



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 10 March 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Thursday 10 March 2022

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

RESPONSE TO PETITION

kunanyi/Mt Wellington Cable Car Project

[10.02 a.m.]

Mrs Hiscutt tabled a Government response to the petition presented by Ms Forrest on 21 September 2021.

See Appendix 1 on page 68.

**LIVING MARINE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT
(AQUACULTURE RESEARCH) BILL 2021 (No. 58)**

Third Reading

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That the bill be read for the third time.

Bill read the third time.

WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY BILL 2021 (No. 55)

**Consideration of Amendments made in the
Committee of the Whole Council**

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That the bill as amended in Committee be now taken into consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -
Mr President, I move -

That the amendments be read for the first time.

Amendments read the first time.

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the amendments be read for the second time.

Amendments read the second time.

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the amendments be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill as amended agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

**CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (JUDGE ALONE TRIALS)
BILL 2021 (No. 50)**

Third Reading

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the bill be read for the third time.

Bill read the third time.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)(a)

[10.08 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move:

That standing order 10(2)(a) be suspended to provide for the Premier's Address to be tabled without the requirement for the Address to be read again in the Council.

Motion agreed to.

Incorporation of Premier's Address

Mrs HISCUTT - Mr President, I lay on the Table of the Council a copy of the Premier's Address. I move:

That the Address be incorporated in the *Hansard*.

Motion agreed to and Address incorporated as follows:

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Mr Speaker, it has been a privilege and an honour to serve as Tasmania's forty-sixth Premier for just over two years. I would like to thank Tasmanians for working with me and my Government through what has been a challenging period as we have dealt with a worldwide pandemic. It is not over yet but we are in a good place and our reopening plan is progressing well.

I want to expressly thank and acknowledge the support and hard work of my colleagues who have stood steadfast with me as we work together to deliver our plan to secure Tasmania's future. I also want to thank in the most generous of terms the hardworking, dedicated and talented public servants who have over the past two years gone above and beyond in their efforts to keep our state safe and to assist those Tasmanians who needed support during these most challenging times.

Right now there is a quiet confidence in Tasmania. Our state is one of the safest places on the planet and our economy is strong. We went into the pandemic from a position of strength and we have worked hard to maintain this. As a result of our vaccination rates which, by any measure, are amongst the highest in the world, and the milder variant of Omicron, our hospitalisation rate is far lower than other states and significantly lower than anticipated.

We have welcomed Tasmanians home and visitors back and as we transition to living with COVID, Tasmania is in an advantageous position, viewed globally as unique and safe with world-leading environmental credentials and a strong, prosperous economy.

In its January State of the States report, CommSec ranked our economy as the best performing in Australia for the eighth quarter in a row. Employment is at near record levels, with 259 100 Tasmanians in work, and our unemployment rate at 3.8 per cent is the lowest it has ever been in our history. We have jobs looking for people, with growth in job vacancies 72.6 per cent higher than before the pandemic. Our building and construction sector is running hot with an extensive pipeline of work in front it and we have an abundance of opportunities in front of us.

For a long time, Tasmanian premiers have had to work very hard to convince investors to consider investing here, but not anymore. Today, as governments and corporations around the world seek renewable energy solutions and announce net-zero plans by 2050, we can already generate 100 per cent of our energy from renewables and have a target to double that, and in terms of net-zero we have achieved that aim in six out of the last seven years.

Unlike this place, others struggle to define who they are and what they might offer in a post-pandemic world. We do not, and consequently now nationally and internationally people and businesses are focused on Tasmania and Tasmanian ideas.

My Government is an aspirational government and our gauge is not just to the horizon but well beyond. Over the next 10 years we will invest to harness the significant opportunities we have available to attract investment, create jobs and opportunity, improve the lives of all Tasmanians and secure Tasmania's future.

Mr Speaker, the 2021-22 Revised Estimates Report released last month confirmed that Tasmania's economic and financial position remains strong and is strengthening as we emerge from the impact of COVID-19. Reflecting the strength in the economy, state final demand has been revised upwards from 3.75 per cent to 5.25 per cent this year and forecast continued economic and employment growth over the next four years. As a result of better economic and financial outcomes, the net operating balance has improved by nearly half a billion dollars over the budget and forward Estimates period and the budget remains on track for a return to surplus next year. The improved budget outcome is due to strong growth in revenue because of higher than expected activity across the broader economy.

My Government continues to invest in next-generation infrastructure for Tasmania which builds better communities, provides better services, opens up more opportunities and creates more jobs. Infrastructure investment for the six months to 31 December 2021 is \$321 million, more than \$81 million greater than the same period last year and, importantly, infrastructure investment has been revised upwards by \$72.5 million to over \$900 million this year. These outcomes are the result of hard work of Tasmanians doing the right thing - getting vaccinated, supporting our local businesses and, in turn, local businesses backing Tasmania.

As a government we provided unprecedented levels of community and business support and we delivered two social and economic support packages of more than \$1.3 billion, including Home Builder, First Home Builders Grants and our social housing record build. Since the beginning of the pandemic we have provided \$160 million in support to businesses to keep them going and, importantly, to save jobs.

I want to especially thank small businesses for their efforts over the last two years. These businesses, many family-owned, are the backbone of our economy, and while we have provided significant support we know that in many cases they bore the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we go forward we will not forget you. Whilst many of the major plans I announce today will underpin and support our economy and provide significant opportunities for the small business sector, should there be a need in the future for additional support we will always have their backs.

A strong economy enables more investment into areas that make a difference to the lives of Tasmanians such as health, housing, education and sports and community infrastructure. Governments need to plan beyond election cycles. They need to lift their eyes to the mid- and long-term horizons. Today, I want to speak about both, about where we are today but also where we are headed and what the future holds.

The 2021-22 Budget included a record \$10.7 billion investment over four years which was \$900 million more than the previous year and around \$4 billion more than the Labor-Greens government in 2013. While much of this funding has been targeted at immediate needs,

such as reducing the elective surgery wait list, which is already making a difference, opening more beds and employing more staff, we are also firmly focused on planning for the future.

That is why our planned forecast investment of more than \$1 billion over 10 years into critical health infrastructure will ensure that generations of Tasmanians to come will be able to access care where and when they need it regardless of where they live, whilst also helping to attract and retain staff in our major hospitals.

The Budget currently includes over the next four years more than \$525 million of investment into health infrastructure, supporting the Royal Hobart Hospital Master Plan, the recently completed LGH Master Plan and the North West Master Plan currently under way, which informs our investment in modern health facilities, improving patient amenity and increasing capacity.

In the north, the Launceston General Hospital Redevelopment Master Plan forecasts capital investment of \$580 million over 10 years to deliver a new mental health facility and a new tower on the current Northside site, providing additional health services capacity to meet future demand. As well, my Government will also underpin the delivery of a new \$120 million private hospital within the LGH health precinct to ensure that integrated patient care and specialist services are delivered in a seamless way.

In the south we are delivering an expansion of stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment which represents over \$200 million in new facilities, including an additional 90 inpatient beds, a fit-for-purpose older persons unit and an expanded ICU, expanded emergency department, and new neurology/stroke and medical subspeciality wards. We have engaged with the Commonwealth Government to provide joint funding for the next step in the plan, with works to commence on stage 3 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment before the end of this term of government. It is proposed that stage 3 will deliver mental health services and specialised multidisciplinary subacute services at an estimated jointly funded total investment of \$665 million.

In the north-west we are progressing a \$100 million redevelopment of the North West Regional Hospital, which includes \$40 million for the first stage of a new mental health precinct and \$20 million for the refurbishment of the Spencer Wing to provide additional wards. Once this is completed in 2025 we will progress the second stage of the mental health precinct at a cost of \$40 million, which we aim to be jointly funded between the state and the Commonwealth.

We have also expanded our investment in the Mersey Community Hospital with a further \$20 million to provide a new kitchen and additional ward, providing more bed capacity. This takes the total upgrade at the Mersey to \$55 million, the most significant in the hospital's history. We are also investing \$20 million to replace hospital equipment, \$9 million in additional and replacement ambulances and \$5 million in equipment for rural hospitals, implementing strategic asset management across these important pieces of equipment.

Another innovative service we have recently introduced is the new Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response, or PACER, team, including mental health clinicians, police officers and paramedics with dedicated support to support those experiencing mental health distress in the community. Since being launched in January as a two-year trial in the south, PACER has already seen positive results, with the majority of people receiving the support

they need to remain in the community instead of being taken to hospital. We know that when people can be treated in the community with the right supports they can recover sooner. However, the most important asset in our health system is our people. Since coming into Government in 2014 we have employed 1500 additional FTE health professionals.

I want to acknowledge the incredible efforts of our hard-working health staff, especially over the last two years. They have been on the frontline of our COVID-19 response and have worked tirelessly to help test, to vaccinate and support our community through this difficult and challenging period. Our plan centres on our patients and our staff. We will continue to invest record funding to meet immediate needs. My Government will continue to set longer term goals to build a better health system in every region of our state.

As part of our plan to secure Tasmania's future we are taking action to assist more Tasmanians into homes and to put downward pressure on rental prices. That is why I announced we will establish a new statutory authority, Housing Tasmania, reporting directly to the Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing to increase housing supply, deliver more affordable homes and units, to deliver the stock of houses and the services required to cater for growing demand.

COVID-19 has changed the housing landscape in ways never previously imagined. Who would have expected that after two years of a worldwide pandemic leading to lockdowns, lockouts and significant economic and social disruption that the median house price in Tasmania and Australia would increase as significantly as it has. I consistently maintain that the only way to combat rising house prices and put downward pressure on home prices is to increase supply. This is why I am, today, announcing a massive 10-year, \$1.5 billion housing package to build on our existing initiatives and take even further action to address affordable housing.

Our existing \$615 million program will deliver 3500 new homes by 2026-27. We are committed and determined to accelerate and build on this effort. The new statutory authority, Housing Tasmania, that I announced last week, will have the capacity to borrow and invest. When established it will have a more than \$2 billion balance sheet to underpin the increased delivery of new social and affordable homes.

Over the next decade Housing Tasmania's board will be tasked with building and acquiring as well as partnering with the not-for-profit sector to deliver an additional 6500 homes and units on top of our current target of 3500 homes by 2027 for a total of 10 000 new homes by 2032. The expected new direct investment in excess of our current plan will be more than \$1.1 billion.

Mr Speaker, as you would be aware we are already delivering a wide range of measures which are building more houses and making it easier for all Tasmanians to get into the market. We will do more. We know that the strong property market has made it difficult for some to access rentals. Rising property values have further impacted the cost of renting a home. That is why last year we reset the land tax threshold, which provided over \$56 million in land tax relief for landlords and property owners over four years.

Growing rental prices show that there is more that we need to do. That is why we will reset land tax thresholds, doubling the tax-free threshold to \$100 000. This means no land tax will now be paid on land valued under \$100 000. We will also lift the upper tax threshold to \$500 000 and lower the tax rate for land value between \$100 000 and \$500 000 from

0.55 per cent to 0.45 per cent. The changes mean that around 70 000 Tasmanians will save on average approximately \$800 every year up to a maximum saving of \$1625. Close to 12 000 taxpayers will no longer be needing to pay any land tax at all.

When combined with the changes we made last year it will provide about \$220 million of tax relief for property owners over the next four years to put downward pressure on rents. One thing that will be a critical factor in increasing housing supply and improving affordability is the availability of land. While recent estimates indicate there is already around 5000 hectares of vacant land zoned for residential use which could yield up to 60 000 residential lots, much of it remains undeveloped. That is why we are continuing to incentivise land owners to activate this land.

We recognise that there is more that we can do. This includes providing amendments that will allow the Tasmanian Planning Commission to consider more contemporary growth forecasts when rezoning land. Rezoning proposals for residential developments will be able to be considered on their merits without needing to wait for the full review of our regional land use strategies to be completed and without compromising sound planning processes.

To further accelerate land supply we will also extend our Headworks Holiday program, doubling the residential land rebate from \$15 million to \$30 million. Already, more than 820 lots statewide have been approved and another 127 are being assessed. To keep the supply of land flowing we are extending our funding commitment while all other criteria for the program will remain the same.

Currently, there is a lack of centrally located medium-density infill housing occurring in our cities. It is often easier to develop a greenfield site on the edge of our towns than develop an infill site within the centres. This needs to be turned around if we are to encourage people to live and play near where they work. I believe active government intervention is required to not only identify areas for infill development but to make it happen. As a first step through the Hobart City Deal we will prioritise this focus area and work with our City Deal partners to provide innovative solutions, including legislating if required, so that we can open up the corridor sooner and build more homes.

Today, to help Tasmanians take their first step onto the property ladder, I am also pleased to advise that we will be extending the threshold and expanding the eligibility of our successful HomeShare program, which will now be called the Housing Market Entry program, allowing more Tasmanians who meet our very reasonable income and assets test access to it. For example, if you have limited financial assets, or are a couple with one child and a yearly income of less than \$114 180, or are single earning less than \$82 712, you meet the assets and income test for the program. If you currently rent a Housing Tasmania property you are automatically exempt from these tests.

However, with the recent movements in Tasmanian house prices the HomeShare parameters have become restrictive. Many people are stretched paying higher rents and do not have the capacity to save for a 5 per cent deposit. We are going to reduce the requirement for a deposit to 2 per cent of the purchase price. We will also double the state's equity contribution to a maximum of \$200 000 or 40 per cent of the purchase price for purchasers of new homes or units, and up to a maximum of \$150 000 or 30 per cent of the purchase price for eligible established homes or units.

We are also opening up access to eligible first-home buyers who would otherwise be unable to obtain finance to enable them, with our help, to purchase existing homes, rather than have to build a home. These generous limits will allow more Tasmanians to achieve their dream of buying their own home. We will back this scheme with up to \$50 million of new equity from our balance sheet, meaning that we can support more than 250 purchases of existing or new homes up to \$500 000 in value, or more than 500 new or existing units, depending on their value.

Since coming to Government our First Home Owner Grants have helped more than 3750 Tasmanians build their first homes. I am pleased to confirm that in the coming Budget we will extend the First Home Owner Grant of \$30 000 for another 12 months, from 1 July 2022. The First Home Owner Grant will also be available to those who use our Housing Market Entry program to build a new home. The Government will also double the Private Rental Incentives Program, which encourages property owners to make their homes available for affordable rent to low-income households with low, or no support needs. We will extend this scheme from its current limit of 200 homes to 400 homes, creating another 200 affordable rental properties over the next two years.

The Tasmanian Government's Ancillary Dwelling Grants Program is progressing well, with 161 houses allocated under the program. To further stimulate this initiative an additional \$2.5 million will be invested, making 250 more places available on top of the initial allocation of 250. The program will be extended until the end of next year.

We need more housing options right in our cities, near our services and shops. In 2017 the Government amended the building regulations to make it easier to develop shop-top apartments. Following on from the success being seen in Launceston, we will be encouraging the take up of this form of housing in other municipalities and jurisdictions, especially Hobart. We will engage directly with local councils to discuss what incentives we can jointly fund to accelerate this form of inner-city living opportunity. Furthermore, we also believe there is an opportunity to better utilise government-owned buildings. I have directed Treasury to review in the next six months our own stock of buildings to see what we can do to repurpose them for a higher and better use.

Mr Speaker, today we are also announcing that all stamp duty and first home owner grants and concessions will be increased to a \$600 000 threshold, which including the previous changes last year, results in a 50 per cent increase keeping in line with rising property values. Our bold plan will assist more Tasmanians into their own homes and ensure they can take their first step onto the property ladder. It will help to relieve rental stress through increasing the supply of properties while at the same time underpinning our strong, growing economy providing jobs and opportunity right here in the state.

My Government has a strong commitment to education and a proud record of providing the resources, infrastructure and opportunities for Tasmanian learners to succeed. From the early years to senior secondary education, skills training and library services, access, participation and engagement in learning is fundamental for all Tasmanians to develop the skills and confidence they need to reach their potential and participate fully in Tasmania's economy and our society. I am very pleased to confirm that all high schools have extended to provide senior secondary options as of 2022, and that direct retention from year 10 to year 12 has jumped almost 5 percentage points since 2019 to 76.1 per cent, the highest on record.

We know that further improvements in education outcomes are needed and we are committed to all year 7 students exceeding the national minimum reading standard by 2030. The recruitment of an additional 40 quality teaching coaches for 2022 is already supporting system-wide improvements to reach this goal.

Our record capital expenditure in education will provide the infrastructure and facilities our learners need and deserve, including six new child and family learning centres, new schools and more upgrades where they are needed.

In 2022 we have further increased support for students impacted by trauma, in addition to the funding of the educational adjustments model for students with a disability which, I am pleased to say, has enabled an additional 2000 students to be funded since 2020.

As a result of COVID-19 we need to be flexible. Early in the pandemic we had more than 80 000 public, independent and Catholic students learning remotely from home. This was an outstanding effort. One of the key learnings was the challenge of the digital divide that it still presents and the need for the provision of laptops and iPads to many students and families for their use at home. In the 21st century, every child in a public school should have access to a device. My Government will invest an additional \$5 million to bolster the additional pool of devices to ensure that those families that are currently unable to provide this basic technology are supported so that no child is left behind.

The Skills, Training and Workforce Growth portfolios were consolidated last year in recognition of their key shared focus on supporting Tasmanians into training and skills development to equip them to fill local jobs and more fully participate in their local communities. Importantly, my Government's focus on ensuring that all Tasmanians - no matter what their age, circumstances or where they live - will have opportunities to create a better life, remains front and centre.

The passage of the TasTAFE bill 2021 through the parliament in November last year will put TasTAFE as our public provider of Vocational Education and Training in a stronger position to meet the demands of the future and make sure that every Tasmanian has the best opportunity to get the skills they need to get a job. We said that we wanted TasTAFE to be more nimble and be able to operate like the businesses it was there to serve, and that is what we will deliver.

Our ambitious multimillion dollar workforce growth agenda is being delivered by the new Jobs Tasmania unit in the Department of State Growth. It is centered on the establishment of a regional jobs hub network comprising seven jobs hubs covering all areas of Tasmania. Jobs Tasmania is also delivering a range of programs to remove barriers and support Tasmanians to transition into training and work, including the Job Ready Fund, the Tasmanian Employer Bonus, Youth Navigators and it is expanding the Area Connect Service so that more Tasmanians can get to work, training or education where no easy transport options exist.

Mr Speaker, the Tasmanian economy is booming and we want to make sure that the opportunities it presents are accessible to everyone regardless of their gender.

In the 2021-22 Budget we committed nearly \$3 million to programs that will recruit, retain and advance women into non-traditional occupations. Further, over the past three years our work to achieve gender equality has been guided by the Tasmanian Women's Strategy.

Under this strategy, the Tasmanian Government has made important progress towards improving women's financial security, leadership and participation opportunities, health, well-being and safety.

Very soon we will launch the next iteration of the Tasmanian Women's Strategy which will build on our current work, with a renewed focus on achieving gender equality with women's leadership at the forefront to ensure that more women are supported to be the leaders of tomorrow. There is no doubt that an important part of creating future change is increasing the visibility of diverse female leaders and role models, and we will increase our efforts to support women to aspire to and participate in decision-making and leadership positions through the new strategy.

Mr Speaker, if there has ever been a time to demonstrate the benefits when the State Service collaborates, we need look no further than what we achieved through COVID-19 and use that as the benchmark for an effective high performing and capable State Service. This is exactly why last week I announced that we will move the major functions pertaining to children and young people to the Department of Education which, as the largest provider of services to children and young people in Tasmania, is best placed to become responsible for children, youth and family safety. When the transition occurs, it will be renamed the Department of Education, Children and Young People.

Our children and youth interact with the Department of Education more than any other agency and the department is ideally placed to broaden its scope further to support the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.

This change will continue to ensure that we move from siloed Government approaches and lift capabilities across our systems, policies, processes and procedures to make them stronger, and continue to build a culture where children are at the centre of our processes and child safety is everybody's responsibility.

In September last year, the Government announced its intention to close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and establish two new facilities as part of a reform of the entire youth justice system. The transition plan for this major reform is well underway with the project team already delivering key activities in line with the project timelines.

Noetic Solutions is developing a detailed functional brief for the new facilities, which will determine the most appropriate settings for both a secure and therapeutic environment. At the same time, a range of Crown-owned sites that may be broadly suitable for the new facilities is under way. In coming months, upon receipt of the Noetic Solutions functional brief, preferred sites will be identified and planning and consultation processes will commence.

Education will be a key focus of these facilities and that is why the education department will have the overall responsibility for children, youth and family safety. While location and design will be finalised in coming months, I can foreshadow that the Budget this year will include an allocation of up to \$40 million to ensure that work can commence immediately on building these centres to coincide with the closure of Ashley in 2024.

One matter that has been much discussed in recent times is the future of the Burnie Court. We recognise there is a wide range of views within the community in relation to the redevelopment of the Burnie Court complex. However, what has become very evident is that

there is an important need to revitalise the Burnie CBD regardless of where the court is situated. Given these concerns, we will engage further with Burnie City Council and the north-west business community to understand the economic and social implications of the current CBD concerns and, importantly, how best to ensure its revitalisation and how Burnie can best come back to life.

I will be meeting with the mayor, council and the business community in coming weeks to actively consider what more can be done and what investment is needed to revitalise the Burnie CBD, including the future use of the current court site.

Last year, I asked the Commissioner of Police for advice as to structural reform across Government to ensure that we are providing a best-practice sexual violence response for Tasmania that puts victim survivors at the centre. Having received the commissioner's advice, I am pleased to announce that the Government intends to establish next level, multi-disciplinary centres that will ensure victim survivors of both family and sexual violence receive immediate and integrated support in a safe place from a range of services, including family and sexual support and counselling, psychologists, witness intermediaries, police and other related services.

Funding will be included in this year's Budget for the establishment of the first of these centres. Once an appropriate location is identified, and subject to a successful pilot, I believe that these centres will be progressively developed in all regions of the state. It is important to recognise the intersection of sexual violence with family violence. The multi-disciplinary centres will embed that understanding in the Government responses by extending the remit and resourcing of the Safe Families Coordination Unit to include sexual offending more broadly, including child sexual violence. Planning work on both initiatives is commencing now and will be coordinated alongside the development and release of the Government's third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, as I said, the Government I lead is aspirational and focused on delivering better outcomes for Tasmanians, today and into the future, harnessing our competitive advantages that set us apart from the rest of the world, whether that is delivering more irrigation water to Tasmanian farmers than ever before through our nation-leading irrigation schemes, maximising the potential opportunity for Tasmania from globally innovative offshore aquaculture, investing to diversify our forestry industry for a climate-positive future, supporting our mining and mineral sector or advanced manufacturing and defence.

Our irrigation projects across the state are allowing farmers to expand the area planted to high-value crops, increase rotations, boost yields, and diversify the new enterprises such as wine grapes, leafy green vegetables and berries. When delivered, the \$370 million south-east scheme will be the biggest irrigation project in Tasmania's history, expected to deliver more than 40 000 megalitres annually, supporting a further \$150 million in on-farm investment with the potential to create more than 2000 local jobs.

My Government is working with the Australian Government's progressive development of the business case for an estimated \$300 million Southern Midlands Irrigation Scheme, which will deliver a similar economic benefit right to the heart of Tasmania. In Tasmania we have the greatest opportunity for paddock-to-plate experiences, which are sought after by locals and visitors alike. This includes wild deer, which will be considered as part of the Deer Management Plan review that will occur 12 months after the commencement of the plan.

Following this review and informed by its outcomes, it is the Government's intention to conduct a limited fixed-term trial to evaluate the potential of deer farmers and land holders to supply value-added wild deer products to the regulated food and restaurant trade in consultation with the Tasmanian Game Council and other key stakeholders.

Thanks to a century of hard work, invention and sacrifice, we have more renewable energy than we can use. We have been net-zero for six of the last seven years, and we have a goal to double our capacity to reach 200 per cent renewable by 2040. Our world-class water and wind resources, natural deepwater ports and our skilled and knowledgeable renewable energy workforce have positioned Tasmania among the best globally in the race to develop renewable energy. Our plan is backed in by a 200 per cent Tasmanian renewable energy target, and our Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan. We are witnessing unprecedented levels of interest in new renewable energy projects in the state from multiple proponents. Tasmania is on track to be a global leader in green hydrogen production by 2030, and we are expecting a decision shortly on our Commonwealth funding application to establish a green hydrogen hub at Bell Bay.

Bell Bay presents a perfect location for a nation-leading green hydrogen hub with its advanced manufacturing zone, renewable energy availability, appropriate infrastructure, water availability, and its port access. We have always said our plans for Bell Bay as a green hydrogen hub is bolstered by the proposed Marinus Link interconnector and Hydro Tasmania's Battery of the Nation project. The Australian Energy Market Operator's 2022 draft integrated system plan has Marinus Link and the Tasmanian clean energy it unlocks front and centre of this unprecedented transformation of the energy market.

Critical underwater engineering surveys from Marinus Link are currently underway across Bass Strait as technical processes to sensitively design and build this national priority infrastructure continue at pace. With growing demand for renewable energy both on island and off, we need more capacity to store and transport energy to ensure Tasmania earns a premium for its renewable energy products and accelerate our economic prosperity.

Further interconnectors such as the Marinus Link will unlock these opportunities, and we continue to work closely with the Commonwealth Government to deliver this national priority project. We will shortly be releasing our renewable energy coordination framework to support the strategic growth of renewables in our state through best-practice consultation and engagement.

Hand-in-hand with the opportunities for new renewable energy generation, Tasmania can lead the way in the deployment of new technologies to meet our target of net-zero emissions by 2030. We have made up to \$12.3 million available for the trial of hydrogen buses and the investigation of opportunities to use green hydrogen for trucking and marine vessels. Work with Metro Tasmania has already begun on the integration of hydrogen buses into their fleet and the development of refuelling infrastructure and hydrogen supply chains.

I can also announce today that in the upcoming Tasmanian budget the Government will invest \$10 million over four years to replace our aging fleet of fossil fuel boilers in schools, hospitals, and correctional facilities with renewable energy powered alternatives, including bioenergy technology. By taking ambitious action on climate change, we can also improve environmental, social, and health outcomes for future generations.

Our tourism industry, while having experienced challenges throughout the pandemic, is well positioned to take advantage of Tasmania's reputation as a climate leader. As Premier and Treasurer, and Minister for Tourism and Minister for Climate Change, it gives me a unique vantage point and opportunities for a unified strategy. Tying our spirit of hard work and boutique enterprise through our current and future climate position is not only meaningful, it is an engine for growth, and importantly we can invite our visitors to be a part of it.

Last year our tourism community announced that Tasmania will become a carbon-neutral destination by 2025 and undertook a body of work to underpin this position in the market. With this work nearing completion, it demonstrates a clear pathway to take advantage of Tasmania's unique position while generating positive impact across our community.

Climate-positive travel can not only reduce our emissions but can contribute to projects to increase biodiversity through on-island carbon offsets, reduce emissions in our transport fleet and support a circular economy. Through our nation-leading emissions performance delivering one of the best outcomes in the world, we will look to maximise the benefits available for our industry sectors and the businesses and jobs they support by ensuring that we capitalise fully on our competitive advantages.

Furthermore, we remain on track for the game-changing arrival of our two new *Spirit* vessels. Construction on the new *Spirit IV* has commenced and the project remains on track with the delivery of the first ship by late 2023, with the second vessel, *Spirit V*, to arrive during 2024. These two new ships will be a significant boost for our tourism businesses, large and small, as well as our broader economy, bringing increased passengers in increased comfort to underpin our visitor economy, along with increased freight capacity assisting our high-value time-sensitive exports to get access directly to the mainland markets which are so desirous of the fantastic fresh product that we are world-renowned for.

Mr Speaker, elite level sport not only provides content for Tasmanians to enjoy, it provides pathways for men, women and children to aspire to and supports the wider efforts of our clubs in bringing people together and strengthening our community. It promotes healthy, active and united communities and serves as a key investment into reducing long-term health costs and pressures on our health system.

There is no denying elite level sport also brings enormous economic benefits, business development and job opportunities and will diversify and strengthen our visitor and broader economy. Never before has there been an opportunity greater than now to challenge ourselves with 'what if' instead of 'what is'. It is reflected in our pursuit to position Tasmanians to be represented in national sporting codes, whether that is the NBL, the BBL, AFL, hockey, A-League football or netball. Time and again Tasmania has proven its ability to host elite sporting content and put on a show worth coming to.

In 2021 Tasmania successfully hosted a record 14 AFL matches, including two elimination finals and the first 20 matches of the 2021 Women's Big Bash League. Hobart's Blundstone Arena recently played host to the very successful fifth Ashes Test. The JackJumpers are in the NBL and the Perth Glory A-League team has just played four games at UTAS Stadium and the Western United A-League Team will play three games later in the season as well. Later this year Hobart will play host to nine ICC Men's T20 World Cup matches, further highlighting our state's ability to hold major sporting events. All these games

are broadcast nationally and some worldwide, once again showcasing Tasmania on the national and international stages.

We remain focused on securing our AFL and AFLW licence later this year and it is very pleasing that we have four-time premiership winning master coach Alastair Clarkson assisting the taskforce with our bid. Alastair is working through the matters raised in the Carter report ahead of a final position being put to the AFL Commission and club presidents for a decision on an AFL team. We will continue working closely with the AFL ahead of the decision on our own AFL team, including important strategies to grow the base of community football as well. This has been an incredible 30-year pursuit for our own AFL licence and I have never been more confident that Tasmania will ultimately be successful.

Now more than ever, it is time to plan for the future, to be ambitious and set the longer-term goals that underpin our aims but also demonstrate to the rest of the country that we are on a pathway to where young Tasmanian men and women can aspire to be the best right here in their own state.

At the last election we outlined a commitment to establish Stadiums Tasmania to position Tasmania and its sporting infrastructure to be able to be represented in national sporting codes and to ensure the sound future management of Tasmania's major public stadium assets and infrastructure. Today I can announce that we will task Stadiums Tasmania to work with the Central Coast Council and continue to invest in further development of the Dial Regional Sports Complex to support the community and the aspirations of young people in the north-west. The complex is being designed to AFL specifications and when we have secured our own men's and women's AFL and A-League teams, and our own VFL team as well, I want games to be played on the north-west coast as well as in the north and the south. We will work with the council to facilitate the inclusion of the Dial Regional Complex and the future structure of Stadiums Tasmania and today we are committing \$25 million to enhance spectator and participant infrastructure.

Our plans for UTAS Stadium, once the transfer of the ownership from the Launceston City Council to Stadiums Tasmania occurs and subject to the Australian Government matching the \$65 million that is allocated within our Budget, are to progress the \$135 million first stage of the \$200 million master plan. Stage 1, subject to funding, will be developed over the next three to five years and will increase the capacity of the ground while also providing retractable seating to enable A-League, AFL and other events to be held, future proofing the stadium for decades to come. Stage 2 will provide an indoor arena capable of holding basketball, netball and other sports and entertainment events.

Currently Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium meet the needs for major sporting events, but in the medium to long-term we need to have a bolder vision and, subject to the AFL and to Tasmania achieving an AFL licence and the highly likely prospect of an A-League licence as well, along with a growing population, we will need a stadium that can meet Tasmania's needs for decades to come.

The Government has recently undertaken preliminary feasibility work to understand what opportunities there are to develop a major entertainment, sporting and events stadium with a capacity of up to 27 000 seats as well as up to 30 000 people for a major concert or event, including standing space, within easy commuting distance of the Hobart CBD and connected to a variety of transport modes.

A new southern stadium was first proposed by the AFL Taskforce in 2019 as not an immediate but necessary part of our AFL licence bid and forms a key part of our long-term vision for sporting and entertainment infrastructure across Tasmania. It builds on the Government's significant investments into and plans for existing major facilities such as MyState Bank Arena and UTAS Stadium in Launceston, as well as Dial Park at Penguin. A southern stadium supports the aspirations for Tasmania securing its own AFL team which would be based in Hobart. We will also be able to host rectangular sporting codes that will support ongoing discussions about an A-League football licence. The stadium will put Tasmania on the national and international stage for both sporting and entertainment events on a scale that has not been possible in the past.

Today I am pleased to announce that, subject to stakeholder consultation and planning approval and achieving later this year an AFL licence, we plan to develop this new stadium at Regatta Point. This part of the city holds great significance for Tasmanian soldiers who have served their country, and the Government will work closely with the RSL on how such a stadium could enhance the Cenotaph area and invite people to remember and celebrate our servicemen and women year-round. The area is also important for the Royal Hobart Regatta which is one of Australia's oldest continuous aquatic events, and the Government will work with Regatta Association to incorporate their needs into the development and explore opportunities to shore up the longevity of that event into the future.

Our goal is to develop a multipurpose stadium that takes the best of today's stadium design standards and trends and has a flexible design that allows for future evolution of the facilities and infrastructure. The stadium will include a retractable roof for all-weather playing and performances, making it only one of two such AFL venues in the country. Blundstone Arena will remain the home of cricket with all forms, including tests, being played there with the option for the larger stadium to be used when capacity becomes an issue. The new stadium, which will form a key part of the 10-year strategic stadium plan that Stadiums Tasmania will be tasked to develop, will cost in the order of \$750 million. We will seek to fund this through funding from all levels of government as well as private sector involvement and equity raising, drawing on numerous examples and lessons of how this works very successfully in other parts of the world.

Subject to achieving an AFL licence later this year and the timing of that being made available, it is envisaged there would be approximately a two-year time frame for planning approvals and contracting and a further three years for construction, meaning that the new stadium could be ready for the 2027 season. The Regatta Point site is ideally located, given its proximity to the city and to future transport corridor links, such as the Northern Suburbs Transport Corridor, ferries on the river and will create a spectacular and iconic entry to the city.

My Government is an aspirational government and this stadium will be a game changer for Tasmania. The economic opportunities that this will bring to the state with the hosting of international events are enormous. It will set us up to have teams in national competitions at the highest level and enable us to host national and international sport, arts and cultural events and concerts. It will be an important part of the state's sporting and entertainment evolution, growing and supporting Tasmania's visitor economy and inspiring infrastructure and transport systems to support industry, business and community growth, filling the city and the state with accommodation, hospitality and retail activity.

In Tasmania we value and protect our environment. We are getting on with our clear plan to reduce waste and build our circular economy. We are making significant progress on a number of key initiatives, including the introduction of a container refund scheme with a consistent statewide waste levy and phasing out single-use and problem plastics in Tasmania by 2025.

We are also building confidence in our waste and resource recovery sectors, investing in plastics, re-processing and re-use of waste tyres and commercial composting and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in our environment. We have also taken important steps to progress the structural and organisational separation of the Environmental Protection Authority from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, creating a new independent state authority. The new model will ensure public confidence in environmental regulation in Tasmania and promote certainty for proponents.

Last year I committed to providing an update following the release of the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty Report. After receiving the report, I wrote to Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations seeking their feedback on the report's recommendations and what the next steps on our journey towards true reconciliation should look like. I can advise the House that while there were a variety of views, the feedback today indicates broad support to take further steps on both the truth-telling process and treaty process. However, the feedback was very clear to me that these processes must be led by Tasmanian Aboriginal people and they must co-design this work. Therefore, as a result of this feedback the next step needs to be to establish an Aboriginal advisory body that is representative of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and can, through co-design, work with the Government to establish these two processes. This advisory body representing Tasmanian Aboriginals will also provide advice on the other recommendations in the report and on matters that affect Tasmanian Aboriginal people. This will not be an easy task. It will require goodwill from all sides to take these matters forward.

My Government is up for it. We want to take the next steps on this path but that path has to be one that is co-designed with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. However, one matter that the Government is firm in its view on is that the Truth-telling Commission, when established, will not be tasked with determining Aboriginality or eligibility. While I understand that this is a vexed issue for some, the Government remains committed to its current inclusive eligibility policy. The next steps will involve inviting representatives of all registered Aboriginal community organisations to come together to provide advice on the establishment of the Aboriginal advisory body, its membership and terms of reference and how it will be accountable to Aboriginal people in Tasmania. I intend to issue the invitation shortly and hold this meeting as soon as possible, as the Government wants to move forward. I know that Tasmanian Aboriginals do as well. However, there must be Aboriginal leadership and ownership of the decisions that affect Aboriginal people.

As we take these next steps we know that already there have been increased costs as Aboriginal people have engaged in the process to date. The Government will, in the coming budget, provide an allocation of up to \$500 000 to offset costs as the process progresses. To support this new Aboriginal advisory body the government will establish an Aboriginal affairs whole-of-government division within DPAC, comprising of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, as well as staff from other departments, such as Health and Education. This new division will be tasked to oversee and coordinate the Government's significant Aboriginal affairs agenda, informed by the views of Aboriginal people. This includes the truth-telling and treaty processes as well as closing the gap, a new Aboriginal

heritage act and finalising the model for returning land. This is a journey we need to go on together and that we must go on together to ensure a more equitable and just future for generations to come.

My Government wants today and into the future to create opportunities for Tasmanians regardless of their background or circumstance; for Tasmanians to have pride and confidence in our state, understanding that it is a unique and special place to grow up and live, with opportunities you can only find in a handful of places in the world. We have a strong pipeline of work ahead of us which is delivering better outcomes to every region in Tasmania - in housing; education and health; renewable energy; tourism and hospitality and across our primary industries, resources and advanced manufacturing sectors. It does not stop there, it cannot, because right now we are in the best position to grasp the opportunities ahead.

We must not just focus on the horizon, we must lift our eyes beyond that. That is what this Government intends to do to secure Tasmania's future.

MOTION

Note - Premier's Address

[10.09 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the Premier's Address be noted.

I would like to speak to that motion. As I have already indicated to members, we will be dealing with the Premier's Address until up to lunchtime.

Last year, when commenting on the Premier's Address, I made the observation that while all state of the state speeches were important, this one was particularly so. I said that at the time because it set the framework for the recovery from the ongoing impacts of an unprecedented global crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's speech is also important because it continues and builds on the Government's plan to secure Tasmania's future.

We have weathered the storm, thanks to strong leadership from our Government, thanks to hard work from a number of state servants and, most importantly, thanks to the determination and commitment of the Tasmanian people to do the right thing. Congratulations to them all.

The key message for me from the Premier's Address is that the Government is steadfastly getting on with the job and is not being sidetracked from playing silly political games. That is tremendously reassuring. The Premier and the Government are continuing to provide the strong leadership to implement their plan, incorporating significant economic and social support packages as well as key infrastructure investments. This plan is providing Tasmanians with the security and confidence to not only continue, but to thrive. As the Premier said in his speech in the other place, this Government is an aspirational government with eyes not just on the horizon, but beyond. The economic and other signs continue to show that we are on the right track.

I truly cannot think of a better place to be in the world at the moment than here in Tasmania. We are the envy of many - not only in Australia, but across the world. The record speaks for itself. In its January State of the States report, CommSec ranked our economy as the best performing in Australia for the eighth quarter in a row. The NAB January business survey found that we have the second best conditions for business in the nation. Employment is at near record levels with 259 100 Tasmanians in work and our unemployment rate is at a 3.8 per cent - the lowest it has ever been in our history. Job vacancies are running at 72.6 per cent higher than before COVID-19 hit. Our building and construction sector has an extensive pipeline of work in front of it. In 2021, there were nearly 4000 building approvals, and that was 11.5 per cent higher than the year before with dwelling approvals remaining elevated at levels not seen in over 25 years.

Infrastructure development for the six months to 31 December 2021 is \$321 million. That is more than \$81 million greater than the same period last year. Infrastructure investment this year could be over \$900 million. The strength of our economy was also confirmed in the 2021-22 Revised Estimates Report, with state final demand revised upward from 3.75 per cent to 5.25 per cent this year and continued economic and employment growth forecasts over the next four years.

Strong growth in revenues following higher than expected activities across the economy means improved budget outcomes, and we are on track for a return to surplus next year.

All this is good news, because a solid budgetary and financial position is reflective of a strong economy which means we can do more in crucial areas such as housing, health and education. That is exactly what the Government is doing.

One of the perennial issues facing governments of all persuasions is the health system. The 2021-22 Budget included a record \$10.7 billion investment in health over four years which was \$900 million more than the previous year, and around \$4 billion more than the Labor-Greens Government in 2013. Much of this funding has been targeted at immediate needs, such as reducing the elective surgery waitlist. That funding is already making a difference by opening more beds and employing more staff. The Government is also focused on planning for the future. That is why our plan forecasts investments of more than \$1 billion over 10 years into critical health infrastructure to ensure that generations of Tasmanians to come will be able to access care when and where they need it, regardless of where they live. This is also helping to attract and retain staff in our major hospitals. The Royal Hobart Hospital master plan, the recently completed Launceston General Hospital master plan, and the North West Regional Hospital master plan, which is currently under way, reflect the Government's investments in modern health facilities, improving patient amenity and increasing capacity.

In the north, the Launceston General Hospital redevelopment master plan forecasts capital investment of \$580 million over 10 years to deliver a new mental health facility and a new tower on the current Northside site, providing additional capacity to meet future demand. We will also see the delivery of a new \$120 million private hospital within the LGH health precinct to ensure that integrated patient care and specialist services are delivered in a seamless way.

In the south, the Government is delivering an expansion of stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, which represents more than \$200 million in new facilities, including an additional 90 inpatient beds, a fit-for-purpose older persons unit, an expanded ICU, an

expanded emergency department and new neurology and stroke and medical subspecialty wards. Importantly, the state Government is engaging with the Commonwealth government to provide joint funding for stage 3 of the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, which will deliver mental health services and specialised multidisciplinary subacute services at an estimated jointly funded total investment of \$665 million.

In the north-west, work is progressing on a \$100 million redevelopment of the North West Regional Hospital, which includes \$40 million for the first stage of the new mental health precinct and \$20 million for the refurbishment of the Spencer wing to provide additional wards. Investment in the Mersey Community Hospital has also been expanded, with a further \$20 million to provide a new kitchen and additional ward, providing more bed capacity. This takes the total upgrade at the Mersey to \$55 million, the most significant in the hospital's history.

I will now turn my focus to housing. Housing is another of the core issues of concern, not only in my electorate, but across the state. The housing package announced by the Premier last week is groundbreaking and unprecedented. In fact, the suite of reforms announced has been welcomed by industry groups and by TasCOSS. The Property Council of Australia stated that the new policies, and I quote, 'will go a long way to substantially increase the supply of social and affordable housing in an enduring and sustainable way'. TasCOSS noted that the Government's pledge of the 10 000 new dwellings by 2032 was welcome news.

So, what was announced? The Premier announced a massive 10-year housing package in excess of \$1.5 billion to build on existing reforms and take further action to provide affordable housing. The only way to address rising house and rental prices is to increase supply, so the Government is building on its existing \$615 million program to deliver 3500 new dwellings and homes by 2026-27. The new statutory authority that was announced last week will have the capacity to borrow and invest, with a balance sheet of more than \$2 billion. Over the next decade it will be tasked with building and acquiring an additional 6500 homes and units on top of the current target of 3500. This leads to a total of 10 000 new home dwellings by 2032. The expected new direct investment will be in excess of \$1.1 billion.

It was also announced last week that all stamp duty and First Home Owner Grants and concessions will be increased to a \$600 000 threshold. Including the previous changes, this results in a 50 per cent increase, keeping in line with rising property prices. This means that an eligible first homebuyer or a pensioner purchasing a downsized property would save about \$11 250 on property duty when buying a \$600 000 home. Additionally, the Government is retaining the First Home Owner Grant at \$30 000 for the 2022-23 financial year.

To further accelerate land supply, the Headworks Holiday program will be extended, doubling the residential land rebate from \$15 million to \$30 million. There will also be an extension of threshold and eligibility for the successful HomeShare program, which becomes the Housing Market Entry Program. This will be allowing more Tasmanians who meet the income and asset test to access this much more generous program.

The program will be improved by reducing the requirement for a deposit to 2 per cent of the purchase price and doubling the state's equity contribution to a maximum of \$200 000 or 40 per cent for new homes or units for up to \$150 000, or 30 per cent of the purchase price for eligible established homes or units. The package will also be opened up to eligible first home

buyers purchasing existing dwellings, rather than building, who would otherwise be unable to obtain the finance.

Additionally, the Private Rental Incentives Scheme will be extended from its current limit of 200 homes to 400 homes, creating another 200 affordable rental properties for the next two years and the highly successful Ancillary Dwelling Grants Program will be doubled to allow an extra 250 places over the initial allocation of 250, doubling our funding commitment to \$5 million. Other housing incentives that the Government will be introducing include re-setting the tax-free threshold to \$100 000 and lifting the upper tax threshold to \$500 000, while lowering the tax rate for land valued between \$100 000 and \$500 000 from 0.55 per cent to 0.45 per cent.

We will be encouraging development at the edges of the urban growth boundary by making rezoning applications easier and we will be working with councils to achieve more 'shop top' apartments. I have heard the Central Coast mayor, Jan Bond, talk about this, so she would like to see that happen. I know there is at least - it will be a good thing for our community anyway.

We are better utilising government-owned buildings by repurposing them for a higher and better use. We are assessing the viability of build-to-rent schemes and providing safeguards for rent-to-buy schemes to encourage their uptake.

We are also introducing a new apartment code to simplify medium density apartment and townhouse approvals and committing to a review of the utilisation of our social housing portfolio to gain more efficiencies.

It is pretty clear that the unparalleled overall housing package of reforms and initiatives put forward by the Government constitutes substantial progress in efforts to ensure affordable housing for all Tasmanians. Before I conclude my comments on the housing front, I was interested to note in passing that work will soon kick off on the redevelopment of the Hobart Showground, which will modernise the site and facilities and open up land for more housing as well as community facilities and local amenities. I am sure the member for Hobart may have a bit more on that in his contribution.

Mr Valentine - It is outside my electorate.

Mrs HISCUTT - There you go. The final \$42.15 million agreement on the redevelopment funding was signed last week between the Government and the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania, meaning work can begin in earnest. That redevelopment will revitalise the Hobart Showground, delivering a new showground pavilion, arena, site infrastructure, commercial precinct, large areas of public open space and residential housing.

The redevelopment would not only see facilities at the ageing site upgraded and modernised but there will be over 450 new affordable homes that promise to bring the area to life like it has never been before.

I will now turn my mind to some comments on the stadium and sporting infrastructure. I noted previously the Premier's comments about the Government being 'aspirational'. That is something to be encouraged across all aspects of government endeavours. As the Premier said

in his speech, when referring to the benefits of elite sport and the efforts of sporting clubs in bringing people together and strengthening our communities, I quote:

Never before has there been an opportunity greater than now to challenge ourselves with the 'what if' instead of the 'what is'.

At the last election the Government outlined a commitment to established Stadiums Tasmania to position Tasmania and its sporting infrastructure to be able to be represented in national sporting codes and to ensure the sound future management of Tasmania's major public stadium assets and infrastructure.

Particularly exciting for me is the tasking of Stadiums Tasmania to work with the Central Coast Council and invest in the development of the Dial Regional Sports Complex to support the community and the aspirations of young people in the north-west. The complex has been designed to AFL specifications and when we have secured our own men's and women's AFL, A-league teams and our own VFL teams the Premier said he wants games to be played on the north-west coast also. The Government will work with the council to facilitate the inclusion of the Dial regional complex in the future structures of Stadiums Tasmania and has committed \$25 million dollars to enhance spectator and participant infrastructure.

I am pleased to report to the Legislative Council that the Central Coast Council and the Penguin Footy Club are pleased with this outcome. When I rang the president of the Penguin Footy Club, Mr Brian Lane, to ask him his comments, he simply said he was "thrilled".

Ms Rattray - Who would not be, with \$25 million committed?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is an AFL-standard field.

The north-west and north of our state have a strong and proud tradition of producing some of the finest athletes our state has ever seen, from football and cycling to cricket and tennis. The list is too exhaustive to detail. Some of the obvious sporting greats include the likes of Darrel Baldock and Matthew Richardson, Gale brothers Brendon and Michael, the current co-captain of Richmond, Toby Nankervis - whose parents used to own the Penguin service station - Danny Clark the cyclist, Stewie McSweyn the distance runner from King Island, Amy Cure and Jack Hale from Latrobe.

Ms Rattray - I think the Leader is name-dropping.

Mrs HISCUTT - There are a few on the list. They are all from our area.

Mr Duigan - No, Toby Nankervis is from George Town.

Mrs HISCUTT - His parents owned the Penguin service station. You cannot argue with that.

The development of sports and associated infrastructure and facilities is as much about the development of communities as anything. It is important.

As the Premier said, currently Blundstone Arena and UTAS Stadium meets the needs for major sporting events. In the medium-to-long term, however, we need a bolder vision. Subject

to achieving an AFL licence and the highly likely prospect of an A-league team with a growing population, we will need a stadium that will meet Tasmania's needs for decades to come. The southern stadium supports the aspirations of Tasmanians securing its own AFL team, which will be based in Hobart, and also be able to host rectangular sporting codes and support ongoing discussions about an A-league football team. The stadium will put Tasmania on the national and international stage for sporting and entertainment events on a scale not possible in the past. It will include a retractable roof for all-weather playing and performances, making it one of only two such AFL venues in the country. The new stadium will form a key part of the 10-year strategic stadium plan.

Tasmania is leading the nation in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and irrigation. In the Premier's Address, the Premier outlined our aspirations to be Australia's renewable powerhouse, to invest more in green hydrogen technology, bioenergy and to continue to grow our booming agricultural sector. Tasmania is on track to be a global leader in green hydrogen production by 2030. We are expecting a decision shortly on our Commonwealth funding application to establish a green hydrogen hub at Bell Bay. This is a perfect location for a nation-leading green hydrogen hub with its advanced manufacturing zone, renewable energy availability, appropriate infrastructure, water availability and port access.

The Government also said the plans for Bell Bay as a green hydrogen hub is bolstered by the proposed Marinus Link interconnector and Hydro Tasmania's Battery of the Nation project. Critical underwater engineering surveys for the Marinus Link are currently underway and while growing demand for renewable energy, we need more capacity to store and transport energy to ensure Tasmania earns a premium for its renewable energy products and to accelerate our economic prosperity. When I drive from my house in a westerly direction toward Burnie, I often see that boat out there surveying.

We have made up to \$12.3 million available for the trial of green hydrogen buses and the investigation of opportunities to use green hydrogen for trucking and marine vessels. Metro Tasmania has already begun working on the integration of green hydrogen into its fleet and the development of refueling infrastructure and hydrogen supply chains.

The Government will shortly be releasing its renewable energy coordination framework to support the strategic growth of renewables in our state through best practice consultation engagement.

Tasmania's irrigation projects are outstripping every other state, allowing farmers to expand the area planted to high-value crops, increase rotations, boost yields and diversify agricultural enterprises.

Every time we go up to turn on the irrigation, it is wonderful to just turn the handle and not have to start the diesel pumps on the tractor and all that sort of stuff.

Ms Rattray - Wait until you get one of those centre pivots and you can turn it on from your phone.

Mrs HISCUTT - We did go down that road and look into it, but the price we got back was prohibitive and we are still thinking on that one. It is wonderful if it could all be done by phone, but it was very expensive.

Ms Rattray - Great investment.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is what they tell me. I will touch now on the environment.

The last specific matter I wanted to refer to briefly was to mention the Premier's reference to the Government's efforts to protect our environment particularly through its plan to reduce waste and build our circular economy.

There is significant progress on a number of key initiatives including the introduction of a container refund scheme, a consistent statewide waste levy and phasing out single-use and problem plastics in Tasmania by 2025. Our members are quite familiar with those three things I have just mentioned.

The Government is also building confidence in our waste and resource recovery sectors, investing in plastics reprocessing, re-use of waste tyres and commercial composting, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in our environment.

Important steps have been taken to progress the structural and organisational separation of the Environment Protection Authority, separating them from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania and creating a new independent state authority. The new model will help ensure public confidence in environmental regulation in Tasmania and promote certainty for proponents.

In conclusion, Mr President, the Premier's Address is about the creation of opportunities for Tasmanians regardless of their background or circumstances. It is about pursuing aspirations and looking forward to what might be. It clearly reiterates the Government's determination to get on with the job of governing our state and ensuring prosperity for all Tasmanians.

Mr President, I note the Address.

[10.33 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I appreciate you calling me in front of the member for Rosevears. I am having a bit of back trouble today and to be able to stand up is very helpful. I thank the member for Rosevears for me being able to take the call before her today.

Mr PRESIDENT - Always very generous.

Ms RATTRAY - The State of the state is an opportunity we have in this place to talk about what has been presented by the Premier of the day. It is also known as a grievance debate and I believe we can talk about anything we desire and it is a particular opportunity to talk about our wonderful electorates. The Leader has just done that and talked about some of the great things happening in her electorate. Now it will be my time.

The Address always tells a good news story, but as members we will all have a bit of a different slant on those good news stories.

I will work my way through the Premier's Address, make some comment, and make some observations about what I see is happening on the ground. When you are close to an election, you always have your ear to the ground, perhaps more intensely than at other times - although

I would like to think that my ears are to the ground and my eyes are looking about as intently every day. People often tell you what they think you want to hear, rather than what they are really thinking. I hope that the people I represent know me well enough to call it as it is. I hope that continues.

Mr Valentine - We know that is the case.

Ms RATTRAY - One of the first lines of the Premier's Address speech is, 'right now there is a quiet confidence in Tasmania.' I can advise there is also a level of frustration around Tasmania, for a number of different reasons. People who work in businesses are finding that having to wear masks is wearing very thin - particularly now, when customers do not have to wear a mask when they come into the stores. They may only be there for 10 or 15 minutes, but the employees in those businesses have to wear them all day, or for their entire shift. I can tell you there is a high level of frustration about that. I would like to see more changes. I know that a lot of people continue to wear masks, even though they are not required to do so. If you are comfortable and want to continue to wear them as a customer, or as a visitor to any particular place, then so be it. People have that choice. However, employees of businesses have to wear them for hours on end and it is becoming very challenging and very frustrating for a lot of people. I do not have the medical advice that the Premier has, but it seems in a lot of cases, and to a lot of people, that it is inconsistent and quite challenging.

In my full week back in Hobart, I note that the CBD of Hobart is quite busy, and that is fabulous for the businesses in our capital city.

Mr Valentine - All those mainland visitors.

Ms RATTRAY - Some of us stay at the Customs House, and Monday night is often a quiet night there. However, this last Monday night was very busy. It is great to see staff on, working and lots of people. That was a positive.

It is a different story in some of the more regional areas. I have been going around, talking to businesses, and doing my best to buy when I can, to visit and encourage them to keep going. I read this morning that the price increases you might see from small businesses are about keeping their doors open. I believe that could well be the truth for some businesses. It is not about trying to make extra money at this time; it is about trying to deliver a service to customers and keeping their doors open. The businesses I know are often very small businesses. I am certain that would be the case for them.

I was interested to note that vaccination rates are good in Tasmania. Many people who are eligible, and who choose to, have already had their booster, their third vaccine. There have been a few changes with that. The pharmacy where I had my first two vaccinations is not doing the booster, so I will have to find somewhere else to go. I called into the local vaccination centre over the weekend, but they were only vaccinating children and advised me to come back at the end of the month and I look forward to that. People were lined up waiting for their appointments when I had my vaccinations. I know that not every pharmacy has enough staff to operate as dispensing pharmacists as well as providing vaccinations at times of high demand. Perhaps the Leader can provide an update on how people can find information about accessing vaccinations? We are encouraged to go to the website, but access to the internet is not always brilliant in some of our regional and isolated areas. I would like to keep that on the radar so that Public Health continues to let people know where they can access vaccinations.

The Premier talks about near-record levels of Tasmanians in work - 259 100 - and our unemployment rate is at 3.8 per cent, which is the lowest it has been in our history. The growth in job vacancies is 72.6 per cent higher than before the pandemic. Are a lot of those Tasmanians in work underemployed? We have often spoken in this place about the fact that 20 hours a week is considered 'employed'; but does the person who has been able to secure 20 hours of employment really need 30 or 40 hours of employment for their family situation? While I am encouraged by what I am reading and learning about employment opportunities, we still have a way to go before we see all of our people who want to work, able to find enough work. There will always be some people in our communities who, unfortunately, do not have working for a living as their priority. Yesterday, the member for Nelson talked about how we move the community's mindset around waste and recycling. How do you change the mindset for some people who may have never had anyone in their family go to work? I have no real understanding of that, but I absolutely appreciate that certain circumstances might have contributed to their situation.

Vegetable harvesting is coming up, and I know how difficult it is for a lot of my communities and for people who work in the spud industry, for example. That industry is significant in the north-west and around the Cressy area in the north-east. Finding people to work on the spud harvester is extremely difficult. In the past, we have been able to secure a lot of backpackers coming into Tasmania to take up those jobs. They arrive for the berry season and they stay on to work on the potato harvest. I am not seeing as many people around and that can be a real challenge for those in the industry. You really need those people on the back of the harvester. That makes sure that what you send to the processing factory, or even to the stores - because if you have a rotten potato and it gets missed off the back of that harvester on the belt as it is moving through, you know what will happen to the half a dozen, or dozen around them in a very short time.

Mrs Hiscutt - You will get marked down on them.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, as the Leader has said by interjection, you will get significantly marked down. It will also mean that a lot of the vegetables around that particular one rotten potato will end up being rotten in a very short space of time. Again, then you do not have as much product to put through the line once they are delivered to the processor.

I might touch on the cost of fuel at the moment. It is sky-high. I do not think it has finished there. Not that I am an expert on fuel prices, but just listening to the various commentators on this, it is going to be a significant challenge for any business that relies on fuel, the transport industry, and for us generally getting to work, as community members. Not all of us live two, three, or five minutes away from our workplace. Not that I believe that the government necessarily has an input into that, but I think they need to be mindful of that when they are setting their budget, that there will be further impacts on the cost of living on a daily basis for so many people.

There was a little bit of feed on my Facebook post at the moment, people saying how expensive fuel is and how much extra it is costing them already to do their everyday work. Somebody in real estate, for instance, said 'my job is to take clients around to properties. I am filling up twice a week now, instead of once.' It is already starting to impact and that costs. There are significant impacts on our cost of living.

I talked a little bit about the COVID-19 impact. I touched on the challenges for business. Does the Leader know if there are some figures? We do not have the Small Business minister as part of our House anymore and that was always a good opportunity to get an update on what was happening with small business. I have had a few people I have been to visit and I have suggested that if they are 30 per cent down on their takings that they apply for the support that is available for small business. That has been very useful.

The feedback sometimes is that it is so onerous. I have tried to work with people, but sometimes it is just overwhelming for them to even think that they have to fill out forms. I know you cannot get any support without some level of information; I am not suggesting that at all. If only there was better communication with the department about what is available. I can only suggest that the new Minister for Small Business be very alert to this. I have not had the opportunity to speak directly to the Minister for Small Business, but certainly be acutely aware that sometimes you need to walk people through these opportunities that they might be able to have if they are at least 30 per cent down on their takings.

Mrs Hiscutt - Through you, Mr President, I was listening to what you were saying and I could not actually hear a question, more so than a comment.

Ms RATTRAY - I guess a focus needs to continue on those businesses that need to apply for some support to actually help them work through the process.

Mrs Hiscutt - You are looking for me to give the minister a comment, as opposed to getting - yes, okay.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, as I said, I have not had an opportunity to speak directly to the new Minister for Small Business. The previous minister for small business was a member of our House; we could make contact with the minister directly. Her adviser for small business, Kylie Smith, was exceptional. I know she continues in that role but a new minister may have new ideas about how she will run her office. I believe it is Madeleine Ogilvie. We need to have confidence that the process will be supported by the minister's office. As we know, sometimes in this place we can bypass the minister's office. Other times, you will put a request into the minister's office and it will go through the department. I appreciate it is not always easy for departments to deal directly with members. Sometimes I feel like I have an urgency regarding a matter, and by the time I get an email to the minister, and the minister finds time to respond, and then I can put my request through the process, the momentum has been lost.

That was an example I had on Monday. Somebody was desperate to have a conversation with the health professionals after their dad was admitted to the Launceston General Hospital on Saturday. On Monday afternoon they rang me directly saying, 'we have not been able to speak to anyone at the LGH or dad about his condition'. I contacted the department out of frustration, and was told I had to go through the minister's office. I know that is the case but when people are desperate, that puts me in a desperate situation as well. I finally did get a really good response, but it was finding where to go. The advisers change so regularly. At times we have been able to access some good information about who to go to and I would appreciate if that was still available in the future.

This family was able to get feedback about their loved one, and I thank the minister and his office for that, but it took until the next day for that to happen. It took from Saturday through to Tuesday morning before they had an opportunity to speak to someone at the LGH.

That is not ideal, particularly when you are a long way away from your loved one and they are in emergency at the LGH.

There is a lot of reference to infrastructure. You only have to do a bit of travelling around your electorate - and my electorate particularly - to see there is a lot of infrastructure work going on. I am pleased to see that. I would like to see some completed before they start the next lot, but I am not sure about the process for that. It appears to me that if they finished one complete section before moving onto the next section, my level of frustration and that of other road users, might be calmed. It is difficult to understand at times why a particular stretch of road is not completely finished before they move on to the next. I am not a contractor of infrastructure, so there may be a reason. The minister for Infrastructure may give me a lesson in that sometime in the future.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - I welcome to the Chamber the group from Hobart College legal studies, years 11 and 12. This is the first group of two, I believe. Welcome to the Legislative Council. Normally we have more members in here, but because of COVID-19 conditions we ask members to take breaks from the Chamber whenever they can. They are probably tuned in through their office television sets, and are glued intently to the contribution from the member for McIntyre who is speaking at the moment.

Currently we are doing replies to the Premier's Address. Normally we work through legislation, and that process probably would be more interesting for you. However, I am sure all members will join me in welcoming you to the Legislative Council today.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms RATTRAY - My welcome as well. I am pleased to hear that the President has suggested that people are not in the Chamber because of COVID-19. I thought it might have been that they did not want to hear me. I am very pleased to hear that. I wish you all the best in your studies.

I was talking about infrastructure. It is always a challenge to understand how the rollout of infrastructure is undertaken by government. I look forward to the continuation of that infrastructure; although when I see what I consider to be a fairly good stretch of road pavement being rolled up, I often think it could be put to use in some of my areas. An example is the patch before you get to turn off to Quercus Park. They have recently rolled that up. From somebody who drives on some pretty ordinary stretches of road around the McIntyre electorate, I thought that was a pretty good stretch of road. However, for whatever reason it was deemed unsuitable and it is being replaced.

Mr Valentine - It might have something to do with the thousands of dollars they get in May every year. Is it May? For Agfest?

Ms RATTRAY - The Agfest committee has decided that given the current COVID-19 restrictions, this year's event will be held in August. Like many others, I still do not understand why only 5000 people would be able to attend Agfest at any one time. How many people did we recently have at the cricket and the football? Seventeen thousand?

Mrs Hiscutt - Through you, Mr President. All the advice comes from the Health department, as you know.

Ms RATTRAY - I know; but it is still a difficult pill to swallow for a lot of people. The August time frame does not necessarily work well with the agriculture industry. For farmers, it is outside the financial year. I know only too well that quite a lot of people who work in that space will go to Agfest, see what they need to buy, and they will buy it before the end of June so that it is in that financial year. I believe having Agfest in August will impact significantly, because you have to wait all that time to claim it. In farming, you are always a long way behind when you do your financials anyway. Often it is not done until January of the following year.

Whether to purchase will be a challenge for the rural industry. The site is not cheap. Independent members had a site at Agfest for a number of years and then the cost grew and there was a change of policy, and it all went pear-shaped. The former member for Western Tiers, Greg Hall, and his EA, Dawn Valance, were exceptional in pulling it all together for members. We would turn up and do our shifts. It was quite an expensive exercise and if people are not getting the return for having a site then I worry for the future, because it is a fantastic event.

Also, if you are in campaign mode Agfest always seemed to be on the weekend so you could certainly spend three days there with your jacket on, walking around and meeting and greeting people. The member for Elwick would have taken the opportunity to be there and probably took the boys, Teddy and Alfie, as well.

Mr Willie - I do not think there were a lot of people from Elwick at Agfest voting on that day.

Ms RATTRAY - You would be surprised at how many people would be there from the south of the state and your electorate.

Mr Willie - I have looked at the voting booth on that day; there were about 60 people there.

Ms RATTRAY - They might have already voted. I reckon they were so organised they pre-pollled.

Mr Willie - That happens a lot these days.

Ms RATTRAY - A lot of people are choosing to pre-poll. Moving back to the Premier's Address. I have touched on some of the challenges in our health system, but we know that there is a record investment of \$10.7 billion investment into health over four years. The Address notes that is \$900 million more than the previous years. However, it seems that no matter how much effort, money and investment we put into the health system, it still falls short for some people. That is of great concern, when we are trying to reduce the elective surgery waiting list and have more opportunities for people.

I have previously talked in this place about the challenges of being able to see a GP. I believe that if there was more access to GPs, then people would not necessarily need to present to Accident and Emergency and clog up the system. I know it is still a challenge for many in my rural areas.

Mr Valentine - It is a six-week wait here.

Mr Willie - That is if you can find one that will let you in.

Mr Valentine - That is true.

Ms RATTRAY - We have significant challenges. How do we support having doctors more available? I still believe that we should be pressuring the federal government to identify that Launceston and Hobart, and perhaps Burnie, should not be considered as regional areas; they should be considered as city areas. You can be a doctor in Hobart and be considered as a rural doctor. Why would you want to go to Scottsdale, or St Helens, or Deloraine, or the west coast, when you can possibly get the same amount of money and funding as you can to be a doctor in Hobart? It is a fair question. There needs to be some consideration. The federal government needs to look at that and take it on.

Mr Valentine - Through you, Mr President. That has been an issue for many years. When I was in council and we were looking, for instance, at telecommunications, Hobart was considered a regional area. It is not just health and GPs; it is an issue for the whole spectrum of matters that are covered by the federal government.

Ms RATTRAY - The member for Hobart is exactly right. That needs to be addressed. Without addressing that situation, we are always going to struggle to have those services that we need. It is a challenge now, even in the cities. It may well be the same access situation in Launceston, and perhaps even Burnie. It is at least two to three weeks to access a GP in a lot of my communities. That does not work for a lot of people - they leave their condition, and then end up presenting to Accident and Emergency, wherever that might be. If they had been able to see their GP sooner, perhaps they would have been not in that situation. It appears that that is a contributing factor to people arriving at Accident and Emergency and clogging the system.

Mr Valentine - To make sure I get the right information on the record, the six-week wait was in relation to when you ring up and want to make an appointment. It is not an emergency appointment. They do have some spaces daily they would provide for somebody who was in absolute dire straits.

Ms RATTRAY - That is the same in most practices. They will ask you if it is urgent. Most people say its urgent. It is urgent to them, it is their wellbeing. They feel like it is urgent. At times they are chastised because when they arrive the doctor says this was not urgent, and there seems to be some tension around what is urgent and what is not. But again, it is still access to those highly specialised services. If you want a specialist, that is a months and months wait. We know how people's condition deteriorates while they are waiting over those months. It is a snowballing effect and causing issues.

A lot is happening on the north-west coast. The Public Works Committee seems to have spent more time on the north-west coast recently looking at references than we have spent anywhere. It is all happening down and around Burnie. That is interesting.

While the committee has been looking at particular references we have seen facilities tired and not fit for purpose anymore. I am not saying they are not worthy of that funding and

the Government continue to put money into those particular areas: a new Burnie Ambulance Station was looked at, new Burnie Magistrates Court and also, the Burnie Hospital.

Housing. It is the biggest issue I face as a member every day. People ringing up, making contact. I had an appointment on Friday morning and as I walked in the door, the person there at that particular facility, said 'Just the person I need to see. My brother has four children. The youngest is five weeks old and they have nowhere to go. They have been told by the housing providers there is a 12-month waitlist'. 12-month wait list for a family with four children. The youngest is five weeks old. What do they do? Where do they find a home?

It is extraordinarily difficult for people to find homes and there has been a promise to deliver 3500 new homes by 2026-27. The Premier's Address says they are committed and determined to accelerate the bill on this effort. It talks about establishing a new statutory authority, Housing Tasmania. We have been there, haven't we? We had Housing Tasmania for many years and now we are going back to where we started.

In the meantime, we have not been able to address the housing needs of Tasmanians, and so we continue. It is such a terrible situation when you feel like you cannot help people, because that is predominantly what we do as a Legislative Council member. Yes, we are the House of review and all of those things and we deal with legislation, but at the end of the day our electorate and the people we represent are why we are here.

When people are desperate for help and you have to tell them 12 months is the norm for a wait on a house or some accommodation - that often is not fit for purpose - then it is a pretty sad state.

I welcome the announcement, but I do not know where you are going get them built, and when, and by that time I do not see that is achievable in a lot of aspects. It is aspirational but is it achievable given what is happening in the housing building boom we are experiencing at the moment.

Recognition of Visitors

[11.10 a.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I welcome to the Chamber the second group of Hobart College legal studies class. We are currently talking about the effects the Premier's Address has on the communities of the 15 members.

Ms RATTRAY - Welcome, all the best with your studies.

Mr President, we have been sharing some of the challenges the people I represent are having in sourcing appropriate housing. There is going to be some more vacant land rezoned for residential use and it talks in the Premier's Address of yielding up to 60 000 residential lots. Well, all I can say is get on with it and get started and get some of the infrastructure in the ground you need. As we know, it is the infrastructure in the ground for new subdivisions and areas that takes the time.

I know of an experience where - and I do not want to be critical of our GBEs, but TasNetworks and Aurora could not get their act together and get some power on to a new house.

I talked about this in my special interest contribution, and they have to bring in a generator for two weeks. One house not out in the sticks, a country town, but it is still urban for that particular area.

There are some real issues here delivering the infrastructure needed to underpin the growth of any housing we need in this state. We really have to concentrate on that. I would like to think TasNetworks might be putting their mind to some of those issues and not talking about reducing their workforce by 300 people. We have been there and done that in this state. I messaged somebody who works for Tas Networks and said can you remind me how long ago it was when Aurora went exactly through this process and let go many of their employees, then two years later rehired half of them, because they did not have enough workers. Certainly not people who understood how TasNetworks works. I only heard the tail end of that media story this morning because we had a briefing and I have it on my list to follow up. If that is their approach I would say it is outdated and it is not warranted. As a GBE, if they need to save some money, then look at other aspects of their business, not getting rid of their experienced workforce because that is often what happens. They let go of all the experienced employees and then scratch their head and wonder why they do not have the resources, capacity and capability to be able to run their business. It makes no sense. They have done it before. They have been down this path. It did not work. Why would you want to do it again? I do not apologise for my emotion about this because I have seen it before, and it just does not work. I will cross it off my list for now but it will not be out of my mind. I was going to get to that later, but I have done it now.

The extension of the first home builder grant - there are two schools of thought about that. Some, particularly in the real estate industry and other places, say that it just inflates the price on the other end. I do not know whether that is a fact or not. Others will make up their mind about whether somebody adds \$30 000 to the cost of building a new home because the Government, on behalf of the people of Tasmania, has decided that that is what we continue to do. In my view, if it does encourage people to build a home and get into the housing market themselves, then it is a good thing. I support it. Whether it inflates the price, I will leave others to make a judgment about that. I know there will be possibly a lot of people, first home owners, who are pretty keen to access that \$30 000 and get themselves a new home.

As we know, if you are able to get into the new home market, there is no maintenance for quite a while and you can perhaps overextend yourself a little bit more in how much you can pay for a new home, because you know you do not have any maintenance in the initial stages. There will be things to do. Certainly not big things such as if you were buying something that was pre-loved and perhaps needed some work, a new kitchen, new bathroom, and the like. I support the Government in that extension of that first home builder grant. I will leave my comment to others to decide whether it inflates the price at the other end.

I want to touch on the Marinus Link and the new transmission lines, particularly on prime agricultural land. There are concerns from some of the areas I represent around Cluan, Cressy, Exton and surrounding areas, about the upgrades to those transmission lines which are needed for the future of investment in the energy market in Tasmania. I have no issue with that.

They are asking for some consideration for underground lines rather than those large pieces of infrastructure that interrupt the way they run their farming operations. Certainly, with big centre pivots you need big open spaces. You do not need a lot of overhead infrastructure in the way. These will be bigger. It is proposed that these new transmission lines will be on

larger cement blocks and therefore you are taking more land. Yes, they will get back some of it when they replace the old ones with the new ones. They will get back a little bit of ground in the future, but nothing to compensate for what they are expected to lose with that new infrastructure.

I am continuing to engage with those landowners who want me to progress the underground option. I am not saying the whole line has to be underground. In the case of the Palmerston to Sheffield line, consideration needs to be given to offering some landowners who are going to be very heavily and negatively affected an opportunity to go underground. I am working with the TFGA, landowners and TasNetworks on that. I would like to see that there was some consideration on that.

Another issue that came to my attention last week was TasTAFE. We know in this House last year we passed legislation to overhaul TasTAFE. I know the Premier made reference to it in his state of the state and talked about one of the lines that was used last year. We want TasTAFE to be more nimble and more able to operate like the businesses it was there to serve, and that is exactly what we will deliver. The Premier's words.

And so we have had some changes to TasTAFE. We might have had some changes but we also have some challenges. Some of the people who are TasTAFE clients have been told that they cannot attend TasTAFE unless they are fully vaccinated. If you are a third year auto-electrician, or a third year or fourth year mechanic and you choose, for whatever reason - we still live in a free country, last time I checked - not to be vaccinated, you are not able to attend TasTAFE. You cannot attend your hands-on training.

That is an issue. I have raised it directly with the minister responsible but I also wanted to take the opportunity to raise it here. I am not sure whether other members are aware that that is the case. Two people contacted me last week and said, 'How do we continue with our training if we cannot attend TasTAFE?'. I offered that there are alternatives to the chemical-based vaccinations that perhaps some people are averse to using. There is a plant-based vaccine now and I offered up that suggestion thinking that they may be the issue. It did not solve the issue for either of those two of my constituents who have concerns but there are two businesses that could well lose their apprentices because they cannot attend TAFE. Do you know when they are going to revisit the policy? On 9 December 2022. For goodness sake. I could not believe it. I know we rely on Public Health advice, but to not revisit that policy until 9 December seemed ridiculous to me.

Effectively, the entire school training year for those apprentices has gone and they will not be able to attend class. If you are an auto-electrician, or a mechanic, to be able to sign off on your unit you have to attend your classes, that is a requirement. We need to be smart about this so if they cannot attend TAFE, then I suggest that the teacher comes out to their workplace. It is not that hard to find another alternative, but to revisit it on 9 December? Not good enough in my mind. I will continue to follow that up because that is not satisfactory and it will not work. So, if I have two people in my electorate, how many members have people in their electorates with the same challenge?

I had the privilege of attending the update for Rural Alive and Well (RAW) last week at Perth with my colleagues, the members for Rosevears, Windermere and Launceston. RAW gives an annual update. It was a terrific event, outside in the open, a really nice setting there in Main Street, Perth. They talked about the work that they do and we know how important

that work is, particularly in some of our more challenging communities, the fact that people live with mental health issues and try to function and often need someone outside of their immediate network to touch base with, to reach out to.

At that event, they told us that they really need another \$120 000 per annum to be able to employ another, to have some more boots on the ground. I am asking the Government to consider this. They have put the request in through the budget process and I am supporting that request. Others who speak may be kind enough to support that as well. Often it is not that easy to source the expertise, to have a clinical psychologist or therapist or whatever it is. There is often quite a long time to get in to see somebody like that. But to be able to pick up the phone and speak to somebody from Rural Alive and Well, who can perhaps find some pathways, they have some of those specialised services available, if that saves just one life and gets people back to feeling like they can cope with whatever they have been faced with, it is worth it. The \$120 000, in the scheme of things, is small fry. When you are talking about committing \$750 million to a Hobart entertainment/football stadium in the south of the state, then I would suggest that it would be very difficult to say no to an organisation like RAW. I trust the Government will take that on board.

I have not had a lot of positive feedback about the announcement the Premier made on the building of a new stadium. I crossed out \$750 million straight away and put down \$1 billion. We know how much inflation is at the moment. I cite the Derwent Entertainment Centre as a perfect example of overrun in no time and \$15 million over budget.

Mr Valentine - \$20 million.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, 15 - 20, what is five? It is a lot of money to a lot of people. When you are talking about additional boots on the ground for an organisation like RAW, \$5 million is a lot. It is a difficult one. I do not necessarily have the answer. I do not think there is enough detail yet. Is the AFL saying without a covered stadium you will not get an AFL team? That has been suggested and I do not know whether that is the case. It has been said if we do not get a team there will not be one built. Is it the AFL saying, if you do not build a stadium you do not get a team? I do not know and it seems a lot of money to double up on facilities. Blundstone Arena does not have a roof and I do not believe you can fit 27 000 people in it.

With all due respect to the south of the state, they do not turn up for the game like they do in the north of the state. You will fill UTAS, good old York Park with a game, particularly if you have two key AFL teams. You will fill it. People will travel from the north-west and the north and a few will come up from the south. I wonder whether it is going to undermine that fantastic facility that is really in the middle of the state. You bring them from the north-west, from the south and from the north. All roads lead to UTAS Stadium. There is some more work to be done on this. Certainly, when you talk to people in the community, they do not appear to be convinced building \$750 million up to \$1 billion of new stadium on the waterfront in Hobart is such a good idea.

I will possibly leave it at that at this point in time. There will be plenty more opportunity to work this through. We may not get the answer in this forum, but perhaps there is an opportunity for the Leader to organise for a briefing from the Premier to talk about what sits behind this announcement, because it is a huge announcement.

You have people who do not have a home and you are talking about building a stadium with a roof on it. I took some advice and there are two stadiums that play football that have lids on them around the world. I do not know whether we need a lid on it, toughen up. If you want to play winter sport get out in the elements as we did at Winneleah and never even thought about a top on the place.

Mr PRESIDENT - Parked the cars around the oval.

Ms RATTRAY - Around the oval and the wind howled through those pine trees and we loved it every single time we turned up. Even revisiting there once a year. We have a social game once a year and people come and we get reminded of how fortunate we were to grow up with local footy. Let us hope we can continue to hold on to, at least, some local footy in our communities, because it is the heartbeat of our communities.

I note on a media post that Bridport - where I have my home - is looking for more numbers to bulk up the footy team. They are calling for anyone who is going to pull on the boots for this year, otherwise they are going to have to fold and we do not want to see that. We do not want to lose any more footy teams. It is not just about the game; it is about the networking. It is about the opportunity just to get together, be part of a community. I wish them all the best.

I had a call yesterday from the livestock industry transport representative. The Powranna Truck Wash is not fit for purpose. Northern Midlands Business Association does a fantastic job, with Gordon Williams and the board, but there are some defects with that facility. I have spoken to the minister. All he needs is some more detail and I have committed to provide that. That is such an important piece of infrastructure.

There are around 4000 head cattle being sold at Powranna today. Imagine the effort to get those 4000 into Powranna to those sale yards from Tuesday night through to last night, ready for sale date today. You know what that means, 4000 head on trucks.

Mrs Hiscutt - Effluent.

Ms RATTRAY - Effluent. The industry gets caned for having it on the road. If you do not have fit-for-purpose facilities so they can wash out and get rid of effluent, you know where it is going to end up, through no fault of their own, because there are no effluent dumps. You have one at Smithton and one at Powranna.

We need one in the north-east and I have been trying to work with council to identify an appropriate site, but they need someone to put their hand up to actually take ownership of it after the department has perhaps supported it. That is a work in progress.

At this point in time, I want us as a community, more broadly, to support those modifications needed for Powranna. If we need to support the Northern Midlands Business Association in putting those modified infrastructure upgrades in place then let us do it, because we want to keep our roads as clean as we possibly can.

They all do a great job, but when you are carting livestock they get stirred up. Even though rules say they should be locked up for 12 hours before - that is right, Leader?

Mrs Hiscutt - At least.

Ms RATTRAY - At least 12 hours before. I do not know if that always happens. How do you know when you arrive at the farm gate to collect a load whether they have been there 12 hours or two hours? Let us work on that.

Last week I attended the Government's information sessions about the suggestion that when the Ashley Youth Detention Centre closes the site could become the next northern correctional facility, in whatever form that looks like. I gave some feedback to representatives of the Government and the department to the effect that there is no information, or very little information. They are looking for people to say 'yes, we will have it' or 'no, we will not'. It is not that simple.

The people who live directly around the AYDC centre have worked alongside that centre for years and feel like they have done their bit for the community. Now that centre is described as no longer fit for purpose, just by the stroke of a pen, despite the amount of money that has been spent on it. I have asked questions in this place, and we know that \$7 million was recently spent on the entry to the Ashley centre. It is difficult to see that all of a sudden it is not fit for purpose, and that it might be a good idea to relocate from Birralea Road to the site around Exton. There is a lot more work to be done.

Submissions close on 14 March, and I know that quite a few people in and around the Deloraine/Exton/Westbury area have taken the opportunity to contribute. When I was there last week, about 90 people had attended. That number will possibly be doubled, because I know many people went over the weekend; it was an available opportunity on Saturday for people to go in and have a discussion. Both the gentlemen there on the day were very good at what they do, but there was very little detail for anyone to make an assessment. I have spoken to a group of adjoining landowners and they had a significant list of questions. I will not go through them today, but they have a lot of concerns about where this information gathering exercise is going to lead. I implore the Government to make sure they engage and take on board what is being presented. If you have a hostile community, we know that things do not go well. We have already seen that happen for the original Westbury industrial site, and then the proposed site on Birralea Road.

I believe there are only two local government areas that already have planning schemes that are able to accept correctional facilities - Meander Valley and Clarence City Council. I am not sure what the plans are for the two new northern youth detention facilities, or youth rehabilitation centres, because it seems to me if only two LGA areas have the right planning scheme amendments in place, to go through that planning scheme amendment is going to be a difficult journey.

I look forward to more constructive engagement about what a new northern correctional facility might look like and where it is going to be housed. That engagement needs to be right through the community, and certainly with the adjoining landowners, not just a broadbrush approach.

I talked about some of the challenges with agriculture but we also know that things are ticking along pretty well. There are some good prices for all commodities at the moment, but we have some challenges around the workforce. Governments do not necessarily have the answers to all of those issues, but I look forward to the Government's suggestions about

workforce. There is some consideration around payroll tax, and any relief is a good thing in business. The jury is still out on the land tax issue, I believe. Was the increase in the threshold enough? Some say, 'No, it did not go far enough,' when you look at other states. I look forward to hearing from other members, such as the member for Murchison, who have some expertise in that area.

I recently read some information about the 2009 Henry review report on taxation reform. We talked about that report for months, in this place. The member for Murchison was on a committee at the time that examined potential changes to taxation in this state. I believe it did not go anywhere, but it would be worth revisiting it. I believe an overarching review of taxation rather than an ad-hoc approach is worth looking at. There is plenty of expertise in this place; the member for Elwick and the member for Murchison would probably jump at an opportunity to be part of such a committee. The Government may well be considering it as they are listening to me. They may be forming some suggestions around the next Cabinet meeting.

I have listened to some 17 occasions of the Premier's Address in my time in this place. It is always a positive spin on what is happening, as the Government of the day sees it, and I understand that. You are not going to give us the bad stuff in something like this. However, we know that there are still some challenges for our communities and I think number one is the housing situation. Number two would have to be access to timely health services, and that will always be a challenge.

I did not make any comment about law and order. It seems Tasmania Police, and those who support them, do a pretty good job. I am attending the official opening of the new Longford Police Station next week. I know they have been housed there for a couple of months now, but I look forward to seeing the finished building. Congratulations to the Government on continuing to upgrade those important facilities. The St Helens Police Station is the next one I would like to see, and attend the opening. I cannot miss an opportunity to mention that one. I have a solution, and they know what that solution is. I am happy to continue to progress that.

I note the Premier's Address. I congratulate the Government on what they have been able to achieve. However, as the Premier and the Leader have said, there is much more to do. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to look at some of those advances that we can make in many areas to support our communities and make their life the best we possibly can on any given day.

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears) - Mr President, I rise today to speak in support of the Premier's Address. As other speakers have mentioned, it was an address that was filled with positivity, a forward focus and an aspirational vision for all Tasmanians. The speech covers a wide variety of really important areas. It canvasses a number of exciting initiatives, all with the goal of improving the lives and standard of living for all Tasmanians.

Today, I wish to concentrate on the housing issues within my electorate. Numerous people have stated, and the member for McIntyre has addressed the issue, that access to adequate housing is a fundamental human right. Everyone should be able to access a place where they feel safe and secure, and perhaps most importantly, where they can live with a sense of dignity. I am well aware that housing has impacts on a wide range of people in our community. But in my electorate office in Rosevears, it appears to always be women and

mums of all different ages, young and old, who find themselves only moments away from homelessness becoming their reality.

These are working women, these are working mums and these are members of our community who are paying their own way. They are doing an amazing job raising their children. They are diligent with their money. They are careful and trying always to save just a little bit on the side. Yet, still with all of that going for them, pending homelessness is a reality. Every day is a struggle. In many of the cases of the women that I speak to in my office, they go from one short-term fix to the next short-term fix. That is surely an exhausting way to live. The toll that it takes on many women who I have spoken to is simply too much.

We have all been part of numerous stories with constituents who come to our office, or they call up our office, or they share their stories with our electorate officers. Sometimes they come and ask, what can they do to change their situation? I am always really humbled and in awe of those who come with that question - what can I actually do differently? Sometimes we have the opportunity to go through things that they are doing and perhaps help them to do things a little bit differently. I am just so humbled by people who come to our offices with that attitude; not what are you going to do for me', but 'can you just be by my side? Can you just work with me so that I can find a way for myself, for my children through this?'. They are awesome people.

Then the question becomes, what can I do in this position? What can we, as the Government, do to help clear those hurdles and clear the fog that they see in front of them, and the stumbling blocks they see on their pathway to secure housing? To secure long-term housing, not just another short-term fix. The member for McIntyre spoke about that. What can she do? What can we do as members in our offices to actually make a difference in this space? It is very challenging. I know I am not alone in saying there are many evenings I go home and I cannot get the images of these women, I cannot get their names, out of my head. I worry about what they are facing.

Ms Rattray - And you are racking your brains trying to think of somebody who might be able to help in the private market. It is just so difficult. I absolutely understand.

Ms PALMER - Certainly there have been circumstances in my office where we have put out a Facebook plea and contacted different members in our community: 'Can you put something on Facebook, because this a situation a family is facing, a single mother is facing?'. Surely as a community there is something we can do. Fabulously, there has been some success in being able to connect people and families in those situations with other families who may have a facility that can be used.

Our Government has acknowledged that you cannot keep doing the same thing and hoping for a different outcome. That is a sentiment that is usually attributed to Albert Einstein when he comments on the term, 'insanity'. This is a focus of this Government: to look at homelessness in a different way. The Premier in his state of the state dedicated much of his Address to looking at how we actually make a real change in this space. Looking at how we can change existing programs to make them better, to make them more accessible and more within the reach of people facing homelessness. Where is there land in our communities that could be used or could be used differently? Looking at government buildings, how have they been used? How could they be used differently? How do we work with other levels of government? What further incentives can we put forward to encourage a whole-of-community

contribution towards ending the cycle of homelessness? It does take a whole-of-community contribution. To that end, I am so encouraged by the Premier's Address.

I want to touch on a couple of things that mean a lot to me, and I know they mean a lot to the people in my electorate. First, the changes that the Premier has announced to the HomeShare program. I look at this program as a really shining light for long-term solutions. Not just another short-term fix, where in a few months you get back on that treadmill again trying to find another short-term solution, but a long-term solution. HomeShare is the scheme that reduces the initial cost of buying a house, what it might cost you month by month to own, and it offers a helping hand as you share the cost of buying a home with the government. For many people, the rent they are paying is more than the cost of a mortgage. The parameters for this scheme have changed to be more inclusive and more accessible to people.

I have seen firsthand the wonderful success that has come from HomeShare. I met a woman some time ago who had her home for the very first time. She had two children, she was a single mother. I had the most fabulous conversation with her. Tears came to her eyes when she told me that for the very first time in her adult life, as a mum, she had been able to put a nail in the wall and hang a picture of her kids exactly where she wanted to because she owned the wall.

Now, for anyone who has been to my home, member for Windermere, there is not a wall in my home that does not have stuff on it. My husband, I drive him mad. I love stuff. I love hanging pictures of my children, special places I have been, and it is my home and I love to do that. Wherever I walk in my home I can look at memories of places I have been, or especially of my family.

To her, having been in a cycle of renting for so long, there was such significance for the very first time that she got to hang the picture where she wanted it. That moment was not lost on me. It was like she was making her mark on her house and it was just beautiful to hear her talk about that.

The changes that have been made to this package are quite significant. It was a requirement for the purchaser to save for a 5 per cent deposit and for some people in our community that was an insurmountable amount of money. When you are trying to pay rent, rents are rising. We have heard the cost of petrol is sky-rocketing; food; trying to do something special for your children. For many, saving that amount would just not be possible. That requirement is now down to 2 per cent of the purchase price and this puts this program back even more in the reach for so many people who otherwise may have walked away from trying to be part of the HomeShare scheme.

There is also a doubling of the state's equity contribution to a maximum of \$200 000 or 40 per cent of the purchase for purchasers of new homes, or units, and up to a maximum of \$150 000, or 30 per cent of the purchase price for eligible established homes or units. This is offering long-term solutions to our housing issues, not to mention the significant role of having your own home, knowing that you have secured safe and long-term housing for your children. What that must do for the mental health of so many parents out there. For me in particular, in my electorate, the people who have approached me, these mums who are just trying to find a solution to this cycle that they have been on. Not a short-term fix that you just survive for a few months and then you start again, but a long-term fix. Short-term fixes are just exhausting. It is an impossible situation and it is too great a toll that is placed on families.

Turning now to the Private Rental Incentives Program. This encourages a property owner to rent out their home at an affordable rate to low-income households. The current limit was 200 homes and this will now be doubled to 400 homes. We have heard the issues about trying to build new homes. This is moving away from that and saying, well, there already are homes, so let us look at a way that we can turn some of those homes into affordable rental properties. These are just a number of initiatives that will really ensure we can make a real difference.

We know that more needs to be done and we see from the Premier's Address more housing opportunities are needed in our cities, near public transport options, near supermarkets, shops, doctors, to pharmacies and all the types of support networks that you find in our cities. There is no point in putting someone in a home who does not have a car and it is miles away and they have to try to rely on public transport. So this is a great opportunity. The Government will be encouraging the take up of 'shop top' apartments that the Leader referred to in her contribution, working directly with local councils to see how we can work together and what incentives can be jointly funded to speed up this type of inner-city living.

Critical to the commitment to seeing change in available affordable housing is the availability of land. The Premier stated:

While recent estimates indicate there is already around 5000 hectares of vacant land zoned for residential use, which could yield up to 60 000 residential lots, much of it remains undeveloped.

As a government, we continue to incentivise those landowners to activate this land. There are other incentives and strategies that will make up this unprecedented 10-year housing package, which will see in excess of \$1.5 billion invested. It is a package that has been welcomed by industry groups and TasCOSS.

I can think of no other issue more important to our community than housing and I commend and I am proud of this Government's efforts in this space. It had to be a massive response and it had to be an unprecedented response and I believe that is what has happened.

I said at the beginning of my contribution, the Premier's Address was fuelled with positivity, forward focus and an aspirational vision for all Tasmanians. For many Tasmanians, in particular the people who have spoken to me in my office, the dream is to have a home, to have somewhere safe, somewhere secure and somewhere where they live with dignity, especially single mums with their kids.

I commend the Premier on his passion to see change for so many Tasmanians. Perhaps those who felt their dream of having their own home might not be a reality will look at this package and say perhaps I can.

Mr President, I note the Premier's Address.

[12.00 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, it has been interesting to listen to the various members responding to the Premier's Address, and I would have to say there is a lot in here to like.

There are some concerns, and I will go to some of those, as I comment going through the speech, but I will be concentrating mostly on the speech that the Premier gave. I listened in my office to the Premier deliver that Address. I was interested to see the focus that he had and to hear the way he delivered his particular opinions on how the state is going. He focused on the fact that our economy is the best performing in Australia for the eighth quarter in a row.

There is a lot of love being shown to our little island at the moment, as a result of being viewed as a safe haven. People are coming here, wanting to move down here, to buy property and to set up life. Even my own son, after having experienced a significant period of time in Melbourne in lockdown with his wife and two children, he had a home here that he was looking at as an opportunity, as a shack at various times. Then he decided, well no, we are going to move down, move back and spend our time in the state. We will give it six or eight months and see how it goes. I have to say they escaped the lockdown in Melbourne and they believe they have made the right decision. It is the way it is. That is why the property prices are going through the roof because people are believing that Tasmania has something significant to offer for them.

The Premier noted our unemployment rate, as the member for McIntyre pointed out, was 3.8 per cent. It is the lowest it has ever been in our history. It always fascinates me when we look at statistics on employment, as to how they manage to equate pre-1960s figures with today, because, pre-1960s or maybe mid-1960s, married women largely were not in the workforce. They were quite often at home. Obviously, there were women in the workforce but when they got married, in a lot of cases they were forced to give up employment. If they became pregnant, that was it.

I am interested in how that equates: 3.8 per cent being the lowest in our history, as to how they actually weigh that all up. I am not a statistics expert. If the member for Nelson was here, she might have an answer for that. If she is listening she might be able to incorporate that into her speech, but I do not want to put that on her. If she does know the answer then I would be very interested to know how they balance previous history with today's circumstances.

It is a good position to be in. It has to improve Tasmania's lot when it comes to people being able to afford to live if they have a job. As the member for Macintyre pointed out, it may well be somebody working 20 hours a week but needs to work 30 or even 35 or 40 hours a week to actually make ends meet. Some would say the state final demand would give an indication of that. I am not quite sure. Certainly, people who are part-time might want a full-time job and it is important to understand what that scene looks like to know how well we are performing when it comes to the unemployment figures.

The Premier looks at our energy production from renewables and the Government has a target to double this. What I cannot understand in the statement he makes is they have a plan to double it and in terms of net zero we have achieved that aim in six out of the last seven years. But further on, we hear him saying we will achieve net zero by 2030. We are relying largely on the amazing power systems created over 70 years ago in most cases. But if we are doing net zero now, why is there a target for net zero in 2030? I cannot understand that. Yes, we can do better. I cannot understand that we are setting a target for net zero in 2030 when we are achieving it today. It does not make sense. If someone can give me the answer, I would be interested to listen.

The Premier says its an aspirational government and it is important to have aspirations. But it is also important to make sure in those aspirations we are doing what we can to improve the lot of Tasmanians. He says over the next 10 years we will invest to harness the significant opportunities we have available to attract investment, create jobs, opportunities to improve the lives of all Tasmanians and secure our state's future. We do need to make sure we do not cruel our pitch by overpopulating and loving the place to death and folks start to leave. We need to bring the part of our population that is really struggling up to a standard of living that delivers social equity, where homelessness is a memory of the past, not the mark of our future. We need a really good focus on that.

The member for Rosevears was basically pointing out the fact people are coming to her, single mums, kids, with nowhere to go. It is a wicked problem and it brings tears to your eyes to think somebody walks out your door at your office knowing they are going to sleep in their car for the night with their kids and they have to go to school the next day. How do they shower, have breakfast and cope with life? The stresses that puts on the parents to try to keep their children upbeat. How can they cope with that? It is difficult and a wicked problem.

We know housing, getting materials and tradies to build houses is not easy even these days. Some might say it is a good problem to have because at least you have the demand, but it is the lives of the people to get a roof over their heads that really matters.

Ms Rattray - Steel has gone up 14 per cent. We do not always build a lot of houses out of steel, but need it for above window frames and all of that. Timber is also really hard to source at the moment.

Mr VALENTINE - That is why steel has gone up, because the demand for steel is increasing, therefore it is becoming a premium product. On the Public Works Committee, Brighton High School was looking at using steel framing because that might be a way of not having to wait for timber products. There is all of that. They are wicked problems, but we have to get through it somehow and bring the populace with us.

I applaud the Government's vision of the significant opportunities we have available to attract investment, create jobs and opportunities, in the sense that if you do not have people coming in and investing, you do not get jobs and do not improve the state's financial position. However, the person on the street with their kids who does not have many options, we need to look at how we can improve their options in the immediate term, not in the long term, and do what we can to improve that circumstance.

The Premier notes on the strength of the economy that the state final demand is a 2 per cent change higher than predicted. Again, that is positive and good to see the net operating balance has improved, at least that is what we have been told. We are getting strong growth in revenue, as he says. Well, no doubt some of that is from stamp duty. There is certainly a heck of a lot of houses being sold and for amazing prices. He notes that infrastructure investment has been revised upwards by \$72.5 million to over \$900 million this year. The Public Works Committee is likely to be busy, member for McIntyre.

Ms Rattray - Busier, Mr President.

Mr VALENTINE - Busier, it has been busy already. People think when parliament is not sitting we have our feet up on our couch somewhere. It has been anything but. It has been

a very busy time for members of the Public Works Committee, also the committees that meet during the break. Rest assured, people, if you are watching there is a lot going on. The Public Works Committee is just one of them. We are going to have a lot to do over this coming year with a \$900 million infrastructure investment.

The Premier points to \$160 million in support for businesses to keep them going and importantly to save jobs. The feedback I receive from some small businesses is you needed a \$3 million turnover and to be 30 per cent lower than 12 months ago. Now, 12 months ago it was the lowest it has ever been. It is almost an impossible thing to me. I urge the Government to look at that model and consider making it two years back when they were thriving. You might say that would bring too many people into the pool, but it is important as small business is the backbone of the economy. We have to make sure those small businesses are supported effectively.

I do not know that the packages being given actually do that effectively or what other members' experiences are with this. It seemed only those who had a significant turnover were able to access that assistance. If you are a small business like a café, one of the ones I know that employ two or three people and have to keep their doors open and be able to provide the service - of course, it costs money to employ people, even if only one person walks through the door, or 100. They are suffering - were suffering - and things have improved with the opening of the borders in some ways. I encourage the Government to look at that model and see if they cannot improve the breadth of the pool that it might apply to and look at the turnover figures and make it more realistic on that score.

The Premier talks about the billion dollars over 10 years into critical health infrastructure. I do not think anyone would say 'no, do not invest in health'. Everybody is concerned about health, absolutely everybody, but it is a bit like playing catch-up all the time. Whenever we put money into health, we have to realise that with the population growing the way it is - and it is growing - it is also the oldest in Australia. As that cohort of baby boomers moves through, their health needs increase and until we get to the peak of that, we are going to have more and more pressure on our health system. With that moving through, people coming here, possibly to retire in this state, it is going to put even more pressure on the health system, and with the population growing, that can only compound it. We have got to get to a point where we look at really good preventive health measures. I do not see much in here.

Sport is concentrated on, that is fine, but you are not going to get your mostly 50-, 60-, 70-year-olds to participate in sport. There have to be incentives for people who may have obesity issues and those sorts of things to get out and exercise and to improve their lot so that the burden on health is reduced. It ought to be almost a number one priority in terms of the health circumstance that we have in this state, to try to keep people out of hospital. We do not pay enough attention to preventive health measures, and that is important to do.

I applaud the Government spending more money on mental health facilities. It is fair to say that anyone, any region of the state, understands that with all the pressures and stresses that COVID-19 has placed on the state, and the financial situation that a lot of families find themselves in, the mental health services are really important. We noted in our Acute Health Services inquiry some time ago now that mental health services for youth, in particular, were needed, certainly in the north-west. Let us face it, someone coming in with a mental health issue and sitting there in an emergency waiting room is not where they should be. I have to

say to the Government, well done on putting these things into play; the measures that the Premier has said that are being taken to improve that circumstance across the regions.

I noted in this place before that there is one mother-baby unit in the state, and it is in a private hospital - St Helens - here in Hobart. If somebody has a problem with postnatal depression and they live in Burnie, they have to go out of their support networks to come down to Hobart to be properly treated, if they are in a state where they need admission to hospital. To see some of these initiatives being put into play, I congratulate the Government on it. I encourage them. I hope we can see those sustainably supported going forward.

It is interesting there is a noted \$120 million private hospital within the LGH health precinct to ensure that integrated patient care and specialist services are delivered in a seamless way. I know there are schools of thought on this, but I do query investment in private health care by a state government. I am not 100 per cent sure of what it is actually costing, I have to be honest there. It is on government land. To me, private health services are always with a profit margin. Why not invest money or resources the state has in state-run facilities, rather than supporting private enterprise to develop on public land? I do not quite understand the benefit there. It might be something that someone else can comment on and tell me why that is a good thing. I do not see that as necessarily the best solution.

The Premier talks about the redevelopment which represents more than \$200 million in new facilities in stage 2 of the Royal Hobart Hospital, including an additional 90 inpatient beds, a fit-for-purpose older persons unit, expanded ICU, expanded emergency department, new neurology, stroke and medical subspecialties wards. The Public Works Committee has seen those. There are significant plans to deliver more inpatient beds. We had the opportunity of quizzing them. I think we have delivered our report on the Royal Hobart Hospital stage 2, have we not?

Ms Rattray - Yes, we have.

Mr VALENTINE - So I can talk about that. We talked about whether that is likely to improve the flow of patients through the hospital. It was explained in the report that yes, it will. I think that is the important thing. The last thing we want to see are ramped ambulances. We do not want to see that. When you are ramped in an ambulance, the ambulance crew are there basically keeping you alive, in some instances, until such time as they have the capacity to see you admitted into hospital. That is a stress on the ambulance crews. The changes being made at the Royal are certainly going to improve that circumstance. More beds are being made available, more units within the emergency unit being available to be able to stage people between the emergency circumstances they are in into a ward in hospital or to hold them long enough so that they are able to exit the hospital and not be in hospital. It is an improvement.

The stage 3 will deliver mental health services and specialised multidisciplinary subacute services in an estimated jointly funded total investment of \$665 million at the Royal. That is so important. Again, the last place you want them to be is in an emergency ward.

The Premier ran through all the investments they are making in health, talking about the innovative service. One that has been recently introduced is the Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response, the PACER team, including mental health clinicians, police officers and paramedics who are dedicated to support those experiencing mental health distress in the community. That has to be a big positive. That is saving those people from actually needing

to go to hospital. They are being dealt with in an environment they are familiar with. Quite a lot of times, people suffering mental illness can get very concerned when their circumstances change and they have the stress of having to leave what they might see as a secure environment to be dealt with. It seems to me that a Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response, PACER team, is a very good thing. I will be looking forward to seeing how that plays out into the future, and how positive, or otherwise, it is. It has to be far better than an emergency ward. That is all I can say to that.

The Premier says, 'however the most important asset in our health system is our people, and since coming into Government in 2014, we have employed 1500 additional FTE health professionals'. My question is, is it sustainable?

It goes back to the point I was making before. If we have good preventive health programs, it may well be sustainable, because the demands on the hospital system are going to be less. Those staff that were just employed, 1500 additional that the Premier points to, are going to be less stressed in their role and in their job.

I agree with him. I think they have done an amazing job through the COVID-19 situation. We all have to recognise that. We all have to recognise how hard they worked, often double shifts in many cases. You can only do so many of those without becoming exhausted and stressed.

Mrs Hiscutt - Mr President, I draw attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr VALENTINE - I was talking about the stresses that staff have had on them over the COVID-19 period, and how you can only work so many double shifts. Yes, you might earn money. It might be a good money earner but your health suffers as a result of having to come back to work to make sure that the services continue to be delivered after you have just done a shift. It is not a good way to operate. It is not a good situation for a lot of our staff to be in.

I want them to know, and I am sure every member of this House will agree with me, they have done a fantastic job and they deserve our full respect and praise for the work that they have undertaken. If the Premier can do something about the number of FTEs, then that can only be positive. Sustainability is important. We have to be able to continue to operate and preventive health programs can ease the burden. I encourage the Premier to have the Government pay more attention to preventive health programs.

I see where the Government announces a new statutory authority, Housing Tasmania - back to the future. I worked in health for 20 years, actually in the welfare area from 1988 to 2012 and Housing Tasmania was merged and moved around and now they are back here again. The only thing I would be concerned about here is the level of scrutiny we are able to apply to housing. I hope we are not going to see it go to the point we only get to examine it once a year. Every time there is a new authority created, is it going to be a GBE or just different configurations that might mean less scrutiny? We need to be able to scrutinise to see how it is performing. I encourage the Premier to remember there is a review role we play on behalf of the people of Tasmania to make sure the way the Government is spending its money is fair, reasonable and accountable.

Ms Rattray - Spending the people of Tasmania's money?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. Is that what I said?

Ms Rattray - No, you said 'their' money.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, yes. Spending their money on behalf of the people of Tasmania and it is the people of Tasmania's money. You are quite right.

The lowered land tax - that is a positive in the sense they are doubling the tax-free threshold to \$100 000, meaning no land tax will now be paid on land valued under \$100 000. The way property is going at the moment, there are not going to be that many people whose land is under \$100 000. I saw one the other day in Dodges Ferry of offers over \$500 000 for a block of land. Yes, it was 1300 square metres. Five hundred thousand dollars.

Mrs Hiscutt - A blank block?

Mr VALENTINE - A blank block at Dodges Ferry. You know how prices go. It will sell for much more, but that is just to give you an indication. It is the southern beaches where a lot of people are who are in the low socio-economic sector, if I can put it that way. With prices like that and if they are renting, it will not be long before their rents start to go up because people will want to capitalise on the value by selling their property. Then when it gets sold, up go the rents because the price of the sale was high and so on it goes. It is difficult.

With this land tax relief, where is the impetus for landlords to reduce their rents? I note the Private Rental Incentives Program is there but limited to a certain number of people. There is no guarantee that with the saving in land tax landlords are going to drop their rent. There is no incentive for them to do that. A lot of them may well have taken a bit of a hit through COVID-19 as people were not able to pay their rent and might have had to give certain rent relief. Yes, some of them received certain assistance, but there needs to be some really good incentives. The Premier says the changes mean around 70 000 Tasmanians will save on average approximately \$800 every year up to a maximum saving of \$1625, with close to 12 000 taxpayers no longer needing to pay any land tax at all. Well, that may well be the case. But when the next valuation comes along, which may not be that far away, bang, up they will go, and then they will have to pay land tax. Anyway, it is better than doing nothing.

The Premier says:

We recognise that there is more that we can do. This includes providing amendments that will allow the Tasmanian Planning Commission to consider more contemporary growth forecasts when rezoning land. Rezoning proposals for residential development will be able to be considered on their merits without needing to wait for the full review of our regional land use strategies to be completed and without compromising sound planning processes

Why have a regional land use strategy if you are not going to follow it, is my question. I have chaired the southern one and the work involved was huge. To basically say let us just park them and do what we want, then review them, is not really good strategic thinking. It does not respect those who may have made investments in certain types of land use that may

conflict with housing environments. I want to read you the Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy contents page so that you understand how broad these land use strategies are. I will go down to the policies area:

5. Biodiversity and Geodiversity
6. Water Resources
7. The Coast
8. Managing Risks & Hazards
9. Cultural Values
10. Recreation & Open Space
11. Social Infrastructure
12. Physical Infrastructure
13. Land Use and Transport Integration
14. Tourism
15. Strategic Economic Opportunities
16. Productive Resources
17. Industrial Activity
18. Activity Centres
19. Settlement and Residential Development.

You can see how in-depth those strategies are. To say let us get in there and make some changes or at least some decisions on rezoning before we properly review them is foolish. No-one questions they need review, but do it the right way around. Do not just say we have a problem today so we have to fix that problem. We may actually compound the problems that we have if we expect people to do a quick fix. I do not think that is sensible; you have planning for a reason. It needs to be properly planned.

We would not do it with business. Successful businesses do not, anyway. Sometimes those that do not properly plan come unstuck. I wanted to read that in and might have done it before during one of the bills we looked at. It is important to know how complex they are. It took a long time to put that southern one in place. Each of the other regions had exactly the same level of effort that went into theirs and while some might have ended up with a framework rather than a strategic plan, but nevertheless it is still significant.

I applaud the Government for the HomeShare program, as mentioned by the member for Rosevears. What a way to assist people. I believe the Government has done well there, for affordable housing. A really important aspect is that if you currently rent a Housing Tasmania property, you are automatically exempt from these tests. I would like to clarify, does that mean if you currently rent a property that is managed by a third party on behalf of Housing Tasmania, do you have to jump through those tests?

Mrs Hiscutt - Through you, Mr President. I will seek some clarification.

Mr VALENTINE - I would like to know that, because plenty of people are renting houses through organisations such as Mission Australia, Housing Connect and others. It would be good to think that they also did not have to jump through the hoops. Life is tough enough for those people.

I was pleased to see that the deposit requirements have dropped to 2 per cent from 5 per cent. With a block of land being advertised for over \$500 000 at Dodges Ferry, something

needs to be done for people to be able to get into the housing market. I do not think it would be on that block, however.

The Government will also double the state's equity contribution to a maximum of \$200 000 or 40 per cent of the purchase price for purchases of new homes or units, and up to a maximum of \$150 000 or 30 per cent of the purchase price for eligible established homes or units. That is a very important move. In a way, it has been discriminatory that it can only be new homes, rather than established homes. I know the reasoning was that building houses would stimulate the economy. But, if you want to get more people into housing, you need to give the relief to anyone who is going into a house. The question is, will it impact adversely on the market in any way? That is always a question that we need to ask: whether it will push up prices. The member for Launceston has particular views on that.

Extending the First Home Owners Grant of \$30 000 for another 12 months from 1 July 2022 is important, and the First Home Owners Grant will also be available for those who use our Housing Market Entry Program to build a new home. That is a total of \$230 000. It is not an insignificant amount. It gives a head start for those in Tasmania, or over those who might be coming here from the mainland, but we all know that might not deter those coming from the mainland. They have sold their house on the mainland for a couple of million and they have plenty of money to invest here, and \$230 000 might not make a huge difference in terms of that competition. However, it is going to make a difference to people on the ground who are finding it a struggle to get the money together to at least buy the most modest of homes.

The Government also doubled the Private Rental Incentives Program, which encourages property owners to make their homes available for affordable rent to low-income households with low, or no, support needs. The property owners get land tax relief and up to \$9900 in return for a guaranteed rental arrangement. That is quite significant. Certainly, it provides encouragement for property owners to enter that space; however, it is only for a certain number. I will not read into the record the amount it is worth. If you are interested in the scheme, there is a web page on it and it is interesting to read about the key features of that program, including guaranteed rent for two years; rents capped at 25-30 per cent below median rental rates; and incentive payments of between \$6609 and \$9900 per annum. It is not the be-all and end-all. It provides benefit to a number of property owners. It certainly improves the rental space; but only time will tell whether it will be significant.

The Ancillary Dwelling Grants Program is progressing well, they say, with 161 houses allocated under the program. The benefit there might be that somebody's mother, for example, might need some low-level care and a person might build this unit in the backyard and enable the mother to live with them. That means, for example, the mother's three bedroom home that they do not need any more is made available to the market. It is a possible way of being able to see some relief. Only time will tell how beneficial that is. I believe there is quite a demand by people from the mainland wanting to get houses here, so it might simply make more available to them. It is a wicked problem. It is better to have the scheme than not. It might add to the difficulty of getting a builder as more and more people have building projects on the go; but we cannot stand still. We have to do something.

'Shop top' apartments is an interesting idea. This was considered for Hobart when I was on council, many years ago. The big issue was fire risk. A lot of central Hobart is made up of wooden buildings and they have wooden floors. They do not have concrete floors above the shops, and you either put in a concrete floor for fire safety separation reasons, or you have to

put in a fire safety sprinkler system throughout the building. It is quite expensive to do that. Some of the problems and issues came in because of the insurance involved. The building regulations might make it easier to develop shop top apartments, but it may not satisfy the insurance companies. If the insurance companies cannot be satisfied then people will not be able to get loans to do the work. I will keep an eye on that as well. Launceston seems to have done a bit in this space. The member for Windermere might have some information in that regard in his offering - whether they have run into the same sorts of issues up there.

The Premier says he is very pleased to confirm that all high schools have now extended to provide senior secondary options as of 2022 and that direct retention from years 10 to 12 has jumped almost 5 percentage points since 2019 to 76.1 per cent, the highest on record. That is good, but is it being accompanied by a low level of apprenticeships? It would be good to know what that space is, because I have heard that apprenticeships are down. Going through the years 11 and 12 scenario in every school, yes, it might be providing some with greater opportunity but it might also be stressing others who find it difficult in that space. With the VET courses that are available to get them into apprenticeships and the like, it would be interesting to do a little comparison on retention in years 11 and 12 and the level of apprenticeships. Has that been well thought through? It would be interesting to know.

Obviously, we want our literacy and numeracy skills to be raised and we want general education to be at a higher level. We want to catch up with the rest of Australia. But we have to do it sensibly and there might be ways of doing that and being able to provide the types of education and job opportunities that fit the circumstances and get the improvement in the literacy and numeracy while having people being able to satisfy the building boom we have at the moment.

The Premier turned his attention to six new child and family learning centres. I have to say, that is an absolute plus. The member for Elwick is not in the room but we had an inquiry into this and from what I saw in the inquiry the question is, are there enough of them? Because they deliver so well. I remember visiting the one in New Norfolk and the one at Chigwell. The services they provided for the children were fantastic, but it is the fact that the parents go along with the children and while their children are playing in a safe and secure environment, the parents have the opportunity to get all sorts of help. Quite often, they might have higher levels of need. These learning centres are just fantastic. There might have been 20 or 24, that is the vision, and there are six now. All I can say is, accelerate them if you can if there is any way of doing that. It needs to be done.

The Premier also mentioned that in 2022 we have further increased support for students impacted by trauma, in addition to the funding of the educational adjustments model for students with a disability, which has, I am pleased to say, since 2020 enabled an additional 2000 students to be funded. Support for these students in the inclusive environment really is of paramount importance to make sure that classroom teachers are able to provide good outcomes for those students and the class as a whole. It is something that cannot be scrimped on. You need to be able to give the level of attention to each student to enable them to progress satisfactorily. It is something that I know a little about, because my wife is a teacher. So I hear the stories, not just from her but from other teachers as well. That support is so vital.

The effort that is being put in by the Government to address the digital divide, laptops and iPads, I think that is a good move, very positive. However, proper resources do have to be provided in support of that as well. There is not much point in giving a laptop or an iPad - iPads

probably not so much in some ways - but PCs, laptops for children if there is no support mechanism there. It costs money to take your computer to a support outlet. It might just end up adding to their burden in some ways, or the device not being effective. It is important that good supports are available. Someone might tell me that is part of it. I hope that that is the case.

As for the TAFE bill that the Premier mentions, it is a bit of 'watch this space', to be quite honest. I actually voted against this move for the reorganisation of TAFE because I was concerned that you may see a lot of expertise walk out the door. Some would say, well, they are people who have been around a long time. We need to modernise and need to change the way we deliver courses and all of that. Yes, but it is important that you are not throwing the baby out with the bathwater. I am not calling them babies but you know what I am trying to say. They are a valuable resource. We need to look after our teachers in that space. They have a lot of knowledge, a lot of expertise.

Youth Navigators has been talked about. Jobs Tasmania is delivering a range of programs to remove barriers and support Tasmanians to transition into training and work, including the Job Ready Fund, the Tasmanian Employer Bonus, Youth Navigators Tasmania. Is this pathway planners? Remember when that was ditched?

Ms Rattray - Yes, and there were a lot of very disappointed people with the loss of pathway planners.

Mr VALENTINE - Pathway planners by another name, I think. It was a service probably best placed in the schools before they left school, not after. It would help them to focus on what they ought to be studying. I think that that was a backward step. I question that one.

There is such a lot to comment on. I have probably taken up enough of my time. I will whiz through the Department of Education expansion. I can see a degree of sense here, where he announces moving the major functions pertaining to children and young people to the Department of Education. I want to see how that plays out. Does that include the family violence component? That is my question. And sexual violence? Does that go into that department? I think it does; it is part of the Department of Communities.

Mrs Hiscutt - We will get some clarity on that in the summing up.

Mr VALENTINE - It will be interesting to see how that plays out in the budget line items when we get to scrutinise them during Estimates. I can understand when the Premier talks about the siloed government approaches. That is our big beef sometimes when we are going through Estimates, that things do happen in silos. I see it as a positive. It just depends on how it is presented in the budget papers.

He talks about the Burnie court. I can say that we dealt with that with the Public Works Committee and I have had my say there. I questioned the public value of that. I voted against that. I believe that it did not demonstrate enough public value to me to be able to support it. But I will not say any more; you can read my comments in that report. It is just all about the disruption really.

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

QUESTIONS

Schools - Incidents

Mr WILLIE question to DEPUTY LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms PALMER

[2.31 pm]

Mr President, can the Deputy Leader provide figures for the following questions:

- (1) The figures held by the Department of Education related to the level of bullying in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (2) The number of student-on-student assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (3) The number of student-on-teacher assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (4) The number of workers compensation claims resulting from stress or other psychological injury to the Department of Education employees in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (5) The number of suspensions for bullying, harassment, stalking of another student in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (6) The number of suspensions for bullying, harassment, stalking of a teacher or other staff member in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
- (7) The total number of student suspensions in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, including a breakdown by grade?

ANSWER

Ms PALMER - Mr President, I thank the member for his question. The Tasmanian Government is committed to working with the Department of Education to ensure there is consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying through the introduction of minimum standards and strengthening current reporting guidelines. The Government is also committed to taking action to prevent and address bullying in the community which has clear links to behaviour in schools.

Questions (1) to (3) and (5) to (7) are answered from centrally held student suspensions data for the years 2017-2021 in Tables 1 to 7 in Attachment 1.

Question (4) is answered in Table 4 using centrally held HR data.

Mr President, I seek leave to table the document and have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

See Appendix 2 for incorporated document (page 70).

TasRail and Fence Heights

Ms FORREST question to DEPUTY LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms PALMER

[2.33 pm]

Mr President, with regard to the cycleway along the north-west coast, I understand TasRail has standards related to fence heights when they are a common fence with neighbouring properties.

I ask the Deputy Leader to provide:

- (1) a copy of the standards; and
- (2) any other evidence of when these standards have been amended to adjust the heights whilst maintaining a safe separation between trains and other users of the cycle/walking pathways.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for her question. The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport has sought advice from TasRail and can advise as follows:

Rail Safety National Law, RSNL, requires the identification and control of safety risks at railway crossings and other interfaces.

In the case of the Coastal Pathway Project between Sulphur Creek and Penguin, and in accordance with the RSNL, TasRail, as the rail infrastructure manager, and the Central Coast Council, as the owner of this section of the Coastal Pathway, were legally obliged to undertake a joint safety risk assessment of the pathway, as it runs in close proximity to the operational rail corridor. TasRail, the council and the pathway project manager completed the risk assessment and worked together to agree to risk management solutions that minimise the amount of fencing required and also provided for two new, safe and fit-for-purpose railway crossings to improve access to the beach by the public.

The fencing solution and the new crossing access points were subsequently agreed with the council and the pathway project manager before the development application (DA) was lodged in July 2021. The design plans submitted with the DA were publicly advertised as required by the planning process and they clearly showed the fencing locations and specifications that had been agreed by the parties.

The fencing agreement included a 1.2 metre-high fence at a small number of specific locations where the path is located right beside the railway. Where the path starts to deviate away from the railway the fence reduces to a height of 600 mm. At other locations where the path was deemed to be of sufficient distance from the rail land, or where the existing ground conditions provided a natural barrier, fences were not mandatory and have not been provided unless there is a steep drop-off.

The objective of the fencing is to minimise the risk of harm by the physical separation of people and bikes from trains and rail activities, such as tamping, track maintenances et cetera.

It also serves the purpose of directing the public to only cross railway tracks at authorised rail crossings that are protected with appropriate safety controls in accordance with Australian Standards of the day. Similar fencing currently exists at other bike path locations across Tasmania, including Burnie, Devonport, Hobart and Glenorchy. In other rail jurisdictions across mainland Australia you will likely find much more stringent fencing requirements, including 2.1 metre-high separation fencing complete with 300 mm of barbed wire at the top.

In summary, TasRail determines the type and specification of safety fencing through a joint risk assessment conducted with the proposed asset owner or developer as it is required by law. The assessment takes into account the specific location and activity as well as the surrounding conditions rather than a predetermined standard.

Trespass in a rail corridor continues to be an issue throughout the state for TasRail, with a 15 per cent increase in reported incidents in 2020-21. The majority were reported in the north and north-west.

SUPPLEMENTARY ANSWER

Pumphouse Bay and Jonah Bay Land Management

[2.38 p.m.]

Ms PALMER (Rosevears - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - While I am on my feet, Mr President, I agreed on Tuesday to take on notice and follow up with a question for the member for Launceston.

I am advised Hydro Tasmania is currently considering seasonal passes for campers as part of the future management principles for the site when they reopen in 2023. Hydro Tasmania has been in regular communications with existing users and has another community session, which is scheduled for 30 April, to provide further information to campers on the future management principles. I am also advised annual leases have never been issued for these sites as the area has always been closed to visitors between May and August. Some people did lease sites for the fishing season.

CONTAINER REFUND SCHEME BILL 2021 (No. 54)

In Committee

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Clauses 7, 8, and 9 agreed to.

Clauses 10, 11, and 12 agreed to.

Clause 13 -

Marks only to be displayed on approved container

Ms RATTRAY - In regard to clause 13, which is 'marks only to be displayed on approved container', it says a person must not place prescribed marks on a container that is not an approved container. Then it goes on to have significant penalties: 800 penalty points for a body corporate and 400 penalty points for an individual.

Can I have some further clarification about what would be deemed as being unacceptable when it comes to marks displayed on an approved container? I need to understand. These are significant penalties. Before putting this through to legislation, it would be good to have that clear understanding on the public record about the penalties that are associated with marks displayed on approved containers.

Mrs HISCUTT - This supports clause 12.

Ms Rattray - I could have asked the question on 10, 11 or 12?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. Supplier contributions are a significant aspect of the scheme. Indeed, they are entirely responsible for funding the scheme. Clause 13 deters organisations from placing fake markings to appear to be part of the scheme, whilst having not paid in. This is why there are substantial penalties. That would wraparound putting little recyclable stickers onto something that is not, or putting something else on it that would lead the user who drinks something out of this container to think it is refundable when it is not.

Clause 13 agreed to.

Clause 14 -
Scheme coordinator

Ms ARMITAGE - I read the amendment standing in my name.

I move the following amendment -

Clause 14, page 21, proposed new subclause (2) after paragraph (d).

Insert the following paragraph:

- (a) does not intend to operate, as the scheme coordinator, for the purpose of securing a profit, or other form of gain, for shareholders, or members, of an organisation or body; and

As I think members here are probably quite aware, I do not believe we have gone with the right scheme. I believe that the scheme coordinator should be a not-for-profit provider. By being not-for-profit, the coordinator is free from any vested financial interest to maximise profit over community good and can instead focus on achieving proper outcomes such as high return rates, more recycling, as well as ensuring jobs are created and the community gets the best outcome possible. Similar schemes in both Western Australia and Queensland have not-for-profit coordinators. As has already been discussed in this House, they run very successful schemes. I see no reason why this would not be the case.

Just as with many other sectors of the community, such as child care, aged care and even environment groups such as Landcare and Natural Resource Management, these are often run

by not-for-profit organisations that aspire to higher values than simply making money, such as caring for our community or doing their bit to save the environment. I believe it is inevitable that those seeking to profit as scheme coordinator will introduce a further margin on any transaction, and so add to the profit of the program for consumers.

Finally, with a not-for-profit coordinator, the monies made will be invested back into the scheme, rather than exported out of Tasmania and often to overseas shareholders, thus ensuring that Tasmania and Tasmanians get the best possible outcome. Given that there are clear examples of successful scheme coordinators being not for profit interstate and they run successful operations, I cannot see why such a move could not be supported.

Mrs HISCUTT - This legislation should not constrain this or any future government's ability to limit the type of organisational structure permitted to respond to a competitive process. The Tasmanian Government wants to be able to choose the best organisation to run the container refund scheme for Tasmania. It is important all types of entity be allowed to participate in a competitive public tender process. There is a risk limiting this to a not-for-profit, will result in a non-competitive market and consequently a higher cost scheme for Tasmania.

Additionally, the Government has received commercial advice that recommends not mandating that the scheme coordinator be a non-for-profit. Schemes throughout Australia see the scheme coordinator role capable of being performed by both profit and non-profit organisations. It makes more sense in terms of getting the most effective scheme for Tasmania to encourage as many interested and capable organisations as possible, both for profit and not-for-profit, to provide competitive bids that will go through a rigorous evaluation process. The Government urges members not to vote for this amendment.

I am just seeking some further advice, Madam Chair. I have nothing more to say, other than urge members not to vote for this amendment.

Ms LOVELL - For me, this amendment comes back to the debate we had at the end of last year on the scheme design. My concern with this amendment is that because of the scheme design the Government has adopted, if we were to pass this amendment it might create problems and we are hearing some of that from the Leader.

This is the type of issue I prefer to have the opportunity to explore further, in terms of the scheme design and which would be the best outcome for Tasmania. We had that debate and the Council determined it was not necessary and we accepted that. The bottom line is that I support a container refund scheme, Labor has always supported a container refund scheme and we want the scheme to be successful however that is landed on in the end.

I appreciate what the member for Launceston is trying to achieve and we have discussed this. However, as I have acknowledged in my second reading contribution, there is profit to be made in a container refund scheme. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but it may be that means it does not deliver the best outcomes for Tasmania. We do not know because we have not had that process we would have liked to have had. They are my concerns with the amendment, that this amendment does not fit with the scheme design the Government has adopted. Whether that is the right scheme or not, it is what we are left with. At this stage I am inclined not to support the amendment, but I am very keen to hear what other members have to say on this matter.

[2.55 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - I acknowledge the intent of this amendment by the member for Launceston. We hear so much in our communities that we want to support the not-for-profits, and for any community organisation to have an opportunity to get some value out of this long-awaited container refund scheme we are implementing in Tasmania. I absolutely understand and also have an amendment later on that really spells that out in a long title we will have seen come around the Chamber. I wonder if we are going to limit the opportunity for not-for-profits to be broadly involved in the container refund scheme if we say the network operator can only be a not-for-profit. I am not sure how that might work when effectively we have this model here.

The member for Rumney is right: we had that debate at an earlier time and I am still listening to the arguments on this. I want to acknowledge the member for Launceston's intent here, because I know that is really what the community wants. They also want to know the scheme is going to be effective, efficient and it is going to get the best possible outcomes, not only in financial return, but also in that waste recovery return. I am still listening and appreciate the member for Launceston's amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 14 agreed to.

Clause 15 agreed to

Clauses 16, 17, and 18 agreed to.

Clauses 19 and 20 agreed to.

Clauses 21, 22, and 23 agreed to.

Clauses 24 and 25 agreed to.

Clause 26 -

Obligations of material recovery facility operators

Ms RATTRAY - This one is on obligations of material recovery facility operators. There has been quite a bit of discussion around facility operators being forced to take the oldies, as they are called in the industry, in preference to or as well as more new containers. I want the Leader to talk about that process in obligations of material recovery for facility operators, which comes under this particular area of clause 26. Some further explanation would be very much appreciated, because it is going to be an issue, particularly initially, as the scheme starts up. People are going to scatter around - and that is the intent - to find oldies that may not necessarily have a complete barcode or their complete receptacle. How does this particular clause 26 work when it comes to the obligations of material recovery facility operators?

Mrs HISCUTT - The material recovery facilities are called MRFs, so I will refer to them as MRFs. MRFs taking oldies in addition to the current one is what you are asking about. Currently, MRFs have to accept recyclable material and will continue to do so through kerbside bins, as we already have. This includes any old recyclable material. When the scheme starts it will be business as usual in this aspect.

When the scheme starts for any eligible approved containers that are in kerbside bins and could go to material recovery facilities, to MRFs, the MRF will be able to receive a refund of 10 cents and this refund will be shared with councils.

Ms RATTRAY - I now take you to page 38, which is part of the 26 and it says:

- (3) If a material recovery facility operator receives a refund amount from the scheme coordinator in respect of an approved container, the operator must ensure that the container does not enter into landfill.

I am not sure how they are going make sure that happens, but there are significant penalties if that happens. For a body corporate it is 900 penalty units, and an individual it is 300 penalty units.

Then in subsection (4) it says:

- (4) Subsection (3) does not apply in respect to an approved container, or part of an approved container, that enters landfill in prescribed circumstances.

Can I have some clarification about what that is? In one clause you are saying that nothing can enter landfill and then in the next one you are saying, that it does not apply in respect to an approved container. Could you clarify what that actually means when it is in operation?

Mrs HISCUTT - Just seeking some advice, Madam Chair. We are talking about clause 26(3) where it goes not to landfill, and subclause (4) where there are prescribed circumstances.

This is here as a precautionary clause. The intent of clause 26(3) is to ensure that the objectives of the scheme are upheld, namely to increase the recovery and recycling of containers. Clause 26(4) allows for extenuating circumstances where material may have to go to landfill. That was your issue.

Currently, there are no prescribed circumstances that the Government intends to put into the regulations. An example where this might be used is the collapse of the recycling market such as the case of the China National Sword Policy in 2018, which saw the cessation of Australia's recyclable material being shipped to China. It may also be relevant in emergency response scenarios, such as a fire or a flood, where a stockpile of recyclable material may be considered as a hazard. It sounds very similar to another bill that we did earlier yesterday. It is there as a catch-all in case of an emergency or if something may happen.

Clause 26 agreed to.

Clauses 27 and 28 agreed to.

Clause 29 -

Claiming refunds under scheme

Ms RATTRAY - This one is in regard to claiming refunds under the scheme. If you go to (3), clause 29(3), it says 'a refund point operator may refuse to pay a refund amount, for a container deposited at a container refund point operated by the operator, if -

- (a) the container is not an approved container; or

This is very new to a lot of Tasmanians. What are we going to see on a container so that we know what is approved and what is not? Is that the next stage? Is this just the enabling legislation? I suspect that that is what you will tell me. It would be useful for us to have some understanding of an 'approved container' at this point in time. I am hoping some time in the future that we put a few wine bottles as an approved container. That is my plan.

Mrs HISCUTT - The question was, what are we going to see on a container? Most drink containers consumed in Tasmania will already have the prescribed markers on them and we copied that from something that we had. What it says on the can or the container is '10 cent refund at collection depot/points in participating state/territory of purchase.' That is already on the container. We are already familiar with it because it is already there. The difference when the scheme starts in Tasmania is the public will be able to get their 10 cents refunded. Of course, we did not have a scheme before, we could not actually get the 10 cents. There will be an education and communication campaign to help people to understand what containers will receive the refund.

With regards to your mention of wine, we talked about that during the second reading debate, the states and territories are currently discussing the inclusion of wine and spirits in the CRS. That is not there at the minute, but is definitely at the forefront of the minds of the people sorting this. Hopefully, we will see that come through. But then we heard yesterday in one of the other bills we did that broken glass is contamination. There are going to have to be a few things sorted yet before that happens and will be nationwide.

Clause 29 agreed to.

Clause 30 -

Request for certain information

Ms RATTRAY - Clause 30 talks about requests for certain information. In 30(1)(b)(i) it talks about a person depositing an approved container at a container refund point. The refund point operator for that container refund point:

- (b) must require the person to provide a refund declaration in respect of the container if -
 - (i) the number of approved containers deposited by the person exceeds the prescribed maximum amount of containers; and

Is that saying there will be places where you can only take 10 or 20 or 30 or 40? How does that work? Why do you need to have a maximum amount? Is not the idea to get back as many as you can?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is an interesting question and the answer is interesting as well. The purpose of this clause is fraud mitigation. The prescribed maximum number of containers is going to be 1500 containers, which is in line with other states and territories. High volumes of containers pose the highest risk for potential fraud. For example, if a company had unused containers that were never sold, they may try to return them, or try to receive a refund whilst not having been paid into the scheme. The regulations we are introducing allow for pubs and clubs who may be returning high volumes regularly to have a written agreement in place that ensures the declaration is not required every time. It is a fraud mitigation process.

Clause 30 agreed to.

Clause 31 -

Refunds not payable in respect of certain containers

Ms LOVELL - Madam Chair, my question relates to some issues raised in the previous debate and I am seeking clarification, for the record. I refer to clause 31(1)(c) and 31(2). The clause is about containers that are damaged, or that might have the prescribed marks damaged in some way.

Clause 31(2) states:

Subsection (1)(e) does not prevent a container that is refused by a container refund machine from being deposited, and accepted, at another container refund point.

Does that mean there would be a person who could examine the container, or does it need to be read by a machine at some point in the process? Also, what quantum of damage would render a container not acceptable for refund?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are talking about damaged containers and a person examining the containers. You also queried the quantum of damage that would render them unacceptable. It is correct that a container refused by an automatic refund machine can be accepted in person elsewhere, but at a different refund point where there may be a person.

Regarding the quantum of damage, we want the containers to be eligible and in reasonable condition. If containers are slightly damaged or missing their labels, we encourage people to return them for a refund. Containers that are in poor physical shape, for example they are very dirty, contaminated or broken, will not generally be refunded under the scheme.

The scheme is not designed to incentivise the return of contaminated containers. This is because the scheme needs to be a clean stream of recyclable material that can then be turned into another product, such as plastic signs. Accepting contaminated containers impacts the material stream and it may mean it cannot be recycled. We are talking about contamination of products, as we discussed yesterday.

Ms ARMITAGE - I have a question with regard to crushed cans. I think we all received this document to do with interstate experience. It has shown there is a problem with jurisdictions that do not give people cash for crushed cans. An example was used of a nine-year-old from New South Wales who collected between 5000 and 6000 cans, but could only receive refunds for 1750 because of the refund machine. I wondered if that is possible. When

I was in Western Australia, there were TOMRA machines that were not totally automated, but they did count. Some TOMRA machines counted crushed cans as well, and did not have to read the bar codes. I wondered what we are doing about that.

Mrs HISCUTT - With interstate experience, crushed cans are not accepted. We want the scheme that serves Tasmanians well into the future. Therefore, the integrity of the scheme is of the highest importance. Reading the barcode ensures that integrity. It connects the supply, and hence, payment of the container with the refund.

Manually crushed cans where the barcode can be read are okay. A bale of mechanically crushed cans where the barcodes cannot be read would not be okay. We know that an education program will be important in this regard, and we intend to start this education program before the scheme commences so that people know what is acceptable and what is not. Experience interstate is that whilst there are some learnings early in the schemes, people quickly adapt to ensure that they can receive their refund. This education program will go out to say what is acceptable and what is not. As long as the barcode can be seen and read, that is acceptable.

Ms RATTRAY - This is an area where I believe we need to be fairly flexible if we are going to implement the scheme and also achieve the outcomes the scheme desires. I will just read you the long title and talk more about that later.

The long title says: An act to establish a container refund scheme to reduce litter in Tasmania and increase the recovery and recycling of containers.

In order to do that, and I am certain this is going to happen for at least a short time, I have an amendment:

I move the following amendment -

Page 46, after subclause (2).

Insert the following subclause:

- (3) Subsection (1)(b) and (c) do not apply in respect of an approved container if the approved container is deposited at a container refund point within the 6-month period after the commencement of this section.

At a briefing earlier in the week we were told that New South Wales had what you call an amnesty period when they introduced this model into the state. Some of those 'slightly contaminated' beverage containers were actually accepted, and that encouraged people to recover as well as recycle.

If that is what we are setting to achieve, having that period of time where at least you have six months to get the oldies out of any particular place, wherever they are, whether they are in the back shed or whether they are lying on the road verges, if we are serious about the intent of this legislation then I believe we need an amnesty period for that. It would be very easy for operators to say, 'too old, too dirty, cannot quite read it, yes we can see what they are, but no, they are a bit grotty, we will not take them'. That goes against what I supported when I supported the principle of this container refund scheme last year.

New South Wales had an amnesty period where they collected all of the containers that you could genuinely see belonged to the scheme, not asking for things that do not belong to the scheme. Yes, they might have been a bit grotty. They might have been a bit damaged, and half a barcode was visible. This is a way of ensuring, with that education process that the Leader talked about that is going to occur, that people are at least given an incentive to have a look around their homes, their properties, road verges, wherever they might be, and see what they can find to put into this scheme. Whether that means the Lions clubs of our community organising clean-ups, the local Scouts, a not-for-profit, whether it just be a group or an organisation who want to raise a few extra dollars for their club, then I can see there will be quite an incentive to do that. I am asking members to support this amendment and show we are serious not only about recycling but recovery of waste in this state.

Mrs HISCUTT - We do not support this amendment. We are taking a similar approach to New South Wales. New South Wales accepted historic litter when the CRS commenced, provided that the containers were eligible, clean, whole and had a label. Contaminated, dirty or crushed containers were not accepted. The CRS aims to reduce litter by preventing containers from entering the litter stream in the first place. We also want to collect and return the beverage containers that groups like the Lions and Scouts find along our roadsides and in our creeks and parks. The CRS will accept and refund this litter, provided the beverage containers are eligible under the scheme and are in reasonable condition. The legislative framework has been designed with this in mind.

There is nothing in this bill that prevents a refund being paid for old littered containers. We intend to implement this transition as a statutory rule and in contracts with the scheme coordinator and network operator. Amendments to the bill to allow for the transition are not required. Instead, this transition period for historic littering containers will be gazetted as a statutory rule. This takes the form of a proclamation that sets out when certain parts of the act will take effect. The proclamation will be drafted by OPC and made by the Governor at the Executive Council meeting, and published in the *Tasmanian Gazette*. Through this process, the Governor will proclaim that parts of the act will start six months after scheme commencement. The specific provision of the bill that will have a delayed proclamation date is clause 31(1)(b), so that for the first six months consumers will be able to return containers that do not display the relevant bar code or refund markings and receive a refund payment for that container.

Clause 31(1)(c) means for the first six months consumers will be able to return containers where the display marks are obscured, or damaged and receive a refund payment for that container.

Therefore, we do not support this amendment because it is unnecessary. It is already allowed for.

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Chair, I thank the Leader for that response, but I see no harm in having this in the legislation. The bill covers all manner of things, including a reference to more than 1500 cans - and yet you do not think it is of value to have something like this included? You are leaving it up to the proclamation of the bill?

When it is in legislation, I believe this is reinforcing the message to the community, that there will be an amnesty and there is no way of getting around it because it is in the legislation. I felt you agreed with everything I had said with what you read out. It is just that we propose

putting it in the legislation, which makes what is going to be required clear and unambiguous. I suggest it sends a strong message to the community. I am not asking for the really grotty, old ones. I am talking about exactly the same beverage container that you had talked about. I appeal to members that it is important to have this in the legislation, because we have put a lot of other aspects into the legislation that could be put into regulation or could be put elsewhere. I believe this is an important aspect, when we are talking about recovery and recycling.

Ms LOVELL - Madam Chair, I accept what the Leader is saying. I am comfortable that will achieve the same outcome. I may have missed something, but I do not recall that being part of any of the debate we have had so far. It would have been helpful if we had known that beforehand so that we could have explored it more fully before we were in this stage, where we only have limited opportunities to speak. It is always difficult to fully explore things in the Committee stage.

That aside, my question is about how those refunds are funded. Beverage producers will not be required to pay into the scheme until the scheme commences, but presumably that is paying for containers that are produced and returned for refund from the point of commencement onwards. How is the refund for containers that have been produced prior to the commencement of the scheme going to be funded? Who pays for that?

Mrs HISCUTT - All schemes anticipate and allow for this initial surge of containers at the start of the scheme. Overall, it is a very small percentage of containers over the life of the scheme. The scheme coordinator allows for this surge and funds it through ensuring that prices charged to suppliers for containers can cover this small initial increase. This accommodation is relatively straightforward, as at the same time the scheme coordinator is only estimating the redemption rate - that is, the number of containers returned compared to sold - in order to charge the suppliers. It is part of the scheme coordinator's primary responsibility to cost the scheme.

Mr VALENTINE - Madam Chair, I am interested in that circumstance at the startup, and what you described as the six-months period. For those materials that are not able to be identified as a bona fide container, is there a mechanism where that material can simply be handled by the network operator? They get the weight of the material, and then that is taken to a recycler? Rather than just rejecting the material that is not able to be properly identified, can they at least get a refund for the weight of the material, the aluminium or steel?

Mrs Hiscutt - While the member is on his feet, are you talking about scrap metal prices?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. To save them going to the scrap metal yard. These are sort of collection points, and you would think there might well be a lot of that stuff that comes in right from the start. I am interested to know whether that has been considered.

Mrs HISCUTT - Only a very small amount that will be part of that. I can point you directly to a scrap material and recycling facility in Ulverstone, for example - so they are already there. Therefore, it is possible and yes, they can.

Madam CHAIR - Member for Hobart, I assume you are speaking on the amendment?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. I am only talking about the start of the scheme, and the six months, and that is what the amendment is about, is it not?

Madam CHAIR - We are focusing on this amendment made by the member of McIntyre.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I have that one. I appreciate that these facilities are available, but someone who only has half-a-dozen of these cans is not going to take it to a metal recycler, but there might be hundreds of people that come in with half-a-dozen each. That is what I am saying, and I was interested to know whether that can be handled through the network operator, in the first six months.

What the member here is trying to suggest is we put that into the legislation to make sure it reinforces there is an avenue for disposal of those sorts of things. Is that correct?

Mrs HISCUTT - If we are not talking bales and talking, as you said, six or seven containers or whatever, that is open to kerbside recycling as we have currently.

I want to reiterate again this is legislation we are doing and it is already in the legislation that this will happen. The Government sees it totally unnecessary and asks you to vote against this amendment.

Mr GAFFNEY - Initially I was going to support the amendment, because I thought it had weight, but after I have heard the response from the Government, just a couple of things.

The bigger picture here is we are trying to get this scheme to work and we want it to be able to work effectively and easily within the community. We are bringing up things like if someone brings in six or seven cans. Are they going to weigh that, and give them how many cents per whatever that weighs when we have that chance of getting that into the recycling anyway?

I think if Scout groups and Lions clubs are picking up rubbish they are picking it up to clean up the environment, not just to get a return on the response. We have to look at the bigger picture here.

The other thing if this amendment went in, this clause would be redundant within six months and we need to make our act as simple as we can. If this is already in the proclamation, why would we want to repeat it into the bill? I do not see a need for that.

With education and awareness, once this scheme is in, they will be saying through all of their media, through all of their things, that you have a six-month period, as per the proclamation to get your old cans or containers in. That will happen very quickly and people will jump on that.

We are spending a lot of time over something initially I would have supported, but now I know it is in the proclamation, there is no need for this to go in to the bill. It is just superfluous and we should vote this one down and get on with the next one.

Ms RATTRAY - I appreciate the opportunity to have put forward the amendment and still believe there is nothing wrong with reinforcing something in legislation. As I already pointed out, we have in legislation all manner of things in the day-to-day operations and

something as important as this. Obviously, I have been here long enough now to read the room pretty well.

I certainly want to encourage our communities to do the best they can in the waste that is around our communities, as well as the recycling opportunities. I still look forward to some support, Madam Chair, for my amendment.

While I am standing here, I want to thank James Harvey from the Lions Club who has been a wonderful assistance to me and many other organisations in progressing the initiative and particularly for community groups who will benefit from this particular scheme into the future.

Again, I still think it is important and will be voting for it and hope somebody else does too.

Ms ARMITAGE - I will be voting for it as well. If the Leader says it is superfluous and is already covered, I cannot see a problem in making it clearer. I accept it only goes for six months. If it makes it clearer to the community, then I see no issue in having it in. I will be supporting it.

Mr GAFFNEY - I do not know many community members who will read the legislation. I do not know many people who will go and look through this and look to clause 31(2), for any awareness. They will listen to the media, they will see the proclamation and understand they have six months to get the old stuff in. We do not want new legislation that is not important in the fact that it is going to be redundant within six months. It is already in the proclamation. We need to understand that, yes, it is a good feel and it might make it good for another six months, but it is not necessary. This legislation is going to be here for a long time. It is already covered in the proclamation. Once again I will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms WEBB - To put on the record, I certainly would have supported this amendment and the intent of it. It is absolutely spot-on, I agree, and the member for Rumney mentioned it would have been quite useful to know ahead of now, while we discussed this amendment, the proclamation process was going to happen. I feel that does cover on the intent of the amendment and am comfortable the very good intent put forward in this amendment is going to be given effect through a different mechanism and this now becomes unnecessary. With all apologies to the member, I thank you very much for bringing the amendment and the intent of it. I support it in its intent and feel comfortable it is well covered

Mrs Hiscutt - I was advised at 10 to 1 today that was going to be the case.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 31 agreed to.

Clause 32 agreed to.

Clauses 33, 34 and 35 agreed to.

Clauses 36, 37 and 38 agreed to.

Clauses 39, 40 and 41 agreed to.

Clauses 42 and 43 agreed to.

**Clause 44 -
Regulations**

Ms LOVELL - To clarify with the Leader, maybe with a nod, if it will be in regulations that the exemption for small beverage producers is provided for the 20 000 containers. My question is, the exemption for the first 20 000 containers is going into the scheme, which has been designed to benefit small beverage producers, so will that be included in regulations?

Mrs HISCUTT - The department sought commercial advice as to the best mechanism to ensure that this policy is met. The advice was to proceed in contracts, not regulations. All beverage companies are exempt from paying into the scheme for their first 20 000 container sales each year.

Clause 44 agreed to.

Clauses 45 and 46 agreed to.

Title

A bill for an act to establish a container refund scheme to reduce litter in Tasmania and increase the recovery and recycling of containers.

Ms RATTRAY - Just by explanation to my honourable colleagues, I had proposed an amendment to the long title on the advice of the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. As you will see from that amendment, I am very keen to include the support to local communities in Tasmania through the scheme and employment opportunities and the inclusion of interested community organisations. As I said, I have been working, particularly with the Lions Club, but I know there will be plenty of other organisations.

I have had some advice from the Clerks at the Table and the Deputy President, who has advised that that is contrary to Standing Orders. So, I will not be proceeding with that amendment. I thought members might like to know that it is not that I am not committed to that outcome for this particular container refund scheme. It is not appropriate that I do that. Next time I will have to check my facts a bit better before I propose something like that.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to put that on the record. I am committed to supporting our communities and organisations through this container refund scheme. I certainly want the best outcome for Tasmania but I also want to know that we are going to do it for more than just the recycling reasons.

Madam CHAIR - By way of explanation in terms of the advice to the member, I note that amendments to the long title should be based on the subject matter of the bill, or pursuant to any instructions. Standing order 272 describes this if members want to have a look at that.

If there had have been amendments made to the bill that warranted a change to the long title, then that is acceptable, but if it does not - there were no other amendments to the bill that warranted such a change - then it is out of order. That is why we spoke to the member about

reconsidering her position on that. Had there been an amendment that broadened the scope it may have been a different argument, but without any amendment it really is out of order.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Move Third Reading Forthwith

[4.35 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT - (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council)(by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended to enable the bill to be now read for the third time.

Mr President, the reason I am doing this is that this bill has been here for a long time, it has been studied very hard, and I would like to see it out of our House as soon as possible.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I understand the Leader's request here. We did adjourn the debate on this bill before Christmas because of the unrealistic expectations of the Government to force a number of very complex pieces of legislation through this place. That included the e-scooter legislation, which came in without much forewarning or much time for consideration. We are seeing the debacle that it has been. I look at the regulations that have been gazetted and tabled with all the requirements, but still I do not see the signs that I should be able to see around Battery Point. There has been horrendous damage to Kelly's Steps, if anyone wants to go and have a look at it.

I am making the point, Mr President, that we do not manage the business in this place as members - the Government does. Yes, we have had plenty of time over the break and I appreciate that, and I have taken the opportunity to have a number of briefings with departmental officers, through the Leader's office, regarding this particular bill.

As it has not been amended, I will, on this occasion support the suspension of Standing Orders, because I have had a lot of discussions. Other members can speak for themselves on this, if they wish to; but the clarity that I have achieved through these additional briefings and the personal briefing requested, has given me a degree of comfort about the bill as it stands. If there had been amendments, I would not have been comfortable. I believe that when amendments are debated and considered, they do need to be taken fully into consideration, not rushed through, because that is where mistakes are made and things do not go well.

On this occasion, I will not stand in the way of the bill being read the third time so that the Government can get on with implementing the scheme. However, do not think it is going to happen all the time.

Motion agreed to.

CONTAINER REFUND SCHEME BILL 2021 (No. 54)

Third Reading

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the bill be read for the third time.

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

[4.38 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the Council at its rising adjourns until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

Basslink - Profitability

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I rise on adjournment to raise a matter of misleading information given to this House by the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, at the GBE scrutiny hearing into Hydro Tasmania on 2 December last year. I will briefly outline the hearing and evidence received and answers provided, to give context to my questions that will follow.

Through my questions I was trying to discover how profitable the existing Basslink has been. Given the Basslink is now in the hands of a receiver after just 15 years, when Hydro Tasmania originally had a 25-year agreement with an option for a further 15 years, it surely must be more than of passing interest to find out how profitable it has been. After all, we are contemplating building a second interconnector with three times the capacity of the first, and probably at five times the cost. As we know, it is increasingly harder to make money from electricity. One just has to look at the forward estimates of our electricity companies to see that.

Surely, Mr President, we deserve to know how profitable Basslink, the first version, has been? Therefore, I asked the minister if he could tell me the value of Basslink exports and imports in the latest year, 2020-21. Hydro normally discloses the quantity figures, but not the dollar amounts. The answer was quite simple - that is commercial-in-confidence. A familiar refrain, Mr President. I was told, as noted on *Hansard*, the megawatt hours are public

knowledge, but the outcome of that is not. If I was a counter party, a competitor to Hydro, I could backsolve the value we gained from that. It is commercial-in-confidence to Hydro and would not be revealed. I subsequently discovered that this is simply untrue. Not only do National Electricity Market (NEM) users have access to the figures, our own Office of the Economic Regulator (OTTER) publishes the NEM figures on a weekly basis - the value of exports and imports. Both the quantities and the dollar amounts are available on a weekly basis. The minister misled the GBE committee, saying this information was not available.

I further tried to understand why electricity generated by the Woolnorth wind farm had dramatically fallen in the most recent year. I was told that it was all to do with movements in fair value of electricity contracts. I now know charges in the fair value of electricity contracts are listed separately in Woolnorth's profit and loss, so it looks as though the answer I was given there also may have been incorrect.

It is hard enough trying to understand the electricity market without the minister not providing details that are available, and should be provided, to the committee and effectively misleading the committee. There is so much at stake with the money that will be needed to build Marinus. I am seriously concerned that there are more pressing needs. There is no time to list them all.

Mr President, I ask for a detailed response from the minister on the matters I have just raised. I would also like a copy of the semi-annual public record on inter-regional electricity trading for the last five years that OTTER says Hydro is required to produce. I cannot find it anywhere. It is meant to be public. I also require a time series covering both quantities and dollar amounts of the Basslink imports and exports since 2006.

We only have a small window of opportunity to ask questions of GBEs every two years. Much time is wasted with completely unnecessary and often irrelevant preambles whenever questions are asked. It would be good if that stopped. To follow that with misleading information - dare I say, false information - that is a step too far.

The Council adjourned at 4.42 p.m.

Appendix 1

Response to petition

RESPONSE:

- 2 tabled L. Hiscott
Government response
to member for Murchison
petition regarding the call for
parliamentary review of the planning
process around the cable car development
on Kananyi/
Mt Wellington
- The Government does not consider that an inquiry into the handling of the Cable Car proposal by the Hobart City Council is required.
 - These matters relate to the exercise of statutory planning functions by the Council under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) and the obligations of councillors regarding conflicts of interest under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LGA). 10/3/2021
 - The Council acting as a planning authority is bound to conduct its assessment in line with the requirements of the LUPAA.
 - The decision-making process in relation to development applications is set out in Part 4 of LUPAA, which specifically sets out the matters that must be considered. These include the requirements of the planning scheme relevant to the proposal, and any representations made during a statutory notification period.
 - The decision of the Council is not one of unbound discretion but an assessment against the relevant planning rules.
 - Decisions and processes of councils acting as planning authorities are subject to review by the independent Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (TasCAT) and the courts.
 - Section 4 of the *Cable Car (Kananyi/Mount Wellington) Facilitation Act 2017* provides that landowner consent is not required for lodging a planning permit associated with land owned by a Council.
 - Under the LGA, councillors are required to declare, and appropriately manage, conflicts of interest. This includes both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.
 - Councillors must declare any pecuniary interest in a matter before council. Where such an interest arises, they must remove themselves from discussion and voting on the matter at the relevant council meeting. It is an offence for a councillor to fail to comply with these requirements and significant financial penalties apply.
 - Councillors are required to manage any non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Local Government Model Code of Conduct framework. Under this framework, a councillor must:
 - bring an open and unprejudiced mind to all matters being decided on in the course of their duties, including when making planning decisions as part of the Council's role as a Planning Authority. This includes making decisions free from personal bias or prejudice;
 - not be, or be seen to be, unduly influenced by personal or private interests in undertaking their functions as a councillor;
 - act openly and honestly in the public interest, including declaring any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest at any council meeting or

judgement to determine whether they should remove themselves from discussion of the relevant matter.

- As elected representatives of their communities, councillors can be expected, and are entitled to have, views on matters that come before council. This is part of the democratic process and should not of itself disqualify councillors from participating in discussion and voting on a matter.
- Importantly however, councillors are required to exercise their statutory functions in accordance with the terms on which they are granted and must be prepared to listen to, and consider, contrary argument.
- Local Government elections will be held later this year (2022) which is the community's opportunity to express its views on this and other matters of importance that come before the Hobart City Council.



Hon Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Local Government and Planning

Date: 7 March 2022

Appendix 2

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Josh Willie MLC

ANSWERED BY: Hon Leonie Hiscutt MLC, Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

QUESTION:

My question is to the Honourable Leader

Can the State Government provide figures for the following questions?

1. The figures held by the Department of Education relating to the level of bullying in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
2. The number of student-on-student assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021?
3. The number of student-on-teacher assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
4. The number of workers compensation claims resulting from stress or other psychological injury to Department of Education employees in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
5. The number of suspensions for bullying/harassment/stalking of another student in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?
6. The number of suspensions for bullying/harassment/stalking of a teacher or other staff member in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

CA

7. The total number of student suspensions in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, including a breakdown by grade?

ANSWER

The Tasmanian Government is committed to working with the Department of Education to ensure there is a consistent approach to preventing and responding to bullying through the introduction of minimum standards and strengthening current reporting guidelines.

The Government is also committed to taking action to prevent and address bullying in the community, which has clear links to behavior in schools.

Questions 1 to 3 and 5 to 7 are answered from centrally held student suspensions data for the years 2017 to 2021 in Tables 1 to 7 in Attachment 1.

Question 4 is answered in Table 4 using centrally held HR data.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Education

Date:

Josh Willie

3

Tabled
Joanne Palmer
10-3-22

Attachment 1

tabled and incorporated
into Hansard

Note: Proportion of students suspended is the proportion of the total student population with one or more suspensions.

J. Palmer
10 March
2022

Figures for 2020 were impacted to an extent by the period of learning at home during the COVID lock down.



09

QUESTION 1. The figures held by the Department of Education relating to the level of bullying in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

RESPONSE – Table 1: Proportion of students, number of students and number of incidents for suspension for the reason "Bullying/physical harassment of a student" 2017-2021

| Calendar Year | Proportion of students suspended | Number of students suspended | Number of suspension incidents |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 0.2% | 110 | 119 |
| 2020 | 0.2% | 107 | 112 |
| 2019 | 0.2% | 116 | 119 |
| 2018 | 0.4% | 237 | 261 |
| 2017 | 0.6% | 337 | 392 |

QUESTION 2. The number of student-on-student assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021?

RESPONSE – Table 2: Proportion of students, number of students and number of incidents for suspension for the reason "Physical abuse of another student" 2017-2021

| Calendar Year | Proportion of students suspended | Number of students suspended | Number of suspension incidents |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 2.5% | 1511 | 2200 |
| 2020 | 2.1% | 1275 | 1789 |
| 2019 | 2.2% | 1349 | 1888 |
| 2018 | 2.1% | 1322 | 1821 |
| 2017 | 1.8% | 1096 | 1496 |

QUESTION 3. The number of student-on-teacher assaults or other incidents of physical violence that occurred in Tasmanian schools in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

RESPONSE – Table 3: Proportion of students, number of students and number of incidents for suspension for the reason “Physical abuse of a teacher or other staff member” or “Physical harassment of a teacher” 2017 -2021

| Calendar Year | Proportion of students suspended | Number of students suspended | Number of suspension incidents |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 0.4% | 228 | 312 |
| 2020 | 0.3% | 178 | 268 |
| 2019 | 0.3% | 198 | 292 |
| 2018 | 0.4% | 224 | 308 |
| 2017 | 0.3% | 181 | 260 |

QUESTION 4. The number of workers compensation claims resulting from stress or other psychological injury to Department of Education employees in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

RESPONSE

| Year | No of claims | Accepted | Disputed (not work caused) |
|------|--------------|----------|----------------------------|
| 2017 | 58 | 38 | 20 |
| 2018 | 61 | 41 | 20 |
| 2019 | 70 | 44 | 26 |
| 2020 | 55 | 35 | 20 |
| 2021 | 68 | 40 | 28 |

QUESTION 5. The number of suspensions for bullying/harassment/stalking of another student in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

RESPONSE – Table 5: Proportion of students, number of students and number of incidents for suspension for the reason “Harassment or stalking of another student” 2018-2021

| Calendar Year | Proportion of students suspended | Number of students suspended | Number of suspension incidents |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 0.1% | 42 | 46 |
| 2020 | 0.1% | 40 | 46 |
| 2019 | 0.1% | 41 | 45 |
| 2018 | <0.1% | 16 | 16 |

This category only became available to schools in the Student Support System in July 2018.

QUESTION 6. The number of suspensions for bullying/harassment/stalking of a teacher or other staff member in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021?

RESPONSE – Table 6: Proportion of students, number of students and number of incidents for suspension for the reason "Harassment or stalking of a teacher or other staff member" 2018-2021

| Calendar Year | Proportion of students suspended | Number of students suspended | Number of suspension incidents |
|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2021 | 0.1% | 30 | 33 |
| 2020 | <0.1% | 14 | 14 |
| 2019 | <0.1% | 24 | 25 |
| 2018 | <0.1% | 7 | 7 |

This category only became available to school in the Student Support System in July 2018.

QUESTION 7. The total number of student suspensions in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, including a breakdown by grade

RESPONSE – Table 7 The number of student suspension incidents by year level 2017-2021

| Year Level | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Kindergarten | 4 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| Prep | 49 | 75 | 70 | 37 | 48 |
| Year 1 | 114 | 162 | 199 | 129 | 159 |
| Year 2 | 189 | 227 | 195 | 234 | 201 |
| Year 3 | 306 | 351 | 277 | 367 | 339 |
| Year 4 | 481 | 423 | 420 | 354 | 380 |
| Year 5 | 440 | 604 | 545 | 401 | 426 |
| Year 6 | 495 | 511 | 697 | 570 | 611 |
| Year 7 | 1120 | 1151 | 1369 | 1145 | 1531 |
| Year 8 | 1224 | 1161 | 1276 | 1412 | 1728 |
| Year 9 | 1356 | 1204 | 1104 | 1199 | 1650 |
| Year 10 | 925 | 1109 | 1072 | 813 | 1182 |
| Year 11 | 159 | 149 | 127 | 110 | 125 |
| Year 12 | 66 | 70 | 67 | 53 | 97 |
| Total | 6928 | 7200 | 7425 | 6830 | 8478 |

Note: suspensions for Year 13 are included in the Year 12 figures