Ms O'Connor - You have nothing to lose by including that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes, it is just so standard.

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

The Committee divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The results of the division being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 257, I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

Dr WOODRUFF - I move the following further amendment. This amendment is for page 11, clause 6, proposed new division 1, section 5C, subsection (1).

Leave out the subsection

Insert instead the following subsection:

- (1) The Minister, in consultation with each relevant portfolio Minister, must consult with the community, research organisations, and with business and industry representatives, to develop a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan for each of the following sectors:

- (a) energy;
- (b) transport;
- (c) industrial processors and product use;
- (d) agriculture;
- (e) land use, land use change and forestry;
- (f) waste;
- (g) any other sector or sub-sector determined by the Minister.

Minister, this is adding the words 'must consult with community research organisations'. It is adding a requirement to consult more broadly with business and industry representatives in the development of a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan.

This is really critical. We must have buy-in from the community. There is very wide and relevant expertise in the community, and also views and ideas about possibilities for sector-based emissions reduction.

Resilience planning is more than just the businesses themselves. There are so many indirect businesses, related businesses, that are involved that do not neatly fit within the categories of energy and transport and agriculture, but are flow-on businesses and organisations that are reliant just by virtue of living in communities, or co-located with industry or businesses. They all have a view. They would have things to contribute.

We are not asking for anything in particular to be done with their views, but they ought to be consulted with and received, and form part of the information that the minister has in making these really important emissions reduction and resilience plans.

Ms WHITE - This is an improvement on what is currently in the bill. The Labor Party also has an amendment to expand who needs to be consulted in the development of the sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans. Ours go a little broader than the Greens have proposed, and we will come to that when the time allows.

I was curious to know, minister, why you have been so restrictive in who is identified to be consulted with. You have limited it to consultation with business and industry representatives, when the development of the Climate Change Action Plan in your own bill consults with a broader range of groups. We have added additional ones throughout the course of this debate, and there are additional ones that we would have like to have seen added as well, through amendment. Why do you not, at least, include the same groups that you have earlier in the bill, when you are consulting around sector-based emissions reductions and resilience plans. I am at a loss to understand that and I would appreciate an explanation.

Mr JAENSCH - I will not be supporting this amendment. This goes to the core of our approach and why it is different from some of the previous efforts and some of the ways that others have suggested running this process. We want to identify emissions in various sectors of our economy and work directly with the organisations and the people who control those emissions, to reduce them. That is going to involve us having an in-depth partnership approach to mapping out pathways to reducing emissions in those sectors, in ways that also support the continuing successful operation of those businesses and those sectors. We are going to need to be able to bring those industry sectors with us because they are the ones that everybody else is talking about. We want to talk to them instead. We want to talk with them about the

emissions they produce and what we can do together to reduce them. Then, we have an undertaking that we have made, and is part of the transparency and accountability of this whole process. When we have those plans formed to a draft level, we undertake to publish them and seek broader comment and input to them. These are going to be plans that are about specific sectors of our economy, the technology they use, and the trajectories that they are on. Their real operating environments have to be thoroughly explored in these plans, to find the opportunities for removing emissions from those sectors. It is not a public suggestion box process at the beginning of that. We have to start with the people who control those emissions and work with them, and engage the public in the discussion thereafter.

We think this is quite essential, if the sectors that everyone else is talking about are going to be properly engaged and meaningfully working with the Government to identify emissions reduction opportunities. We do not want to close the general public and various other interests out of that entirely, but we need to start with those who control the emissions if we are going to make reasonable inroads to them. This is how we propose to do it. It has transparency but it has rigor. We know that others would prefer that we set hard emissions targets on these sectors. Instead, we are going for a hard conversation about emissions with them, and we need them to have confidence that they are safe to do that and work with Government to identify their emissions reductions. Each one of those will involve the relevant portfolio minister as well, who has a knowledge of the stakeholders, the issues, resources and information they can bring to bear on that work. The product of that work, then in draft form, is made public and we seek broader commentary and input to that before finalising and tabling the document. That is the rationale -

Dr Woodruff - There is no commitment to the public in there. You mentioned the public was going to get involved; where do they get involved? It is not written in the bill.

Ms White - No, it is not.

Dr Woodruff - There is nothing in the bill about the public having any involvement.

Ms White - It does not say that you will publish a draft document.

Dr Woodruff - No, it just says that you basically do the job in secret. No one knows what is going on.

Mr JAENSCH - I foreshadow that we will be supporting the amendment or the component of the amendment that has been put forward, I think, by the Greens to publish draft emissions reduction and resilience plans. I think we are yet to come to that, but we will be -

Dr Woodruff - Publish the draft ones.

Mr JAENSCH - before public comment. We do not support the amendment that is in front of us at the moment, number 40.

Ms WHITE - Further to the minister's explanation, I note that the sectors that will be developing plans include: land use, land use change in forestry, and waste. You have excluded local government even from the consultation that will occur here. They are not listed.

They were listed in the groups for the development of the climate action plan, but in the development of these sector-based emissions reduction resilience plan, the only groups listed

for consultation are business and industry representatives unless you are now telling me local government fits within that category, just like you have tried to tell me unions do. They are not there. I think that is an omission and it should be rectified.

I note that it is not in the Greens amendment, but I point out that there are some deficiencies in your argument because they are directly involved with those particular elements.

Mr JAENSCH - I agree, and consider that local government is an integral part of the waste industry in Tasmania. Again, what we are talking about is capturing the sector, be it employees, business owners, operators or their peak bodies. Local government is a business in the waste industry as well, and very much part of that value chain managing it. That is the intent, and we will apply that consistently throughout.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, you foreshadowed that you are going to accept our amendment number 42.

Mr Jaensch - At least in part. I am not going to write cheques in my name. Is it section B?

Dr WOODRUFF - It is adding after section 5C(1), which is what we were just talking about. Then the next amendment proposes to add in a new subsection after subsection (2), so after:

the Minister, consulting with each relevant portfolio minister, business and industry representatives to develop sector-based emissions reduction plans, and making sure that those plans support greenhouse gas emission reduction and transition to a low economy

Our amendment would have the minister prepare the emissions reduction resilience plans within certain time frames - in the case of transport, 12 months; and in the case of other sectors, within 24 months.

Then the second part of it is:

before preparing the reductions and resilience plan, the Minister has to cause a draft to be published online and called for public comment.

What you are saying is that you are going to do the consultation phase with relevant portfolio ministers, and with industry and business, and have the conversation about it, and develop a plan? Then our amendment would have that draft plan available for public consultation. Are you foreshadowing that you would accept that amendment?

Mr Jaensch - Yes, and the time frames. The exception would be that we would seek to amend the 'musts' to 'is to', as we did before.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am happy to let that go as it is.

Amendment negatived.

Progress reported. Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

[9.01 p.m.]

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

That the House do now adjourn.

Child Safety Workers - Recruitment and Retention

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, for the removal of any doubt reflecting on an answer I gave earlier today in response to a question from Ms White on child safety recruitment, we are talking about successful recruitment and can say the number of appointments made is 16.

Vacancy Management Control Committees

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, this morning Ms O'Byrne asked me a question about vacancy management in the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. I rise to provide additional information regarding the question.

I am advised that vacancy management committees are a common practice across agencies, including the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. These committees are part of good governance to ensure appropriate allocation of resources across and within our agency. The DPFEM vacancy management committee was re-established by the secretary on 28 July this year. The committee governs the management and practices in relation to State Service vacancies and variations to establishment.

The House adjourned at 9.02 p.m.