

Wednesday 20 June 2018

The President, **Mr Wilkinson**, took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read Prayers.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17)

Noting of Budget Papers

Resumed from 19 June 2018 (page 71)

[11.03 a.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, yesterday I mentioned prisons and said that the Government should not automatically believe that prisons operate best when they are under government control. The Government should look closely at prisons throughout Australia and the world that are run by private companies. The company that runs most of the private prisons on the mainland is an international company with a good record in operating prisons. Having prisons run privately could see savings, efficiencies and a number of other things taken into account. I spoke to the manager of Fulham Correctional Centre who said that prisoners generally prefer to be in privately run rather than publicly run prisons. He gave a number of reasons for that and directed me to a report by the Victorian auditor-general. He asked me to obtain a copy of that report and read it, which I will do and inform members about.

Mr Finch - Are you signalling?

Mr DEAN - I raised this matter yesterday; perhaps I will do so in the Government Administration Committee B, asking for a review of private versus public prisons. Prisons come under that committee's area of interest, so I will raise it with the committee and see what other committee members think.

Mr Finch - It might be timely, considering the trouble at the prison at the moment. It would be good to keep in touch with what is available for the future of the Prison Service.

Mr DEAN - It would be, and I will raise the issue in the sessional committee.

I also raised the issue of stealing in shops yesterday. Last night I received an editor's pick on my phone that referred to self-serve checkouts, saying that stealing in those areas is rife. As I commented last night, an incredible amount of stealing goes on through self-serve checkouts.

Mr Valentine - You could probably balance it with the cost of staffing.

Mr DEAN - You are right - that would make a difference because while self-serve checkouts have relieved stores of a number of staff, theft probably balances that out there. That does not make it right because we are paying for it.

Mr Willie - If you want to stop the stealing, pay the staff.

Mr DEAN - You are right. I am saying that we, as consumers, pay at the end of the line.

I want to touch briefly on TasWater and where we are going with that. It is interesting that not all of Hillwood, on Launceston's doorstep, has potable water. The water in some parts of Hillwood is mud. Seeing is believing - I have been there and looked at it. It is amazing. There are households in that area that have to buy water and go to laundromats to do their laundry. It is a terrible situation. I spoke to TasWater about it, and was told TasWater is working on the problem and that by the end of July the matter should be fixed and all people in that area should have potable water.

It would be a positive move to have the state share ownership of TasWater. I am not sure when that bill will come forward. I think it has to be done by way of legislation. It is highly likely I will support it. The only better way would have been for full state ownership. That is my position on that.

The budget papers refer to freezing of water and sewerage charges in 2019-20 and with a cap thereafter of 3.5 per cent. Consumers are struggling with these costs on top of their rates.

When the split occurred, as people in this place would remember, consumers were misled, and horribly so. They were told the split would not see additional costs to them over and above the rates they were paying at the time. Remember that? I remember that.

Ms Armitage - Not only were consumers misled, we as aldermen at that time were misled because we were told the same thing.

Mr DEAN - That is right, we were.

Ms Armitage - That is why we passed it on to consumers.

Mr DEAN - Yes, A terrible situation occurred because of that. They clearly misled us - that is what people keep saying to me now. When the bill finally comes to us, I will refer to some statistics that show what people are now paying for water and sewerage - they are quite astronomical.

Ms Armitage - It is comparable.

Mr DEAN - You are right, it is comparable and above rates. One family has sent me a copy of their sewerage and water bills, and it is over and above what they are paying in rates. It is out of control and it really needs to be controlled. The Government has said it will freeze the price, which will assist and will support households.

I have spent a little time on preventative health. How much money has been provided in this Budget for strategies to prevent people getting sick and requiring medical help and hospitalisation? It is all very well to pile money into improving medical facilities and building new facilities, but a visionary government should also focus strongly on programs to improve health to prevent the necessity for medical intervention. This should be a main focus, not building new infrastructure and establishing more hospitals and beds. The Government should concentrate on preventative health, and it could do that very easily in some areas. The best and strongest way to attack this issue is by investing in programs to reduce smoking. I will spend a little time on that and will read from a document provided to me on this topic.

First, how much money has been allocated in this Budget to mass media campaigns and other interventions for tobacco control in Tasmania for the next financial year? This is the most effective

method available to state governments to reduce smoking rates. The Heart Foundation, Cancer Council, Quit and other health organisations have made submissions to the Government asking for at least \$464 000 per annum for tobacco control, a small amount at the end of the day when you look at the end result.

I quote from a National Heart Foundation of Australia (Tasmania Division) submission and ask if these objectives have been met -

Recommendation 2.1 - A comprehensive tobacco control program in addition to the current funding allocation to Quit, increase funding for tobacco control activities to a minimum of \$464,000 per year: total of \$1.9million over the four-year period 2017-18 to 2020-2021 - in order to fund:

- anti-tobacco social marketing to an additional \$334,000 per year over the four-year period 2017-18 to 2020-2021 to achieve a minimum of 700 TARPs ...

For members not familiar with TARPS, it is the Tobacco Addiction Recovery Program -

... per month, every month as part of a comprehensive tobacco control program

- a minimum of \$130,000 per year over the four-year period 2017-18 to 2020-2021 to ensure that an annual mandatory Tasmanian Smoking and Health Survey can be undertaken.

In the past the department produced short summary fact sheets after the budget explaining tobacco control expenditure. I respectfully request this be done and provided to members as soon as possible.

People would be aware of Senator Abetz's recent comments about electronic cigarettes. He is saying we ought to be moving down the path of condoning and supporting the use of electronic cigarettes. He is sadly mistaken when you start to look at the history of electronic cigarettes.

It is time to revisit the Tobacco Free Generation proposal I introduced into parliament that was overwhelmingly supported by all major health organisations and 75 per cent of the Tasmanian community. This proposal would phase out the sale of tobacco products by ending the sale to any person born after, for example, 2002. This is not the time to introduce more commercially developed addictive, harmful recreational drugs to the health-stretched Tasmanian community. Some members would be aware of the exploding vape pen that killed a Florida man, and some members would know that aircraft companies have stopped the carrying of electronic cigarettes on planes. A number of things are happening in this area. The liquid nicotine used to refill e-cigarettes can kill a child and it has been linked to deaths.

Contrary to Senator Abetz's claims about European research about e-cigarette use in young people, the *European Respiratory Journal* has just published an article by Ferkol and others that says inter alia -

The use of nicotine-delivering electronic cigarettes has risen dramatically among youths worldwide. In addition to physical dependence, adolescents are susceptible to social and environmental influences to use electronic cigarettes.

The product design, flavours, marketing, and perception of safety and acceptability have increased the appeal of electronic cigarettes to young people, thus leading to new generations addicted to nicotine. Moreover, there is growing evidence that electronic cigarettes in children and adolescents serve as a gateway to cigarette smoking.

It goes on further about identifying the harmful effects of these electronic cigarettes. Tobacco smoking is still a leading preventable cause of death and disease in Tasmania. In 2013-14 smoking cost the Tasmanian community an estimated \$465 million in tangible costs, including in health care and in a loss of productivity because of a reduction in the workforce. If the current smoking rate is reduced to the target of 10 per cent by 2023, it is estimated this would result in tangible savings of \$969 million over a 20-year period, the saving of a hospital. In other words, Tasmania could save \$1 billion over the next 20 years by phasing out the sale of all tobacco products, not by introducing new ones, as Senator Abetz and his tobacco industry friends seek to do.

I have taken this advice from Dr Kathryn Barnsley, currently an adjunct researcher, School of Medicine, University of Tasmania. People are aware of her credibility in this area. She was a major director of, or involved with, SmokeFree Tasmania as well.

There are many issues about this, and I will not go through them all, but I want to make a couple of points. I am disappointed the Government with this Budget has forgotten the greatest cause of ill health, premature death and hospitalisation in our community. The Government has said smoking will be reduced to 10 per cent for all age groups by 2020 and to 5 per cent by 2025. This appears in a document, *Healthy Tasmania Five Year Strategic Plan*, dated July 2016.

What a load of absolute nonsense. Without taking strong initiatives like supporting the Tobacco Free Generation - TFG - or similar groups, there is a snowball's chance in hell of getting anywhere near 10 per cent, let alone 5 per cent. It will not happen. It will not be reduced to 15 per cent by 2025, let alone 10 per cent by 2020, two years away. What is happening? What is the Government doing to try to get anywhere near that percentage decrease? Very, very little. Playing around the edges, tinkering around the edges, a few points here and there, that is what is happening. It will not make much gain at all. Tasmania still has the highest smoking rate in the country. It will continue to be that way for a long time. Having said that, we might be very close to the Northern Territory - they could just be in front of us, but there probably is not much difference there.

There is a new trial on the east coast. I do not know whether the member for McIntyre mentioned it. It has not been mentioned yet in these speeches. The five-month trial, designed by UTAS researcher Mai Frandsen, will take place in Swansea. It is providing smokers with incentive vouchers when they register as smoke-free for up to three months. Member for Prosser, I am sorry for pinching what you might have been going to say, but smoking fits very comfortably with me and has done for a long, long time - trying to stop it, that is.

Three community pharmacies will recruit for the trial and carbon testing will be part of that program. The total value of the vouchers will be \$310 should participants remain smoke-free. As Dr Frandsen said, 'Some people may look at it as rewarding people for doing the wrong thing, but that is a false perception if you consider the billions that is spent on health care each year for smoking-related illnesses.'

I would happily donate money for this program, and so should the Government. If it works, it will promote good health and would have a positive impact on the billions of dollars spent on health

care annually for smoking-related illness. It would also demonstrate that the Government is serious about reducing smoking.

I want to touch on a few issues in my area that have come out of this Budget. The *Examiner* on Thursday, 14 June referred to \$30 million being made available to help improve the Tamar River's water quality. The member for Rosevears raised this matter, but I was ecstatic when I read this article, thinking that after 35 or more involved and costly reports done on the Tamar River, some action was now likely to start the clean-up of this cesspit.

The river is full of sewage, cigarette butts and everything else flushed through toilets and off the streets. It is an absolute mess. However, all I can see in the Budget is a commitment for \$500 000 in 2018-19 and then \$1 million each year through to 2021-22. That is supported by Commonwealth money as well. I will look very closely at how that money is spent and what more will happen here. It is clear that to fix or improve the river, the Ti Tree Bend sewerage plant must be a part of the first works undertaken.

Ms Armitage - Perhaps we need to look at some of the recommendations we received from the many groups involved in it, such as building weirs and barrages. If we are looking at a bridge across the river, perhaps we need to go further, as some other countries have done. I am sure you were on council when we had presentations showing what could be done and how wonderful it could be if you have a weir or barrage across the river.

Mr DEAN - The member for Launceston is right. There have been many presentations on this issue and much work done in relation to it. The member for Rosevears mentioned the select committee inquiry that he, our previous president Don Wing and I were members of. We found that one problem was that so many organisations have a finger in the Tamar River pie that nobody really knows what is going on or who is responsible for what. One of our strong recommendations was that we need to form one body responsible for the Tamar River's clean-up and control.

Ms Armitage - If you could combine all the money spent on it over the years, it would possibly be enough money to build one of these high-end fixes such as a barrage or weir. We have spent so much on reports over a large number of years.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely true; that is one of the issues people continue to raise in the Launceston area. After so many reports, we must know where to go. I hope none of this money now available is for another report.

Ms Armitage - Feasibility report.

Mr DEAN - A sum of \$2 million has been made available for the northern Tasmania tennis centre. I suspect that is for new club and change rooms because the new tennis centre has none. It will be interesting to see whether that is the case. I am not sure who owns the centre now; it used to be the property of the Launceston City Council, which leased it to another group, which may have leased it out to somebody else. It will be interesting to know the position of the Launceston tennis centre. It is well-supported. A ladies' tennis group asked me about was going on with the centre and who owned it. The centre's management was seeking to increase fees by 200 and 300 per cent, so the group was wondering what was going on.

Mrs Hiscutt - Your question is around tenants?

Mr DEAN - Who is the owner of the northern Tasmanian tennis centre at Launceston, who is it leased or subleased to, and who is currently controlling it? What is the position with the state Government? I understand the state put a lot of money into the construction of the new tennis centre in the first place. I would like to know what is going on. There is money for Queechy High School, but this is just rebranded money. That is money that was made available either in the last financial year or in the previous year; it is part of a larger sum of money that will be made available. Queechy High School has been in a terrible state - there is a new building, a new section; that is good -

Mr Willie - That was redeveloped when my dad was principal there

Mr DEAN - I recall your father did work there. That is when I first came to know him. At Queechy they still line up buckets down the corridors when it rains, to ensure water does not spill onto the carpets. The school building needs work; hopefully we can get Queechy High School into a fit condition again. The gymnasium is a good example - the students and other people who use the recreational area refuse to use the change rooms because they are dirty, smelly and terrible.

Mr Farrell - From my short enjoyable time on the Public Works Committee, I remember visiting many schools. Many of the problems are because of school architecture that belongs to a time when buildings were designed more for their appearance rather than their practicality. We are fortunate that newer architectural plans consider both.

Mr Willie - There is more consultation with teachers and students.

Mr DEAN - You are right - it is important there should be more consultation with the people who have to work in these premises. If we took more notice of them, these buildings would be more serviceable and in better condition for the staff who work in them. For example, members of the Legislative Council were involved with the changes made to the ground floor of Henty House for our accommodation over the next 10 years, the term of the new lease. It is great we have had a say on it.

Mr Farrell - It would be interesting to find out who proposed the bronze statue of Kerry Finch for the foyer.

Mr DEAN - I am not aware of that. The city gateway improvements funding of \$1.3 million fits into the Smart Cities Plan, Launceston City Deal. This deal is a tri-part arrangement with the Commonwealth, the state and the City of Launceston Council. It would be good to understand what the projects are and their time frames. The member for Launceston might have more detail on this. There is some mention of it in the Budget and I would like to know more.

Mrs Hiscutt - That might have to be a question for Estimates.

Mr DEAN - Yes. Charles Street Bridge, Goderich and Forster streets and Invermay Road are mentioned in the budget papers. There are significant road congestion problems right through this area, created mainly by developments at the Tamar River end of Lindsay Street. Bunnings is now there, one of the largest stores in the country, along with JB Hi-Fi, Officeworks and others. We also have the magnificent Silo Hotel. The congestion at that intersection, the Lindsay and Goderich streets intersection is all-day long, not just at peak periods, and it is becoming a real mess. I hope some of the money being made available will fix some of the problem.

Mrs Hiscutt - That might be another question for Estimates.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely. An amount of \$53 million is set aside for remedying these traffic problems, plus other projects. Have the Government and the council stepped aside from the eastern bypass of Launceston, which was talked about for a long time? It has not been mentioned for a long time and has come off the agenda. An eastern bypass from the south to the north around the eastern side of Launceston. Maybe it has been shelved.

People have brought the Mowbray Connector to my attention. In any other state it would be an under/overpass structure, but here it will be traffic lights. That is what has been agreed. While that will probably improve safety, it is a poor option. We should be looking at least 40 years ahead, not three or four years. It is a dumb decision to put another set of lights on this major highway, on this south to north Bell Bay, a major industrial site, connector highway. Over 2 kilometres, traffic will have to negotiate about 14 sets of lights. That is nonsense - it is the main access route for heavy trucks and free-flowing traffic is important. Stopping a truck unnecessarily should always be avoided. It involves greater levels of pollution, and wear and tear and fuel costs. These trucks already negotiate about 13 sets of lights.

In order of inherent danger for an intersection or a junction control, an uncontrolled one is the most dangerous. Obviously that is what it is now. Lights are the second best option; the next best option is a roundabout, and the very best option - the ultimate - is an under/overpass. That is the ultimate. We should not accept anything less than a roundabout.

In the time of the Labor government and the Dilston bypass, a roundabout plan was in place for the Mowbray Connector. I received advice one Friday night from a senior member of the Launceston City Council - the member for McIntyre was there at the time - that the roundabout had been shelved and the money had been moved to the Dilston bypass. The roundabout was planned to go in at the Mowbray Connector. The money might well have gone to Dilston for the construction of an under/overpass. I was very strong in this place on that, but they had run out of dollars.

Ms Armitage - That was for your pulp mill, as I recall.

Mr DEAN - No, it was not anything to do with the pulp mill; it is not true to say that.

Ms Armitage - The upgraded road was.

Mr DEAN - No, it was not. You need to look at the heavy traffic on the road now. Bell Bay is a thriving hub for produce and woodchips with many log trucks travelling on it. It is ironic in a way that on my advice, it would seem the money was taken from the roundabout and put into an under/overpass at Dilston. This was because the people of Dilston, Windermere, Swan Bay and George Town would not accept anything less. They stood up on their haunches as we should with the Mowbray Connector. I will take this matter up with the RACT because I am confident it would not support traffic lights. Certainly, lights are a better option than an uncontrolled intersection. I will probably take it up with the trucking companies and City of Launceston Council because I would be surprised if they had not wanted something better than traffic lights.

I commend Labor for putting the roundabout plan in place; had they continued, it would have saved two lives. There were two deaths about three years ago on this junction. One a young person, one a little older.

Ms Armitage - A double fatality.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it was a double fatality. Had a roundabout been there, those two lives might have been saved. There have been a number of crashes there; it is a terrible black spot on the roadway.

Mr Farrell - It highlights the need for longer term infrastructure plans because regardless of who is in government, things are swapped and changed with money moved from one electorate to the other. If a plan was in place over 30, 40 or 50 years, you probably would not see those sorts of issues.

Mr DEAN - True, absolutely true. I think this Budget refers to long-term infrastructure planning, that the Government will go down that path. That has been raised in this place previously.

Mrs Hiscutt - We do talk about six-year plans, but then we are being criticised for taking them over a four-year period, so you are damned if you do and you are damned if you do not.

Mr DEAN - Committing other governments, you are right.

I want to raise the Tamar River bridge crossing. I and many other people have said we always thought it was pie in the sky stuff that it would never occur in our lifetimes.

Ms Armitage - It has not yet.

Mr DEAN - No, it has not, but there is money in this Budget to consider this or to look at planning another bridge crossing the Tamar River. As I understand it, it is identified at this stage as the 'Alanvale Connector', or the University Way and the East Tamar Highway, which is north of the Mowbray Connector. It will go across to Cormiston Road on the Riverside side. It is interesting that the planning stage of this work is being identified. It will be a large piece of infrastructure. People are excited about it because it will assist tremendously with traffic congestion. There is a lot of congestion on the western side of the Tamar River. The member for Rosevears has created all this, with all his traffic problems. This bridge will take the problem away from West Tamar and bring it across to our side. It is good to see the state Government is looking seriously at the congestion problems on the Riverside side. The member for Rosevears would know more about that than I would.

Mr Finch - I made a speech here, probably 15 years ago now, about a crossing. There is an opportunity to have a barrage across there which would help greatly with the silting problem. I might revisit that speech.

Mr DEAN - I remember the barrage being raised.

Mr Farrell - It would be a good spot for another bronze statue.

Mr DEAN - Of the member for Rosevears?

Mr Finch - The idea is to simply stop that congestion in the city. All the traffic coming down the West Tamar has to go up the East Tamar and has to come nearly into the centre of the city.

Mr DEAN - That is true. It is no good doing that unless they fix the problem we currently have at Lindsay and Goderich streets, the intersection near Bunnings. That has to be fixed, as does the Mowbray Connector. Other things have to go hand in glove with this.

The North Bank infrastructure is a very interesting matter for me, the member for Launceston and the member for Rosevears, with \$665 000 set aside for that. The North Bank improvements have started already, with the construction of a footbridge across to Seaport. There has been a bit in the press about that, including a piece in the *Mercury* yesterday. This will complement the great work of Errol Stewart, with his construction in the Seaport area, and now on my side of the river, at the Silo Hotel. It will complement everything he is doing. What a visionary man, one of this state's greatest entrepreneurs, and what magnificent work he has been doing. All his work is of the highest standard. He puts his name on that and says he will not be involved in anything unless it is of a very high standard. The member for Rosevears commented on the CH Smith site yesterday in his special interest matters speech. Once again, Errol Stewart is right behind that and very much involved in it. It is great.

Mr Finch - I had some communication with Errol Stewart yesterday. He said the area, and Tasmania, has been very good to him and his family over a long time and it is very good to be able to put back into the community.

Mr DEAN - I knew Errol Stewart's father quite well because he was involved in the timber industry; he had a timber mill. As a part of the North Bank project we will also see a state-of-the-art children's play area constructed. This is all part of the state funding as well, and it is important because Launceston has been left behind the rest of the state when it comes to children's play areas. We have a few dotted here and there, a few swings and slides, but that is it. This will be a wonderful part of the North Bank development.

Money has been made available for the Hobblers Bridge Sports Centre, which is great because netball continues to be a growing sport. Sixty teams are participating in netball in the region, with 1500 members, and it is continuing to grow. There are 13 netball courts; it is a significant set-up. It is important that money is made available for that - one of the important parts of the year for the netball centre is the Windermere trophy, awarded every year on grand final day. It is a much-anticipated event. This will help promote netball for a long time, which is what it is all about.

Elphin Sports Centre - \$90 000. We appreciate that very much because that is a much-used centre, home of the Tornados, and we need to ensure it is kept up to a high standard in the future.

Mrs Hiscutt - When my sons were playing basketball, we used to travel to Launceston to play at that centre.

Mr DEAN - Prossers Road received funding. Interestingly, I had a call from people living in that area only about two weeks ago to tell me about the poor condition of the road. Something has to be done and it is great there is money in this Budget. It needs sealing; it is not a long stretch of road and sealing would be the way to do it, once and for all. Hopefully some of this money will go towards sealing. It needs to have a reasonably permanent fix.

My electorate has done quite well in respect of election commitments. Perhaps the biggest country town winner is the George Town RSL, which has received up to \$200 000 to relocate and buy a new premises. It is great that has happened. The Government has provided a lot of good things to George Town since our demise - and I say our demise because I am a member of that sub branch as well - the demise of the previous RSL premises when funding became an issue. We are moving shortly into another area of George Town through government support, which is to be commended.

Mr President, I must also thank this place, the Legislative Council, for the support provided to the RSL by way of some furnishings. I want to put that on the record. It has been much appreciated and the RSL is delighted to get some support.

It is the first time I have seen a government put out a full list of all promises made during an election campaign; I have not seen that before. It did not happen last year, and it did not happen four years ago. This is the first time I have seen it. It is wonderful the Government has committed to honouring all those promises and pledges it made during the election campaign. The Government should be commended on that. It should give the Government a lift in credibility. People are talking about it - 'They made a promise to us and we got it.' That is what people are saying. Even small amounts of money mean a lot to some of these places and clubs. It does not matter how small it is, it means a lot to them.

I will finish with a couple of comments on the Treasury building. There is a lot of talk about that and what should happen to it. My view is that the Treasury building is more suited to another use rather than to house the Treasury staff. I do not think it is the right place for that. Looking at this place, we have said for a long time that we need to make changes here to make it more work-friendly. It is the same for the Treasury building. Old buildings are great to look at but when it comes to working in them, they are not so good. Provided the Treasury building is sold at or above market value and not given away, it should be sold. There are many examples of where that has happened with government properties. With the information I have at this time, I would support the sale of the Treasury building. We can do much better. It is a heritage-listed building and its integrity must be retained at all cost. No doubt about that.

The member for Rosevears and others have mentioned the co-location of Calvary St Luke's to Launceston General Hospital. The co-location of the Royal Hobart Hospital and Hobart Private works well. When you look at other regional cities around Australia, most of them have co-located public and private premises.

People are asking: What is likely to happen to the St Luke's Hospital in Lyttleton Street? What is likely to happen to St Vincent's Hospital? I do not think they can be demolished. If that co-location occurs, it will be interesting to see the outcome for those two buildings.

Mrs Hiscutt - It will be a decision for the owners.

Mr DEAN - That will be closely watched, of course.

Mrs Armitage - Many people are saying we should have had a bit more foresight earlier on. The old Launceston General Hospital would have been the ideal location for the co-located hospital because it is across the road.

Mr DEAN - I do not think we need to revisit that. The member is right.

Mrs Armitage - We looked at it, particularly with the parking issues.

Mr DEAN - You are right - hindsight is a great thing.

Mrs Armitage - It was not even hindsight.

Mr DEAN - I finish with a short comment on the church sale saga because it is hurting a lot of people. I am pleased the member for Prosser has moved a motion that will allow us to talk a little bit more about this. On Sunday I went to a church service and a public meeting afterwards at St Matthias Church, Windermere, the oldest rural church in this state. It was built 175 years ago in the 1840s. It is heritage-listed and has a great tourism attraction as well. That church will not be sold. People will not allow that to happen. They have to raise about \$45 000 to keep it. One criterion set by the Anglican Church is that a quarter of the value of all their properties must be paid into a fund that will provide redress for survivors of child sexual abuse. That is what they are working on at present, to get the money they need.

The church would not be a good saleable structure anyway because it has a cemetery around it. The Government is currently working on changes to the Burial and Cremation Act 2002. Some changes will be made to that act to ensure the preservation and protection of all relevant cemeteries. It will be interesting to see that legislation when it comes before us.

Mrs Armitage - The other sale in your electorate is of St Leonards church. You may recall how old that is and the work that was done when we were both on the council. Now it is up for sale.

Mr DEAN - Hopefully, we can also look at that church. We will raise the money at Windermere to save that church. I am confident.

Mr Finch - The 'member for Windermere church'.

Mr DEAN - It has a good ring to it. At the meeting on Sunday people kept saying the upsetting thing was that it was a sad situation that we have to pay for the sins of other people. The archdeacon and the minister said that they are not paying for the sins of those people and what they did; what they are paying for is the senior people within the organisation who knew about it, who had an early understanding of what was going on, and did nothing about it. That is what people are paying for. That is where this problem stems from -

Mr Finch - The money is going to support the victims.

Mr DEAN - The Anglican Church has already paid out \$1.5 million. They do not have any money, not like the Catholic Church and some of the other churches. They are accepting their responsibilities and the position of the royal commission. This Government and the federal government have supported these moneys being paid. There is a three-year period for it to occur and they are not backing off.

Ms Forrest - The member for Prosser has a motion proposing an alternative.

Mr DEAN - It will give us a chance to talk about it. On the information available to me, the Budget is good. Some areas need to be considered further and I have raised some of those today. I hope that happens because I am not going to sit back and allow some of the things to occur without taking it as far as I can. I will be supporting the noting of the Budget.

[11.53 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President I congratulate the Hodgman Government for once again achieving a budget surplus. The recent announcement of an additional \$20 million of new funding to be invested in reducing elective surgery waiting times is a pleasing addition to

Tasmania's health system. The elective surgery waitlist affects hundreds of Tasmanians, many of whom are forced to live in chronic pain while waiting for surgery. It is hoped colonoscopy and endoscopy waiting times will be reduced because these procedures are often life-saving. Waiting lists have been far too long for far too long.

Although long overdue, I am happy and relieved the Government is focusing a large portion of its health funding on the Launceston General Hospital. The \$87.3 million investment budgeted for the LGH will provide vital upgrades, the addition of eight new beds on Ward 4K, refurbishment, expansions and additional car parks. More beds are needed urgently and I await the election promise of the planned creation of the new Ward 3D in 2023-24 with 32 new inpatient beds. The flow-on effects to greater Launceston, both in increased employment and medical services, will be well received.

I am concerned about promises being made outside a government's term of office and possibly across different-coloured governments because this is more wishful thinking as opposed to commitment. Sufficient staff need to be employed to staff these wards and beds, and to see funding for an additional 180 nursing graduates over the next six years.

I note the Budget lists 40 more northern nursing graduates at a cost of \$3.4 million. Hopefully the 20 extra graduates listed for the north will appear in the next budget because I note the election promise was for 60 northern nursing graduates. Perhaps I have misread the Budget, or the time frame. Could the Leader explain that one for me?

Another promised project for the LGH is the addition of specialist services for mental health, a much-needed service for the north of the state, and one I have no doubt would be well utilised. Could the Leader please advise where this is at?

I see the Government is investing additional funding for 25 new mental health beds in the south.

I am also pleased to see \$6 million over three years to fund more drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds across the state, more than \$1.8 million funding for infrastructure, and almost \$16.5 million over four years for the opening of the new beds.

While I acknowledge the Tasmanian Health Service is working to address the gaps in north and north-west Tasmania with regard to a persistent pain service, with a steering committee established to look at a number of recommendations put forward by the Musculoskeletal Clinical Advisory Group in 2016, with no time frame set for this and the THS focused on developing a statewide model of care, what is the Government doing in the interim to address the issue of no pain service in the north and north-west of the state?

I also support the co-location of Calvary private hospital with the LGH site because I believe this will deliver better service to the people of the north. It will also provide easy access to the intensive care unit and medical staff at the private hospital.

Obviously car parking will continue to be an issue and we may need to build several floors for car parking beneath the new hospital to cater for the demand. The other possibility is adding a floor or two to the existing car park.

It is currently very difficult for people living near the hospital with regard to car parking - free car parking will always be preferred by people over paid parking. I do not know how we overcome

this. Constituents have told me that they take their children to school and then have nowhere to park when they return to their homes. You can only imagine how difficult it is because many of the very old homes in that area have small and narrow driveways. Often people cannot get back into their driveways even if there is space because other people park their cars so close to the edges. After they have taken their children to school or gone shopping, they come home and have nowhere to park.

Over the last couple of years, the Emergency Department of the LGH has received some bad press. I applaud the Government for responding to this issue by making the Community Rapid Response a permanent service in Launceston. This service, combined with the extra beds, should help alleviate some of the pressure the Emergency Department is under.

However, I am advised that it has been a very difficult fortnight for the Launceston General Hospital with overcrowding, large numbers of admitted patients in the emergency department and ambulance ramping. I believe that as Ward 4D was full, we had medical patients in surgical wards of the LGH, a situation to be avoided.

One of the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine's issues was overcrowding and patient flow through the Emergency Department. Even though emergency departments are busy places, it is not normally at the severity we see from the college's point of view. It is hoped that if the situation can be improved, we may regain accreditation.

I also understand that the Royal Hobart Hospital had 45 patients admitted earlier this week with no beds on the wards, with the flu season yet to fully strike. If the minister has a plan, it needs to be put in to action quickly.

We need to keep people out of hospitals by putting more into preventative health. I hope the \$120 000 allocated for a feasibility study into an urgent care centre will show that such a centre would be of great benefit to the area, and should alleviate some pressure on the LGH Emergency Department.

I would have liked to have seen something in the Budget for a hospice or a dedicated palliative care area within the LGH or the Launceston region because this has been a wish for many in our community since the demise of Philip Oakden House in 2007. I take this opportunity to commend Barb Baker, Lyn Thomas and their committee for their years of hard work and commitment in trying to make a northern hospice a reality.

I am also happy to see a number of other announcements in the state Budget that affect the Launceston area, and I will go through those shortly.

TasWater was mentioned by the member for Windermere. I am very pleased to see a compromise has been found with respect to TasWater's ownership. Like the member for Windermere, I voted in favour of a government takeover. What has come out of it is certainly a good alternative. I also put on the record the very good and timely assistance provided to my constituents by TasWater's CEO Mike Brewster. Without exception, every issue I have taken to him over the last six months has been resolved to the satisfaction of my constituents. That is worth mentioning.

On the northern prison, while we hope that fewer people go to prison, we know there will always be a need for some confinement. I commend the previous member for Western Tiers, who

fought very hard for a prison at this end of the state, particularly to help visitation of residents. Finding the best site is critical, and I tend to agree with those wishing to site it near the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. That is probably the best place. Perhaps we could have a Greg Hall wing.

It is also pleasing to see an additional \$12.6 million for tourism, as I am sure this will help the Government reach its target of 1.5 million visitors to Tasmania by 2020. The statistics show that visitor spending increased by 8 per cent over the last year to \$2.33 billion, which is promising for the tourism and hospitality sectors of our community.

The funding over three years allocated to the proposed 'Northern Journey' drive will no doubt boost tourism to the greater Launceston area, as will the addition of more flights into Launceston airport. I remember the member for McIntyre mentioning the tourist drives and how worthwhile they are, particularly at encouraging people to see more areas of our state.

The extra funding assigned to the upgrade of certain roads in Launceston will certainly ease traffic flows, especially the expansion of the Charles Street Bridge. That is a very busy road, particularly with the super stores on Lindsay Street. It is also important that visitors to the newly opened Silo Hotel and Grain of the Silos Restaurant on Lindsay Street do so without too much hold-up. I commend the work and vision of Errol Stewart and what he has given back to Launceston over a great number of years. It is extremely commendable.

On to Education, I am delighted that two schools in the Launceston area will be among the first schools to be extended through to years 11 and 12 in 2019 - Kings Meadows and Prospect high schools. I think Prospect High School has now gone across to the member for Rosevears. It was mine and I still feel some ownership. Many of the constituents still live in my electorate. I am happy to share.

I am concerned about the impact on Newstead and Launceston colleges. I am advised that numbers at Newstead College are well down. If this is the case, who is using the accommodation provided for students at this school? Perhaps the Leader could answer this question. I believe there is certain accommodation located or co-located with Newstead College. I have heard that perhaps it is not all being used by students now.

Mrs Hiscutt - Is that your direct question: is it used?

Ms ARMITAGE - Who is using the accommodation, with the numbers down at Newstead College?

Mr Dean - You will be able to ask the minister that on Monday

Ms ARMITAGE - We might get an answer before that.

Mrs Hiscutt - I will see if we can; if we cannot, we might press on.

Ms ARMITAGE - While I appreciate the investment of more than \$31 million to provide free preschool to disadvantaged and vulnerable three-year-olds from 2020, concern has been raised that this may lead to the demise of some early learning childcare centres, which rely on many of these subsidised children to keep their doors open. My understanding, Leader, is that the preschool program from 2020 was about the local early education and care centres getting first option at providing the programs, unless of course a school already has the facilities on site. To allay the

fears of many in the early childhood sector, can you advise how many schools are getting kindergarten ELC upgrades and/or grants?

One of the greatest determinants of a budget is how it provides for the most vulnerable Tasmanians. This Government has dedicated an additional \$24 million to help protect children in out-of-home care and potentially at risk. Children are our future. If we do not provide for their safety and educational growth, we are not ensuring the future of this state. This area, along with Health and Education, can never have too much government support.

The Budget includes investment of \$24.9 million over the forward Estimates period for a suite of projects across northern Tasmania, including the Midland Highway, the Tasman Highway and other road improvements. It is hoped landowners are adequately compensated when their land is compulsorily acquired. Properties can be cut in half with portions useless to the owners unless they plan to subdivide, which may not be the case. This then results in a very large loss to the landowner.

I am also pleased to see the \$3.5 million for the Launceston Airport road access. It would be appreciated if the Leader could perhaps elaborate on what is happening.

I am disappointed, as mentioned by the member for Windermere, that the road fix for the Mowbray Connector will be traffic lights rather than a roundabout. Obviously, an overpass would be best, but a roundabout is better than traffic lights. An article was published in the *Examiner* on 14 May 2017 that reads -

A notoriously dangerous intersection on the East Tamar Highway is set for a major upgrade, with \$7 million allocated in next week's state budget.

The Mowbray Connector and East Tamar Highway junction has previously been the topic of heated debate among the Launceston community, with 10 crashes at the site over the past five years, including a double fatality early last year.

Announcing the funding on Sunday, Infrastructure Minister Rene Hidding, said it was 'an expensive job but worth doing. While reducing serious crashes is our major objective, in line with our goal of no deaths or serious injuries on our roads, this upgrade should also improve traffic flow', he said. Both a roundabout and traffic lights have been proposed for the intersection, however, Mr Hidding said a roundabout was the 'likely outcome'. ... A final design plan is expected within the next month or two and the works could be completed by the end of 2018.

We were told it would likely be a roundabout because this would be the best result. But, alas, economy has won and it will be traffic lights.

Men's sheds and neighbourhood houses are also supported in this Budget. These kinds of organisations are the quiet achievers in our community. They provide a necessary function for many hundreds of Tasmanians and enhance so many lives through their support and friendship. We have all visited some of the men's sheds and neighbourhood houses in our electorates. Newcomers are very quiet and shy in the beginning, then all of a sudden they start to talk. They have no-one at home to talk to and many live alone. It is somewhere for them to come. It is wonderful to go along and actually see how they open up, feel welcome and look forward to their visits to the men's shed. The wonderful things they make are fabulous.

Tasmanian seniors are being acknowledged with cost savings to national park passes, the removal of disincentives to downsize their homes, allocated funding to Council on the Ageing, funding support for the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy and the Active Ageing Plan. With our state's ageing population, this always needs focus.

The Budget contains the first tranche of \$70 million dedicated to the national redress scheme, which hopefully will see many Tasmanians who live with the horror of being a child sexual abuse victim be provided with more services and support. I cannot imagine the pain and suffering these people have and continue to go through. Anything we can do to help is welcomed.

Can the Leader advise about government funding for urgent restoration work on the Anglican Christ Church at Low Head? As suggested, last week I wrote to the Treasurer to find out if recompense would be made to the Government should the Christ Church be listed for sale in November. To date, all I have had is acknowledgment of my letter.

Mrs Hiscutt - Didn't we have a question without notice on that?

Ms ARMITAGE - It was suggested I write to the Treasurer. Perhaps the Leader can provide me with the answer because I believe that the funding needs to be provided with a caveat.

I also note the comments by the member for Windermere with regard to St Matthias Church at Windermere and St Peter's Church at St Leonards. Neither of these are in my area, but many of my constituents go to these churches. I have had calls and correspondence about the fact they are to be sold, particularly with St Matthias being a church such as it is and its age, and also St Peter's. The member for Windermere would recall when we were both on the council -

Mr Dean - It had an extension done to it.

Ms ARMITAGE - There was a lot of concern about the extension, and it took some time to go through council. Many parishioners were concerned about the extension to it. The Anglican Church wanted this large room on the side because it would be more helpful for the parishioners and would make the church more user-friendly. It is very sad to see it is listed for sale not many years after that extension was done. Perhaps the people of the area can find their way to raising the money for it. It is such a small area at St Leonards. I do not believe it is fair for the parishioners to have to raise that money. There must be some other way the Church can find that money without selling off places such as this.

On to the Tamar River. While the Tamar River is not in the Launceston electorate - I put the blame on the members for Rosevears and Windermere - the health of the Tamar River is a concern for all in the greater Launceston area. It is pleasing to see the Commonwealth coming on board with a \$27.9 million investment as part of the Launceston City Deal to help clean up the river and restore it to a healthy system.

The additional funding of \$3.5 million the state is investing in the Tamar catchment will add to the clean-up effort. I sincerely hope we can improve this river and make it an attraction. Unfortunately, many millions of dollars have already been spent on often short term-focused actions, after which the river returns to its previous state. How many reports have we had on that river during my time on council? There have been countless reports.

Mr Dean - Close to 40.

Ms ARMITAGE - If you look at the cost of the reports now sitting on shelves gathering dust, we possibly could have done something to change the state of that river with that money. Perhaps the bridge across the Tamar promised in the election spiel could form part of a barrage or a weir, as has been the case in other countries.

When I was on council, as was the member for Windermere - I think he might have been the mayor at that stage - we had presentations from many people about other countries. From memory, Singapore was one of them. A great deal of money was required, but when you add up the money that has been spent already in smaller portions, if we had had some long-term vision rather than short-term gain, we actually might have been able to do something to provide a much better outcome than what we have at the moment. You only have to look at the river to see that the silt comes back. I agree with the member about the Ti Tree Bend Sewage Treatment plant: while we are looking at that to alleviate it, in heavy rainfall it has to open the gates to allow the partly treated sewage through.

Mr Dean - They have accepted that.

Ms ARMITAGE - They accepted that because it simply cannot cope with the approximately 9162 homes in the Launceston area that have joint sewerage and water. In periods of heavy rain all the stormwater that goes in with the sewage is far too much for the sewage treatment plant to cope with.

Hopefully, the Government and TasWater can look at alleviating some of these issues and add to the treatment of the Tamar River.

Mr Valentine - It is the same problem at Salamanca, where the stormwater is going into the sewerage works. It is not the incapacity of the sewerage system to cope with sewage, it is the incapacity to cope with all the stormwater that goes through it.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes. We all need to take responsibility for this river if we are ever to have a chance of redeeming it.

All in all, it is a reasonable budget, although I am disappointed that once again first homebuyers have been left out. It is all very well to support first home builders: I understand the flow-on to the building industry et cetera. I also appreciate, particularly with the lack of rental accommodation, that many young people would love some assistance with buying their first home and that many can not afford to build.

To me, this is discrimination. I will never agree with the excuse that it allows vendors to raise the price of their home by the amount of the grant. What it does is provide first homebuyers with the money for a deposit. We all know -

Mr Dean - It is about creating employment as well.

Ms ARMITAGE - I mentioned that, member for Windermere, it is about creating employment. I accept that, but I also believe, if the budget is as healthy as it is, why not provide some funding for people who cannot get rental accommodation, but who would love to buy their first home but cannot afford to build a brand-new home? What they can afford is perhaps to buy one of these houses people are now buying for short-term accommodation or for rental, which they could do up, but they just need help with the deposit.

I can recall, many years ago when I was in real estate, that people used their first homebuyer's grant as a deposit to get the rest of their money. They would have to go to the bank, there was one particular lady - I will not mention her name - who was absolutely wonderful. She would help them by using the first homebuyers grant as their deposit, to then get the rest of their funding.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am aware of the member's feelings on this, but this is a targeted policy. I appreciate what you are saying.

Ms ARMITAGE - I understand that, but this is also part of a grievance debate and the grievance I have every year is that one sector of my constituents, who would love to be home owners, are left out. The Government has a surplus and I cannot see why it cannot include the group that every year, for many years now, has been discriminated against. There used to be a homebuyers grant. I am not sure if it was under the Labor government at that stage and who dropped it.

Mr Willie - We started it.

Ms ARMITAGE - Home builders grants are all very well, but do not discriminate against those young people, or even older people, who want to get into their first home. They cannot find anywhere to rent and they cannot buy a new house or build a new house. It makes no difference - I say it every year and no-one listens; it falls on deaf ears. I hope one day the Treasurer, when he finds he needs those extra votes, will find the money.

I am looking at the delivery for Bass. The greater Launceston area has done quite well. Probably the majority is in Windermere and Rosevears, but I am very happy with that because all those people come into the Launceston area. They use our facilities and that is what it is all about. It is about everyone working together for the good of the state.

I am very pleased to see \$600 000 for Karinya Young Mums 'n' Bubs. I am not sure how many people are aware of that program. It provides intensive case management and accommodation to young pregnant women and also young mums and dads in Launceston aged between 15 and 19 years. Priority is given to those who have limited family support or are homeless or at risk of homelessness. You can only imagine what it would be like to be a young person between 15 and 19, pregnant, maybe thrown out of home, with nowhere to live or rent. It is the young dads as well because sometimes these young people have a partner and neither of them has anywhere to live. It is good to see that \$600 000 has been given towards the Karinya Young Mums 'n' Bubs. I am almost finished, I can see the member for Elwick is very anxious.

A couple of last issues in other electorates that certainly relate to the greater Launceston area. The Duck Reach Power Station education centre, \$51 000, is one of these. It is critical to that area to develop this station and for people to be able to go and look at it. It is really important to keep these areas alive so people know what happened in our past.

Reimagining the Gorge, \$875 000 - many people say that the Gorge is magnificent as it is, that it does not really need any reimagining. However, if more tourists come, more tourists will see it. We know what something like MONA has done to Hobart and the southern region. If we can, we should have more of a spotlight on it. We believe Launceston is the greatest city in Tasmania, also the greatest city in Australia, and that the Gorge is certainly number one on the world stage.

All in all, this is a reasonable budget. It has certainly been fairly good to my area of Launceston and to most areas in the state. There really is something for most places in it. I am a little concerned with some of the promises going over the Government's term. I am concerned about that because if it is a promise that is made outside your term -

Mrs Hiscutt - The last speaker spoke in favour of 20-year plans.

Ms ARMITAGE - I understand the plan, and the plan is great. However, promising funding for something when a government of another colour may come in and may not complete or may not start -

Mr Dean - But that has to happen, because otherwise a government can only plan for four years. What a horrible -

Ms ARMITAGE - I understand the planning, but I am looking at something like Ward 3D. We hope that when women's and children's wards move into this new area, it will be redeveloped into 32 beds. It is a hope.

Mr Dean - It is not unlike local government, exactly the same. They plan well and beyond the time of the current council.

Ms ARMITAGE - I am not disputing that. Local government is probably a bit different because the council is the council regardless of who is sitting around the table. A government is slightly different; it can be a totally different colour and have a totally different direction. I am concerned that on paper it looks as though we are getting 40 new beds. We are actually getting eight new beds and we hope to get another 32. I hope we get another 32, but I would like them sooner rather than later, particularly when you look at the number of people at the moment who are sitting in an emergency department whether at the LGH or the Royal. They have already been admitted but they are either sitting in a bed or sitting in a chair.

The nurses and staff in an emergency department should not be treating patients as if they were in a ward; that is not their job. They are dealing with casualties - critical patients coming in - while trying to deliver meals and get bedpans. That really is not right.

All I am getting upset about is the fact that it looks on paper as if we are getting 40 new beds. I would like to get 40 new beds, but something could happen in the next three years or so which means those 32 new beds do not go across to this or they go to something else, and it will not happen. They are commitments. I agree with you that we need to plan for the future and that we need a long-term plan.

Mr Dean - Yes, the government has talked about that.

Ms ARMITAGE - I accept that; it is imperative. We have to have that. I am concerned that when we promise to do something, particularly providing hospital beds, another government may come in and say, 'Well, hey, we would have done it if we were still there, but we are not still there, so now you are not getting 32 beds. It is not our promise. That is what we would have done, but we are not there anymore.' That concerns me.

I commend the Government on quite a good budget. It is good to see that the Government has a budget surplus. As I said, if it has a surplus, how about it gives some money to the first homebuyers?

[12.24 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I thank other members for their contributions. Mine will have a different spin again.

The Government said this is a budget that will take us to the next level and that this is the golden age. While it is acknowledged we are in good economic times, some important truths need to be stated during this debate. The first one is that the current global economic conditions suit Tasmania. Tasmania relies heavily on its exports and when the Australian dollar trades at a lower rate, our industries benefit.

The current exchange rate is 0.74 US cents, but reached an all-time high of \$1.10 US in July 2011. This was off the back of the 2008 financial crisis which took time to flow to Australia and Tasmania, and is widely acknowledged as the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression. It was Labor governments - federal and state - that were dealt that hand and they made very good decisions at the time in difficult circumstances to insulate us from as much of the fallout as possible.

The global and Australian economies are recovering from those times and Australia is being lifted through better terms of trade, through federal grant increases, through increasing GST payments and domestic activity which has resulted in better state revenues. The Liberal state Government has been very keen to take credit for this. In taking credit you would think it would be easy to point to a raft of significant economic reforms that have contributed to the growth.

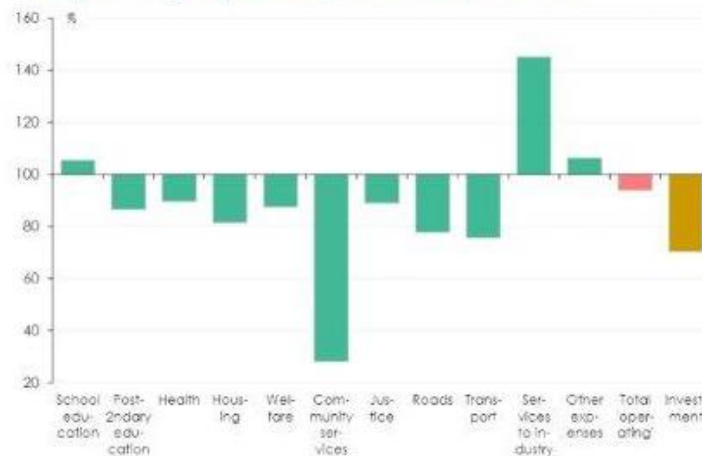
Last week when questioned by the Opposition the Treasurer was unable to point to a single one. I ask members in this place: can you name a significant economic reform implemented by the Hodgman Liberal Government? I often ask that question to rusted-on Liberal voters when discussing the state of Tasmanian politics. Usually the silence is deafening. Yes, I acknowledge we are in good economic times but, as others have said, this is very much a 'minding the store' government that has benefited from luck.

Despite the success of the economy on the back of hardworking private enterprise, we have a government presiding over some of the worst education outcomes in the country, skyrocketing housing costs comparative to wages and a health system that is in crisis. At last week's TasCOSS budget briefing CEO Kym Goodes talked about transformational change, deep system thinking and redesign, and the willingness of state governments to leave a legacy that as a generation we will all be proud of. During her presentation she highlights this graph by Saul Eslake. It highlights actual service provision spending compared to what is required as assessed by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Mr President, I seek leave to table the graph and incorporate it into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The graph reads as follows -

'Level of service provision ratios' for specific areas of 'operating expenses', Tasmania, 2016-17



Mr WILLIE - This graph shows the level of service provision ratios for specific areas of operating expenses in Tasmania in 2016-17. In schools and education, we are above what is required - we spend the most per dollar per student and we get the worst outcomes. Most of the other sectors, including post-secondary education, health, housing, welfare and community services are particularly underinvested. Justice, roads, transport, other expenses, total operating investments are all below what is required.

However, services to industry are above what is required. So we are in good economic times but this graph highlights that investment is not being shared across the economy and across sectors. The growing inequality in Tasmania and in Australia needs to be recognised. We have a lot of work to do.

Saul Eslake's informative analysis and commentary informed my reading of the Budget. I refer to some of the figures he cited in an ABC report last week. The political comments are my own. There is \$1.6 billion worth of new spending in this Budget. Good economic managers save during the good times for a rainy day, but not this Government. This Government was clearly panicked during the election campaign and went on an unprecedented spending spree. The new spending will be funded by a combination of additional revenue from state-based revenues, profits from GBEs, significantly increased grants from the Commonwealth Government and more borrowings.

The budget figures state we will be very close to net debt in 2021, and in very poor shape for any economic downturn or change to the GST distribution. Net debt will go from negative \$622 million to negative \$15 million by June 2021. This is in part because the Government will borrow \$440 million over four years and run down its holdings of cash and deposits by \$253 million as part of its \$878 million infrastructure spend, which includes the Bridgewater bridge and the Cradle Mountain experience.

While spending on infrastructure is good for jobs, the economy and improving quality of life, it is worrying to be so close to net debt when our unfunded superannuation liability is forecast at \$7 billion in four years' time.

We are receiving one-off infrastructure grants from the federal government, so the Government is trying to borrow to make the projects happen. It is a rolling of the dice, risking the budget position, hoping revenues do not deteriorate.

Recurrent spending is increased in this Budget, based on increased revenues. There is an additional spend of \$725 million over the four years to 2021-22, with \$521 million attributable to election commitments.

The Treasurer often talks about a surplus and is claiming a net operating surplus across the four year period. This is his preferred terminology, because looking at net underlying operating balance, we will remain in deficit until 2021-22.

As the shadow treasurer has consistently highlighted, and referred to in an article in the *Advocate* recently, the net underlying operating balance is a truer figure because it strips out Commonwealth funding for specific capital projects. That figure reveals a negative balance sheet.

The elephant in the room is a potential change to the GST. Well covered in the media, the Productivity Commission's final report is under consideration and the Prime Minister is saying Tasmania will not be one dollar worse off. The assumption for GST payments for the coming financial year is \$2.48 billion.

The Prime Minister's statement has been of little comfort to the Opposition and many concerned Tasmanians because it does not address potential changes to the distribution methodology and suggests Tasmania's share of the GST may be capped at this dollar level, while the percentage of Tasmania's share of national GST revenue is reduced. Tasmania would receive \$500 million less over the three years, 2019-20, through until 2021-22, the Budget assumes.

What will the Government cut if changes to the GST distribution methodology is implemented by the Liberal government in Canberra? Will it sell government assets to keep election commitments? Selling the Treasury building seems like a red herring included in the Budget speech and potentially an insight to a wider privatisation agenda. Perhaps the Government is testing the waters with the controversial sale of heritage public building. Perhaps it intends to sell a government business to prop up its budget in future years.

I am speculating, of course, but I am able to do so because the Government has been less than clear on how it will handle the situation, let alone acknowledge the problem.

I will turn to budget paper 2, volume 1. Housing has been a prominent issue during recent times. I have been very vocal when holding the Government to account. I make no apology for that. We are in good economic times, a golden age apparently, but government policy settings at both federal and state levels have commodified housing and accelerated the unfolding crisis. Young Tasmanians are giving up on their dream of owning their own home. Families are living in tenuous housing arrangements, struggling to pay rent they can not afford.

It is here I take issue with the member for Windermere's comments. He suggested the protests on the parliamentary lawns were a farce that related to attitudes. I asked the member whether he took the time to speak with any of the protesters and listen to their stories.

Mr Dean - I do not recall saying that the housing protest was a farce; I said I thought the tents at the Hobart Showground were a farce.

Mr WILLIE - Have you taken the time to talk to any of the people suffering from homelessness?

Mr Dean - I have talked with many of them. My career was in policing and I frequently talked to and worked with homeless people. I talked with many of them, and many of them will tell you they are homeless because they wanted to be homeless.

Mr WILLIE - I disagree with that.

Mr Dean - I am only telling you what people told me, so you can disagree with it all you want.

Mr WILLIE - We are speaking from a position of privilege here. Suffering from homelessness catastrophically affects people's lives. To dismiss homelessness in the way you did lacked empathy and understanding of the issue.

Mr Dean - You can make whatever statements you like; I commented on my position on the tents at the showgrounds. I do not think I commented at all on anything on the lawns. If I did, I have forgotten totally about it; I will stand to be corrected. I simply commented that many of people there have simply put themselves in that position through their own -

Mr WILLIE - They are locked out of our housing system. They are locked out. Every day we read tragic stories in the media. As I have just stated, we even had protesters taking the extraordinary step of camping on the parliamentary lawns in protest to create awareness of their plight. Before the Budget, I called for housing funding to be front-ended so that the Government could urgently respond to the increasing need. The overlap of the Affordable Housing Action Plan stages 1 and 2 in the financial year starting in a couple of weeks is welcome, but there is no plan or policy detail on how those funds will be spent.

You would think that if the Government had a plan with costed initiatives and named-up time lines, there would be variations across funding in the forward Estimates, but we have an average.

We know there are critical skills shortages, and I would have thought that front-ending the Budget would include increasing funding in years 2 and 3 to reflect any delays in planning or construction delays. Pattie Chugg from Shelter Tasmania expressed similar comments in the *Mercury*, stating that they were very pleased to see the \$25 million brought forward, and \$125 million on the Affordable Housing Strategy over the next four years, but they would have liked to have seen a nice surprise and some new initiatives in the funding. We would like to see more money brought forward.

Back to the skills shortages. There is an increased spend on infrastructure across the forward Estimates from this Budget - spending for schools, bridges, roads, rail projects - and that will likely impact on the housing sector in regard to skilled workers. The affordable housing supply bill, as tabled in parliament, will rezone crown land, and may help with land supply and planning time delays, but skills shortages will remain. The Government has been caught out, so to speak, with the state now 1900 apprentices and trainees worse off than when the Hodgman Liberal Government came to power. Increases in infrastructure spending should have been planned for, and a policy setting should have been in place to increase the skilled workforce. Perhaps a tangible example of this impact on the housing sector is that the Government is considerably behind its own targets from its Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-19. With just 37 social houses built out of its own target of 430, the Government has not explained the delay, nor given a strong commitment that this deadline will be met. I can speculate again.

Supply is key, there is no doubt about that. If there are supply delays, a population increase of 8000 over the next two years, according to the Government's own targets, and a population growth strategy, will we continue to see poorly drafted policy like the landlord incentive scheme, which

offers little protection to tenants? This scheme takes advantage of tenants' desperate circumstances. If they sign up to the scheme, they will be removed from the public housing register and lose their place. They will only have a guarantee of 12 months' tenure in the scheme. After 12 months, their rents will more than likely return to market rent. The scheme offers an 80 per cent of market rent value but that is not affordable to people on Newstart Allowance or on low incomes, particularly in the Hobart area. It was policy on the run. The Government announced the policy without having any of the eligibility requirements. In the press release it said, 'Send an email to this email address and we will get back to you with the details.' I know of people who did that. The Government emailed in return and said 'Thank you for your inquiry. We will get back to you in a couple of weeks' - basically, when it has been worked out. I am summarising.

Because there is a lack of supply, the Government is under pressure. These poorly developed policies are increasingly worrying. This policy, which pays \$13 000 to landlords, is effectively state government welfare for property investors. What about the people experiencing homelessness?

I am deeply concerned about how the Government is handling the unfolding housing crisis. I will be interested in how many landlords and tenants have signed up to this scheme. I will be holding the minister to account in budget Estimates.

Will there also be unwillingness to rebalance short-stay accommodation despite a chorus of stakeholders saying the Government has it wrong? If demand continues to outstrip supply in the private rental market, the Government is going to end with an even bigger mess on its hands. Organisations such as the UTAS Institute for the Study of Social Change are saying we have not even reached peak Airbnb yet, and that is extremely worrying. I hold Professor Richard Eccleston in high regard and I value his and his team's contribution to this debate.

Labor took a comprehensive housing policy to the last election. While we cannot implement our commitments from opposition, we can and will advocate for policies that would make a real difference in the short, medium and long term. This Budget does nothing to assist people who are shivering through the bitter winter cold right now. Yesterday, Labor called on the Government to seek expressions of interest from local government and private dwelling owners to urgently secure accommodation for Tasmania's homeless. This is a short-term solution aimed at addressing the critical shortage of crisis accommodation this winter. If we can help community organisations increase their emergency housing stock capacity with a focus on quality, that could only be a good thing.

If we acknowledge the problem, demonstrate empathy for our fellow Tasmanians and approach the issue with a can-do attitude, anything is possible. It is all about priorities. You only have to look at the approach of New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who vowed to find shelter for her country's homeless population in time for this winter. By working with providers and communities, the New Zealand Government aims to increase, as a matter of urgency, housing supply this winter by more than 1500 additional transitional and public housing options. The contrast with our state Government could not be starker. It is not a golden age when your basic needs are not met.

The Government should take immediate steps to rezone the Hobart rail corridor for medium-density housing. This initiative would free up land close to services to increase supply for affordable housing. A greater residential population along the corridor would also help to underpin a business case for passenger rail and facilitate urban renewal and better social outcomes in the

northern suburbs. As a strong advocate and resident of the northern suburbs of Hobart, this project is a game changer. It will take political will to achieve.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition also announced Labor will commit to an introduction of inclusionary zoning, which has been adopted in South Australia, New South Wales and the ACT. I am proud to have input into Labor's in-principle support for inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning incorporates affordable housing in residential developments as part of the planning process. It has been proven to assist with housing supply and helps to ensure affordable homes are located close to services. The Labor Party will use its time in opposition to consult with housing and property sectors on the development of an inclusionary zoning scheme ready for implementation in government.

I welcome most of the extra funding for children's services, \$24 million for more early intervention work, more child safety officers, which will give them the time to make good decisions and provide families with support they need. A lot of the work of child safety officers is about keeping families together and putting strategies in place to help them address inadequacies in care.

I take issue with a portion of that funding, and I refer to the minister's press release - \$7.5 million over three years for additional intensive family and parenting support services is great. A further \$2 million allocated to the Youth at Risk Strategy, including individualised case management is excellent. \$4.35 million over three years to ensure young people transitioning from out-of-home care are ready and supported with \$3 million to extend care up to the age of 21 is fantastic. An amount of \$1.2 million has been allocated for incentive payments of \$2500 to both the foster carer and the young person upon successful completion of their TCE or equivalent, to encourage them to continue their studies. I was aghast when that was announced in the election campaign. As an educator who has worked with kids from the child safety system, I understand that the trauma they have been through in many cases relates to their learning difficulties. This policy is discriminatory - it does not acknowledge many of these kids may have had setbacks in their lives and may not attain a Tasmanian Certificate of Education. That is okay. There are lots of meaningful pathways to employment that do not necessarily entail a TCE. This policy also does not recognise that current foster carers value educational attainment. So many good foster carers work with the kids in their care so they can achieve at school.

This policy was developed in the middle of an election campaign by a panicked Liberal Party trying to make up for all the damage it had done in the children's portfolio. This policy is fraught with so many bad scenarios. For example, a young person is studying for their TCE while in the care of a foster carer. They decide they want to do a building apprenticeship. Excellent, because we need more builders and it is a great pathway into a booming industry and a secure job. The foster carer potentially says, 'No, actually you have three months to go before you get an incentive payment and I get an incentive payment, you should stick it out.' A lot of pressure is imposed on that young person and they do not take up that opportunity. They may miss a lifetime of work they enjoy in an industry that they enjoy because of this policy. Young people and foster carers should be free to make choices about their own direction in life without added pressure, and silly policies like this.

Like housing, I have been really strong on this and that is because Labor has been listening to the workforce, listening to children's experiences in the child safety system and hearing parents' experiences. What has been abundantly clear for some time is that the Child Safety Service is beyond breaking point and staff have unmanageable case loads. During the past year, we have committed to bolstering the Child Safety Service. It has taken a lot of persistence and a lot of pressure for the Government to finally make this concession to include additional funds in the

Budget. We exposed the manipulation of case load numbers, including cases being allocated to staff who no longer worked at Children and Youth Services.

Why has this taken so long? Why did ministers - past and present - not address this? Why the venom from the former minister whenever this is raised? The immediate answer is obvious to everyone but the Government. They could have started recruiting additional child safety officers 12 months ago.

This issue sits within the broader redesign of child protection. There is no doubt this area has not been a priority for the Government and plenty of work remains to be done. The budget papers contain alarming figures to anyone new to this but they reflect the Report on Government Services statistics. Some of the performance indicators in the Budget include responses to investigations under 28 days. Currently 19 per cent of all investigations have an outcome determined within 28 days. What the budget papers do not reflect is the number over that time, with some of them taking over 90 days to investigate. That means there are kids and families who need help and are languishing because the Child Safety Service is not responsive enough to their needs. This is not necessarily about removing kids; this is about giving child safety officers the time they need to do the early intervention work and work with families to keep them together. The state Government is doing a disservice to those families by being unresponsive.

In 2015 the government conceded the system was broken but the child safety system has not changed structurally in 2018. I acknowledge that implementation of some of the more significant reforms will happen later this year, including the advice and referral system. It is important that the Government takes all stakeholders on the reform journey, including the Opposition. I wrote to the children's minister some time ago, saying that the reforms were at a key point and I was willing to undertake a briefing from the department so I was more informed in my commentary. I have not been given that opportunity; I have not even been given a response from the minister.

This is at a key time in the redesign of child protection. It is important the Government works with workforce groups, unions, the community sector and the opposition, even the Greens and independents. This is a unique time in this area where you have in-principle support from all stakeholders, including the Labor Opposition. I have said that many times: you have in-principle support for this reform. But the Government needs to bring us in and give us information so we can continue to support it.

Disability is another responsibility of mine as shadow spokesperson. This sector is in the middle of significant transformation as the National Disability Insurance Scheme continues its rollout. Currently, the NDIS is available to eligible people aged between four and 34 years. From 1 July 2018, the NDIS will be available for children aged zero to three and adults aged 35 to 49.

The NDIS is the biggest social reform since Medicare but it is not without its problems: housing, respite, the interface with Health, transport, wages, career structures for workers, payments to service providers, just to name a few. Some of those are federal responsibilities, but the state is definitely exposed to some of those areas.

The state manager of National Disability Services, Will Kestin, says there are a few shortfalls in the Budget. The \$20 million for housing over the next three years is not enough, particularly with people with a disability joining the queue. With the next eligible cohort, there are issues to be worked through with early childhood, early intervention and the interface with the state-based Early Childhood Intervention Service. The key point here is that even though the budget papers state -

Since signing the NDIS transition bilateral agreement, Disability Services is primarily responsible for the transition of state funded specialist disability services to the NDIS.

The state remains a key partner in the social reform and may need to intervene from time to time to ensure the NDIS's success.

An example of that is the taxi subsidy. In 2016 the then state transport minister proposed to remove the subsidy for people with a disability. At the time my office was inundated with families and people living with a disability who were aghast that subsidy was going to be removed. It was removed for a period of weeks.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am not sure, and I will chase it up, but I think the federal government was removing it and the state government picked it up.

Mr WILLIE - The state signed up to the NDIS; that funding went to the NDIS, the NDIS then capped the transport and then -

Mrs Hiscutt - We picked it up.

Mr WILLIE - Then we tried to remove the taxi subsidy. This is correct. The Leader can shake her head; I know this. They capped it - the state government scheme was a 50 per cent subsidy on any trip so people were using their cap in the NDIS scheme very quickly and ran out of transport. There were conditions on the NDIS transport - it was linked to education and employment. You had people living with a disability living in regional areas across Tasmania who then became socially isolated and found it very difficult to get anywhere; it ruined their lives.

I had people in tears on the phone to me. We started a community campaign; we put pressure on the transport minister at the time and, finally, the Liberal government saw it was the right thing to do to continue the scheme, and it has continued it on a year-to-year basis. That scheme remains in place. That is an example of the state intervening to ensure the NDIS is a success. Some of these problems need to be solved at a federal level - I am sure they will be over time - but the state Government is a partner in this and it cannot walk away from the NDIS. We signed up to the agreement and that may mean the state needs to intervene from time to time.

I am pleased the scheme remains in place. I will certainly continue to hold the Government to account for any of those decisions. We cannot leave vulnerable people isolated in communities.

Like many people in our small parliament, I have responsibility for an ever-growing number of responsibilities in the shadow cabinet, including Corrections. The Budget contains funding for alternative sentencing options passed by this place, which is welcome. There are large infrastructure commitments, including \$70 million for a southern remand centre that would house at least 70 prisoners. There is \$45 million towards a \$270 million northern prison which will effectively bind future governments to a huge capital spend, redirecting funding for prevention of crime measures.

I take issue with a few of the comments made by the member for Windermere today. Private members can make statements and if you disagree with them, Leader of Government Business, you are quite entitled to state that you have different opinion. Members should not say things in a debate if they do not want comments to be made on them. It is simple, is it not?

The member for Windermere talked about privatising a northern prison; he said that the Prison Service was not efficient and that having a private prison system interface with a public system would drive efficiencies.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Public Functions - Government Property - Attendance by Members of Parliament

Mr FARRELL question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.32 p.m.]

I received an answer straightaway for a question I sent in this morning, for which I thank the Leader of the Government.

A public invitation was advertised in the May edition of the *Highland Digest* for the Cancer Council fundraiser, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, to be held on 16 May. My office advised by telephone that I would attend. On 15 May, my office received a call from the Central Highlands Community Health Centre advising that if I wanted to attend the fundraising morning tea for cancer and/or visit the community garden, the centre needed permission from the minister to let me on site. The centre stated that the last time it had taken one week to get permission, so I could not attend the public morning tea the next day. I offered to seek permission but was told the centre had to go through its own channels.

Is it now government policy that members of parliament are prevented from attending public functions held on government property without permission of the relevant minister?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Derwent for his question. I feel for him on this occasion. The minister's response is -

I am advised there has been no change in policy for members of parliament attending public functions such as this, held on government property. Members are welcome to attend these events, as are all members of the public. This situation appears to have been a misunderstanding.

The minister has asked the department to ensure staff are aware of this policy.

Emergency Accommodation Fund

Mr WILLIE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.33 p.m.]

In March the state Government announced \$500 000 to support immediate emergency accommodation options -

- (1) Can the Government update the House regarding how many people have been assisted?
- (2) What is the current balance of the \$500 000 emergency accommodation fund?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his question and note the answer was here yesterday.

The Government's \$500 000 winter package was added to existing programs providing assistance to people through Housing Connect. It is not possible to determine which part of the whole funds was utilised to assist households in need. Additionally, while assistance provided to tier 1 of Housing Connect is available as a figure to date, as at 17 May 2018, for tier 2 of the Housing Connect assistance the reporting cycle is quarterly. The figures will contain an estimate of support provided at that level. The member should note the figure is provided in households because not all applicants seeking assistance are individuals.

Because it is not possible to determine which part of the whole fund was utilised to assist households, it is not possible to answer the second question. An expenditure figure has therefore been provided for the reasons outlined above and this contains an estimate.

- (1) Over 100 households.
- (2) Over \$50 000.

Short-Stay Accommodation - Regulation

Mr WILLIE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.36 p.m.]

In February 2017, the Treasurer said that changes to short-stay accommodation were a model for the rest of the world when it comes to the regulation of accommodation organisations like Airbnb and Stayz. He said -

We have landed at what is a commonsense position that provides both certainty while ensuring safety is taken care of.

The Housing minister also said in April this year that the Government had embraced the sharing economy and had no plan to change the rules.

- (1) Is this still the position of the Government?
- (2) Can the Leader unequivocally confirm the Government has no plans to change the rules?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his question. I hope your dog is all right.

- (1) and (2)

Tasmanians have embraced the sharing economy. We believe our regulations deliver a contemporary, pragmatic and balanced approach. The recent reports from the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission, which assesses our regulations, recommend minor changes to planning regulations around short-stay accommodation, which the Government is adopting.

Pregnancy Terminations in Public Hospitals - Consultations

Ms LOVELL question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.37 p.m.]

Last Wednesday, the Minister for Health committed in the parliament to consulting on how to adequately resource statewide terminations of pregnancy in the public and private systems. That followed a motion in this place, which was strongly supported by members that called on the Minister for Health to provide pregnancy terminations in the public hospital system.

Given this strongly supported motion and given that the minister has committed to parliament to report back on this very important matter by 3 July, can you please outline -

- (1) What groups will be consulted?
- (2) When they will be consulted?
- (3) How they are able to make submissions?

ANSWER

(1) to (3)

Mr President, I am advised a similar question was asked in the House of Assembly yesterday and was answered by the Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson. In his response, the minister noted the motion specifically calls for advice from the Department of Health and Human Services, and indicated he will bring the advice back to the House once it has been provided to him by the department. As he noted, it is a matter for the secretary of the department to determine exactly the other stakeholders from whom advice will be sought.

Housing Stock Leverage Program - Transfer of Freehold Titles

Mr WILLIE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.38 p.m.]

On 16 November 2017 the Government confirmed it had not transferred any freehold titles as part of its commitment under the Housing Stock Leverage Program.

Can the Government -

- (1) Provide a breakdown of the freehold titles transferred to community housing providers by suburb?

- (2) Provide a breakdown of the freehold titles transferred to each community housing provider and the types of properties, including the number of bedrooms?
- (3) Confirm how many new homes have been constructed since the freehold titles were transferred and the program commenced?
- (4) Confirm how many homes have been refurbished since freehold titles were transferred and the program commenced?
- (5) Explain how the delays will impact on the Affordable Housing Strategy time lines and deliverables?

ANSWER

I thank the member for Elwick for his question. In recognition of the fact these questions follow up a previous question by the member, information has been provided in a column format to make it easier to read.

- (1) The community housing providers are Housing Choices Tasmania, Mission Australia Housing, Community Housing Ltd, and Centacare Evolve Housing. A total of 309 titles have been transferred and this is the breakdown -

Bridgewater	-	195
Chigwell	-	8
Clarendon Vale	-	5
East Devonport	-	1
Gagebrook	-	23
Geilston Bay	-	1
Glenorchy	-	6
Goodwood	-	2
Hadspen	-	1
Herdsmans Cove	-	19
Latrobe	-	1
Lindisfarne	-	1
Mayfield	-	2
Newstead	-	10
Ravenswood	-	2
Rokeby	-	2
Shorewell Park	-	1
Somerset	-	1
St Leonards	-	6
Summerhill	-	1
Warrane	-	14
Waverley	-	1
West Launceston	-	3
West Ulverstone	-	2

- (2) Breakdown by asset type, property design and bedroom number is -

Vacant land	-	72
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Buildings	-	237
- 2-bedroom	-	29
- 3-bedroom	-	191
- 4-bedroom	-	17

- (3) By 30 June 2018, 650 properties will be constructed under the following programs - Housing Fund, Better Housing Futures, Capital Investment Program, HomeShare, Affordable Housing Action Plan and Community Housing Stock Leverage Program.
- (4) By 30 June 2018, 27 properties will be refurbished
- (5) Progress on all actions in the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-2019 can be found in the quarterly reports on the Department of Health and Human Services website.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17)

Noting of Budget

Resumed from above.

[2.57 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, before the break I was talking about the member for Windermere's comments on privatisation of the proposed northern prison. A word of caution about privatisation of services, particularly those that care for people, whether prisoners, children in out-of-home care or people with a disability. Service providers driven by profit have an inherent conflict in their model: they are designed to make a profit out of the care of people. That is a direct conflict of interest.

Mr Dean - Do you need to tell that to the rest of the world?

Mr WILLIE - I have not finished yet. The public service and public servants do a fantastic job and sometimes productivity gains are difficult to achieve. The member for Murchison touched on this. The public service is there to provide a service to people and often can be more expensive at times than a for-profit model. Often the care can be much better. One example is a story breaking today that deals with a private prison on the mainland. That prison's treatment of its inmates and the set-up of this prison is examined on the ABC's *7.30 Report*. This is my word of caution about privatisation of services, whether they be state or federal services -

Mr Dean - I said it should be considered, that it should not be ruled out. I am not saying it should be privatised at all.

Mr WILLIE - I am making the point about where it could go wrong. This story is on ABC online -

The unit was already overcrowded, and now the screws were bringing in another prisoner.

'I told them, "he is going to get bashed"', said Peter, a prison officer at Queensland's Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

'This unit already had over 50 prisoners in it. It was a fight club. Had all the mongrels.'

On this day Peter was escorting a new inmate, a sexual abuse victim, who would get his own cell. And that meant they would have to clear a cell and squeeze those inmates into an already overcrowded unit.

'We've got some real heavies, and they'll go the new prisoner, "you're not welcome here, [unparliamentary language] off"', Peter said.

Despite warning management of the risk, Peter was told to take the new prisoner in.

The inmates inside could see the newbie in the airlock, and they were not happy.

'I got him in the airlock and I said: "watch your back son"', Peter said.

'I put him in his cell, and the whole unit are going, "kill yourself, kill your ... self, you are going to get it in the morning".

'It was a stupid idea to ever put him in my unit and I told them that and they didn't ... listen. Then he just about killed himself.'

Peter said the new inmate was discovered in time by prison staff and survived.

It is quoted as being 'One of the most nastiest and corrupt prisons', by Kevin Davenport, 24, who has been an inmate in jails across four Australian states.

In 2012, Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre recorded two suicide attempts. But figures compiled by the ABC from official incident reports obtained under Right to Information reveal that in the 18 months to September 2017, that number had spiked to 37.

'A lot of people do feel that feeling of insecurity and they feel like they are going to get bashed or stabbed, so the only way they think out is taking their own life,' said Kevin Davenport, who has done two stints inside Arthur Gorrie.

He left the prison in April after serving time for a parole violation for offences involving drugs, fraud and assaulting police.

'Arthur Gorrie inside, if I had to use a term, it would probably be one of the most nastiest and corrupt prisons I've been in,' said the 24-year-old, who has also served time in Tasmania, South Australia, and New South Wales.

'Inside there it's crazy, actually, because you have staff there that don't go by the books.'

Arthur Gorrie is a remand centre where people who have been ordered to be held in custody await trial.

Many are coming down off drugs, while for others it is their first experience of the prison system.

Located at Wacol in the western suburbs of Brisbane, Arthur Gorrie is one of only two private prisons in Queensland.

It is managed by GEO Group Australia, a subsidiary of the controversial US prison giant GEO.

Peter and another Arthur Gorrie officer 'Carol' spoke to the ABC on the basis they would not be identified, saying they would lose their jobs if management discovered they were speaking out.

They said spikes in attempted suicides and violence at the prison were being driven largely by one factor.

'It's drastically overcrowded. Every cell is doubled up,' Carol said.

'It's a violent place. It seems calm as anything, then all of a sudden, it'll kick off and some of these things are huge incidents with multiple people involved.

'I think overcrowding' -

Mr Dean - It sounds like Risdon, overcrowded and doubling up.

Mr WILLIE - I will get to that in a minute. It continues -

'I think overcrowding, the sheer volume of prisoners is probably the main cause of it.'

An unreleased 2017 report by Queensland chief inspector of prisons confirms the extent of the overcrowding:

'The centre's prisoner population is currently at capacity, having increased approximately 35 per cent since 2012 and 28 per cent since 2013, with 315 'double up' cells currently, i.e. 630 prisoners out of a prisoner population of 1,179 are in doubled up accommodation at the time of inspection.'

'We don't have enough staff to safely manage the prison. It's an absolute powder keg,' said Damien Davie of United Voice, the union that represents many of Arthur Gorrie's prison officers.

'We had a situation where one officer got knocked down and a group of inmates kicked the hell out of him and it was up to 10 minutes before there was even a response to help this officer out.

'It's only a matter of time with this overcrowding and understaffing that there's going to be a staff fatality at Arthur Gorrie.'

The 2017 chief inspector's report also reveals a 500 per cent increase in serious assault and a 700 per cent surge in sexual assault between 2013 and 2016.

Arthur Gorrie's rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults in 2016 was double the rate of the next most violent prison.

'The reasons for these assaults and threats are not clear, but could be related to overcrowding (155 per cent capacity, ' -

That is way over Risdon's number at the moment, which is about 90 per cent -

'300 plus double up cells)', the report said.

But when you are driven by profit, is it a surprise?

'They're jamming everyone in, they're turning 50 man units into 80 man units', said the former inmate "Steve", who has done four stints at Arthur Gorrie, most recently in 2016.

'You've got two officers to a unit, and half the time they're sitting in a fish bowl not giving a [unparliamentary language]. If you want to get someone you can. It's easily done.

'Just drag them into the toilet and off you go.

'I've seen a lot of nasty, brutal bashings happening in front of me', ex-prisoner Davenport said.

'I've been eating my dinner, and next minute I've seen someone get sliced from the back of their ear to the front of their jaw and just bleed in front of you, you know, and there's nothing you can do.'

This is pretty awful stuff -

But the violence isn't restricted to prisoner-on-prisoner incidents.

'I was told by colleagues of a recent incident where a prisoner barricaded himself in a cell. Officers couldn't get in, so they had to take the door off', officer Peter said.

'Because these people aren't trained properly, they went in and they dragged him out, dragged him out to the hallway and then they beat the absolute [unparliamentary language] out of him until he became unconscious and they had to radio for an ambulance because he stopped breathing.'

I think members get the picture. I could go on and on. I caution that governments - state and federal - need to be very careful when outsourcing services to for-profit companies. We are seeing

the neglect of care here in Tasmania and across the country when it comes to kids in out-of-home care supplied by for-profit providers. We are talking about vulnerable cohorts in disability. There is a conflict of interest. It is not necessarily a better service. The Australian Government and state governments have fallen into this trap. They think there are efficiencies to be gained by outsourcing services. If there is not a proper level of oversight, these sorts of things can occur.

Mr Dean - Of course, they can occur. It can occur in public facilities as well, and in public jails. I can show you a number of good reports on private jails as well. All I am saying is that they should not rule it out, that it ought to be considered with the proper contracts in place. That is what the private jails are telling me. There have to be watertight contracts in place to determine their numbers, the reporting conditions and the benchmarks and so on. All I am saying is that it should not be ruled out.

Mr WILLIE - I will go back to the principle that when you are driven by profit, there is a conflict of interest in the care of people under your responsibility.

Mr Dean - It depends on the contract.

Mr WILLIE - It is a philosophical viewpoint. Personally, I believe in the public service. We should invest in essential services. I respect public servants and the work they do. Sometimes there are not efficiencies to be gained because they offer a high level of service, and that is a cost - or an investment, in many cases - of government, and a responsibility of government. That is the point I am making.

I turn to Health. I know the member for Rumney will detail Health well in her responsibility as shadow health minister. The Tasmanian Labor Party will continue to prioritise health - it is important to us as a party, and it is important for the Tasmanian people. We will continue to hold the Government to account for the crisis in our hospital system which continues unabated, as it did throughout the government's last term.

I am sure the member for Rumney will go into the detail, but it is deeply concerning that we are losing medical specialist after medical specialist from our state system, that the Launceston General Hospital has lost accreditation for emergency medicine and physician training, that the Royal Hobart Hospital has lost its accreditation for psychiatric medicine training, and finally - and this one has been very prominent of late - that Tasmanian women cannot access affordable safe terminations in their own state.

We have an appalling state of affairs in Tasmania. The situation in regard to terminations is discriminatory. It particularly affects people from lower socio-economic levels who cannot afford to fly to the mainland. Termination is legal - it has been legal since 2013. It is a philosophical viewpoint of the Health minister that is actually preventing the provision of this service in Tasmania.

Education - as a former teacher, I will continue to maintain an interest in this area during my career in this place. Education is a common link between economic and social prosperity. By relegating disadvantaged children to a life of underachievement we are failing to invest in our human capital and unlock our potential as a state. Education is a joint responsibility of families, students, professional educators and the wider community. If we get it right, we can reduce inequality and achieve economic growth that can be truly inclusive. I acknowledge that the percentage of funding in the Budget is reasonable -

Mrs Hiscutt - Pardon?

Mr WILLIE - I said the percentage of funding in the Budget is reasonable, but we spend the most per student in Australia and get the worst results. We need to think very carefully about why this is the case. The Government is committed to the rollout of years 11 and 12 in urban high schools and has maintained its position that colleges will not shut. Is it sustainable over the long term to have that duplication? These are serious questions for the Government given we spend the most per student and get the worst results. The Government has not outlined or justified how it is going to go about that. College staff and students have serious and reasonable questions about that.

In my electorate, I note that Cosgrove High School has been given \$20 million to extend to years 11 and 12, but only \$5 million of that amount is allocated in the forward Estimates and that was in the last year. I note also that the Government has started consultations around that redevelopment. I hope that with the risks associated with the Budget, my community is not being led on by the Government and that commitment will be honoured in four years' time. If the budget position deteriorates, the Government should not start looking for these sorts of savings after working with communities - therein lies the problem of putting funding outside the four-year Estimates in your election campaign. I know we did it for a few commitments, but when you are talking six to 10 years -

Mrs Hiscutt - I hear from other members that a 20-year plan should have been done.

Mr WILLIE - I am concerned that my community might be let down with an investment in the built infrastructure in that school. Schools are more than just classrooms and buildings; they are about people with specialist skills and the community working with parents and the whole family. There is a lot of work to be done in Tasmania in this area. It will remain a passion of mine. Spending in education needs to be carefully targeted. Teachers need time to collaborate, participate in professional learning and mentor each other.

Another concern is about the demographic of our teaching workforce. I am not sure the Government has outlined how it will address this. The average age of teachers is increasing every year. Experienced teachers are leaving the service every year, including very experienced principals who are reaching retirement age. I saw some statistics where one in four principals is under 35 - the member for Mersey might be able to help me on that statistic.

Mr Gaffney - Not on that one.

Mr WILLIE - We have a lot of younger principals entering the system and they need time to develop. They also need to be mentored and people with experience around them to test ideas and to test and monitor their own practices.

Mr Gaffney - One thing happening at the moment is that the last of the studentship holders, selected back in the 1970s, are going out of the system. A number of those are current principals and heads of schools so there will be a void.

Mr WILLIE - Did you get a studentship? The member for Mersey is right. Many principals received Gough Whitlam government studentships to go to university and study teaching. A lot of them are leaving the system now. They have a wealth of experience, have seen it all, have seen governments come and go with different agendas. That needs to be managed - particularly when we are talking about leadership positions in schools, they are absolutely critical.

I would like to see the Government over its term start talking about this more and about what sort of plans and supports will be put in place to address that and assist principals and teachers with their professional development. Had I stayed in the teaching profession, I might have been one of those young people trying to get a leadership position in a school. What is the Government doing to address this?

I commend the Government on finally committing to the continued rollout of child and family centres. It rebadged them 'early learning hubs', but that is petty and does not matter because infrastructure is committed. The Government has finally acknowledged these centres offer extraordinary value for money and have a huge impact in the community. They will be located in Sorell, Kingborough, Glenorchy, East Tamar, West Ulverstone and Waratah-Wynyard. I assume these are the areas of highest need - Glenorchy would definitely be in this category.

I had a brief conversation with the Education minister on whether any sites had been identified. He said the Sorell site is secured and they are working on West Ulverstone; we did not get to the Glenorchy site. I extend a genuine offer to work with the minister. I have extensive networks in the schools in the northern suburbs and I am absolutely committed. You will not find a bigger champion of child and family centres in this parliament.

I am committed to working with the minister to establish an early learning hub in the Glenorchy area. I will work collaboratively with the minister through my networks and I will support this where I can because I truly believe in the model.

Mrs Hiscutt - Have you told the minister?

Mr WILLIE - No. The Leader can relay that conversation, although I am happy to have the conversation with him if he would like to take up my offer. That means working with the staff in the schools and the local community and working collaboratively to help establish a site.

I have tried to stick to some of my shadow responsibilities and talk broadly about the budget structure. In summary, I believe education has the power to change lives. My late father improved his fortunes through a Gough Whitlam studentship; he met my Mum at university - she was also on a studentship. I am here today because of their hard work and their good fortune to be under the governance of the Whitlam government in their forming years.

On education, and in summary, I will quote the great man, Gough Whitlam -

We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer, a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.

[3.04 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I have enjoyed listening to the contributions from other speakers. I must congratulate the Hodgman Government on delivering its fifth budget. I attended the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry - TCCI - breakfast in Hobart last Friday morning and the state budget dinner in Burnie on Friday evening. These events were, once again, well organised and attended; they continue to provide a clear barometer on where the business groups and other people in attendance appreciate and accept the government's economic message. The feedback I heard was largely positive. This is a solid budget that implements the vast majority of spending promises taken to the 2018 election. The budget outlook is, to use the

Treasurer's words, 'golden' in that we are presented with a surplus, excluding the underlying net operating balance. I concur that Tasmania is a very different place compared to just five years ago. However, the member for Murchison's comments regarding surpluses and buffers need to be heeded in this current budget conversation.

Indeed Mr John Lawrence, an economist from the north-west coast, echoed the member's warnings in today's *Mercury* - his last statement was, 'It's a shaky foundation for a Golden Age'. One obvious example is the change mentioned by the Treasurer, that five years ago Dark Mofo first breathed energy back into the southern Tasmanian tourism industry in the cold winter months. Gone is the lull in winter, with Tasmania becoming a destination of choice in the colder months for a wide range of winter experiences. It is difficult to imagine a winter in Hobart without Dark Mofo.

I note the Government's enthusiasm for the improvement in the Cradle Mountain environment and visitor infrastructure. While the Leader's speech even compared these entities - MONA and Cradle Mountain and the potential for increased tourism numbers as a result - I hope that occurs in the north and north-west. Individuals and groups already love Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain because of the natural and scenic beauty of the area.

MONA is a completely brand-new, man-made tourism attraction, marketing a different entity to the Cradle Mountain landscape which was shaped by glacial changes. While both are tourist attractions, they hold a different appeal and I have reservations about likening Cradle Mountain to MONA. Whether the improved facilities result in a significant increase in visitations is yet to be seen. If the improved infrastructure means simultaneously the area is afforded greater protection by minimising man-made negative impact upon this landscape, these changes ought to be applauded.

Another change over the last five years is the shift in the Government's language and messaging. Gone are the days in 2014 and 2015 when phrases such as 'fixing the budget mess' and slogans such as 'laying foundations for the future' were used. I remember tongue-in-cheek misleading statements such as '650 000 by 2050', 'the healthiest and fittest state by 2025' and 'a planning scheme faster, fairer, simpler and cheaper'. In 2015-16, the then government more positively said that it was 'building on the momentum' and 'heading in the right direction'. These slogans changed the following year to 'Tasmania back on track', and 'reinvesting in essential services'. In both the 2017-18 and the 2018-19 budgets, the Governments message has been one of building Tasmania's future and seeing Tasmania enter a golden age.

Such a glowing description. Economist Saul Eslake pronounced on the ABC that -

Tasmanian Treasurer Peter Gutwein's fifth Budget delivers on all of the Hodgman Government's election commitments and provides what should serve as a further boost to business confidence.

The only point in that sentence which stirs controversy - which the Treasurer acknowledged in his speech at the TTCI budget breakfast - was the proposed sale of the Treasury building. I will not comment extensively on that because I imagine the member for Hobart has a full appraisal prepared for this issue.

Nonetheless, the Treasurer and this Budget present a positive outlook as the Government continues to balance its bottom line while providing improved infrastructure and services for Tasmanians. The addition of 30 nursing staff per year across the state over the next six years and

the injection of \$20 million to reduce elective surgery wait times this coming financial year will ensure Tasmanians of all ages receive better and more timely treatment than before.

Health was an area where the Government was heavily criticised in the lead-up to the March election. It is pleasing to see the Government meet its election promises. The early advancement of the Mersey Community Hospital upgrade will ensure the people of Mersey will begin to see changes earlier than expected; it will raise the standard and breadth of facilities and services offered at that hospital. These investments may give confidence to residents and workers who use this facility that the state Government not only intends to maintain but also improve the services provided.

These upgrades will be complemented by investments in other hospitals, including an addition of 250 beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the redevelopment of the LGH over the next six years. The potential for a co-located private hospital in Launceston will further enable access to health services in the north and north-west of the state. Although the Government has announced increased funding for 25 new mental health beds, I note this funding is directed exclusively towards the south of the state. Mental health is a statewide issue, so it would have been pleasing to see this investment disbursed more broadly across all Tasmania's hospitals. Keeping people close to home while they are being assisted with their mental health issues will enable them to have better support from their friends, family and other support networks.

I am pleased to see other smaller investments in health. For example, a two-year \$540 000 community defibrillator fund is in place, which will provide 180 defibrillators to various communities around Tasmania. Although only a comparatively small investment compared to the others I have already mentioned, this is a worthwhile investment that will save lives in the future.

Other initiatives, including the Ticket to Play program, break down some of the socio-economic barriers that restrict access to sporting experiences for children. I am sure that children are able to get off the couch, interact and build social networks and begin fostering a healthy lifestyle.

I taught in a number of Tasmania's disadvantaged areas. While the students were tough and rough diamonds, those were some of my most memorable teaching years. The lack of opportunity and barriers to positive health outcomes was so obvious, that somebody - in this case the government - needed to step in and provide support and assistance to help break the cycle of health disadvantage. This program is a step in the right direction, but we still have a lot more to do to motivate the broader community to take control of their health.

Preventative health needs to be more than just about children; it also needs to target those in the workforce to get out and exercise at the end of their work day, as well as keeping those in retirement moving so that they can enjoy retirement for longer. There were some positive investments announced, with funding to establish the Tasmanian community health fund and to build a southern Tasmanian indoor multi-sport facility. Another quasi-health investment was funding to find locations for a new iconic Tasmanian walk, albeit it will be a while before this comes to fruition.

With these developments the Government has made a step in the right direction, but there is plenty more required to get people off the couch to achieve the Government's target of Tasmania being the healthiest state by 2025. As the chairman of the Meercroft Park Facilities Committee, I was particularly interested in the Government's announcement of a \$10 million investment over two

years to facilitate increased female participation in sport by building new or upgraded facilities to ensure that women and girls have the same access to facilities and opportunities as men and boys.

The MPFC, which is made up of representatives from the Devonport Junior Soccer Club, the Northwest Raiders Gridiron Team, Devonport Touch Association, Devonport council and service clubs, has had scoping work undertaken. ARTAS Architects has produced a fabulous design that will vastly improve conditions for all users of the park, particularly women and girls. The current facilities were designed and built prior to the grounds being regularly used by a large number of female athletes, as occurs today. I look forward to discussing this opportunity for a partnership between the Government and these user groups.

I am not an authority on the Australian Football League, but I have had some experience playing, coaching and in administration. I am not against having a Tasmanian team in a national sporting competition, but we need to choose a viable sport. Basketball, volleyball and soccer all have a certain appeal and perhaps are more manageable, but, for the life of me, I cannot accept that a Tasmanian AFL team is possible or that it will be profitable. I realise it is popular for politicians and political parties to get on the bandwagon and lend support to the call for our own Tasmanian AFL team. Like a number of other Tasmanians I have spoken with, I cannot accept, nor will I support government funding going towards our own Tassie team, especially if it is a failed mainland team.

The current situation is not too bad. Eight rostered games in the state seem to provide many benefits and advantages for the wider community, both as a social outlet and in an economically positive sense. It is quite a decent, advantageous and appropriate scenario.

To balance the record, while I see the physical and social benefits derived from sporting competitions and the like, I am also very much a supporter of the wider arts community. Interesting, innovative, creative and progressive communities have a strong focus and a passion for the arts. I can only continue to encourage the Government to do whatever it can to promote the most wonderful arts opportunities to attract visitors and talented individuals with artistic fervour and capacity to be an important part of our social fabric.

Leading on from youth sport, as a former teacher I was pleased to see the Government is reinvesting in the education front line by adding 192 teachers over the next four years, reaching 250 over the next six years. This will be complemented by a boost in the number of literacy coaches who play a vital role in ensuring Tasmanians master the educational foundations of literacy and numeracy. There will also be a significant increase of 80 teacher assistants to ensure each child's needs are met.

Although five years ago the discussion was around closing and merging schools - which in some cases had to occur - the present Budget sees a significant number of schools being rebuilt and others being created. Of note in my electorate is the \$10.5 million allocated to redevelop Devonport High School, albeit only taking effect towards the end of the forward Estimates in 2020-21.

After what can only be described as a difficult year for TasTAFE, it was positive to see that it will receive \$18.9 million to maintain and build new infrastructure to support those engaged in vocational education and training. Pleasingly, the Drysdale Hospitality College has been given a significant boost, with \$1.5 million allocated for a training kitchen within the Devonport Living City precinct. I am pleased a new educational training facility will be located in the Mersey region.

While UTAS has campuses in Hobart and Launceston - the two largest population centres in the south and the north - UTAS on the north-west coast is housed in Burnie. I am not concerned so much by that situation, as geographically Burnie provides easier access for west coasters, those from Circular Head and also King Island. However, I hope the Devonport area can be successful in attracting an education centre of excellence, which is very much needed to support the Living City concept. I trust that State Growth and the Coordinator-General continue to promote further developments in the region.

The new fish pellet factory at Wesley Vale is very close to a most magnificent vacant industrial area, the rehabilitated Wesley Vale Pulp Mill. It is just a stone's throw from Devonport airport, an important and sound runway, albeit very much underutilised. Hopefully, the north and the north-west coast - and especially Devonport - will be successful in the provision of appropriate resources to attract the Qantas flying school.

The continued funding of the Bravehearts school program and Stay ChatTY for the next four years will continue to address the issue of youth mental health, suicide and keeping of our children safe.

On housing, it was pleasing to see the extension of the first home builders grant for another year, and the 50 per cent stamp duty holiday will assist Tasmanians buying a home as well. An issue I can see with capping the stamp duty holiday at \$400 000 is that Hobart's median house price is presently \$450 000. Although other parts of the state fall beneath this cap, the result is that in Hobart this scheme will largely benefit those purchasing in the outskirts and beyond.

I note community criticism that there is no increased investment beyond that initially promised at the election. As Kym Goodes of TasCOSS put it in the *Examiner* -

When you have a \$161 million surplus, and people are sleeping rough, it will be hard to understand why it is a good budget.

There were certainly some initiatives to assist the rental market, including a three-year land tax holiday, but this incentive only applies to newly built homes, and will not have an immediate effect upon the rental market. Similarly, incentives to purchase a home will not assist those who are simply unable to purchase a home, or who only desire to rent a property.

With people continuing to sleep in tents and the need for housing all around the state becoming more acute throughout the last 12 months, it was perhaps a missed opportunity to tweak existing arrangements to better acknowledge that housing and rental markets in Tasmania have become worse and not better since the release of the initial Affordable Housing Strategy in September 2015.

Pattie Chugg of Shelter Tasmania stated her assessment of the Budget in the *Examiner* -

Tasmania needs to build at least 150 additional affordable rental homes every year above the current affordable housing strategy commitments.

We clearly have more to do to ensure that people who rent are not left behind in this 'golden age'. Some cost of living measures will have a flow-on effect and will help ensure Tasmanians have more money remaining in their pockets that can be spent in the local economy.

I am pleased the Government has had a change of heart regarding TasWater. The decision to work with, rather than advocate against, TasWater operating externally to government has resulted in better outcomes for Tasmanians, including capping water price increases while increasing the speed of infrastructure investment.

I am also pleased the Government will not be imposing any new or increased taxes, which will alleviate some costs of living pressures for all Tasmanians, particularly those struggling with housing at the moment.

There are even some innovative policies to assist industry, including the energy on farms initiative, on-farm energy and irrigation auditing, and the extension of the energy rebate. These will all assist in making Tasmanian agribusiness competitive in the future. It is great to see so many ideas and initiatives being put forward in the agricultural space.

Moving to justice, law and order. It was great to see government funding for rehabilitation and alternative sentencing options. The Chatter Matters pilot program is a real opportunity to address a range of issues that result in recidivism and it will hopefully ensure that, once rehabilitated, these people have stronger ties to their families and friends, can engage in meaningful employment as a result of their increased literacy skills and can effectively contribute to the Tasmanian economy instead of remaining unemployed.

The building of a northern prison is both a negative and positive step for criminal justice in Tasmania. I am pleased that Tasmanians from the north of the state will no doubt benefit from having greater access to their loved ones. The closer location will also assist with easier integration in northern communities towards the end of their sentence. However, 'if you build it they will come'. Filling prisons should never be the aim of criminal justice. Addressing the root causes of offending is a far more appropriate and cost-effective endeavour. Every year, an additional \$4 million will be provided to the Tasmania Prison Service to deal with increased prisoner population numbers. This increase in funding occurs before this House has been presented with proposed changes to remissions and suspended sentencing, and prior to building the new prison. These changes will invariably lead to a further increase in the prisoner population and, with that, a further cost to the budget.

I have mentioned this in previous years but it is worth mentioning again. I am disappointed there was no meaningful increase to the funding of Legal Aid and other community legal service providers in this year's Budget. In fact, over the forward Estimates, funding to Legal Aid will decline. These services ensure the justice system as a whole functions more effectively and efficiently. Access to legal services means that individuals are aware and informed regarding their legal rights, adjournment after adjournment is avoided as a result and self-represented litigants do not clog the court list. Both complainants and defendants are also able to have swift access to justice. The ability to mount a legally assisted defence reinforces the presumption of innocence and helps to keep downward pressure on any prisoner population blowout.

On the other side of law and order, I note there will be a \$36.8 million increase to frontline police and the addition of other resources, such as an additional police boat, in their armoury. In reading the previous contributions of members of this place, I recall the member for Rosevears in 2016 raised the issue of whether increases in police numbers at that time were necessary at the expense of health, when Tasmania already has a fairly high police-to-population ratio. Perhaps some of this surplus money would have been better invested in Legal Aid and the broader Justice

department so as to ensure we are not prison- and police-heavy at the expense of those traversing the court process.

Certainly, I was pleased to see that funding will start to flow to upgrade the Burnie Court Complex. Although outside my electorate, members of the legal profession within my electorate regularly attend this facility, which is long overdue for an upgrade. This redevelopment will increase the safety and amenity of the complex for all those who use it.

On the topic of infrastructure upgrades, it is pleasing to see that finally Tasmanians now have a replacement Bridgewater bridge locked in as a priority by both state and federal governments. This project, along with broader investments in roads infrastructure, will not only assist politicians who traverse this bridge regularly, but it will also benefit commercial companies that move freight as well as travelling Tasmanians and tourists, providing a safer road gateway to Hobart.

In closing, as I alluded to in my reply last year, Tasmania has benefited from a combination of care for financial management and generous support from sustained GST revenues. The Government should be congratulated for its hard work. However, the following point was noted by Mr Eslake to the ABC, who stated -

The biggest 'enabler' in this year's state budget is an additional \$564 million ... in revenue from Canberra, over the three years 2018-19 to 2020-21 ...

Of this, \$140 million comes from Tasmania's share of revenue from the GST ..., \$194 million from increased grants for various recurrent spending purposes (mainly health, education and environment), and \$231 million in 'one-off' funding for a variety of capital purposes (including the Bridgewater Bridge replacement, the Launceston 'City Deal', the 'Cradle Mountain Experience' and a slew of road and rail projects).

It was with these figures in mind that I read another article about an interview of Mr Eslake, where he summarised the predicament Tasmania faces as follows -

The fact that the Tasmanian economy is doing well doesn't benefit the budget much, which just underscores how dependent the government is ... on the generosity of their colleagues in Canberra.

I note that the Budget outlined 62.6 per cent of Tasmania's revenue is generated from grants, where only 19.6 per cent is from direct taxation. This was a concern touched upon at the TCCI breakfast in Hobart, where one questioner asked whether the Government should be investing in a fund as a buffer for the future rather than producing surpluses. These questions should be given thought because we have at present several clouds on our horizon, including no guarantee of continued increases to GST revenue. There is the issue of state superannuation and a local economy that is reliant upon agriculture and mining commodities, as well as discretionary tourism spending.

Our economy is heavily reliant upon global economic fortunes. As Mr Eslake acknowledged in his ABC analysis -

The budget papers make only passing mention of the biggest risk to the otherwise generally sound overall condition of Tasmania's public finances - the possibility of major changes to the GST revenue sharing arrangements on which Tasmania

is so dependent, flowing from the Productivity Commission's final report on those arrangements which is now under consideration by the Federal Government.

Mr Eslake concluded -

It remains to be seen, however, whether it has done enough to shelter the state from the storms which could, conceivably, hit us in the next year or two.

Mr President, in building our future, is it not time for the Government to also consider how Tasmania can cement its position during this golden age and save for its future as well? I note the Budget.

[3.27 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I had some work undertaken on this as well, which I have incorporated into my speech. I will share those findings with you. It is hard to say this is a negative budget. I do not think it is negative, but the money being spent could give greater consideration to certain areas. Some media comments on this Budget - as noted by a couple of members - are that it is a 'blokey' budget inasmuch as it has a significant focus on fixed infrastructure construction across a number of portfolio areas. People making those comments obviously prefer a stronger social policy focus, with more expenditure focused on housing, education, health, public safety and transport. I will delve into that a little deeper as we go through.

It is important the budget has a balance across fixed infrastructure construction and social policy areas. Balanced investment and expenditure by government will deliver the best outcomes for Tasmania's economy and the community, provided governments are attuned to the telltale signs of a community in stress. It is important that a government of any colour needs to be able to pick those telltale signs of a community in stress.

First, how did we do in 2017-18? On page 177 of budget paper number 1, Table A3.1 in Appendix 3 shows the Government's budget management over 2017-18. This table sets the basis for the development of the 2018-19 Budget. It shows an estimated net operating balance for 2017-18 of \$75.3 million, which is very much in the same vicinity as the 2017-18 budget Estimate of \$54.3 million. The result is due to both revenue and expenditure deviating from the Government's budget Estimates and offsetting one another.

I listened with interest to all members' offerings, but in particular the member for Murchison's take on this situation and the way that money is moved around at the end of the financial year. I can see how there is an element of smoke and mirrors. A significant result from 2017-18 is the movement in the estimated superannuation liability, which has resulted in a significantly improved operating result for 2017-18. At Estimates, we will have an opportunity to ask why those figures are the way they are. It makes for interesting contemplation.

Budget highlights are mentioned in budget paper 1 at pages 3 to 5. There is a strong focus on infrastructure; on the construction of roads, schools, hospitals, ambulance services; and on affordable housing. The hospital infrastructure funding is a response to some very tough service delivery environments. I want to re-establish the acute health services inquiry and wait for the completion of that inquiry. As we said in our interim report, mental health services need significant attention and it is good to see some in this Budget.

There does not appear to be much attention given to the arts. The member for Mersey mentioned this. Yet the arts have been responsible for a renaissance in the south of the state, which is bound to be felt as it goes north. Perhaps the Government believes all is well because of this renaissance and the way it is bringing tourists and visitors to the state.

There is no doubt that what is known as the 'MONA effect' has been an elevator tourism is riding. It goes from strength to strength in terms of visitation, and it must be good for the whole state. This was all done by the impetus of one interesting individual and his desire to spend his money in the way he has. As a state we should be grateful David Walsh decided he wants to develop MONA and the spin-off events around MONA. We should be grateful this individual has decided that, yes, this is what he wants to do. He is an individual and he can decide to go no further. Where would we be then? This real 'moving and shaking' has happened because of the way he challenged our thinking on many things. Many other arts organisations feed off MONA and the creativity within the community. It has created Hobart as an edgy city. Hobart is out there, both nationally and internationally. People now look upon Hobart as a place to go and visit. Hobart is a city that is not afraid to give things a go - like installing people underground to stimulate thinking about the oppression of Tasmania's original inhabitants and convicts. It could be that way for the whole of the state.

A number of other aspects are currently being discussed. There have been cries about wasting money and that money could have been spent on housing and so on, but money cannot buy the profile this brings to our city. It improves the economy, creates greater opportunities for employment and will always cause a healthy debate.

There are other sides to this - religious groups complaining about desecrating their particular religion while others say it is creating the opportunity for religious debate. It is getting people thinking. While there is a focus on the MONA effect, other arts organisations surrounding the MONA effect are doing their bit to provide experiences to boost the wellbeing of our community. They cannot be allowed to wither on the vine because everything looks rosy in the arts sector.

Arts organisations are employing people around the state. I am sure members can point to any number of those organisations. They are employing people and these people need to buy their bread and milk. It adds so much to the profile of all regions in which they operate, and not just in Hobart. Arts organisations in all regions do a fantastic job of creating a sense of community and individual achievement. In many cases they are keeping the hands of our youth busy and focused. The principals and the employees of those organisations are as much part of the employment landscape as traditional forms of employment and they must not be forgotten, given how much they add to community wellbeing. They need to be viewed as preventive health rather than some luxury that suffers an immediate cut when the going gets tough. We look at arts organisations as being the extra on the side. We should not view them this way, rather they are an integral part of our Health budget because of the preventive nature health opportunities they provide.

Education funding provided through the Budget to year 12 in schools is a concern. Established colleges - Rosny, Launceston, Hobart and Elizabeth - provide such experience and opportunities for kids in years 11 and 12 to get involved in the arts; they provide quite a breadth of subject areas.

Because we have years 11 and 12, especially in the schools closer to the metropolitan areas, extending them to 11 and 12 means colleges become unviable because they are not getting student numbers to enable them to deliver the breadth of subjects they currently deliver.

What will happen is that high schools will have a less than viable set of subjects, and families might want to end up sending their children to private colleges for a better experience and opportunities, which will result in the collapse of our colleges.

We have be careful. Regional schools like Nubeena are further away from established colleges. Some students going to year 11 and 12 would have to travel right through to the metropolitan areas, which is expensive. I lived in Dunalley and did that myself.

I went to Clarence High School and then to college at Hobart Matriculation College. It is not easy as an 11-year-old to board away from home. Had I stayed around Dunalley, where would I be today? What path would I have chosen? Would my networks be as wide as they are? Had I stayed at home what benefits would I have had compared to the benefits that came with moving out? Would I be as resourceful and independent? I am not talking about politics.

You have to be careful that in trying to improve things, we are not actually reducing offerings in the college system.

Mr Willie - You are talking about a two-tier system and we do not want to create a two-tier system.

Mr VALENTINE - That is right. We do not want to get to the point where the only way you can get a really good, well-rounded college education is by going into the private system. We do not want that. We want families who cannot afford much to have the same level of opportunity as those who can afford to send their kids to a private college, whether it is Catholic or Anglican or any other private college. That concerns me a little, so I voice that here today.

There is also funding allocated for a northern prison. In one sense it is regrettable we see a need to fund another prison and the further prisoner places that will provide. I remain to be convinced that incarceration is the best solution to reducing crime. It is one area where perhaps the Government should be giving greater consideration to programs that keep people out of prison as an alternative to providing more prison capacity. Apart from the capital cost of construction, there is also the considerable ongoing cost of incarceration, which I am led to believe may be as high as \$300 000 per prisoner per annum. I need to look more carefully at that to gain confirmation, unless a member can enlighten me otherwise. I am led to believe it is in that vicinity.

Mr Gaffney - I actually thought it was higher. I remember we had some briefings once about the cost of a prisoner per year.

Mr VALENTINE - You think it is on the low side? In any event, it is a heck of an amount of money. However, apart from the present overcrowding at Risdon Prison - and you only have to listen to the news about the prison riot yesterday or the day before - I believe there is a social benefit from prisoners being housed closer to their families where possible, providing for visitation by many who must currently find it a real burden to find enough resources to visit their family members or loved ones spending time at Risdon. I believe the presence of family can have a positive influence on the attitudes of inmates. I do not think there would be any question about that. That is important. If you look holistically at this, it is important they are able to be closer to where their families are. I am sure our previous leader, Dr Vanessa Goodwin, our late attorney-general, would have had a learned opinion on that. There is a positive about having a northern prison, but I guess that focus on incarceration is something we need to look more closely at.

I am unsure what extent the funding will be to address the critically emerging issue of housing for the ageing, given we have the oldest age profile of any state in the nation. Someone else mentioned it yesterday. I believe the present housing investment is attempting to address the housing needs of those who have traditionally needed housing support. However, with an ageing population, less affordable housing and relationship breakups later in life, housing for the aged is becoming an emerging issue. It seems that more people are reaching the pension age either as long-term renters or with a significant mortgage. I have heard there are greater numbers of older single women facing significant housing stress, either because they have chosen a single lifestyle or have experienced a marriage breakup. Funding to support housing for an ageing society is critical, but not necessarily on the radar of governments at this time - and I do not mean just this Government - given the current focus on housing affordability for families and younger Tasmanians. We need to bring current research together, or undertake further research if necessary, to fully understand what is going on in this area, to balance the investment in housing across the generations and deliver infrastructure appropriate for each group through the Government's investment in housing.

How affordable housing is delivered is something that also needs further work. There are various models for value capture. I have spoken about this before. I believe the whole notion needs further investigation to see whether there is a model that can be employed in some way that results in so-called affordable houses being affordable for more than one cycle of ownership. If you are going to build affordable housing and someone buys it, they are going to want to get the top price when they sell it on. Then government has to come up with other initiatives to try to find more houses, and build more affordable houses.

One model works in one sector, and that is transport-oriented development. That works through a system where land increases in value in a transport corridor - in some cases as much as a 40 per cent rise as soon as the project is mentioned - and it is locked in. They say, 'Right we are going to have a train line up to wherever' - that happened in Perth, Western Australia - and the rise in value is captured by the government. The land in the corridor is leased - they do not sell it. A developer does not get the whole benefit of that land because they do not own that land; they pay a lease. The government captures that money and then puts it back into the project. They are not funding it out of consolidated revenue but out of the rise in value created by the very development itself. Is that not smart? It is a smart way to go. It is not everyone's cup of tea and the Property Council may have a different view of this, but we are not talking about Property Council money, we are talking about government money and government land.

There is a need to look carefully at value capture. If we can come up with a model that could work in a similar way for housing, would that not be great? Some parts of the government's program allow people to buy into housing where the government has a certain equity in the house as well. What happens with the land underneath once the purchase is made and 30 years later the couple gets to own the land? It would be better if the government owned that land and the people get in with two-thirds of the value of the house, the capital addition to that land. At the end of a certain time, they will have the opportunity to exit and go off and buy their own home. They could take with them two-thirds of the value they have with a lift in the CPI, and then the land is there for release again to enable people to afford to get into housing. I am sure it has been done around the world - we need to have a good look at how that could happen here.

We are all well aware of the current debate around the impact of the sharing economy and of Airbnb and Stayz. We have an inquiry on foot - I will not pre-empt the outcomes. This is all about the value of community versus catering for tourism versus impacts on the rental market and, ultimately, homelessness. The current move to limit share accommodation, say, at Battery Point,

which I believe is happening, may slow the loss of the community feel of Battery Point, but it will not assist greatly in the affordable rental sector. Battery Point is a very desirable location. The rents are fairly high. You are not going to get people who really need housing being able to afford rent there. It is a two-edged sword.

Mr Willie - There is a real inequity there because that community has the resources and knowledge to make representations, and it gets special treatment when it comes to short-stay accommodation. Other communities with the same sorts of sentiments will not have those provisions.

Mr VALENTINE - I do not know it is quite like that. I know there is concern in Battery Point. Everyone may say it is a privileged community, but initially it was an undesirable place to live and many people who have lived there lived there when it was undesirable, and now it happens to be desirable. That is fate. They are losing their sense of community and that is the problem.

Mr Willie - So are other areas.

Mr VALENTINE - They are, that is all I am saying. The move to do that is okay for one area, but those problems exist further out - I could not agree with you more. It is the loss of community that is the question. You have a neighbour but that neighbour changes every two or three nights. You do not get the same community feel when you have a neighbour who might be renting out part of their property but you still have that neighbour. You actually have no-one there because the whole house has been rented out.

Mr Willie - Housing is a continuum too, though. If you take high-end private rentals out of the market, everyone shuffles down the continuum - it is having an impact.

Mr VALENTINE - You will not get any argument on that from me. I will wait for the inquiry so we know we are operating using factual information, at least as many of the facts as we can get. It is not always possible to get fully factual information about how many houses there are on Airbnb.

How we handle our assets is an interesting point. The Budget is seeking to deliver a stronger economy and more jobs, and an expenditure plan for tourism, including nature-based experiences. TAFE hospitality training, agriculture research and training, and event marketing seem focused on areas where Tasmania has a strong comparative advantage.

The main challenge to me is to make sure that we do not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. What some see as good nature-based experiences, others see as reducing the competitive edge we have as a state when it comes to tourism experiences. For many years, the backpacker economy has proved to be a real boon for the state. I do not think anyone would deny that. They want to come here; they get a bit of work which gives them money to travel around the state - a lot of them go bushwalking and those sorts of things. They do that work to fund their exploration of our wilderness areas. It would be somewhat silly to cruel the pitch by allowing helicopters to disturb the quiet enjoyment of those iconic places and spaces. People want to climb Cradle Mountain and get that wilderness experience. Do they really want to hear helicopters going overhead every 10 minutes? I suggest they do not. All that is going to do is turn them off. It is the same around Frenchmans Cap or some of those other iconic locations, you have to be so careful that you do not -

Mr Armstrong - What about those people who can not get there on foot but who want to see it?

Mr VALENTINE - I understand that. There are always going to be those sorts of arguments, but then again I cannot go to the bottom of the sea either. You know what I am trying to say. There are certain things that people cannot do in life.

Mr Armstrong - I would like to see you try.

Mr VALENTINE - What is that you say? That there is an opportunity I could? Are you suggesting I might end up in the bottom of the harbour? I hope not.

I understand, member for Huon. There are ways we could increase access, but we just have to get the balance so that we are not actually reducing the experience to something that becomes ordinary. We need to be a bit careful.

Then I come to the repurposing of our historic buildings. That is a must in terms of tourism, if we want to maximise their benefit. However, the way those buildings are used is most important. The Treasury building is a stand-out heritage asset - it could be turned into a hotel that ends up being open only to those who have the money to spend the night in a hotel like that. Or it could be an extension of TMAG, showing off our colonial art collection, with upwards of 200 000 to 300 000 visitors and locals moving through it each year. Perhaps there could be a small charge at the door to assist with maintaining the building. We need to think about these things when we look at such iconic assets.

That corner is one of the most iconic heritage corners in our nation. It has four sandstone buildings of Georgian heritage architecture, one on each corner. It is a very significant location and we need to treat it with due respect.

Mr Armstrong - The red awnings set it off, don't they?

Mr VALENTINE - I do not necessarily agree with the red awnings - but that is not the one that is on the corner; it is one back. He is doing a bit of stirring here.

Mrs Hiscutt - He is doing a bit of fishing. I think he has caught one.

Mr VALENTINE - I think he has caught one - exactly right. I think that was finalised when I was not on the council.

Ms Rattray - Are you sure?

Mr VALENTINE - I think so. We dealt with it first when I was on council, from memory, then it went to the tribunal and by the time the tribunal finished with it, I was not there.

It is selling off the farm. Is selling off the farm the only way to go to guarantee a heritage asset is not degraded? Just because it is surplus to requirement or unfit for habitation as offices does not mean we should sell it off for a one-off \$20 million gain.

Ms Rattray - Is that the price?

Mr VALENTINE - That is what I am led to believe. Who knows what the real price is. It is a one-off injection of funds into the coffers; losing control of that, do we basically end up degrading the base product?

Mrs Hiscutt - Do you have a suggestion of what should be done with it as a vacant property?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I have just said we could turn it into an iconic colonial art museum.

Mrs Hiscutt - We?

Mr VALENTINE - The state Government. We could put a charge on the door. Given what it is, it needs to be maintained into the future, it would need work anyway. It would pay for itself, and it would be an icon. Everyone would want to come and visit it, just as they visit Port Arthur, which has 360 000 visitors annually. There are 280 000 to 300 000 visitors to the top of Mount Wellington, and the Botanical Gardens get the same visitation. It is a no-brainer, from my perspective, that you could do exactly the same there.

We have these assets on public land. We just need to be a bit cleverer in the way we deal with public assets like that, rather than getting a one-off windfall. It is the same with Macquarie Point and the CSIRO land, although I do not think we own that. I think it is Commonwealth-owned. If we are not careful, we will see the special nature of our port change.

I listen to tourists who come here. Over the years, I have heard that they see Macquarie Wharf, and they see all those white tyres - what the heck goes on there? It is a long wharf. It speaks of activity of a serious nature. It was all to do with the Antarctic vessels coming in, *L'Astrolabe* and the *Aurora* and the CSIRO research vessels - they all add interest to tourists. Tourists want to see that sort of stuff. It is edgy. Macquarie Point is an opportunity to maintain that working port. Tourists then wonder about where the research vessels go. They go around the corner and they are not seen by the people anymore, and all you have is a set of luxury hotels and marina with yachts in them - and that edginess is gone. It is just like anywhere else around the globe. We have to be careful how we deal with it. I am not saying, 'Do not touch it.' I am saying, 'Just be careful'. Nevertheless, that is how I see we should be handling some of our special assets.

Preventative expenditure - government services in health and education in Tasmania, and Tasmanians in need will never really get enough. We know they are all big areas that need attention. There will always be demands for more spending from community groups and various government departments. What is important is the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding government makes available.

When thinking of preventative expenditure, I think of climate change. I cannot think of one other issue that has the capacity to highly impact our community in the long term as much as climate change. I do not see much of that being mentioned here. It needs to have a higher profile. There is some good with Climate Action 21. Like health in all policies approach, when departments are doing their strategies, they need to have climate change in the back of their mind. How is that going to impact on us in the long term? There needs to be more there.

Expenditure at the acute phase, whether it is hospital beds, remedial teaching or support for children in need is spending at the most expensive end of the problem. Spending on preventative measures delivers strong returns for government and it is critical there is evidence in the budget that preventive measures have been given due consideration. A lot can be learned from New Zealand, which is taking an investment approach to spending in its social policy areas and whole-of-life outcomes. They are determining where funding can best be focused.

Tasmania should consider this approach and begin to shape its budget along preventive health programs. I hate that descriptor because preventative health suggests we are preventing health. No, you want healthy people but it is how you get people to the healthy stage and what you do to enable to improve their health. For want of a better phrase, they are called preventive health programs. That is a classic example. The spending identified as protecting Tasmania's way of life broadly considers preventative intentions; however, it appears to lack a strong strategic framework to deliver improved whole-of-life outcomes unless they can be properly linked to an item in an overall strategic plan and corresponding business plan. As I said the other day, spreading funds around immediately prior to an election is not a great way to achieve long-term results except in helping to win an election. This is not the only government to do this, they always have. It is bad policy and the community expects better. It is not just about this government. Governments can and do fly in to fix a specific problem that may be out of control, and that action gains precedence over spending on early intervention to stop the problem occurring in the first place.

The Government's decision to take action on the cost of living is welcome. Cost of living pressures affect those in our community who are in lower or fixed incomes, and the greatest increases in prices in recent years have been associated with unavoidable expenses such as rates, power, water and transport.

The provision of these services in Tasmania is through government businesses that also have a demand from government for strong dividends. It ends up like a dog chasing its tail. The more the enterprises make in revenue, the greater the dividend flow can be back to government. The revenue is then harnessed to provide support to those in the community affected by those high prices. A tax by stealth. Surely we need stronger price control over the long term from these monopoly enterprises and a requirement for them to improve efficiency to keep price rises within CPI increases. TasNetworks and MAIB are points in question.

I want to read an article in yesterday's *Mercury* into *Hansard*. It is by Kym Goodes, who we would know as the head of TasCOSS, and she imagines a healthier and better educated Tasmania needs fewer hospital beds, not more -

Have you heard the good news? Tasmania's public hospitals are closing beds. Imagine if this was our good news story, the story of our state, the story of a government that took a bold step, made a choice to invest differently and changed the health outcomes of the next generation. History has shown us that one of the most common threads of humanity is that we want to ensure the next generation will live a better life, that the problems that may have besieged one generation will be eased for our children and our grandchildren.

In the days after a state budget is handed down there is always much discussion about a surplus, about a record spend on infrastructure, questions asked about whether hospital bed numbers are enough and which roads are most important.

A budget needs to support the current needs of the current population.

But what if a budget was also measured on whether it was leaving a legacy that changed the life of the next generation and generations to come, a legacy that changes the story of who Tasmania has been and writes the next chapter of who we can become?

This is a good budget for Tasmania based on our current measures of a good budget.

There is record money for health, a reinstatement of teacher numbers, and funds for the most vulnerable Tasmanians in child protection, affordable housing and family violence strategies.

But humanity is messy.

And there is human need in Tasmania that we want to tackle so it doesn't become the legacy for the next generation.

While the economy may be strong, low educational attainment, poor health outcomes, low household income levels, housing affordability and the essentials of life such as energy, healthy food and transport continue to be major issues.

This year in Tasmania 5000 households will go without meals and 7000 can't afford to heat their homes this winter.

More than 21,000 struggle to pay their bills on time.

More than 3000 people are on the public housing waiting list and don't have a place to call home.

And 1242 children in the child protection system are living in out-of-home care, a number that is increasing, not decreasing.

And there are many initiatives in this budget that will help to support people impacted right now, and this is to be applauded.

We don't want this to be the story of our future.

The people of Tasmania know that things can change, and as a progressive population we want things to change.

But the change needs to be structural, at a deep systems level.

Funding the same systems to address the current problems will not deliver for the next generation.

These systems are designed to give you the results you've always got. We want and need a different result for our people, this will take different systems.

So what might a legacy budget look like - what would be different?

To achieve this change, we need to look at our traditional approaches to budget allocations differently.

We need to start from our desire to invest in communities and people in the same way we invest in industries and in hard infrastructure.

We want to invest not just in built infrastructure but in social, human and natural capital.

Imagine a government brave enough to stand up on budget day and announce the progress towards fewer hospital beds.

Or to downsize the prison, not build a new one.

To do this, a government, in the current economy needs to make strategic choices that set up the next generation for success, because the priorities create the choices and the choices create a legacy.

It will require leadership to set the vision and achieve what we know Tasmania can be for the next generation.

How do we break the cycle for our politicians?

How do we empower them to celebrate big funding decisions into universal and preventive services with the same level of celebration as the big infrastructure spends or acute health bed increases?

How can we imagine the day when we don't 'welcome the announcement of more money for child protection', because our families have the right level of support before things go wrong, not after.

The economy is strong, and can handle a dual investment while we rebalance and reset for the future.

We will need to fund the acute and the preventive together until we turn the corner and the new Tasmania, the legacy version emerges.

Then our story becomes about all of us, not just some of us.

It doesn't rely on the assumption that if the economy is doing well, and business is doing well, and tourism is doing well then our future is secure and is guaranteed to be better for the next generation.

When government strives for truly 'balanced books' it is not just measuring that balance economically, but also through the outcomes of the people and the progress towards the legacy of a better life for the next generation.

This should be the surplus we celebrate.

That is a fantastic article. I commend Kym Goodes from TasCOSS for providing that food for thought in the *Mercury* yesterday.

On Saturday evening I went to a function for the Hobart Police and Community Youth Club. The president read out some statistics on our young people, and I will share some of those with you. This was researched by their CEO, who happens to be Allison Ritchie. I have not independently

verified these, but they are worth considering. These are a few facts about our young people, and they are worth listening to, for those who have an ear to do so.

Tasmania is home to 114 058 children and young people aged between zero and 17. Tasmania's population of children declined by 2.7 per cent between 2005 and 2016. Approximately 7 per cent of Tasmania's children identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Twelve per cent live in poverty. Nationally, 18 per cent are born overseas, with 40 per cent having at least one parent born overseas. Has this been read in before?

Mrs Hiscutt - No, I was just telling Josh it is great to see he is onto the job.

Mr VALENTINE - He has a few to go yet. It takes three, does it not? One for each of you and one extra.

Tasmania's youth unemployment rate sits at 15.3 per cent, more than 3 per cent higher than the national figure.

One in four young Australians currently has a mental health condition - this is equivalent to 750 000 young people today. Half of all lifetime cases of mental health disorder start by age 14 and three-quarters by age 24.

Eight per cent have a disability, 2 per cent of which is severe. Tasmania has higher numbers of children and young people with disability than the national average, including those with a profound or severe core activity limitation.

Tasmania's teenage pregnancy rate, 19.4 per 1000 women aged 19 and under, continues to be substantially higher than the national average.

Seventy per cent of students are enrolled in government schools; 51 per cent will attain a year 12 certificate and although Tasmanian students perform well in numeracy across all year groups, in last year's NAPLAN results, the figures show the state continued to lag the rest of the country in literacy measures, particularly in senior years.

Around 22 per cent of children and young people aged between five and 17 are overweight and 8 per cent are classified as obese.

Around a third of young Tasmanians exceed the recommended number of hours using electronic media, two hours per day. We here probably do not set a good example, but it is part of our job.

Almost 40 per cent of homeless people in Tasmania are young people aged 24 or younger.

On the upside, the rate of young people aged 10 to 17 in juvenile justice detention in Tasmania is the second-lowest in Australia. Alcohol consumption in young people has decreased in Tasmania, with 23 per cent of children between 12 and 17 classified as 'current drinker' in 2011 compared to 17 per cent of children in 2014. It has dropped by 6 per cent, so that is encouraging.

Ms Rattray - I wonder what they are doing to fill that void.

Mr VALENTINE - I do not know, but they are sobering statistics.

On the financial front, there are also notable pressures. Tasmanian families also have higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage than the national average - I am sure we all knew that - with Tasmania the second-most socio-economically disadvantaged state in Australia. Most of you know that young people are now older when they become independent from their parents. It is harder now for young people to transition into full-time work and education is also becoming more expensive. Young people are more in debt than any other generation. The Reserve Bank of Australia in 2014 has shown for young people aged from 25 to 34, debt has increased from \$63 000 in 2002, to \$128 000 in 2010 - that is in September 2010 prices. This is due to both increasing education costs as government shifts debt to them and credit card debt. This situation reduces the potential impact of our younger workforce and stops young people from participating in markets such as the housing market.

I thank the Police and Community Youth Club for those figures, particularly Allison Ritchie who did the research. I have not verified it but I am sure it would be right.

Mr Willie - It sounds like the work from children's commissioner's office, which does a snapshot of children and young people.

Mr VALENTINE - It may well be where it has come from. I am making sure it is in *Hansard*.

When we look at budgets, we need a balance otherwise we will simply increase the level of disadvantage. Even though the net operating surplus shows an upwards trend and is positive across the forward Estimates, my question is: what is missing out to allow that fiscal position?

While I have reflected on Kym Goodes' opinion piece, when it comes to electricity costs, the Government has removed itself from the ties of the national electricity system with the agreement of this House in an attempt to reduce power prices.

Ms Forrest - Not yet.

Mr VALENTINE - You say 'not yet', but there is a capacity to do that.

Ms Forrest - Not entirely, Basslink is still plugged in.

Mr VALENTINE - No, but we passed a bill that allowed the minister to take that decision. The Government is going down that track with the agreement of this House in an attempt to reduce power prices. Is this sustainable in the long term? Will this come back to bite us when we need cooperation selling our renewable energy into the national market? Is there a downside to the move?

We will have to wait and see. We used to be known as the Apple Isle. Only last week I heard it mentioned on radio. I have to say, given the likes of the battery of the nation project and our increasing development of renewable energy, that we should be known as 'Tasmania, the Electric Isle'. Such an opportunity would significantly boost tourism. Electric vehicles are on the up and we should be grabbing every opportunity to promote their use by ensuring there are charge points right around this island. It could be a bonanza for hire car companies. They could have strategically placed depots with a pick up and go facility, or no waiting for battery charging, exchange the battery or the car and away you go. We could really be getting stuck into this and adding to our profile as the renewable energy state. It is an opportunity not to be missed. There is only \$250 000 in the budget and that goes to my question yesterday about government departments. The answer talked about

government departments looking at these things, but there should be pressure from Treasury, rather than leaving it up to the department to make the decision.

It is up to the departments. We need to encourage the Government to put some pressure on. If we do not move, it will not happen in the long term. It is one of the reasons I have an electric car and am choosing to get another one, because we need to push the envelope.

Ms Forrest - It is already a small patch to drive around and plenty of places to plug in.

Mr VALENTINE - You cannot plug it in here. That is my point. I plug it in at home and charge it up every night.

Mr Willie - You could put an extension cord from your office window.

Mr VALENTINE - I might do that. That is a great idea. The thing is that you cannot do it using an extension cord. They will not let you do that. It is a good thought though. It is all right being in a small patch, but I travel the state. I am on the Public Works Committee and I travel the state and the engine charges the battery - that is why the hybrid is so good. If we do not buy these cars, eventually they will disappear off the purchase list because no-one is touching them. We need to push that a little bit. The longer we go on, the more distance you can get. You can buy a Tesla X now for \$150 000 that will take you 450 kilometres, not that they would be on the government list.

Ms Rattray - You could buy a nice Lexus for that.

Mr VALENTINE - You would not have any better facility if you did because if you read the specifications on a Tesla X, it is very expensive.

Ms Forrest - They are not going to be on the list any time soon.

Mr VALENTINE - That is what I said. They will not be on the list.

As far as transit options are concerned, the highlights for that area appear to be better transit for Tasmania, which is lightly addressed. There is \$1.5 million over three years - three times \$500 000 for the capital component for the establishment of the Derwent River ferry service. I congratulate the Government on that. Further strategies to reduce our dependence on the car are required and to provide better linkages for Tasmanian residents to services they need to access across the state. Many cannot afford to own a car in a state that has the level of disadvantage we have in Tasmania.

Tasmania's population density and topography mean we are a bus environment, apart from isolated patches, but we need stronger integrated services. However, there are no budget highlights in this area. It is not that high on the agenda, apart from that money to Metro. Furthermore, it is well recognised that more road infrastructure for private cars only exacerbates traffic problems rather than solves them. Road infrastructure investment must be highly strategic. In the Tasmanian setting, it must facilitate improved transit outcomes.

We should strongly focus on smart infrastructure, not just more bitumen. At every turn we should be designing facilities for walking and cycling in our major infrastructure projects where applicable. I pushed this point in the Public Works Committee. Every time we build a main road,

we ought to think about adding a cycling facility off to the side. They do add wider verges these days and that is good to see, but do people feel safe on those? I do not know. You would need to question cyclists. It is important that people who go from town to town have these facilities. If you can work with local government to make it happen, that would be a positive step.

I have always said you can have a cycleway right up the middle of the state and across to the north-west and north-east. Wherever the railway line goes is the flattest route between two places. Councils could collaborate with governments and put in a cycleway next to the train line. That way you might get train tourism happening because people could get on and off and take their bikes with them. They could ride for a bit and get back on the train if they wanted to at a later point. All those small towns in the middle of the island would come alive, places like Parattah that used to be alive because they had a train stop. It could happen again.

Recently I received a letter about walkers. This guy said we have so much infrastructure for the car that when he walks places, he cannot cross roads. 'It is getting to me. I want to be able to walk and there is no great facility for walkers.' He has a point - we have to look at other users as well.

The move to broaden Metro Tasmania's business model to include ferries could be a good thing, providing it is dealt with as an integrated end-to-end service for the patrons. A service from Blackmans Bay and Kingston - I know they are only looking at across the river, but a service from Blackmans Bay and Kingston could solve the congestion in our suburban streets where people choose to park in their commuting week. This would need to be matched by services at this end. The integrated transport inquiry made some interesting recommendations, and those who were on that committee will remember that.

It may be a cheap option to drive, but better ferry and bus services would certainly reduce the impact on suburban amenity for our own city suburbs. Those currently using long-term car parks would stand to gain by switching to a ferry service, but that has to be accompanied by peripheral car parking at the transport nodes and services such as childcare centres being made available at those nodes.

You are not going to get people out of their cars if they have two or three kids to drop off at a childcare centre. It is so easy for them to stop once, put their children in the childcare centre and then catch the ferry and then when they go back home they can get their kids from the after-school care offered by those centres - they can all get in the car at once and go home. It makes sense but it will need to be an integrated end-to-end service.

People say that if you do that, that means the long-term car parks will lose out. They are commercial businesses and they could be turned into an inner city accommodation, if you think about it. Over a time, with a good strategy there could be a win-win for people, for councils and for the developers.

Regarding the money being spent on the Macquarie-Davey Street couplet. I do not think a lot of people will know this, but the government owned and maintained Macquarie and Davey streets, and it swapped them with the council for the lower Brooker coming into the city. Now, we see it going back the other way. It is an interesting set of circumstances. They are not going to solve the problems unless they work collaboratively with the council. What is needed is a collaborative rather than a dictatorial approach. That needs to happen.

Local government has investments in the city, and they have in mind where those investments are. If the Government sits down and talks with them about this on a reasonable basis, you will get a holistic approach. The regional land use strategy, developed when I was lord mayor in 2010 or 2011, is all there. They just need to read it. It needs updating, yes, but it needs to be read and followed.

Twelve councils all agreeing on a land use strategy is not a small thing. The member for Huon would remember those days.

Mr Armstrong - Well and truly.

Mr VALENTINE - A single ticketing system would need to be employed with Metro servicing the nodes. It is something that needs careful thought, because clearly we do not have a bottomless bucket to support a sinking asset, if it goes wrong. So you have to do it properly.

I see a number of ICT projects are on foot, but I wonder how much effort is being put into a good review of government business and how it can be improved through the application of technology. I encourage a good roundtable with the ICT sector, if it is not already happening. I am sure TasICT would be more than willing to engage in that. Of course, there may well be other opportunities for government to facilitate with the ICT sector when it comes to bidding for large projects, either nationally or internationally.

Years ago, back in the early 2000s, I remember developing a marine science cluster. We had a roundtable discussion with about 15 companies. They talked about how they had missed out on big projects because they simply did not have the capacity to bid. Yet collectively, they could. So we worked for quite some time to develop a template or a pro forma so that every company involved had the benefit coming back to them and it was formalised. When about half a dozen companies decided they would, I stepped out of it. I did not have any skin in the game, and it was well conceived. There is no reason the Government cannot work with areas such as the ICT sector or the agriculture and irrigation sectors, which would be good value for the island and our economy. I do not see why they would not be able to do the same thing in the ICT sector.

Looking at the budget Estimates summary - when delivering the budget, there is always a trade off between income, expenditure and debt. The last four budgets have attempted to get this balance right, but this one has been criticised as being a bloke's budget. A budget that focuses less on infrastructure and more on social policy expenditure runs the risk of reducing budget outcomes, but it is the tension of getting the balance right. Infrastructure investments tend to be treated as one-off expenditures in the budget, whereas social policy expenditures tend to be recurrent expenditures.

Given this distinction, unless there is a strong outcomes focus along the lines New Zealand is adopting, a less blokey budget runs the risk of getting out of control. It is easier to slow down or defer infrastructure expenditure than to put a halt to recurrent programs focused on particular issues within society. Real balance is needed. We do not want to be the state that looks good from an infrastructure perspective, but does not pay enough attention to those who are doing it tough, and very tough in some instances.

The fiscal surplus moves into the black over the forward Estimates. This outcome is highly dependent upon the assumptions in the out-years, as over the next two years the fiscal deficit balloons, primarily due to infrastructure investment being boosted over the next two years. Net

debt shows a decline over the forward Estimates. Achieving each of these outcomes will require ongoing strong budget management, but hopefully not at the expense of the less fortunate.

While revenue is up by \$343.3 million for 2018-19, general government expenditure is up by only \$235.6 million. The major source of revenue is from the Commonwealth Government followed by state taxation, sale of goods and services, dividends and tax equivalents. Health, education and public safety dominate the expenditure side of the Budget. In relation to dividends, it is noted there is a focus change between the three energy companies. In recent years, TasNetworks has been a primary source of dividend revenue, due to the decisions of the energy regulator in past years, which have resulted in favourable regulated revenues.

Over the forward Estimates the pressure will fall on the Hydro and its expected improved profit performance as demands on TasNetworks decline significantly as regulated revenues to the company are constrained. There is reduced pressure on the MAIB to provide dividends in support of the Government's budget directions. The same situation applies when considering tax equivalent payments with a strong focus on the performance of Hydro Tasmania. It will be interesting to see how that changes with the implementation of pumped Hydro initiatives across the state.

With regard to risks and sensitivities, the budget papers suggest the Government has created a prudent financial buffer to offset the risks and sensitivities that will impact on this Budget. Given the dominance of Commonwealth revenue to support the Tasmanian budget outcomes, future decisions regarding GST distributions and the manner in which a range of Commonwealth grants are provided are critical. Some have been saying this aspect has not been given enough attention.

While GST is important, perhaps of more interest is the nature of tied grants and specific purpose payments to Tasmania. Increasingly the provision of funding from the Commonwealth comes with specific strings attached to address nationally perceived problems, which may not be a key focus of the Tasmanian Government. Such payments constrain the direction the Government can take in addressing issues and may not necessarily lead to the best outcomes for Tasmanian conditions. They can also constrain the implementation of innovative approaches that may deliver better outcomes and usually involve a heavy administrative and reporting overhead that impacts significantly on a smaller jurisdiction.

State taxation is the next most important source of revenue. Revenue raising is very sensitive to the population, local business confidence, employment levels and the housing market. As such, there is a boost at the moment but some outlooks, particularly for housing, are less than positive and the forward Estimates are based on strong performance in the property sector.

On the expenditure side, the key pressure is public sector wages. The Government no doubt sees the current 2 per cent wage policy as a critical aspect of maintaining wages within a reasonable level, and any increase above that will put budget outcomes at risk. How this strategy is impacting on those at the coalface is of interest to me, however. Staffing numbers are certainly an issue in delivering the services of government. Stress does not augur well in the focused delivery of those services.

The changes that have been necessary to achieve the budget outcomes could be the straw that breaks the camel's back if they are not revisited. Other expenditures such as the state's superannuation liability regularly gain media attention but are perhaps more easily managed over the forward Estimates and beyond than the risks associated with public sector wages. One big risk for public sector wages could be an independent determination that politicians' wages should gain

a boost of more than 2 per cent, creating an incentive and a precedent for a higher increase across the board. I guess only time will tell.

Government financial estimates - on the revenue side the Estimates show a mild increase in Commonwealth grants and state taxation, and a slight decline in receipts from dividends and tax equivalents. These numbers seem reasonable and are perhaps evidence of the Government's commitment to reducing cost pressures on consumers. As indicated earlier, employee expenses dominate the expense side of the Estimates.

On the balance sheet, it is interesting to note a significant decline in cash and deposits, and an increase in investments. The cash is being used to fund the infrastructure spend, while the increase in investments is associated with funding the future replacement of the TT-Line ferries.

Borrowings are expected to increase sharply over the forward Estimates. The improved balance sheet outcome flows from the values associated with the Government's significant infrastructure investment over the forward Estimates, rather than improved outcomes for liabilities or financial assets. It is largely due to book valuations rather than realisable values, which I thought was an interesting point made in the research done for me.

In conclusion, it has been seen as a 'bloke's budget' and that there are needs in the social sphere that should be paid attention to. The arts sector needs greater support and recognition for the value that it provides to the community. Keeping people out of jail is important, while seeing the need for those incarcerated to be closer to their families. The need to look at the affordable housing model in a more sustainable way is similar to the transport-oriented development perhaps. It is important to address the tourism versus impacts on rental markets versus homelessness; to develop nature-based experiences without killing the golden goose; to repurpose heritage buildings while making sure we are getting the public benefit and not selling the farm; and to look holistically at preventive expenditure, not just on health. Perhaps there should be a policy on preventive health across the board in all policies, and also when looking at other matters, to prevent some of the social situations we have. The current model is like a dog chasing its tail when it comes to some of the charges our government businesses are putting on people and then having to support those people. We need to ramp up our response to the electric revolution, as I call it. There is a need for integrated transport and a review of government operations to look for opportunities in the ICT sector.

I think I have done it to death, Mr President. I look forward to being able to provide some questions to delve into some of the detail to understand why the Government has chosen to pursue the budget it has.

[4.39 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, this is only the second budget I have seen handed down from this perspective, the first being last year, shortly after my election in May. I remember only too well looking at the budget papers and thinking, 'What on earth does this all mean?' For someone to pick up a set of budget papers and make any sense of them at all takes some experience. The processes we have to scrutinise the Government's budget, to ask questions and sometimes challenge spending and priorities, is very important for those who have elected us to represent them. Without these processes, the people of Tasmania would have very little understanding of the financial management and the plans for the future of our state. I am more prepared this year and I am across the Budget and what different parts of the Budget mean in reality.

I start by highlighting some of the funding commitments, particularly in my electorate and in the shadow portfolio areas I have responsibility for. These are positive commitments that I support wholeheartedly, such as the funding commitment to the Choir of High Hopes. The Choir of High Hopes provides much-needed support and social connection for people in Tasmania. I am pleased to see it has received some funding to assist it with a medical volunteer.

The Clarence Plains Community Shed is in my electorate, in Clarence Plains. The shed does some amazing work with the local schools and the local community, providing an avenue for people to connect socially, develop skills and build their confidence. I know they have been working hard to find funding for their extension, and I am pleased to see that has been committed to.

The DIGnity gardening program, which is currently operating out of neighbourhood houses on the Tasman Peninsula is not in my electorate any longer but now with the member for Prosser. I believe this funding will allow them to expand into a neighbourhood centre in my electorate in Midway Point, and I hope that is still the case. This program provides a very valuable opportunity for members of the community who are suffering with mental health problems or social isolation, or are living with a disability, to come together and have access to social and medical support that they might not otherwise get. They are also able to get out into the garden and grow vegetables and produce that they can use.

Midway Point Yacht Club has been given some funding towards some new training vessels and safety equipment. This small club does some great work in the community. It is a volunteer-run, community-based grassroots club which is still able to host some national competitions and do an amazing job.

The Risdon Vale Bike Collective does a lot of good work with young people in Risdon Vale. Risdon Vale is a suburb where there is often not much opportunity for young people. The bike collective provides a great outlet for young people to learn a new skill, use their hands, and put their attention and energy to good use. I am pleased to see that the collective has received some funding.

The South Arm Fire Brigade and the South Arm RSL have also received some funding, which I support. The South Arm community is a very tight-knit community. Both of these organisations are very highly regarded on the peninsula.

I am also pleased to see commitment to ongoing and increased funding for Rural Alive and Well. This organisation fills a need that would otherwise be unmet in our communities. I spent a day on the road with a Rural Alive and Well worker driving up the east coast to visit some of his clients. I was pleased to see how well-connected Rural Alive and Well is in the communities and the support it is offering that nobody else is offering. I am very happy to see this work will be able to continue.

SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY is another organisation that is doing some great work in sporting clubs and schools around the state, and I am pleased to see its funding continue.

I am also happy to see a commitment to and some funding allocated to work with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania on developing a peer workforce strategy. This is a crucial part of an integrated mental health system which the Government has committed to. I attended a mental health forum with the Minister for Health during the election period, hosted by the Mental Health Council of Tasmania. At that forum, the minister, the Greens' spokesperson for health and I made comments that we are all in support of an integrated mental health system and willing to work together on

implementing that. I am pleased to see an ongoing commitment from the minister, and I hope we have the opportunity to see that come to fruition.

There is no doubt the economy in Tasmania is in good shape. But let us be honest: when you look at the global and national economy, it would be very worrying if we were not doing well. The Treasurer has heralded this Budget as the beginning of a golden age for Tasmania. We have heard the Treasurer make public statements to the media about how well the economy is doing. Business confidence is booming, tourism numbers are growing, but yet there are many Tasmanians who are being left behind, who are unable to secure a safe place to call home - working families and children going to school from tents and sheds; Tasmanians heading off to work in the morning and coming home at night to their car.

Public sector workers are being told blatantly, 'Yes, Tasmania is doing it well, isn't it wonderful? But sorry, your employer does not value you enough to negotiate in good faith around your wages and conditions of employment. Sorry, we have made lots of promises and we will not be able to keep them, if we have to pay you more.' I was shocked to hear the Premier on ABC Radio on 9 May say the 2 per cent wage policy was consistent with other jurisdictions, that it was competitive and a cornerstone of their ability to deliver election commitments. No mention of being fair, or keeping up with the cost of living or bargaining in good faith.

The Treasurer claimed in parliament on 23 May that the average public sector wage in Tasmania is \$110 000 a year. Yet the most recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, put the average public sector wage in Tasmania at \$74 000 a year. I was in the public gallery with a number of public sector workers who were there to observe parliament on the day those comments were made. The feeling of disbelief and anger in the gallery at those comments was palpable. Our nurses by April next year will be the worst paid nurses in the country. Nurses and midwives working in Tasmania will, at best, be earning 7 per cent less than their mainland counterparts.

I welcome the Government's funding into additional nursing graduate positions, but remain deeply concerned our nursing graduates will have the option of earning at least 7 per cent more than they could earn here if they choose to work in another part of Australia. Nationally wages are forecast to grow by 3.5 per cent. Even the Governor of the Reserve Bank thinks workers should be getting a bigger pay increase and said so to the Australian Industry Group-

In my judgment, a return over time to a world where wage increases started with a 3 rather than a 2 is both possible and desirable.

I am a former union organiser and remain a committed unionist, so my view on this should come as no surprise. But when the Governor of the Reserve Bank is agreeing, well, that is just about unheard of, and the Government should pay attention.

I have spent many hours poring over these budget papers with particular attention to Health. I consider it a privilege to have been given responsibility for the Health shadow portfolio, as this is the most important issue for Tasmanians. I have many questions for the Minister for Health and will have my chance to ask those in the Estimates process. Rather than comment on too many specifics, I will make some general comments.

There is no denying, try as the Minister for Health might, that our hospitals are in crisis. It has become commonplace for both the Launceston General Hospital and the Royal Hobart Hospital to operate at their highest escalation level, which is a level designed to manage patient flow at times

of crisis, not regularly. It is so normal for ambulances to be ramped for hours on end that paramedics are now being rostered on specifically to relieve crews stuck on the ramp. They have actually created a new shift for this purpose.

Calls for overtime specifically to assist with ramping are put out regularly. The emergency departments are chaotic. How is it acceptable that a person can present to the emergency department after a suicide attempt, be kept in emergency for four days and then be sent home? This happened to a former colleague of mine only a few short months ago. I remember it well - it was during the election campaign and I was doorknocking. It was late afternoon. I remember standing on the street taking a phone call from a mutual friend who was absolutely distraught, begging me to find a solution that meant he did not have to go home alone. I remember the feeling of helplessness, realising that there was no solution.

How is it acceptable that patients are being treated in corridors, in ambulances, in the waiting room? Patients are shuffled into emergency departments and back out into the waiting room, into a chair, onto a bed, back onto a chair. It is like shuffling a deck of cards. These people are sick. Patients are presenting to emergency departments sicker and needing more complex treatments than ever before and yet every day there is a horror story.

The staff in our hospitals and ambulances need to be recognised for the incredible job they are doing under such enormous pressure. I have heard nurses and doctors say they have never seen it this bad. I have heard nurses talk about their fear that something terrible will happen because everyone is so exhausted. I have heard them speak of their fear that one of their own family members will need attention in the hospital and their fear of what that might mean. How is this okay? How is this not a crisis?

This Government campaigned on the promise of a record investment in Health - \$757 million over six years, with \$95 million into mental health. It was proud of the fact that with its health policy, in the words of the former chief of staff to the Premier, they had 'gazumped the Labor Policy'. Record investment. I was sceptical of this at the time, and indeed it seems the devil is in the detail. This Budget certainly does make some investment into Health, but is it anywhere near what was promised?

I have been through the Liberal election policy documents and the Budget, and it seems to me there are some discrepancies between what was promised and what is being delivered. In the lead-up to the election, Tasmanians were told that a majority Hodgman Liberal government in the biggest single boost to acute care in Tasmania's history would invest \$299 million over the next six years to open and fully staff 250 additional hospital beds at the newly refurbished Royal Hobart Hospital. Yet, in this Budget in budget paper 2, volume 1, page 113, there is only just shy of \$53 million allocated to this commitment, and that is in the third and fourth year of this Budget. That leaves a shortfall of \$246 million to be delivered in just two years if the Government is to deliver on its election commitment.

Another commitment was to open 32 new fully-staffed inpatient beds on a new ward, Ward 3D, at the Launceston General Hospital, with the use of the new beds to be determined in consultation with clinicians. It was estimated that almost 100 additional full-time staff would be recruited. We know our hospitals desperately need more beds - let us find it in the Budget. Page 113, again dashes and a footnote: 'Funding for this project has been allocated beyond the forward Estimates period.'

This was an election commitment it seems the Government had no intention of delivering in this term. By my calculations, beyond the forward Estimates, this Government will need to deliver \$357 million in just two years to deliver on its Health promises and \$54.8 million more in just two years to deliver on its mental health promises. This pattern continues. This record investment, this policy that gazumped the Labor policy, will not benefit Tasmanians in this term of government.

I have no problem with long-term planning. Our state needs a long-term vision for Health, a vision that extends beyond the four-year election cycle, but be honest about it. Do not leave voters to believe they will see these promises now or next year, or at all in this term, if you have no intention to deliver.

Before I am accused of playing politics with the health of Tasmanians and not being positive enough, as I have been before, let me say two things: first, these comments about playing politics are just a way of trying to silence critics. Tasmanians know there is a crisis because they are facing it every day. Tasmanians want leadership, they want vision, and they want transparency and honesty.

Second, these concerns are not mine alone. There have been widespread scathing responses to the Health components of this Budget. The Australian Medical Association put out a press release on Thursday, 14 June prior to this Budget. For clarity, the association is referring to the alternative proposal around the psychiatric ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital - an alternative to moving the psychiatric ward into the K Block. I will quote just part of the press release -

Had the government funded this proposal in the budget they would have strategically delivered many of their election promises. Failing to deliver on this proposal will impact patient care and cause untold damage to staff morale at the Royal Hobart Hospital. It is unfortunate, given the plight of health in Tasmania that the government choose not to spend some of the surpluses on health.

The Medical Staff Association put out a release the following day. It was titled, 'Devil in Budget Detail for Royal Hobart Hospital' -

The Medical Staff Association at the Royal Hobart Hospital is deeply concerned that the recent State Budget, as it stands, does not meet the needs of patients presenting to the Royal with severe mental illness nor older patients with complex medical problems. The decision to proceed with plans to create acute psychiatry beds in the K block will lock in disadvantage for this group.

The ANMF's Emily Shepherd in a media release dated 14 June said -

The Minister continually reassures us that he is extremely appreciative of the hardworking nurses, midwives and careworkers across the public sector. However the State Government's continued 2 per cent wages policy does not reflect this sentiment, especially in light of large budget surpluses forecast over the next four years.

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine - and this is particularly concerning considering the minister has been assuring Tasmanians that he has been working closely with the college after the loss of training accreditation for emergency medicine at the Launceston General Hospital. The statement from its media release reads in part -

The spending announcements in today's state budget are not the cure for a health system that is failing Tasmanians ...

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine president Dr Simon Judkins said -

The Budget does not go far enough to address existing resource pressures that are further undermined by increased patient demand for emergency care. This places an unfair burden on staff to scramble to find solutions rather than strategically respond to rises in demand. It also impacts their ability to reduce the risk of harm to patients.

Dr Milford McArthur from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists spoke on WIN News on Saturday night. Again, you would have hoped that the minister was working closely with this college since the loss of psychiatric training accreditation at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I am yet to hear or see a response from a health stakeholder that is more favourable than it is critical.

Mr President, I appreciated hearing the contributions of other members and their assessments of the Budget. I look forward to hearing from those who are still to make their contributions. I will have many more specific questions next week for ministers and I look forward to being able to apply the appropriate level of scrutiny to the Budget.

We play an important role for many thousands of Tasmanians, who like me before last year, might not have fully understood government budget papers and what these documents mean for their day-to-day lives. Let us not forget just how important that is.

An economy of fairness is a strong economy, an economy where Tasmanians can contribute to their society, where Tasmanians are healthy, have meaningful and secure work and a safe place to call home; where Tasmanians cannot only pay their bills and put food on the table, but can also play a sport, have a weekend away, take their kids to the school fair with money to spend and be an active participant in their community. That is the Tasmania we should be building a budget around and in this regard I do not believe this Government has succeeded.

[4:59 p.m.]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Huon) - Mr President, I have listened to members' contributions here and I believe that the Budget has been well received by the majority of the public. We know that not everyone will be 100 per cent in support of it and it is the Opposition's job to scrutinise and pick out what they believe is wrong, as we have heard here from Opposition members. I am sure it is happening in the other House, and they will do that well.

What is pleasing to see in the Budget is that we are back in the black and have a surplus. I can understand why governments require surpluses. Over the last four years we have had bushfires and floods, and the Government needs a buffer of money in case those things happen again, and I certainly hope they do not.

Over the weekend I heard many comments about the \$2.6 billion infrastructure investment. Many comments were along the lines that it is a government's job to invest in infrastructure because if infrastructure is in place, investment in business will follow and that will bring jobs.

Overall, the Health budget looks to be on the right track. The Treasurer's budget address states it will recruit 470 additional hospital staff, progressively open 76 more hospital beds, and that this is the first stage of a four-year commitment. The recruitment of staff will include doctors, nurses and paramedics. Our health system will always be a problem, as we are an ageing population and few people have private health cover. The Government is moving in the right direction, and that is really positive because the people of Tasmania have been asking for that.

There is also funding for an antenatal clinic in the north-west, additional funding for new mental health beds in the south, and funding for drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds across the state. Housing has drawn much publicity. We have all read about camping on the Hobart Showground. This Budget delivers \$100 million to support affordable homes and Tasmanians who need a roof over their heads. I hope this initiative and the other programs put in place help us fix this problem as quickly as possible.

Community safety is so important. Our police force does a tremendous job. I am pleased to see another 125 frontline police officers will be employed over the next four years. While these officers are doing their job well, there are areas that should have more severe penalties applied. A police officer catches a driver texting while driving, which I am sure every member has witnessed - it must be so upsetting to police officers because they are the ones to attend accidents, and one can only imagine how stressful that would be - and after they have arrested that person, it is a \$200 fine. It should be more severe. A person should automatically lose their licence if they are caught texting while driving.

Much has been said about the extension of years 11 and 12. Much of my electorate is rural, and I have heard many good reports regarding this initiative. The Huonville High School has nearly 80 students attending these classes and, if it were not available, I do not believe those students would have travelled to Hobart to complete years 11 and 12. I am very supportive of that initiative. Education is important. Anything a government can do to encourage students to complete years 11 and 12 has to be a bonus.

Tourism is booming in this state, as we saw this weekend. Years ago, in the winter months, Tasmania's tourism went into recession. Now, with football and Dark Mofo, tourism is alive and well. I agree with the member for Mersey about football. We have something going well here for us with Hawthorn and the North Melbourne position. We should have our own side in the VFL like before. This would strengthen our football.

Tourism brings me to an area of my electorate that requires a lot of attention, the Huon and Channel highways. Both these highways have had very little capital spent on them since they were built. The Huon electorate, which includes Bruny Island, has some of the best tourism icons in the state, including the Tahune Airwalk, Bruny Island Cruises, Hastings Caves and the sheer beauty of the area, but the road infrastructure has not improved with the growth of tourism and businesses. I acknowledge \$15.5 million has been allocated to road funding, and it is pleasing to see the Channel Highway diversion has been funded at Huonville to take the traffic from Cygnet through to the top end of Huonville without going through the town.

I thank the former minister, Rene Hidding, whom I met twice on site lobbying for funds for this project; now it has been funded. There is also some funding for Bruny Island main road, and works on Arve and Hastings Cave roads.

The Huon electorate contributes so much to this state. I have already touched on tourism. Other industries are also major contributors - the aquaculture, stone fruit, timber and apple industries and our wineries, to name a few. All of these use the Huon and Channel highways; these are the lifelines to the region. These highways, as I stated earlier, are in need of major repair. They need passing lanes and general upgrades to move with the development in the region.

Another area raised with me is the park-and-ride situation. A large number of my constituents are required to travel to their places of employment in the CBD of Hobart. I have heard from several of them that to avoid the dilemma of travelling, traffic congestion, highly priced parking and simply for general convenience, they have been driving themselves to Kingston to catch public transport to Hobart. This is a great idea.

However, more recently, from feedback I received, it appears more and more people seem to be doing the same thing. The flow-on effect is there is now a shortage of suitable and safe parking in the Kingston area. The Government needs to work with transport operators and the general public to assess a general and convenient position to establish a free car park-and-ride zone that needs to be sealed and have lighting, so that in the winter months when people get off their bus, they are safe.

Mr President, I have already touched - I think in the reply to the Governor's Address - on the issue of seasonal workers in my region. Seasonal workers' accommodation is a real issue. With the uncertainty around council-owned camping areas, accommodation for seasonal workers is a real issue in my electorate in particular. I was in the north of the state not long ago, where I heard the Mayor of Meander Valley Council saying the council would be closing some of those areas. I do not know what the Government can do. It needs to work with local councils to see whether it can alleviate the situation. Campers are now taking over recreational areas, barbecue areas and beaches where there are no facilities. We really need to look how to accommodate these workers.

The member for Windermere touched on TasWater. The outcome of the state Government becoming a shareholder in TasWater is a good one. Water and sewerage costs have gone through the roof. I was looking at my rates notice last year. My rates in the Cygnet area are back to what they were when water and sewerage was combined with them. To put water and sewerage rates on top of it is a big impost on any household.

I will touch on the Summerleas Road intersection at Kingston. This area has been a high-accident intersection for many years. I am not sure whether it was the previous government that funded it, or whether it was a combination of the previous government and the current Government. The major roadworks there have gone very smoothly. You never get held up there. They have done a fantastic job. It always flowed when the works were going on there. I do not know how many members have been down that way, but they are substantial roadworks. However, I still cannot believe they have gone from four lanes coming out of Summerleas Road, which carries a lot of the traffic from Kingston and all the traffic from the Huon Valley, and then back into one lane. To me, this is only going to cause another big bottleneck. It is poor planning, to my eyes. It is the same with the Southern Outlet. I cannot see the sense in putting a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet unless you can fix the Macquarie Street problem. I saw in the budget papers that the Government allocated money to talk to the Hobart City Council about taking over Macquarie Street and making it into a four-lane road.

Mr Dean - The bottleneck obviously starts in Macquarie Street, doesn't it?

Mr ARMSTRONG - It does. Two lanes of traffic come in at 80 or 100 kilometres per hour. Then they get to Macquarie Street and it is 50 kilometres an hour, so naturally we are going to have a bottleneck there. If you put a fifth lane in, you will only to get to that bottleneck quicker.

Mr Valentine - Only 17 or 20 per cent pass through the city, the rest of them go into the city. Putting a bypass around the city is not necessarily going to fix it.

Mr ARMSTRONG - It is a matter of watching this space to see what happens here.

From what I have seen, the Government appears to have kept all its election promises. It is good for any party in government to honour its election commitments, otherwise it looks bad in the eyes of the general public, who think 'We cannot trust these people' - it has happened before.

The Cygnet Football Club received \$69 000 for new lighting for its grounds, which it very much appreciates.

I noticed in the infrastructure spending that there is \$600 000 for the Woodbridge Jetty. That jetty services many people - commercial fishing boats, tourists and people who want to wet a line of a night - when you drive past the jetty, you often see many people fishing from it.

Mr Dean - Is the Woodbridge Jetty not the responsibility of MAST?

Mr ARMSTRONG - I cannot answer that.

Mr Dean - If the funding is made to MAST, is it for that?

Mr ARMSTRONG - I cannot answer that question; I just noticed on the sheet that \$600 000 has been allocated for the Woodbridge Jetty. It is a vital bit of infrastructure at the southern end of the channel because so many recreational fishermen, commercial fishermen and tourists use it. There is a camping area just north of it, so everybody who camps there goes there to fish.

The Alonnah Hall upgrade received \$150 000 in funding. I am sure the people of Bruny Island will be very pleased about that.

The Franklin foreshore rehabilitation, following erosion, has been an issue for many years, since I was on council. It was all reclaimed land in the first place. We are talking about where the recreation ground and the Franklin rowing club are. I think it was \$750 000, which should be able to help that area.

The member for Rumney touched on Rural Alive and Well and the extra funding it has received.

Ms Rattray - I gave that a tick yesterday as well, you might recall.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, I know Rural Alive and Well did so much work when the forest industry was going through tough times. It does a good job so it is pleasing to see that.

Ms Rattray - It is still following up, particularly in some of the areas I represent that were directly affected three or four years ago. It comes back and follows up with the people who were struggling at that time, which is fantastic.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, it does do a great job.

Mr President, overall this Budget is a good budget. I am sure there will be areas where people are not so supportive of it, but overall it is quite a good budget and my electorate is pretty well served by it.

[5.15 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Prosser) - Mr President, I congratulate the Premier and Treasurer for delivering the Hodgman Liberal Government's fifth state budget since coming to office in 2014. The 2018-19 Budget handed down by the Treasurer last week delivers on all the Liberal commitments made under our plan to build Tasmania's future. I agree with the Premier. There is no doubt Tasmania is a stronger, prouder and much more confident place than back in 2014. With our economy continuing to grow, Tasmania under the Liberals has one of the strongest economies in the country. The Liberals have already created more than 11 000 jobs since coming into office and the measures outlined in the Budget will support the creation of even more jobs, with a record \$2.6 billion investment in important infrastructure for new schools, better hospitals and road upgrades right around the state.

Aside from this record infrastructure boost, a number of excellent job creation initiatives will help attract and promote further investment in Tasmania and provide jobs for young Tasmanians. This includes supporting 4500 additional apprentices and trainees by extending targeted small business grants and the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme to June 2021; by equipping young Tasmanians with the right skills; by establishing TasTAFE centres of excellence in agriculture, trades, water, tourism and hospitality; by cutting payroll tax; and by helping businesses relocate to regional Tasmania with a payroll tax holiday of up to three years.

This Budget also delivers a number of important initiatives to help Tasmanians with the cost of everyday living expenses. We understand people struggle to pay for things like electricity, water and rates. This Budget provides nearly \$300 million to help reduce the pressure on household budgets. This includes capping electricity prices at the CPI for three years, which will save the average residential customer around \$179 per year; and working with TasWater and local government to freeze water and sewerage price rises in 2019-20 and capping future price rises to no more than 3.5 per cent. We are also providing a 50 per cent stamp duty discount for seniors downsizing to homes that better suit their needs.

These are all good initiatives to help Tasmania's households. One particular initiative will help families get their children into sport - a new \$3 million Ticket to Play voucher system, meaning more participation in sport for young kids and better health outcomes. This will ensure kids get a chance to play their chosen sport.

A record \$757 million package for health is to be rolled out over six years. This health package will build on the significant investment already made over the past four years. The Liberals record health package will deliver more new beds, nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and support staff. We are also investing in important capital upgrades at the four major hospitals, and in rural hospitals and ambulance stations. We are delivering on our plan to improve education in Tasmania, providing more staff in our schools, including 192 teachers and 80 teacher assistants. This Budget provides for education infrastructure projects alone of \$192.2 million for schools and TasTAFE infrastructure over the next four years. It includes important initiatives such as \$10.5 million for the first of our six new early learning hubs, and \$15 million to build or upgrade existing kindergartens.

Another very important initiative, particularly in our rural and regional area, is \$30.5 million to support the extension of all Tasmanian high schools to year 12 by 2022. This Liberal policy continues to drive Tasmania's school retention rate up and will help provide young Tasmanians with the greatest opportunity to complete their senior secondary education. We know that Labor sadly does not support this policy.

There is not enough time for me today to speak about all the great initiatives and funding measures in the budget papers.

Starting in Sorell, the Liberals have clearly recognised the significant and rapid growth in this area, with it having a projected population growth of 17 per cent from 2012 through to 2022. We have committed to support Sorell and its surrounding communities with funding of \$12 million to build a new emergency service hub on a new greenfield site to house both police and emergency service personnel. There is \$25.7 million for a complete rebuild of Sorell School, providing a kindergarten to year 12 school. In regards to roads, we have allocated \$21 million for a south-east traffic solution, including funds for to construct the \$30 million Hobart International Airport interchange, an upgrade of the Tasman Highway between the airport and the causeway, capacity improvements at Midway Point and an overtaking facility on the Arthur Highway. These are all important initiatives to improve commuter flow, provide reliable access to the Hobart airport, and, importantly, to cater for increased traffic capacity over the next 20 years.

On the east coast, there is a significant investment of \$3.5 million to help improve mobile phone coverage on the Great Eastern Drive between Binalong Bay and Buckland. This will significantly improve mobile phone coverage in several of the small towns along the Great Eastern Drive, including Four Mile Creek, Falmouth and Coles Bay, providing a much better service for residents and tourists. The Great Eastern Drive is a road journey created and delivered by the Liberal Government, it is now one of Australia's iconic road trips and one of Prosser's primary tourist drawcards.

This Budget will deliver an extension of the drive from St Helens through to the Bay of Fires. It will provide overtaking lanes between St Helens and Dianas Basin; importantly, it will provide \$6 million for further general upgrades along the drive. In terms of other infrastructure roadworks, there is also \$3 million for Colebrook main road; a \$9.5 million road package to support Tasmania's visitor economy, including Stormlea Road and Fortescue Bay Road; funding for the Eaglehawk Neck safety upgrade on the Tasman Peninsula; \$23.3 million for the continued work on the southern end of the Midland Highway and Mud Walls Road; courtesy stopping bays near Murdunna; and upgrades to the Highland Lakes Road.

In the Midland region, in the Health portfolio, \$2.9 million has been provided for the Campbell Town ambulance station, and \$2.5 million for the upgrade of the multipurpose centre in Oatlands, which will deliver significant improvements in patient care, including a better layout, more privacy and increased space. In the Brighton area, the Government will begin construction of a new years 7 to 12 high school to cater for the municipality's rapidly increasing population. Recognising the importance of our agriculture sector, we have committed \$4.3 million to redevelop the Brighton farm school, along with additional funding to support this operation.

I want to touch on our commitment to protect the Tasmanian way of life. We are committed to protecting what makes Tasmania special, while at the same time delivering initiatives to enhance the enjoyment of our unique wilderness and our recreational fishing and boating.

This Budget has significant funding for our national parks with an investment of \$31 million in our world-renowned national parks and reserves, including \$4 million to improve park infrastructure on Maria Island, \$1.5 million for east coast camping infrastructure and \$1 million to improve facilities in the Tasman National Park gateway. We are also providing improvements for viewing platforms, tracks, toilets and car parks at key attractions on the Tasman Peninsula. For those, like our Leader, who love recreational fishing and boating, Tasmania is home to more than 125 000 recreational fishers, almost one in four of the state's population, who love to go fishing.

The division of Prosser encompasses a large amount of Tasmania's beautiful east coast. Its coastal towns are some of the most popular destinations in the state for fishing enthusiasts. The Budget provides \$2.2 million for better boating and trailer parking along the east coast at St Helens, Coles Bay, Swansea and Eaglehawk Neck, making it much easier to take your boat out for a day's fishing. A further \$500 000 has been provided to extend the breakwater at Coles Bay, with \$200 000 to extend the Nubeena Jetty, addressing access needs for both recreational and commercial vessels. Importantly, the Government has provided additional funding to Tasmania's volunteer marine rescue units to ensure they continue an ongoing volunteer response coverage along with \$250 000 to upgrade the Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club. That is a much-needed infrastructure upgrade.

A range of budget measures will support the valuable work undertaken by our local communities and small regional and rural towns. This includes providing peak body status to Carers Tasmania, the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association, along with the RSLs, with each one now receiving \$110 000 per annum in core recurrent funding. This is great news for those peak bodies which provide invaluable support across the state, particularly in some of our smaller regional communities.

We also have funding of \$2 million over four years for capital improvement, additional funding of \$375 000 over three years for the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association and Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania, along with grant funding for security upgrades for alarm systems, security doors, windows and lighting.

One of the last areas I will briefly touch on is our commitment to rural and regional producers, with an additional \$70 million in funding over four years for agriculture and \$12.7 million for our seafood sector. As I mentioned in my inaugural speech, my electorate of Prosser has a range of industries, including farming, viticulture and a number of niche businesses growing a wide range of fine Tasmanian produce. This Budget provides our producers with \$4.18 million to work with farmers, processors and agribusinesses to help them improve productivity and profitability. There is funding for two new AgriGrowth liaison officers in the north and a new primary producers' hotline, and \$8.6 million to strengthen Tasmania's biosecurity, including truck and machine washdown stations, and expand Biosecurity Tasmania's collaboration with farmers and industry groups. The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture will receive \$3 million to support a new agriculture innovation fund and \$7 million to modernise crown and TIA research farm assets. There is \$5 million to fund the ongoing development of fisheries integrated licensing and management systems, and \$300 000 to extend the East Coast Rock Lobster Translocation Program, which is rebuilding rock lobster biomass to benefit both commercial and recreational fishers.

The Government recognises the importance of the agriculture and seafood industries to Tasmania and initiatives in this Budget will support and deliver more jobs and opportunities right across our region in these sectors.

There are so many initiatives in the 2018-19 state Budget, far too many for me to speak of today. I will have a great deal of pleasure in working with the Government to deliver the measures and initiatives outlined in the Budget in my electorate of Prosser.

I put on record my admiration of the Premier's and the Treasurer's commitment to continuing to grow Tasmania's economy and for providing a state budget that delivers on our plan and will help build Tasmania's future.

[5.32 p.m.]

Mr FARRELL (Derwent) - Mr President, it is getting late and several people have asked me to be fairly quick and not drag my comments on too much. I will only take 80 or 90 per cent of the time.

Ms Siejka - Except for the member for Pembroke. I am happy to own that comment.

Mr FARRELL - I was not going to name names. A lot of budget issues of have already been covered, and the last thing people want to hear is a rehash of what other people have already said. I will not be overly long.

When looking through the budget papers in the short time frame we have after it was tabled, there is so much information to digest that sometimes it is difficult to see what is not there. That is the art of smoke and mirrors. A new budget comes along, and the old one becomes obsolete, especially when the forward Estimates expire. You need to look back as you look forward. Other members have highlighted how some previous promises have either disappeared or have been heavily modified. This is the Government's second term budget and following an election year, there tends to be more things of interest that no doubt will be drilled down into during Estimates.

I look for items that have big dollars. These have been well covered by other members but I like to see where the smaller amounts go because after an election this is where many interesting funding allocations lay. Many roads and buildings are funded because these tend to win votes and are a pretty easy sell. Solutions to ongoing problems are somewhat less favoured because they are complex and a hard sell. If they were easy, they would have been solved.

For a small state, we spend a tremendous amount of money. If more people realised that money was coming from their pockets, there might be a lot more interest in the whole process. Most comments come from lobby groups, either social, economic or environmental groups, and their opinions vary based on support for their particular interests. A good government needs to be fairly considerate in all these areas.

Governments are considered as to be poor managers of money and resources; sadly, this is accepted to a large extent, and sadly in some cases, it is even expected. People say all the time, 'The government runs that, so it is not going to be very efficient. The private sector should do more of it.' But that does not work in every case, as other members have highlighted.

Ms Rattray - Look at the road maintenance, for instance. I do not want to labour it, but I will. It has never been the same since it went to private enterprise.

Mr FARRELL - Many people say that. The roads are not as good as the days when the DMR did it.

Ms Rattray - The maintenance.

Mr FARRELL - That was the government providing a service, where private enterprise tend to put everything to a price and a time frame. We have discussed where the Government should be and where it needs to step out of the way. Certainly with road maintenance -

Ms Rattray - I would like to look at that again - that contract.

Mr FARRELL - Anyway, with governments running things, you do not have to look too far to find where these things go astray. During the election campaign, there was a sudden announcement that New Norfolk was to get a new \$5 million police station. Where did this come from? The council? The public? The police? I do not know. It was just an announcement that was made. People have wanted a stronger 24-hour police presence in the area but no-one lobbied me directly for a new building.

Ms Rattray - We are happy to have it at St Helens if you do not want it.

Mr FARRELL - I am not saying we do not want it. This is just to raise a deeper point. It is a bit like building new buses and thinking more people will use public transport because there are new buses. That is simplistic thinking. While I support the new bus program, and it is great that we are building buses in Tasmania and modernising the fleet and so on, it is not the answer to the public transport issue, just as a new police station will not reduce crime.

Mr Dean - No.

Mr FARRELL - Thank you. It also raised the issue of why build a new building in a town that has a number of buildings that could be repurposed, where a new police station could also create another unused building. The case for a new station was made by saying the existing police station was in an old 1950s building that was no longer fit for purpose, which was too small and about to fall down. When I discussed this with people, including retired police officers, they were surprised because they remember it being built in the mid-1960s - it was a large building that was used for other purposes, including storage. I think a lot of stuff is stored there from other areas. There were concerns about a crack at the back of the building, but apparently that crack had been there from the day the building was built. There was a crack and it had not opened up any further; the building is just standing there proudly displaying its crack without any -

Mr Dean - It is a good solid station. I was posted there. It is a good solid brick station with plenty of room to build on or add to it.

Mr FARRELL - Yes, when it was built it was also built apparently to have a second storey. So it was a good strong building.

Mr PRESIDENT - A crack or a second storey?

Mr FARRELL - A second storey. No, it has had its crack allocation. Of course, it is in a great location. It is right there in the middle of the town. This is more a general comment on how governments operate and like to spend money. Every member here would have examples of wasted government buildings in their area - and particularly in the Derwent electorate there are many. I think of Bernacchi Lodge, which was built by the federal government and handed to the state. David Llewellyn has told the story on many a long winter's evening over a rum toddy. It was built and

then they decided it was no good anymore, so they left it to fall down and private enterprise turned it into -

Mr Finch - Thousand Lakes Lodge.

Mr FARRELL - Thousand Lakes Lodge. The same building was built beautifully, as a lot of the government buildings are. Look around areas like Willow Court and see how the Royal Derwent complex was built to last a million years and survive any atomic bomb. There was so much money put into it - you could not afford to build buildings like that any more. Once they are deemed no good, they are quite often left a long time; they fall to pieces and become a hazard.

Mr Finch - The Vietnam veterans used it for some time but Marcos Ambrose led the refurbishment of that lodge. The fit-out was a lot of work and investment.

Mr FARRELL - You see this all the time, even with the detention centre at Pontville. A huge amount of money spent for a purpose and then dismantled. That is a federal government thing. Their budget is so much bigger and there is much more waste because of the way things are deemed redundant. It takes the private sector to come in and say that there is a use for this and we can do that.

Mr Finch - Lucky the investment was able to be made. The business is going gangbusters and is developing traction, like MONA, around the world for what it has to offer.

Mr FARRELL - Whether we are looking at a derelict buildings or for future opportunities for developers, they are littered all around the place. Members may travel across the current Bridgewater Bridge, which hopefully will be a new Bridgewater bridge as promised in a few years' time. We will keep you to that one. On the right is the causeway and the old probation station, a lovely old building, as old as -

Ms Rattray - You.

Mr FARRELL - No, much older than me. It was built there keep the convicts when they built the causeway. It had a long and successful career as a service station, now it is sitting there as one of our heritage gems.

Mr Willie - Is that the one in the car park?

Mr FARRELL - Yes, near the toilet block where everyone carools. It is painted a lovely shade of bright caterpillar yellow, a heritage scheme.

Mr Finch - It was at one stage set up as a museum. Do you remember? It has a rich history.

Mr FARRELL - Yes, a beautiful little building sitting there unmaintained. I think it is condemned. I inquired and thought it would make a tremendous electoral office for the member for Derwent right in the middle of the electorate. I found it was owned by the state Government and uninhabitable.

Mr Gaffney - You were not allowed to visit?

Mr FARRELL - No. It sits there. Around New Norfolk, the old Toll House is a building sitting empty. Many people have tried to use it for different purposes, but they find it is too hard to work through. It is too hard to get a lease from the government. It is too hard to do anything with it, so it sits there. We have recently had the Carinya hostel, built as a hostel for the students from the Highlands to go to the New Norfolk High School. A fantastic lot of buildings apparently not up to standard. It was proposed to use them for short-term housing and that was pooh-poohed for whatever reason. More assets sitting unused and they have been for some period of time.

When I went to some of the events at Macquarie Point for Dark Mofo, there were several huge warehouses where they have set up a few laser beams or that type of thing. For the rest of the time, when Dark Mofo is not on, which is most of the year, those sheds are probably sitting there unoccupied. There is a tremendous amount of property owned by the government that is not being used. There is also the former Claremont primary school site -

Mr Willie - That is privately owned now.

Mr FARRELL - It is privately owned, but it has been a sad process whereby it was given to one of these developers who probably caught planes during dark hours and purchased the building for whatever purpose and then did not get the funding to develop it. I think the bank has foreclosed so it sits there being burned down slowly and vandalised. It is such a pity to see what was once a perfectly well-maintained building decaying over the years.

There are huge assets sitting everywhere. It is like the other school, the former Roseneath primary school just up the road, which was a nice little school. The government of the time decided it needed to build a bigger school, so it was demolished and the land sold off to developers. The line between where the government needs to maximise returns for its assets and where developers come in is important. I think the land was just sold off holus-bolus, subdivided by a developer and then homes were built on it. I understand a friend of the developer is here, the member for Rosevears, so he might have a better idea on how it all works. It seems the value of that land was not fully realised. It would be interesting - and I do not know who has the time to do this - to find out the total floor space of government-owned property that is not being used. I am sure it would be a huge amount.

While I am not tipping cold water over a new police station at New Norfolk, -

Ms Rattray - Too late, you have done it.

Mr FARRELL - That would be the grab I suppose, it will all be over the northern -

Mr Willie - Hopefully you won't have to make a call there one day.

Mr FARRELL - No, I have spoken to serving policemen and they say the building needs a bit of a tidy up. Maybe the idea would have been to move Service Tasmania out of the old charge office into another place and refurbish the existing police station. You remember the old charge office, member for Windermere - you would have made good use of that and probably wore a few chairs out there. For whatever purpose, it has been decided to build a new police station.

Mr Finch - The member for Windermere and I had some success with some government property in Launceston, helping out the National Trust. The Government and Treasury were very cooperative in supporting us in that - and the member for Launceston.

Ms Armitage - I know, this is a man's budget but you could at least have mentioned me.

Mr FARRELL - There are all sorts of opportunities. The reason I raised the police station is to illustrate the point that \$5 million is a lot to spend in a regional town. As someone who lives in the town and has constant contact with the townsfolk - no matter whether your office is open or not - there are many areas where this large sum of money, or somewhat lesser amounts of money, could have had a great impact. Maybe when governments look at doing these things, they should go through a process where they say 'X dollars here could also equal X dollars here, here and here'. Money does not always have to be in huge amounts. In fact, in many small towns a small amount of money goes a long way. The Government has done that with many of its pre-election promises. Many smaller amounts of money are going to make a big difference to many community groups. I am not saying the Government has not done that.

In many ways this relates to the current plan for the Treasury building and the general way governments view infrastructure they feel is no longer fit for purpose. It becomes considered a liability and the government cannot get rid of it quick enough because there are maintenance issues, risk issues with insurance and those types of things.

Just for something different, I will use the rail system as an example of this. Under government ownership, since it was taken back from the private operator that basically wrecked it, some of the disused lines have been allowed to go into decay. It seems that until now the government preference has been to tear the rail up and pass the liability of the corridor on to others. This is particularly frustrating when there are other people who wish to access the rail for rail purposes. There seems to be, from inside the bureaucracy or TasRail or wherever, an attitude that if we let the weeds grow up and the puddles form and the rails rust, people will say get rid of this eyesore, and then it is gone - rather than look at adaptive reuse for some of the great railway assets we have in Tasmania. Having said that, though, there is a tremendous opportunity before us at the moment to start on a fresh page. There are some changes within TasRail management that coincide with a new Infrastructure minister. There may be a different approach now to how we look at the tourism rail business in Tasmania.

Ms Rattray - Are you confident there might be new hope for the north-east rail route?

Mr FARRELL - Yes, I would like to see that looked at in depth. There is also the Derwent Valley line. I have spoken to the new Infrastructure minister and he has been having meetings with people, so I am optimistic. I want to work with the Government where I can on that issue as it is one of my passions. I have kept it pretty much under a bushel to this point.

Ms Forrest - Not many people buy a house because it is next to a train line.

Mr FARRELL - No, but they need to -

Ms Forrest - Usually it is the other way round.

Mr FARRELL - Anyway, I am going through the budget papers, and I must remember I made a promise to finish early. I am getting there.

One of the happy stories I found in reading through the budget papers is the bit around Inland Fisheries. It is only a small operation, but there is no extra allocation in the budget papers, so why talk about it? For exactly this reason. Inland Fisheries works within its allocation as a statutory

authority, as I think it is termed. From my research, it has not had an increase since 2008, not even a CPI increase. It has set itself up to run in a businesslike manner, to work within its means, and it has investment portfolios to bring money into the business. It is a bit like the fishes and loaves story, I suppose - producing its own way of life.

Ms Rattray - It gets to keep the licence fees that are generated, so if there is an increase in fishers, there would be an increase in funds.

Mr FARRELL - It is very much run on a numbers business. We should be looking at that business and the way it works and saying that maybe there are lessons here for other government businesses. Years ago the Housing commission, when it was run by the government, made money for the government.

I remember growing up in our little Housing department area and the rent man would come to visit; he was there more than just to collect the money. He was there to make sure the property was being looked after, to see how the neighbours were going and that type of thing. Anyone who played up was moved out. It was well managed back then. There was not the destruction and damage to housing properties there is now. There might be a lesson in looking back to how we did that and having a more hands-on approach with our public housing to ensure the properties are respected and the people living in the properties are looked after in a proper manner. It is one of those 'stitch in time saves nine' type scenarios. We did some things in the past a lot better than we are doing them nowadays.

Ms Rattray - One of the biggest issues Tasmania will have with housing is the significant millions and millions of dollars of debt we continue to have around our neck and we cannot get rid of it. It holds us back as a state for building new stock.

Mr FARRELL - Within the transport sphere, heritage rail, some money was allocated which is good. The Don River received \$30 000 or \$50 000 - I cannot remember the amount off the top of my head - and the two southern ones received that between them. That is good. The big issue I highlighted in our election policy on the heritage rail is getting assistance from within government to navigate a way through all the regulation and red tape. I am having that discussion with the new minister and there is an understanding of where some of the blocks to that may be.

In this state there are so many other heritage opportunities for bus tours. There is the *Cartela*. We seem to forget about the *Cartela*. It is sitting somewhere down the Huon not in service, but I hope it is being maintained.

Mr Armstrong - Franklin.

Mr FARRELL - Franklin. Yes. Think how attractive a steam ferry on the Derwent would be now we have our tourism industry growing. We need to be in a position to look at funding more attractions and more ways of satisfying people because they will only come here so many times and take a bus trip to Port Arthur. There are some good opportunities around the state and it is just a matter of some direction and funding from the government to make this happen. You only need to look at New Zealand and see how well New Zealand does this type of thing - and people go there in shiploads to spend time.

Mr Dean - What did you say?

Mr FARRELL - Shiploads. Lots and lots of ships full of people. There are people I know who are constantly taking cruises to New Zealand. It is not for the climate. It is for things they do over there.

The proposal for Metro is a step in the right direction and it follows the recommendations of the Legislative Council Committee on Integrated Transport Options, I think it was called.

Ms Rattray - Got them here ready to go for tomorrow.

Mr FARRELL - Another very good process of the Legislative Council and a really good report. It has taken a long time to resurface but it seems like it has now. That model needs to be worked on a little bit more. If Metro is to be the manager of other transport options, including the ferries on the Derwent, which is another good move, it might need to move its bus operations so it is not competing with the public sector. That is a big concern of the private bus companies that operate within the Metro framework.

There is no proper money that I could see for the underground bus mall or the Tamar River bridge, and there is still no funding for the Hobart northern suburbs passenger rail. That is so much more than just a transport system. It will be very much an economic and social stimulation for that part of Hobart. It will help to alleviate a lot of the problems we are having with traffic. We are seriously going to have to look at it. There have been the new traffic changes at Elwick - I do not know if anyone has been there at peak times - but while you flow beautifully past Elwick, you then have the next two intersections that take all the traffic that used to block roads at Elwick.

Mr Willie - It is near my house.

Mr FARRELL - We are just moving the blockage further on. We really need to look at proper traffic solutions. I take on board the member for Windermere's comment about the roundabout. Having the extra money to do it properly the first time around would save a lot of money in the long run. Maybe we need to be more accepting of allocating the right amount of money at the right time, otherwise it is like restoring an old car. You can buy one that is restored and it will cost you so much, or restore one yourself and it will cost 20 times as much.

Mr Valentine - You would not have had that experience.

Mr FARRELL - No, sadly, not something I want to talk about here. Another major infrastructure is our water and sewerage. Poor quality water and sewerage infrastructure is halting a lot of development in Tasmania. It is something that keeps coming up. I think the \$200 million equity injection still will not address the critical infrastructure issues, the Launceston combined sewerage and stormwater system for example, and the one proposed for MONA and Macquarie Point is still unfunded. In fairness we should wait and see how this goes now with 30 owners, rather than 29.

The member for Launceston mentioned her satisfaction with the way in which TasWater has dealt with her and I too would like to express the same satisfaction. Every single issue that I have raised with TasWater has been acted upon and good resolutions reached. While there is a bit of TasWater bashing, which was almost a hobby for some there for a while, I have never experienced that - I found TasWater to be very good. I hope this improves the situation.

Mr Dean - They are good, and I have had similar positive experiences with them. They do not just pay lip-service with the issues you raise with them.

Ms Rattray - They certainly have been proactive since legislation was brought into this place.

Mr FARRELL - I often wonder if there is a better way to deal with the budget. Should we do a review rather than judging it before it is implemented? We debate how good or bad it is before it is implemented, but we do not really evaluate the results. Some would say that elections evaluate the results but I would say it is about so much more than the budget. It is time to look at how we can do things better. A budget is just a number unless it can be measured for social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Debate adjourned.

CONDOLENCE MOTION Mrs Mary Elaine Binks, OAM

[6.05 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I move -

That this Council expresses its deep regret at the death on 12 June 2018 of Mrs Mary Binks OAM, who served as an Alderman, Deputy Mayor and Mayor of Devonport Council, and places on record its appreciation of her service to the Devonport Municipality and this State, and further, that this House respectfully tenders to her family its sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

Mr President, today I would like to take a moment to honour the life and many selfless achievements of Mary Elaine Binks, OAM. Mary was born in New Norfolk and educated at St Brigid Convent and St Mary's College in Hobart. In 1958 she married Chris Binks, her much adored and loving life partner, and later had four children - Peter, Catherine, Mary and Jenni. She was a devoted grandmother to Hilary, Clementine, Hugh, Erin, Siobhan and Kieran.

Mary's early career began as a librarian, at CSIRO in Hobart for five years and at the University of Tasmania library where she worked for three years. After Mary moved to the north-west coast she immediately made her presence felt. She became the inaugural president of the Devonport branch of the National Council of Women of Australia in 1983 and remained a member until her passing. For members who are not aware of it, the NCWA is a national non-government umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives which seeks to raise the awareness of women and girls about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encourages the participation of women in all aspects of community life. In 1989, Mary was elected to the Devonport City Council, serving a total of 13 years - two years as deputy mayor and four years as the mayor. It was during this time I met Mary and she was certainly a lady who very pleasantly commanded and deserved respect.

Mary somewhat reminded me of the Queen, a little lady with a backbone of steel. Mary would gracefully listen to a complaint or a point of view and no matter how ridiculous the suggestion or comment, she would acknowledge, smile sweetly and then carefully craft a response allowing the individual to feel validated in their opinion. Usually the person then walked away with a much better understanding of how they should be thinking.

Never one to rest on her laurels or just be an alderman, Mary was a member of the Cradle Coast Authority for two years, a member and state convenor of the Tasmanian Women's Consultative Council, and a past vice-president of the Tasmanian Local Government Association. Continuing her commitment to advancing and educating women in local government, she was at various times the president and an office bearer of the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association. ALGWA would later honour Mary for her dedication and service to the organisation by awarding life membership.

In what might have been called her spare time, Mary took on roles with the Tasmanian Library Advisory Board, the Tasmanian Heritage Council, the Local Government Review Board and the advisory board to the North West Rural Palliative Care Project set up by the North West Tasmania Division of General Practice.

One of the loveliest things about Mary was her capacity to seemingly never get old or, more precisely, to never apply the social, moral or religious stands of her youth to modern-day situations as we sometimes see in people growing older. There is a famous saying attributed to the Dalai Lama, 'When you talk you are only repeating what you already know, but if you listen you may learn something new.' Mary embodied this sentiment. She changed with the times, accepted diversity and always sought more knowledge and understanding. Quite simply, she never stopped listening and never stopped learning.

In the early 1990s, during the bitter and hurtful public debate as the government of the day moved to decriminalise homosexuality, Mary was horrified by the pain and trauma experienced by young LGBTI people and, sadly, the number of suicides of gay men on the north-west coast. Mary was a devout Catholic, but Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesperson Rodney Croome described Mary's response to the situation as follows -

At a time of division and pain in the community, Mary Binks stepped up, brought people together, and made our island a better place. She might have come across as prim and proper, but underneath she was a force of nature who achieved what many thought was impossible - establishing an LGBTI support organisation in what was then still Australia's most homophobic state. Mary was a role model for all those heterosexual people who want to support inclusion and equality for the LGBTI community because she was at once polite and tenacious, brave and kind, strategic and outspoken.

During 1994 and 1995 Mary chaired the committee which produced the 'Working It Out' report, a study into the prejudice and discrimination faced by north-west LGBTI youth. The report was utilised by many communities throughout Australia and resulted in funding for Working It Out as an organisation from federal and state governments.

Not surprisingly, but perhaps in contrast, other community involvements included Mary's tenure as state president of the Catholic Women's League in the 1980s, executive officer of the state Penguin Club and a member for five years, inaugural member of the Devonport Police and Citizens Youth Club, pensioner groups, and vocational education and training.

Mary also contributed to the development of the Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing and was a keynote speaker at the Power of Positive Ageing forum in 2003. Mary established a soup kitchen in Devonport. I am now quoting from the *Advocate's* editorial of 14 June -

After her time in the mayor's robes she was a key driver behind setting up Gran's Van to help those less fortunate in the community.

Mrs Binks used her connections to gain the ear of at least two prime ministers to get support for the project, because she was passionate about it - or more the people that would benefit from the service.

It was all delivered with no judgement, just a helping hand for those who needed it. And many hundreds of people have done just that over the 12 years since the service was established.

Mary Binks was entered on the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women in 2005 for service to the community, was declared a 'Diamond of Devonport' and received an OAM for service to local government, particularly through the Devonport City Council, the promotion of women's affairs and the community.

I take the liberty now to share some reflections from the Deputy Premier, the member for Braddon, Mr Rockliff MP, and Devonport-based Senator the honourable Richard Colbeck. Mr Rockliff said -

It's a very sad day for our region, Mary Binks was a wonderfully compassionate and kind person. She was a great community leader that demonstrated strength and oozed genuineness.

Senator Richard Colbeck also paid a personal tribute to Mary Binks -

'I had the genuine pleasure to serve on Devonport Council with Mary when she became Devonport's first female Mayor from 1999,' he said. 'Mary was an excellent leader of our community ... she carried out the role with authority, warmth, compassion, feistiness, humour ... Mary was someone who was very much of her community and it showed in the way she carried out her role. Hers was a friendship that I respected and valued and I know she will be remembered warmly by her community', Senator Colbeck said.

Indeed she will. Vale Mary Binks.

[6.12 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I add to the member for Mersey's condolence motion. I met Mary when I became a local government councillor on the Dorset Council. I went to a women's workshop near Exeter and remember being very nervous as it was my first time at such a large gathering of women in local government. I remember well Mary's arrival and it almost felt like the Queen had arrived. She just had a presence about her. I was in awe of this woman whom everyone seemed to go to and wanted to spend time with, soaking up as much knowledge and understanding of being a woman in local government as possible. That was around 1998 and I still remember it to this day.

I listened intently and hoped to learn something on that day. I did and took it forward in my role as a councillor and community representative. I made contact with Katrena Stephenson at LGAT and asked her for any input. Christine Fraser, Katrena's mum, sent me the whole chapter from her book published in 2008, titled *Politically Correct: Talking to Twelve Tasmanian Women*.

Christine met Mary at the time when she was general manager at Kentish Council. I thank Katrena and Christine for providing some information. I thought one lovely part of the book about Mary was -

Barely five feet, Mary stands tall in a still male-dominated environment. She is intelligent, committed, energetic and charming.

It came as no surprise to find that she felt her skill in tying scarves had stood her in good stead during her election campaign. Always beautifully groomed, her outfits often feature a scarf.

She had that presence but she also was a feisty lady who absolutely believed in what she was doing. She was a real role model for women in local government and for her community. We have already heard about when Mary was elected as the mayor of Devonport. Interestingly my notes say that she was the first mayor to make it a full-time job when she was elected as mayor of Devonport. She had full office hours. She must have gone to the office each day and prepared for the day ahead. It is nice to remind ourselves of the influence people have upon us in our roles as we journey through life and Mary Binks made an impression on my life and many others. I pay my respects to her family and appreciate the opportunity to put those few words in *Hansard*. I came to know Mary a little in my time in local government.

[6.16 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I knew Mary when I was lord mayor. She was mayor of Devonport from 1998 to 2003, just before I took up the role. She may have been a rather smallish lady, five foot -

Ms Rattray - But feisty.

Mr VALENTINE - It belied her tenacity and her determination. She was always keen to get on with the job. I am sure she represented her community very well. As the member for Mersey said, she was a caring and kind individual in her approach and demeanour. She exuded this warmth. She was always pleased to see you. She smiled a lot. I did not see her all that often but when I did see her she was always congenial. You would not say that Mary was moody or disrespectful in any way. She was great and I enjoyed my interactions with Mary on the occasions we met over the years. I will miss her smiling face and those opportunities to connect with her. I simply pass on my condolences to her family and her friends. She will be sadly missed.

[6.18 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, on behalf of the Government, I support the condolence motion moved by the member for Mersey. While I did not have the pleasure of personally knowing Mrs Mary Binks OAM, I am aware of her considerable achievements and her contributions to the Tasmanian community. I had met her on one occasion where I became aware of Gran's Van.

I highlight Mary's support for advancing the role of women in public life. Mary was the inaugural president of the Devonport branch of the National Council of Women of Australia in 1983. She was a member and state convenor of the Tasmanian Women's Consultative Council. She was the state president of the Catholic Women's League. She was also president and office bearer of the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association as well as a life member. Mary also made a significant contribution to local government. Mary was elected

to the Devonport City Council in 1989 and served two years as deputy mayor and four years as mayor. She was a member of the Cradle Coast Authority for two years, a member of the Local Government Review Board and vice president of the Tasmanian Local Government Association, all those things you had mentioned. Thank you for bringing them to our attention.

On behalf of the Government I express my condolences to the family of Mary Binks and place on record the Government's appreciation of her significant contribution to the Tasmanian community.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members please stand for a minute's silence in appreciation of the many services provided to Tasmania by Mary Binks OAM.

Motion agreed to in *nemine contradicente*.

[6.22 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I move -

That a copy of the resolution be forwarded to the family of the late Mary Binks OAM.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That at its rising the Council adjourn until 11 a.m. on Thursday 21 June 2018.

Motion agreed to.

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

That the Council do now adjourn.

The Council adjourned at 6.22 p.m.