



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 24 August 2021

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 24 August 2021

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Member for Franklin - Mr O'Byrne

[10.03 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I wish to advise you of a change in my status as a member of this House.

Yesterday, Labor leader Rebecca White publicly called on me to resign from parliament. Her statement made it clear that she did not want me to be a member of the State Parliamentary Labor Caucus, a crowded and untenable situation. I have advised the Parliamentary Labor Party, and I advise the parliament today, that I will remain a member of the party and serve as a Labor member for Franklin for the remainder of the term. Regrettably, I will no longer be a part of the Labor Caucus.

I wish to place on the record my response to the investigation findings that have precipitated this situation. At the outset I want to make it clear that women have a right to be free from sexual harassment. It is the responsibility of men to make this right a universal reality. Women need to be able to raise complaints about sexual harassment, knowing that they will be listened to without fear of being attacked or discredited. Complaints should be properly investigated by supportive and independent processes which recognise the stress many women endure in raising complaints, while also providing procedural fairness for all parties involved.

In 2007, at a Hobart nightclub after a work function and in a subsequent taxi ride, I exchanged kisses with Ms Rachel Midson and, for a couple of months afterwards, I exchanged text messages with her. At the time, I believed these interactions to be consensual but this does not mean my behaviour was acceptable. I should have recognised that these interactions were quite inappropriate, given I was the secretary of the union and Ms Midson was an employee.

I understand that the interactions were inappropriate. At the time, I failed to understand the imbalance of power in workplace settings requires men in positions of authority to think deeply about the nature of consent. In the statement I made on 30 June this year, when some details of the confidential complaint from Ms Midson were leaked to the press, I recognised that my interactions with Ms Midson were inappropriate, even though I believed they were consensual. I also acknowledge that Ms Midson did not believe they were. I sincerely apologised and I repeat that apology today.

The only appropriate course was for me to stand aside and enable an arm's length inquiry to proceed. Ms Midson was entitled to have her complaint properly investigated and I was entitled to respond. I appreciate that for Ms Midson the lodging of a confidential complaint was a stressful experience. The leaking of the complaint ahead of the investigation can only have compounded that stress.

Some in the media, and some members of this House, have suggested that my 30 June statement and subsequent decision to resign amounted to an admission that the allegations made against me were true. This is not and was not the case. I recognise that my behaviour was inappropriate and that Ms Midson had a right to have allegations of sexual harassment and victimisation heard and investigated.

I acknowledge that I have let down my wife and my family. I also had an expectation that I would be entitled to have my response to the allegations heard and considered. I did not believe that I had engaged in harassment or victimisation and, indeed, the investigation found this to be the case.

The independent investigation commissioned by the Labor Party was finalised last week. It has been acknowledged by Labor leader, Rebecca White, and Labor state secretary, Stuart Benson, that the investigation process was thorough, robust and comprehensive. Ms Midson and I were both interviewed following the submission of lengthy statements. All of the contemporaneous witnesses cited by Ms Midson were interviewed.

The independent investigator, Ms Barbara Deegan, a former senior member of the Fair Work Commission bench, conducted the investigation. She has impeccable credentials and is well-versed in procedural fairness, workplace management practices, and sexual harassment policies and protections. No fair-minded person could suggest that she is anything other than impartial, independent and objective. She understands the difficulties many women face in having allegations of sexual harassment properly considered and having their voices and stories heard.

Ms Midson and I received advice from Mr Benson on investigation findings on Monday, 16 August 2021 but neither of us have been given a copy of Ms Deegan's report -

Mr SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, short if you could.

Mr O'BYRNE - I will be brief, Mr Speaker.

The finding confirms the view that I have publicly and privately expressed: Ms Deegan found that our exchanges were inappropriate and wrong on my part - a fact I have already acknowledged in public. She also noted that these interactions occurred in a consensual atmosphere and did not constitute sexual harassment.

There were four other allegations: that I regularly touched Ms Midson in an inappropriate manner; that I subjected her to improperly motivated and unwarranted performance management; that I treated her resignation differently from other resignations; and that I attempted to persuade other unions not to employ her. Based on witness testimony, Ms Deegan found these not to be true.

I respect all contributions to the investigation and the good faith and honesty in all involved. Ms Midson's evident distress last week and her declared lack of faith in the report are understandable. She has not been provided with a copy of the report. The investigation was thorough and of high integrity, but there has been a lack of transparency because the investigation findings and the report remain confidential despite the public interest in the matter following extensive media coverage of the complaint -

Mr SPEAKER - It's not a substantive debate, it is on indulgence. I need you to -

Mr O'BYRNE - I am explaining the reasons for my change in circumstance and I will be brief.

The investigation was thorough. For as long as the report remains confidential many in the Tasmanian community will doubt whether the Labor Party is serious about the robust investigation of allegations of sexual harassment and victimisation, and many will have uninformed doubts about its findings. I urge the Labor Party to release this report or, at the very least, provide a copy to the complainant and the defendant.

While the Deegan report has found that I did not engage in sexual harassment and victimisation of Ms Midson some 14 years ago, I do not claim it has absolved me of inappropriate workplace behaviour. I took responsibility for my behaviour by resigning the Labor leadership and apologising to Ms Midson, knowing that I would suffer serious reputational damage even if the investigation found that I had not engaged in sexual harassment and victimisation.

I hope my experience will give men a salutary reminder that the implications of power imbalance is for consent between men and women must be properly weighed in every social and workplace setting. In every instance men must always pay a proportionate price for failing to respect the rights of women. This is necessary to ensure that men honestly reflect on, acknowledge and change inappropriate behaviour.

I am human and I made a mistake. I paid a price. I will strive to be better.

Mr Speaker, for the House, I will remain the Labor member for Franklin because I passionately believe that members of parliament in a representative democracy can make a real difference to the lives of all Tasmanians. My biggest responsibility is to the electors of Franklin, to raise big and small issues, and to give them an experienced and passionate voice in the parliament. I will redouble my efforts -

Mr SPEAKER - I need you to wind up, Mr O'Byrne. It is becoming a speech.

Mr O'BYRNE - I have a responsibility to uphold the values of the Labor movement, social justice, dignity, the importance of work, public housing, economic and employment growth, high quality public education and health services and to end inequality and the right of every person to reach their full potential.

This is why I am Labor and this is why I will remain a member of this House. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Can I get some clarity under Standing Orders about what just happened?

Mr SPEAKER - It is standing order 127, which is an opportunity on indulgence for a member to make a statement when the circumstances have changed, as the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition do quite regularly.

STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Opposition Appointments

[10.10 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I will update the House on shadow portfolio allocations. As Leader of the Labor Party I have taken on the shadow minister for climate change, shadow minister for tourism and hospitality and events, and shadow minister for infrastructure. I will also take responsibility this week for health, parks and environment.

Other changes include the member for Braddon, Shane Broad, taking on the responsibility as shadow treasurer; the member for Lyons, Jen Butler, taking on responsibilities for ICT and science, building and consumer affairs, and veterans' affairs; the member for Bass, Janie Finlay, has responsibility for primary industries and water, small business and start-ups; and the member for Franklin, Dean Winter, has additional responsibility for economic Development.

QUESTIONS

Fortescue Future Industries - Hydrogen Investment

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.12 a.m.]

It was reported last week that FFI's \$500 million hydrogen investment was being held back because Hydro Tasmania has not agreed to supply the necessary power at a suitable price.

Your own Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan lists competitive electricity supply arrangements as one of the three actions the Government will take to support the growth of this exciting new industry. Deloitte has estimated the plant would create more than 3000 full-time jobs, increase Tasmania's economic output by nearly \$18 billion, and capture more than a quarter of the national hydrogen market for Tasmania and Tasmanian workers.

Why have you been unable to agree on a suitable electricity supply arrangement with the proponents?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the returned Leader of the Opposition for that question. In terms of hydrogen and renewable energy, I make the point that on this side of the House we have a plan and we are getting on with that plan, unlike those on that side of the House.

When we were returned on 1 May, the Tasmanian people made a decision about who was best to take on the responsibility of governing this state. Obviously, they recognised then that if you cannot govern yourself there is no way in the world that you can govern this state, as has been demonstrated time and time again. We see hydrogen as being a fantastic opportunity moving forward. In terms of the steps we have taken regarding renewable energy, already we

stand alone in this country with 100 per cent of our renewable energy being generated here to meet our needs. We have a plan to double that renewable energy to 200 per cent.

Regarding the discussions that we are having with Fortescue Future Industries Group, I spoke personally with Dr Forrest last week on this particular matter. He obviously has a burning desire to invest in Tasmania. Likewise, we have a desire to have investment in this state. What we will not do is sell the state short. What you can be guaranteed of is that on this side of the House we will work responsibly and sensibly through the issues, through the challenges, as we get to a point where we can have that investment in to green hydrogen which the world wants.

Tasmania is ideally placed to deliver this both with our renewable energy base but also with the fresh water that is required. We are in an enviable position. At the end of the day it is a position we intend to grasp. Already, the hydrogen plan has a number of proponents that are working on feasibility studies. We are well engaged with Dr Forrest and the Fortescue Future Industries Group. What we will not do - and I want to be clear - is that we will not sell the state short. We want to ensure that we get an outcome that is good for the state, good for our economy, and that is also good for jobs, but importantly, it is also good for energy consumers in the state.

Ms White - Are you saying he was asking for a cheap rate because he was told there was none available at any price?

Mr GUTWEIN - I make this point very clearly: we are very excited about Dr Forrest's interest in Tasmania. We are working with Dr Forrest. I hope that in terms of the opportunity that presents through Fortescue and a range of other proponents, we will have a lot more to say later this year on those matters.

Fortescue Future Industries - Energy Deals

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.16 a.m.]

Your own Hydrogen Action Plan promises to provide competitive energy supply for green hydrogen proposals. You have given grants to support companies looking to invest in Tasmania, and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on various consultancies. You have clearly created an expectation that you can deliver, with Andrew Forrest recently telling the ABC:

We understood that Tasmania was very keen to be a hydrogen leader in the world, and our early discussions led us to believe we should focus in on Tasmania.

However, he says he was subsequently told by Hydro that, and I quote:

We have no electricity to provide you at any price.

Is this true? If it is not, will you confirm unequivocally that Hydro is unable to supply, or that it is able to supply, 250 megawatts of power to Fortescue Future Industries' hydrogen proposal at a competitive price. Can you do it, Premier?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. You must not have been listening to my previous answer. The point that I have made very clear is that we will negotiate the best outcome for Tasmania, but I am not going to negotiate it here in this House.

I made it perfectly clear that on this particular industry we see an enormous opportunity, and we see enormous potential, as does Dr Forrest, and a range of other proponents. But we will seek to get the best deal for Tasmania. At the end of the day, the energy consumers in Tasmania do not want to see their prices rise; they do not want to see the opportunity for other industries not to be provided with the opportunity to also land their capital here. We are in the enviable position where we have a range of proponents knocking on our door. What we will do -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, it goes to relevance. The question to the Premier was: is there 250 megawatts available? It is a simple question.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms White, it is not an opportunity to re-ask the question. The Premier was on his feet. I ask the Opposition not to interrupt the Premier while he is answering, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I believe Ms White is aware of this. Not only do we have people knocking on our door wanting to use our energy but we have people knocking on our door wanting to install significant amounts of wind energy as well.

Regarding the member's question, I make the point again: I am not going to negotiate on the Floor of this parliament other than to say we are going to get the best deal from the best proponent so that we can secure Tasmania's future with these investments.

Federal Group - Casino Tax Rates

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.19 a.m.]

I am still on the same theme actually, Mr Speaker, and what is in the best interests of Tasmania.

Premier, all the way through the last state election campaign you refused to tell voters what the casino tax you had negotiated with your party's major donor, Federal Group, would be for EGMs. You were given repeated opportunities to be straight up with Tasmanians about the casino pokies tax rate. You dodged, ducked and weaved all the way to the poll. The same goes with your colleague, the Finance minister, Mr Ferguson. Shameless deception from both of you.

Now Tasmanians know you negotiated a discount tax rate with the Federal Group last December, and the legislation in which this gift is wrapped was drafted before you called an election a year early.

Why could you not be straight with Tasmanians before you went to the polls? Is it because you knew they would be angry if they knew you had effectively given away \$250 million from the state Budget over the next 20 years? Is that the best deal for Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens for her question and ongoing interest in this matter.

I made this point last week: what you forget and you are not prepared to talk about is that Federal Hotels - who you love to deride, and love to stick the boot into - have lost \$20 million as a result of this deal.

Ms O'Connor - After the billions they have made over the past 40 years, how disingenuous could you be.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - If you were to look at some of the comments I made in the lead-up to the election -

Ms O'Connor - People have taken their lives because of those people.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - I was very clear. The policy on gaming was dealt with at the 2018 election. What we said was that the state Government would do better out of this. We also said that pubs and clubs would do better out of this, and that the loser would be Federal Hotels. That is exactly what has been delivered.

Ms O'Connor - \$250 million bucks! Tell the truth. You cannot even say it clearly because it is a lie.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - I know it does not suit the member's aims. I said during the lead-up to the election campaign that in terms of tax rates, you need to look at the bundle. You cannot just focus on one tax line, which is exactly what you want to do to make your political point. You need to focus on the bundle.

Ms O'Connor - I'm focusing on the Federal Group, your donor.

Mr GUTWEIN - She says, 'our donor'. Well, we just clipped them \$20 million -

Ms O'Connor - That is small change.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I ask you not to interject; be respectful in this place. You have asked a question of the Premier. I expect the Premier to be heard in silence.

Mr GUTWEIN - Cabinet considered the final package after the election. That has now been put out for public consultation. Importantly - and the member knows this - this parliament, both the lower and upper Houses, will make the final decision on what is in that legislation. When the deals were first cut, that was not the case. Deeds of arrangement were put in place. That is not occurring this time around.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Premier has avoided the question about why he was not honest with Tasmanians during the campaign about the casino pokies tax rate.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, the point I have made is that the package needs to be looked at as a bundle. That bundle is now transparently out there for consultation. It will come before both Houses of parliament, as it properly should.

The member wants to focus on one particular tax line. It is the bundle, Mr Speaker. For Federal Hotels - which again the member will not talk about - it costs them \$20 million a year on the current deal. The state does better, and so do pubs and clubs.

Mr SPEAKER - I call the the member for Clark.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Without disrespecting the ruling, can I ask why you would go to a Government member when the Independent member for Clark has stood up and is actually asking a question?

Mr SPEAKER - There is a jump. I get to choose when people jump together. The Government has not had a question yet. There have been three questions put already this morning. I will maintain that system as we go along. I call the member for Clark, Ms Ogilvie.

Budget 2021-22 - Securing Tasmania's Future

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.24 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Government's clear plan to secure Tasmania's future is working as we head towards the state Budget? Is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question and her interest in this matter.

It is good news. I know those on that side of the House will find it hard to listen to - knowing where they have been and, no doubt, where they are probably going - but last week's Australian Bureau of Statistics data once again confirmed that our economy is strong and jobs

are continuing to be created, with the highest number of Tasmanians now employed than ever. Employment in July grew 800 jobs to hit a record high of 263 000 and our unemployment rate is four-and-a-half per cent, the equal lowest of all of the states and below the national average. Our economic recovery has led the nation. These positive figures once again, demonstrate that our clear plan is working. Our economy is growing, it is up; jobs are up and the unemployment rate is down. That is a good thing, Mr Winter. The economy up, jobs up, unemployment down; even you should be able to grasp that.

COVID-19 remains an ever-present threat to our way of life, particularly with the Delta strain. That is why the budget this week will continue the momentum and deliver on our plan to secure Tasmania's future. The budget will build on the strong foundations that this Government has established. It will grow our economy, it will create jobs, it will support business, and it will connect skills and training with young Tasmanians and Tasmanians around the state so that they can grasp the opportunities that are there in our growing economy. We are going to be investing significantly in our health system and the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. We will invest in education, and in social and affordable housing. This budget will secure Tasmania's future.

I will mention another couple of matters. This weekend, history will be made in Tasmania. Our state will host two AFL elimination finals in what is a massive coup for our state. The Sydney Swans and GWS Giants on Saturday, and the Western Bulldogs versus Essendon Bombers on Sunday in what will be a big weekend for Launceston, and an even bigger weekend for the state, in terms of its ambitions. These matches sold out in a matter of hours yesterday. As we have always said, if you bring the big clubs to Tasmania, we will turn up. I reiterate that the health and safety of Tasmanians is paramount. I reassure Tasmanians that all the COVID-19 safe protocols will be strictly adhered to and we will take Public Health advice every step of the way. The clubs are already operating in strict COVID-19 safe bubbles and are COVID-19 tested regularly, travel in sterile corridors, and will not interact with the broader community. Over the past 48 hours, Public Health and the COVID-19 Coordination Centre have been working with the AFL and the clubs involved to ensure that we have the strongest and strictest protocols in place to keep Tasmania safe.

I want to let the House know that we are also in discussions with the AFL regarding these four clubs being brought in a couple of days early in a COVID-19 safe bubble or hub. Should this be possible, and subject to Public Health advice, the two winning teams could stay on after this weekend's games and remain in their COVID-19 safe bubbles with the possibility of another final being played in Tasmania. This will depend on discussions with the AFL and depending on the week one results of the finals.

I am proud that Tasmanians will have the opportunity to attend these games which represent historic events for our state. They promise to be a spectacle the AFL football fans deserve. Let us get behind it and, importantly, let us do it in a COVID-19 safe way.

Finally, and importantly, I am very pleased to announce this morning that after further discussions with the AFL and Mr McLachlan over the past week, we have now reached agreement on the time frame for a decision on a Tasmanian licence. The decision for a Tasmanian AFL licence will be, once and for all, made next year in line with the finalisation of a funding model for the AFL industry for the 2023 and 2024 seasons. This will be finalised during the 2022 season and, I hope, early in the season. The AFL and the State Government

will work through the matters raised in the Carter Report ahead of the final position to be put to club presidents for a decision, once and for all, on a Tasmanian licence.

Mr McLachlan and I have had a number of conversations. Some of them have been more pleasant than others as we worked our way through this. I thank him for working with us. We now have a time line for the answer to be given, once and for all, whether or not we will have a Tasmanian AFL team.

I hope that side of the House is able to support and get behind this, although no doubt, they will find a way to play some politics with it.

The other part that this enables me to provide some clarity to is for Hawthorn and North Melbourne. We are now in a position where we can negotiate one-year rollover deals and finalise those negotiations. Subject to Hawthorn and North Melbourne being prepared to work with the state, we will have AFL content on the ground next year. Regarding the AFL licence, we will get clarity on that once and for all, after 30 years, next year. I hope that those on the other side of the House could at least find within themselves, to support the fact that we are moving this on, that we will know once and for all whether we have a team, and that will happen early in 2022.

Fortescue Future Industries - Hydrogen Industry Proposal

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.30 a.m.]

You have been actively encouraging investment in hydrogen proposals in Tasmania, yet you seem unable to confirm there is 250 megawatts available for a serious investment like Fortescue Future Industries' hydrogen proposal. Is Hydro currently able to supply 250 megawatts for any green hydrogen projects in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Again, I make the point that I am not going to negotiate on the floor of the House regarding this. We have a range of proponents looking for significantly more than 250 megawatts of energy. I am not going to commit load to a particular proponent. We will work through this to get the best outcome for Tasmania. That is what we want to do. We will do it sensibly and responsibly. Those negotiations are underway and we will continue with those negotiations. When I am in a position that I can update the House more, I will do so.

Government Schools - Healthy Lunch Program

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms COURTNEY

[10.32 a.m.]

You will recall that in this House in June I asked if you would introduce a healthy lunch program for all primary school students in government schools. Unfortunately, you refused.

I note that your school lunch pilot program will be delivered to 15 schools next year and 15 more the year after, bringing the total to 30 - barely one-fifth of Tasmania's 146 kinder to grade 6 schools, and it is still only a pilot.

First, I am puzzled by the funding announcement. There will be \$700 000 in 2022 for 15 schools, then \$700 000 in 2023, presumably to keep delivering to the 15 schools in 2022 but also for the 15 schools added in 2023. How does that work? Shouldn't that be \$1.4 million in 2023?

More fundamentally, we acknowledge that the pilot to date has, without doubt, proven the worth of the scheme. Will you now deliver a healthy lunch program to all primary school students in Tasmanian government schools?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As the Education minister, I completely concur about the importance of education for our young people. We want our young people to be growing up in a place where they have opportunity and access. This is why we have committed to our \$1.4 million expansion of a school lunch pilot program to 30 schools.

Only last week, I visited Beaconsfield Primary School to announce the first 15 schools to participate in this program. They have participated in a comprehensive EOI process. Furthermore, next year we will see another 15 schools able to participate in this pilot. Schools know their students and their communities, so this opt-in program allows the flexibility to ensure that schools are empowered with their school communities to make the right decisions.

There are two points I will make in response to the member's question. First, these are pilots. The purpose of a pilot is ultimately to be able to evaluate them. The Government has committed to independent evaluation of the pilot program. Ultimately that will be able to inform future decision-making on potential funding commitments as well as the way funding commitments roll out. Schools have huge diversities in the way these programs can be delivered. Different schools have different capacities and different schools have different set-ups, indeed their equipment. This is why within this pilot, there is a lot of flexibility for schools to either spend money on capital, spend money on food or other programs to ensure that it is appropriate for their setting. It is a really important point for the Chamber to acknowledge that through this pilot and through the independent assessment, it will give the Government the information it needs to be able to make good decisions going forward.

I also draw the member's attention to the food security strategy that my colleague, Mr Rockliff, announced last week. The Food Relief to Food Resilience: Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2021-2022 is part of this broader strategy. The Government is working around a range of mechanisms across different parts of community sectors and government organisations to ensure that we are looking at how we can ensure that all Tasmanians have food security. This is about ensuring that we have a comprehensive approach that looks at a range of different mechanisms from emergency food relief to ways that we can empower and build capacity in the community and, too, school lunches through the pilot.

I can assure the member that we are going to be monitoring this very closely. It has been welcomed at the schools where it has been provided. Future funding commitments will be determined on the outcomes of the pilot.

Business Support Package - Exclusion of Certain Sole Traders

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms HOWLETT

[10.37 a.m.]

The business support package announced recently excluded sole traders with turnover below \$50 000. The Labor Party, like the Government, has received correspondence from Mr Paul Lewis, who runs an independent taxi licence out of Perth. With the Launceston Airport operating well below regular levels, Mr Lewis's income has collapsed. However, due to the turnover thresholds, he is ineligible for support. Why has the Government ignored sole traders with a turnover of less than \$50 000? What do you say to Mr Lewis and the many others in a similar situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is a very important question. With more than 39 000 small businesses employing over 100 000 people around the state, we know that small business is the engine room to our economy.

One of the key priorities of the Tasmanian Liberal Government is jobs. One of the key ways we deliver that is by ensuring small businesses remain our economy's powerhouse. Under our long-term plan before COVID-19 hit, thousands more Tasmanians had been employed since March 2014. Even after the impact of COVID-19, our employment participation rate has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Our Government is helping to grow the economy and create jobs by supporting businesses to develop a skilled workforce, assisting with market access, unlocking investment opportunities in Tasmania, cutting red tape, and delivering the infrastructure our community and businesses need.

Our thoughts continue to be with the states and territories currently dealing with COVID-19 Delta outbreaks and associated lockdown. We know many of our small businesses that rely on interstate and overseas visitation and trade are operating under severe hardship due to the current border restrictions. That is why we are taking action and we are doing what we can to help them through these difficult times.

On 13 August 2021, the Tasmanian and Australian governments announced a jointly funded \$20 million small business package that will provide much-needed relief to Tasmanian businesses struggling with the ongoing impacts of border closure and to the closure of our biggest visitor markets. The Business Hardship - Border Closure Critical Support Grant Program opened on Tuesday 17 August 2021. It is targeted at businesses in the tourism, hospitality, arts, events, seafood, transport, hire car and coach tour sectors, as well as those directly impacted by reduced interstate visitation. The support program is available to businesses that have suffered a significant reduction in turnover as a direct result of recent lockdowns and border closures in other states, as a result of a reduction to the number of visitors being able to travel to Tasmania and a reduction in the ability to provide, sell, import or export goods and services. Financial support -

Ms Butler - I am after an answer.

Ms HOWLETT - Financial support of between \$2000 and \$10 000 is available to businesses that have suffered a 30 per cent decline in their turnover. Are you going to listen?

Ms White - Are you going to answer the question?

Ms HOWLETT - I will answer the question, if you will listen. The \$20 million package forms part of our Government's 4 Point Delta Shield plan that will keep us safe as we continue to deal with the risk associated with the Delta strain of COVID-19. Importantly, this package will help to keep businesses in business and Tasmanians in jobs. So far, 435 applications have been submitted to the program, which has only been open for just over a week. The program will close at 2 p.m. on 17 September -

Ms White - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It goes to standing order 45. The question was specifically about a sole trader who has a turnover of less than \$50 000, who is ineligible for the program the minister has spent the last three or four minutes talking about.

What else is your Government going to do to support people like Mr Lewis, who has written to your Government directly?

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Minister, please continue.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, we will continue to monitor the situation around the nation and review the impacts on our businesses moving forward, to determine any additional measures that may be required as we continue to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 situations around the country.

I encourage you to get Mr Lewis to please contact my office. I am happy to speak to him.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, before I go to the next question, I draw your attention to year 10, 11 and 12 students from St Patrick's College who are in the gallery. Welcome.

Members - Hear, hear.

MMG Rosebery - Tailings Dam

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[10.43 a.m.]

It is clear that if MMG Rosebery does not have a new tailings dam by 2024, the mine will close, 500 jobs will be lost and the Tasmanian economy will lose at least \$1 billion in wages, royalties and spending on services and supplies over the following decade. The time lines are very tight, and without any test drilling, MMG will not know if the South Marion oak site is suitable for a tailings storage facility.

Ms O'Connor - They were in there illegally. Does that not matter to you?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Dr BROAD - Minister, what are you doing to make sure there are no more unnecessary delays to test drilling so that the Rosebery mine does not have to close in three years' time?

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, if you wish to hear the answer to the next question, then hopefully you will not interject anymore. The minister has the call.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased and honoured to receive a question from the shadow minister for resources regarding a very important matter for Tasmania, and that is all about jobs. It has been a priority to secure Tasmania's future for our Government, day in and day out, election in and election out. It is something that Labor has not cottoned onto; you have not been listening. There is too much infighting over there, so Dr Broad, please come on board and support the measures we are taking to support jobs, growth and development - 8000 mining and forestry jobs on the north-west coast alone.

Regarding the 440 000 hectares in the Tarkine that the Greens - the parliamentary wing of the radical protest group, the Bob Brown Foundation - want to lock up, the impact on jobs, growth and development is just insane. It is insane because it would be detrimental for our economy, our society, and for the environment. A lock-up like that was denied by federal minister, Sussan Ley, and it was a good decision.

With respect to Labor, what about the federal Labor candidate, Mr Lynch? What is his position? He asked the question; he wanted to do more research as to whether he supported the 500 jobs at Rosebery. Mr Lynch was not sure. He needs some mentoring from those in the Labor Party, but we are not sure who, because they are so divided. Then, on the weekend, he is not so sure about salmon farming on the north-west coast. He wants to take more advice. He has grave concerns about the productive industries. Dr Broad, the member for Braddon, should be talking to Mr Lynch.

We know that Labor is bitterly divided at a federal level and at a state level and this is happening in Tasmania. It is toxic; we know it is toxic. It has been said by Dr Bastian Seidel. There is no government that is more in support of the resources sector than the majority Gutwein Liberal Government unlike Labor, who cannot even come into this place, election in and election out, to support our workplace protection legislation, to support the workers. Why not? To support the businesses and their right to operate freely from attacks, from intrusions, from workplace invasions, people tying themselves to equipment. Why does Labor, every single time, vote against that legislation, Mr Speaker?

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker, on relevance. The minister is being misleading. The mining company, MMG, was in the Tarkine illegally. That is why they had to pull out. It is just a statement of fact. It would be good if he stuck to the facts.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Speaker, we know we will do everything we can to support the mining company MMG at Rosebery. We will do everything we can to ensure they can go through the environment and planning approval process in the appropriate way. They need the

right to do that, unlike the radical protesters and their parliamentary wing, the Tasmanian Greens, in terms of their opposition to their right to do that. We will stay resolute in our support for the resources sector, and for jobs in that sector.

Budget 2021-22 - Future of TasTAFE

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.48 a.m.]

Can you please outline how this year's Budget will deliver on the Government's plan to build a better TasTAFE and invest in skills and training?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question, particularly as we are in National Skills Week.

Earlier this year, the Government took a strong plan to the election that received the endorsement of the Tasmanian community. We were clear on our commitments: better access to skills and training so more Tasmanians have the opportunity to get a job; and more investment in TasTAFE so that we can see better outcomes, closer alignment with industry and, importantly, more pathways to jobs.

This week's Budget will deliver on these priorities, headlined by a significant investment into our skills and training agenda of more than \$135 million. We are the strongest supporters of TasTAFE, which provides training to thousands of learners every year. Our reforms and investments are all about making sure TasTAFE can continue to deliver the training our community needs to grow with the workforce of the future.

This is why the upcoming Budget will deliver on our \$98.6 million four-year plan to create a modernised, future-focused public training provider. This means \$37.6 million to recruit 100 extra teachers; and \$10 million for the Virtual Campus, increasing access for regional students and putting TasTAFE at the cutting edge. It also includes \$2 million for SKILL UP, which provides free short courses to support job readiness; and \$4 million to increase TasTAFE access for rural and remote students with Libraries Tasmania. Crucially, it will also see \$45 million for TasTAFE facility upgrades in projects across the north and the north-west, as well as the south and transition funding as part of this also.

We have been engaging and consulting with industry, trainers and stakeholders, to ensure our plan to evolve TasTAFE and I can confirm that we will be releasing our stakeholder-informed implementation plan later this morning. This delivers on our first 100-day commitment and clearly sets out exactly what we are going to do to achieve these reforms and investment and how we are getting on with the job of delivering. In this plan, we are clear about what this means for staff and learners: more choice for learners, improved conditions and more contemporary employment arrangements, flexible hours aligned to learner, business and industry needs and improved access to training in regional and rural areas.

Crucially, TasTAFE will remain not for profit under this model and no existing TasTAFE employee will be worse off - no ifs, no buts. Throughout this process, we are committed to continuing to consult and engage with staff, students, unions and industry. TasTAFE has gone from strength to strength in recent years, a reflection of the significant investment our Government has made in the public provider since coming to office. There is more work to do to ensure that TasTAFE can reach its full potential and our reforms are focused on ensuring TasTAFE has the resources and the structures it needs to train the workforce of the future.

Other investment that will be delivered in this year's budget, includes \$20.5 million to deliver our Working Tasmania package, targeting and supporting employers who take on job seekers and removing barriers for those looking for work, as well as our \$13.8 million local jobs for local people package.

This is the only side of the Chamber that is focused on delivering Tasmania's future. Despite the proclamations that we have had from Ms White on the other side that we will see change under her latest leadership, all we are seeing is the same bitter, divided Labor. There is a toxic environment, as we saw demonstrated and said by their own ex-member yesterday. There are no plans, no policy. We will wait to see if there is an alternative budget but it is highly unlikely.

Only this side of the Chamber will continue to deliver a plan to secure Tasmania's future.

JBS and Huon Aquaculture

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.52 a.m.]

The Benders are selling their shares in Huon Aquaculture after a chequered history of environmental damage, social disregard and animal welfare issues. Many Tasmanians would think it could not get any worse. Instead, JBS has moved in, the largest meat processing company on the planet and has an appalling environmental and human rights record. It is guilty of massive deforestation of the Amazon, clearing indigenous land, US price fixing and it refuses transparency of their products.

JBS also has form in Tasmania. It poisoned King Island by pumping raw abattoir effluent into Porky River and, after a \$3 million bail-out grant from the Government to fix its mess, it turned around and sacked all the workers. When it suited their business model, they closed Quoiba and Longford. This company could not give a stuff about workers or their health and safety. They do not give a damn about the environment. They are Brazilian butchers, plundering the planet's resources and they are coming after our chief marine real estate -

Mr Ferguson - Is there a question? This is an adjournment speech.

Dr WOODRUFF - Hoovering up Huon Aquaculture is attractive for them, thanks to your Government's weak regulations of fish farming and massive expansion plans.

It is in everybody's interests for fish farming to be truly sustainable -

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, point of order. Could you draw the member to the question?

Dr WOODRUFF - I am very attentive to my questions.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, I ask you to go to the question. The preamble has been very long.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. They are facts that need to be on the record so the Premier can answer the question which I am getting to now.

Premier, you said you found JBS to be a company that has been fair and reasonable to deal with. Will you retract that ludicrous statement and your support for the company? Will you create an independent EPA and regulate marine farming in Tasmania to protect our environment and economy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that was quite a preamble to the question. I thank the member for Franklin for that long-winded question. There are a couple of points that I will make. First and foremost, Peter and Frances Bender have employed thousands of Tasmanians, invested millions of dollars in the state, created jobs and created a great product. Tasmanians should be proud of what they have done.

Regarding other matters that you raised, since coming to government this side of the House has strengthened regulation of the salmon industry, which is something you never did -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - when you were in government. In fact, if memory serves me correctly you were a great supporter of Huon at one time. Again, hypocrisy writ large from the Greens.

The circumstances regarding the vendors and the sale of Huon is a matter for those purchasers, and I understand there may be a couple of them floating around. Regarding JBS - and I have only had to deal with them on a one particular issue, which is when we needed to save the pork industry. I said quite publicly that they were a reasonable corporate citizen to deal with when we put that plan in place. In concert with the state they saved that industry and the jobs that it supported.

This matter will run its course. I note in the comments that you have made in here which I think on a number of measures could be considered to be defamatory; I doubt you would say them outside of the House -

Ms O'Connor - JBS on the evidence is corrupt.

Dr Woodruff - They are deforesting the planet.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I will return to where I started. I want to say to Peter and Frances Bender, who have been great supporters of Tasmania for a long period of time, thank you for the investment, thank you for the jobs that you have provided many of which are in regional and rural Tasmania, and thank you for helping us to build a strong brand in salmon.

In terms of the rest of the commentary - I put it down as that - that came from the member for Franklin -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Premier is mistaken. Every bit of information that Dr Woodruff put in her question is publicly available and referenced.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'Connor - The Premier is being misleading because he does not want to admit they are corrupt.

Member Suspended

Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor

Mr SPEAKER - Order, I have had enough today, Ms O'Connor. I ask you to leave the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

Ms O'Connor withdrew.

Mr GUTWEIN - Mr Speaker, I make my point, Peter and Frances Bender have been very -

Dr Woodruff - This is about JBS.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, unless you wish to join your colleague.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Premier was directing his comments directly at me. I responded directly to him because he is not being accurate.

Mr SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, I do not have to remind you that you asked the question. In responding to it I would have thought that would have been reasonable.

Mr GUTWEIN - The way Ms O'Connor jumped, I was wondering for a moment where the question came from.

I make the point that the Benders have been very good Tasmanians. If you re-read your question and the comments you have made about Huon, to be quite frank I think you should come back into the place and apologise to the Benders.

We strongly back the salmon industry. We have increased the regulation of it. We have put the regulation at arm's length, which it was not before when the Greens were in government and had the opportunity to do it. We will continue to support this industry. The corporate

machinations that are going on at the moment will run their course, and then at the end of the day, the FIRB will have a say.

Workplace Protection Legislation

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[11.00 a.m.]

Can the you update the House on what the Gutwein Liberal Government is doing to protect Tasmanian workers and businesses from illegal extremists' intimidating and dangerous protest action? Are you aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for that question and for the clear interest and support of workers and businesses in Tasmania, and the right to work.

As a government, we remain committed to protecting Tasmanians' right to work, the right of business to operate freely, the right to lawfully do so without threats and intimidation, and without disruption from extremist protesters. Let us be very clear, the Liberals on this side of the House have always stood firm in fighting for the rights of Tasmanians to work and the right of business to operate freely since the majority Liberal Government was elected in 2014. Through every single election we received that mandate to ensure that that objective was met. Of course, every single time it was the Opposition Labor Party who opposed that legislation.

We have a clear mandate to re prosecute our workplace protection laws and we will do so. On behalf of the Government I advise that we will be introducing another workplace protection legislation bill into this parliament to re prosecute the case. This is to ensure that workers have the right to work free from intrusion, intimidation and threats from illegal protesters, and that business will have that right to work.

Let us be very clear: our bill is absolutely based on our previous bill. It is taking into account the federal legislation, the previous legislation and the legislation that has been passed by other states and territories across Australia. It will protect not just the right to work but the right to free speech, which we have always held onto. Our legislation has been supported by the farmers; the fishers; the foresters; the miners; the business, large and small. We have had that support year in, year out; election in, and election out. We have a mandate. We will re prosecute this.

I am calling on the Labor Party to take a few moments out of their bitter division, their 'divide and conquer' and the dominant Left faction. They have to come together to support this bill, come on board and support the workers. For too long they have been standing with the Bob Brown Foundation and the radical protesters and their parliamentary wing, the Greens, in voting against this legislation.

Opposition members interjecting

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - Enough is enough from those in opposition to this. This is not a hypothetical situation. Dr Broad mentioned the Rosebery mine. This is not a hypothetical. This has been happening month in, month out; week in, week out; with radical protesters chaining themselves to equipment; getting in front of trucks, saying 'Stop'. This is putting people's safety in jeopardy. It is not good enough. It is not going to happen here in Tasmania, not on our watch. We are re-prosecuting this legislation and we are calling on the Labor Party to come together and support this bill.

This bill is not anti-free speech; it is not anti-protester, and it never was. It is not anti-union; it never was. It will not stop legal protests outside hospitals, schools, or climate-change protests on footpaths or in the street. It never did. The bill will protect the workers' right to work, the businesses' right to operate freely from disruption and extremist protesters. This side of the House has been very clear and it is time for the other side to come forward.

The Leader of the Opposition said when she became leader, again, that there would be a full stop: no more bitter infighting, no more backgrounding, and that she would unite the Labor Party. Well, what happened? The exact opposite. It is time they got their act together.

Yesterday, it was a big day in politics in Tasmania for the Labor Party. AD 69: Mt Vesuvius -

Mr WINTER - Mr Speaker, point of order. standing order 45 on relevance. It is a Dorothy Dixier. It is not even relevant to his own Dorothy Dixier. Can you please bring him back to the question?

Mr SPEAKER - I cannot put words into the minister's mouth.

Mr BARNETT - I will wrap up, but we are calling on the Labor Party to put aside their bitter divisions, the fighting, the dominant factions, the Left and the Right. It is time.

In AD 69 Mt Vesuvius was spurting volcanic ash, rocks and lava. Pompeii was totally destroyed. Time will tell whether yesterday, with all the repercussions in the Labor Party, the infighting, the blow-up, whether that will be the end of the Tasmanian Labor Party. We do not know but 23 August will go down in history. It is ground zero. What is into the future for the Labor Party? We do not know.

Bob Brown Foundation - Threatened Legal Action against MMG

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[11.06 a.m.]

The Bob Brown Foundation has threatened Rosebery mine owner MMG with legal action if they continue to proceed with test drilling on their mining lease at South Marion Oak, despite having all the state approvals in place. The Bob Brown Foundation appears to be arguing that because the test drilling may lead to the construction of a tailings dam, that any works require a full EPBC assessment.

Why is the Government letting this legal threat stand when it means that the Bob Brown Foundation could use the same threat to veto any drilling on any mining lease that may or may not lead to the construction of a mine or a tailings dam, unless there is a full EPBC assessment? Why are you letting this stand?

Dr Woodruff - It is the law, that is why. They did not have a leg to stand on.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to receive a question with respect to the Rosebery mine and MMG, and their plans to progress. There is no government more supportive of jobs on the west coast, unlike the divided Labor Party.

I have a quote from your federal counterpart, Chris Lynch. What did he say when he was first preselected with respect to the MMG mine, the 500 jobs? Last month when he kicked things off and was asked about whether he supported the Rosebery mine at MMG and what was happening there, his response was it was 'a tricky question'. It was a tricky question as to whether he supported the 500 jobs at Rosebery. Seriously.

Dr BROAD - Mr Speaker, point of order, standing order 45. I know the minister wants to try to have some fun but this is a very serious question about the Government letting a legal threat stand that has potential to impact mining.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, Dr Broad. I will ask you to sit down. The minister has only been on his feet for 30 seconds. Allow him an appropriate amount of time to answer the question.

Mr BARNETT - I have made it very clear that there is no government more supportive of the resources sector. We have been backing them in, up hill and down dale, year in and year out. They know that. You talk to the stakeholders and they know that. Felix Ellis, the member for Braddon, and I were down there and went through the tailings dam and the proposed work that was to be done. The feedback was positive. The workers know that we are very supportive and there is nothing more that could be done.

In terms of being united, yes, we are on this side of the House, but what about that side of the House? Yesterday, what happened on 23 August? It will go down in history. You have lost two members and where are they? The two members, a big proportion of your Caucus has now disappeared and you are trickling down to almost zero. You are nearly at ground zero. That is the question, Mr Speaker; are they there or not?

That was the question to the federal member: 'Do you support the 500 jobs at Rosebery and their future?' It was a tricky question as to whether they support the Bob Brown Foundation because you have been asking about the Bob Brown Foundation and the radical protesters. On the weekend he admitted he had grave concerns about a proposed fish farm that would be 12 kilometres from the nearest shore. It is over twice the distance that you can see with the naked eye. He attended the political rally of the anti-salmon echo chamber and seems to be taking his advice from the radical left-wing environment groups -

Dr BROAD - Standing order 45, relevance. The question had nothing to do with salmon. It's about a legal threat that the Bob Brown Foundation is holding over the head of mining on the west coast. Why won't the minister address the question?

Mr SPEAKER - I'm sure the minister understands the question, Dr Broad.

Mr BARNETT - It gives me in the time left to respond highlighting the deep divisions in the state Labor Party and the federal Labor Party in this state, so I am very pleased you have given me the opportunity to highlight the deep divisions.

With respect to the Bob Brown Foundation, let us be very clear: they were caught red-handed using baited camera traps on site earlier this year. They were caught red-handed.

As the Greens well know the Commonwealth Government has decided that the development of MMG's proposed tailings storage facility is to be considered as a controlled action through the EPBC legislation and that is an entirely appropriate way to go. It is an appropriate assessment and approvals process. In terms of the state, we have done everything that we can to progress that, we have supported that and we support that process through an independent EPA. We have complete confidence in the EPA to do this work and we are pleased that they are undertaking a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the proposal.

It is a bit rich coming from Labor, trying to stand up for jobs when year in year out, election in election out, they voted against our workplace protection legislation. You are feigning support for jobs when you have been caught out. It is high time that you brought into line your federal Labor candidate in Braddon.

Bob Brown Foundation - Threatened Legal Action against MMG

Dr BROAD question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[11.11 a.m.]

Given that the Bob Brown Foundation has forced the halting of test drilling at MMG's mining lease at South Marion oak, why has not the Government offered to become party to and challenge the Bob Brown Foundation's legal threats and uphold the legal basis for state exploration approvals?

We have seen that the Government joined cases against disability advocates and paramedics, supposedly for the purpose of clearing up legislative inconsistencies. Is this Government really willing to allow the Bob Brown Foundation to have an effective legal veto on any mineral exploration in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is clearly betwixt and between with respect to this matter. It is high time he got all the Labor Party onboard to support this very important initiative and the mining industry itself, with more than half of our exports from the mining sector, billions of dollars in support for this state and the resources sector, thousands of jobs, 8000 on the north-west coast alone. It contributes \$1.6 billion in direct gross revenue

and more than \$650 million in value added terms per annum. The risks from the Bob Brown Foundation are patently obvious.

They try to lock up 440 000 hectares of Tasmania, 6 per cent of the state. They have tried their best to lock it up and that emergency listing has been refused. They went into the Federal Court and then into the High Court with respect to the Regional Forest Agreement and they were denied. Denied, denied, denied. Through the strong support of this Government, through backing in the state government's Sustainable Timber Tasmania we ensured that we got that support locked in for the forest industry, for the resources sector. They have been denied but this is part of their strategy.

This is how they do it. They try to raise money in Melbourne and Sydney. They make false and misleading statements and make these claims to raise that money and now they are employing a full-time person to oppose the salmon industry. They have advertised for that and that person no doubt has already started or will start very soon. They are about stopping things whereas we want sustainable development, supporting jobs and development. For way too long Labor has been supporting the Greens and voting with them. So, your time will come.

I have announced today that legislation will be re-prosecuted and it is your time. Make a commitment today, Dr Broad, that you will support it; that you have listened to the Tasmanian people, you respect the mandate and you will support this legislation. You know what is before the federal government. We are here as a state government. We have done everything we can and we will continue to support the resources sector and they have to go through process with the federal government. I am not the federal minister. I cannot respond on behalf of the federal minister. This is not possible.

Dr Broad -What about the state approvals? That is what I am arguing about.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - This is the state parliament, Dr Broad. If you want to write to the federal minister you are entitled to do that. You should try to get your side of the House on side rather than being bitterly divided and being in a toxic state.

Safe Workplaces

Mr ELLIS question to ATTORNEY-GENERAL, Ms ARCHER

[11.15 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Gutwein Liberal Government is ensuring safe and harassment free workplace for all Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his strong interest in promoting a respectful culture in all workplaces.

Our Government is committed to ensuring safe and harassment free workplaces for all Tasmanians. As members might be aware, the Commonwealth Government funded the

Australian Human Rights Commission to undertake the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces. Tasmania actively participated in the consultation process as part of the inquiry.

Last year, the inquiry handed down its report: the Respect@Work National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces (2020). This landmark report sets the framework for a model that is evidence-based, victim-focused and framed through a gender and intersectional lens. It is also based on existing legal frameworks to avoid duplication, ambiguity and undue burden on employers.

As members of parliament, it is incumbent on us all to show leadership and act decisively to ensure our workplace is harassment free.

As the Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins stated when handing down the report and I quote:

Victims who have for too long been silenced have found their individual and collective voice.

I call on all employers to join me in creating safe, gender equal and inclusive workplaces, no matter their industry or size. This will require transparency, accountability and leadership. It will also require a shift from the current reactive model that requires complaints from individuals to a proactive model which will require positive actions from employers.

This is such a powerful statement and words we must reflect upon in this place. It is why the Tasmanian Labor Leader is so exposed in relation to Mr O'Byrne's inappropriate workplace behaviour having previously stated that, and I quote:

The Labor party never condones that sort of behaviour and ... any person across the community will condemn that type of behaviour, particularly in a workplace.

It took almost everyone else in Tasmania, survivor advocates and ultimately the victim herself to speak out and demand Mr O'Byrne's resignation before Ms White could muster the courage to call for his resignation herself. It was far too little, far too late. As David Killick wrote in the *Mercury* recently:

... Labor has rotated through [a] succession of leaders but there is not a scintilla of leadership.

When Ms White became leader this time, she said it was a full stop. The backgrounding and bitter infighting would end and she would unite Labor. Well it has not and she has not. Ms White needs to step up for Tasmanian women and strongly demonstrate that she is, in fact, listening. Unfortunately, she continues to let them down.

Unlike those opposite, our Government recognises the importance and significance of this report and the message it sends in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. A number of the report's recommendations were for action by governments, highlighting that sexual harassment is a pervasive and widespread issue across Australian society.

As Attorney-General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Workplace Safety and through my department, I am committed to working at a national level, as well as with stakeholders at the local level, to progress the implementation of the recommendations with a view to preventing sexual harassment in workplaces. Within the Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs portfolio, we have progressed recommendation 35 by agreeing at the meeting of Work Health and Safety ministers on 20 May 2021 to amend the model WHS regulation to deal with psychological health.

On June 24, 2021, the Australian Government introduced the Sex Discrimination and Fair Work Respect at Work Amendment Bill 2021, which will implement the Government's response to a number of recommendations in the Respect@Work report. The bill is aimed at strengthening Australia's anti-discrimination and industrial relations frameworks by simplifying, clarifying and enhancing protections against sexual harassment and other forms of sex discrimination in the workplace.

Our Government will continue to show leadership on this important issue and work with the Workplace Sexual Harassment Council and other jurisdictions to progress the implementation of these important reforms and ensure that we, as a Government, walk the walk and not just talk the talk.

Time expired.

PETITIONS

Sealing of Wielangta Road

[11.21 a.m.]

Mr Tucker presented a petition from approximately 1244 residents of Tasmania, requesting that the House call on the Tasmanian Liberal Government to seal the entirety of the road known as Wielangta Road to give a safe and second alternative route to the lower east coast of Tasmania by Christmas 2022, and to repair and replace the bridge on the southern end of Rheban Road near Wielangta Road.

Petition received.

Upgrading Facilities at Queenborough Oval, Sandy Bay

[11.22 a.m.]

Ms Ogilvie presented an e-petition from approximately 382 residents of Tasmania, drawing to the attention of the House the poor state of facilities at Queenborough Oval in Sandy Bay, Hobart, and the need to upgrade these facilities to a contemporary standard.

Petition received.

Workplace (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2019

[11.23 a.m.]

Ms O'Connor presented an e-petition from approximately 764 residents of Tasmania, as part of a longer petition totalling 3257 petitioners, drawing to the attention of the House the Workplace (Protection from Protesters) Amendment Bill 2019. Your petitioners are concerned the bill is -

- (1) undemocratic and illegal in the way it shields business from public criticism and elevates the economic interest of organisations over the civil liberties of individuals
- (2) unjust in setting harsh criminal and financial penalties for those who peacefully assemble on public land to protest
- (3) are dangerous in the silencing effect it will have on Tasmanians who decide against participating in public meetings and rallies for fear of breaking the new law
- (4) technically flawed in that none of the concerns and drafting problems identified raised by legal academics and community groups during public consultation have been addressed in the bill or its supporting information.

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

Public Accounts Committee - Inquiry into the Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic - Final Report

Mr Street presented a copy of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts final report Inquiry into the Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Report received.

Subordinate Legislation Committee - Reports - Scrutiny of Notices issued under COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020

Ms Ogilvie presented reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation:

- Scrutiny of Notices issued under Sections 11, 18 and 19 of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Local Government), and Scrutiny of Notices issued under sections 11 and 17 of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Local Government) Report 14, and

- Scrutiny of Notice issued under Section 14 of the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2020 (Land Use Planning and Approvals) Act 1993 Report 15.

Reports received.

SUPPLY BILL (No 3) 2021 (No. 32)

SUPPLY BILL (No 4) 2021 (No. 33)

First Reading

Bills presented by **Mr Ferguson** and read the first time.

DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 34)

First Reading

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

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

Acknowledgement of Message of Condolence on Death of the Duke of Edinburgh

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I report to the House the receipt of the following correspondence -

Windsor Castle
10 June 2021

TO HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC

Thank you for your letter of 23 April, addressed to Sir Edward Young, enclosing an Address of Sympathy to the Queen from the Tasmanian Legislative Council and House of Assembly, sent on the death of The Duke of Edinburgh.

Her Majesty much appreciated you taking the time to write as you did and would be grateful if you could pass on her thanks to the Parliament of Tasmania.

This letter comes to you with The Queen's warm good wishes.

Tom Laing-Baker
Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen

Acknowledgement of Address-in-Reply

Honourable members, I advised receipt of the following further letter:

Buckingham Palace
2 August 2021

Dear Mr Speaker

The Queen has asked me to thank you for the recent Address-in-Reply passed by the House on 30 June 2021.

Her Majesty was most grateful to receive it, and this message comes to you with The Queen's warm good wishes.

Tom Laing-Baker
Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen

MOTION

Parliamentary Committees - Membership

[11.34 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice in connection with the membership of certain parliamentary committees.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that leave be granted.

Mr FERGUSON - On the question of seeking of leave, Mr Speaker, the member ought to have foreshadowed the purpose of the motion that would follow. The House has no idea what this is about.

Mr Winter - It is the membership of committees.

Mr Ferguson - It is an appointment by the whole House.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that leave be granted? The ayes have it.

Mr WINTER - Mr Speaker, I move that Ms White be appointed to serve on the Standing Orders Committee in place of Mr O'Byrne, and Dr Broad be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts in pursuance of section 3(3) of the Public Accounts Committee Act 1970 (No. 54).

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I understand Mr O'Byrne is also on the Privileges Committee?

Mr WINTER - That is not correct. I have consulted with the Clerk on this matter some time ago and it is in relation to the change of leadership from Mr O'Byrne to Ms White. That

is why we are putting this back in line with the usual arrangements for the leader being a part of the Standing Orders Committee.

Ms O'Connor - Maybe you could give us a text or an email next time so that it is smooth. I did not know this was coming.

Mr WINTER - I was not expecting this to be a big deal.

Mr SPEAKER - I am sure if there are changes you can come back into the House and make them, if people have issues with them.

Mr FERGUSON - In the absence of the Manager of Opposition Business providing some notice to other members of the House about a motion to change membership of the committees being provided, at least we might be provided with a copy of the motion the House has been asked to agree to. That would assist members to know what the question is before the Chair. It is highly irregular for members to jump to seek to change the House's decision as to who should serve on committees without at least letting other members know.

Mr Speaker, with that point noted, I want to ensure that at least the Government was aware of what the proposal is in relation to the changing memberships.

Now that Mr O'Byrne, who is, I understand, continuing as a Labor member for Franklin, has previously been decided by this House to serve on the Standing Orders Committee, I do not know if he would have something to say about it. He is actually being replaced as a result of this motion. I have not even spoken to Mr O'Byrne about that so I am none the wiser.

For those of you who think this might be a petty opportunity to draw attention to the fact that Labor is in disarray at the moment, you would be wrong about that because it is the House that gets to decide who serves on committees. Often they are negotiated; nearly always it recognises the important role of the Opposition, but the Standing Orders Committee does have two members of the Labor Party currently on there, being Mr O'Byrne and Mr Winter. I draw the attention of the House to that.

I am looking at Mr O'Byrne and I am seeing he is quite comfortable with it and with those points made, I conclude my contribution.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Leave to Move a Motion without Notice

[11.39 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice, for the purpose of moving a suspension of standing orders to debate the following motion -

I move -

That the House -

- (1) Does not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace.
- (2) Acknowledges that sexual harassment is not a women's issue; it is a societal issue which every Australian, and every Australian workplace, can contribute to addressing.
- (3) Acknowledges that workplace sexual harassment is not inevitable and is not acceptable.
- (4) Acknowledges that sexual harassment in the workplace is preventable.
- (5) Acknowledges victims of sexual harassment, including those who have spoken out and those who have been silenced.
- (6) Commits to promoting a safe workplace culture where women are treated with respect.

It is important that this House give consideration to this motion as a matter of urgency, given the very recent and troubling public discourse about the nature of consent and sexual harassment in the workplace.

It is important that, as community leaders, we act quickly and decisively to protect women at work, and make it clear that any form of abuse will not be tolerated in this or any other workplace.

[11.40 a.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, this is a seeking of leave motion.

The Government recognises that Ms Johnston has discussed this matter with me this morning. The Government has considered the request for a matter that ordinarily should go into private members' time. Ms Johnston does not have private members' time scheduled tomorrow, because as an Independent member she attracts a quota of time, which in her case allocates private members' time every four sitting weeks for one hour.

Second, I dare to suggest that the motion as tabled would be supported by every member of this House, subject to a debate and, with the recent public interest, the Government is prepared to allow the debate to occur.

From a housekeeping point of view, I note that I have not yet heard or seen the foreshadowed suspension motion. So, if it is required, I need to indicate that we need to put some time limits on the actual debate. I propose 90 minutes today. In so doing, it is important to indicate that this is a way of ensuring that we can balance the priorities of the House today, which is naturally the supply bills and legislation which has been listed today.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, Dr Woodruff and I support the seeking of leave, and we strongly support this motion as worded. It is an urgent issue.

I will reflect on an event I went to last week, the Anna Stewart Memorial event, where women from the community sector and the unions come together to learn about leadership and how to get good outcomes. I was there with my Clark colleague, Ms Haddad, and the Independent member for Nelson, Ms Webb. We were all given a few minutes to talk and then it opened up to the floor.

The very first question from the floor related to the events that have surrounded the Labor Party and Mr O'Byrne for the last two or three months, and a simmering sense of injustice over what has happened, and a sense that the internal Labor Party report was not conducted as fairly as it could have been. I am relaying the feeling from the floor.

This issue is most certainly front of mind for women and girls across Tasmania. It has been talked about in cafes and on Metro buses. I had a conversation with a Hobart College student yesterday relating to gender equality, and this came up as well.

Parliament has a responsibility now to send a very strong message to women and girls that we stand with them, we hear and see women and girls. If they come forward with allegations of sexual harassment or abuse, we will listen, we will provide support and we will investigate. There is a pervading sense that gender equality is going backwards in Tasmania. We need to provide assurance to Tasmanian women and girls that we stand with them, and that is why we support the seeking of leave and a debate on this matter.

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Opposition will support the seeking of leave in this matter as well. This is a very important matter, and we understand it has been a matter of vast public commentary, particularly in the last few days.

The House wishes to debate the matter now and we will support that, because it is an important matter, and it is an important matter to us.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Move a Motion Forthwith

[11.45 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That so much of standing orders be suspended as to prevent such motion from being dealt with forthwith.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, consistent with my earlier comments, I will keep it brief.

I move -

That after 'forthwith', the following words be inserted, 'and that debate on the motion be limited to no longer than 90 minutes'.

Ms O'Connor - Until what time do you propose?

Mr FERGUSON - Not a time on the clock, just a 90-minute duration of the substantive debate.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Does not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace.
- (2) Acknowledges that sexual harassment is not a women's issue; it is a societal issue which every Australian, and every Australian workplace, can contribute to addressing.
- (3) Acknowledges that workplace sexual harassment is not inevitable and is not acceptable.
- (4) Acknowledges that sexual harassment in the workplace is preventable.
- (5) Acknowledges victims of sexual harassment, including those who have spoken out and those who have been silenced.
- (6) Commits to promoting a safe workplace culture where women are treated with respect.

Mr Speaker, I rise today to call on members of this place to speak as one in condemning sexual harassment in the workplace, and to recognise our responsibility to promote safe workplaces.

I want to begin by addressing a conflict of interest issue head-on. Yes, the victim who made the complaint is my sister, and yes, I am a witness who was not called to give evidence in the internal Labor investigation. That is a matter on the public record, and I do not shy away from it.

Today, I am also speaking as a mother, because I have a daughter who will soon be entering the workforce. I worry about what may happen to her in the workplace and I want her to be safe. I am speaking as a friend and a supporter of other women who have been subjected to sexual harassment at the hands of Mr David O'Byrne and others. I am speaking up as a woman who wants this to stop, and says enough is enough. Most importantly, I am speaking today as a community leader - a member of this parliament who has an obligation to speak up on behalf of women and shine a spotlight on this issue.

It saddens me that in 2021, a motion of this nature is still needed. The events of the last two months, the experience of my sister and others, tells me that it is needed now more than ever.

In 2007 to 2008, Mr O'Byrne - then 38, a union boss, married with two young children - kissed and sent explicit and vulgar text messages to a junior employee on probation in her early twenties. These facts are not disputed. Mr O'Byrne has admitted them. Publicly, he gave an unreserved apology. He said, 'I acknowledge that my behaviour did not meet the standards I would expect of myself', and that it had given him 'cause to reflect deeply on the nature of consent'. Of course, the circumstances surrounding his conduct at the time - a significant power imbalance between a senior male boss and a young female probationary employee - meant that consent was not possible.

It is not unreasonable to expect that an experienced boss of a union would have known this. Unions are called on all the time to represent and advocate for workers where there is a power imbalance that has been misused.

Mr O'Byrne is a 52-year-old man who has risen from the ranks of a union movement to the top of a Labor party who, in June 2021, would have us believe that he has only just now 'understood the nature of consent after deep reflection', following a complaint. Does he really take us for fools? Despite his public statements, Mr O'Byrne acted in a manner that demonstrated a lack of respect for the complainant and, disturbingly, a lack of respect for women in the workplace.

When he had the opportunity to show leadership and accept his wrongdoing, he instead chose to attack the complainant, further traumatising her. He called in lawyers, tried to background on her, and changed his tune by saying the conduct was 'consensual'. The mishandling of this complaint by the Labor Party is mindboggling. When a detailed complaint was confidentially made it took Labor two weeks before it was properly acknowledged.

In the meantime, someone within Labor told Mr O'Byrne of the complaint and its contents. Mr O'Byrne took it upon himself to contact potential witnesses for the complainant and to try to influence the evidence that they might give. He also talked about the complaint more widely within the party, breaching the confidentiality of the process. When it became apparent that the media had the story that a complaint had been made, Mr O'Byrne's private response was not one of remorse but instead he threatened to sue the ABC.

When Labor finally properly acknowledged the complaint by instigating an internal investigation and note, I do not call an internal investigation 'independent', he did not reiterate his public unreserved apology. Instead, he dragged the complainant through an horrendous investigation process where he vigorously defended his actions.

The investigation process itself was fundamentally flawed and inappropriate when dealing with a sensitive issue like sexual harassment. On one occasion the complainant was denied the opportunity to have a support person with her.

Most concerning was the refusal of the investigator to speak with a number of the complainant's witnesses. These were people who could provide evidence that, at the time, the complainant did not want the sexual advances of her boss and found them repulsive. They could provide evidence that she was frightened of losing her job and that she was repulsed by his behaviour. They could attest to the traumatising impact of Mr O'Byrne's conduct. To make it clear, these people have not been interviewed.

There was contemporaneous documentary evidence too: emails from August, September and October 2007 that detailed the conduct and the impact of it which the investigator refused to give any evidentiary weight to. For the State Secretary of the Labor Party, Mr Stuart Benson, to issue a statement yesterday saying that all witnesses that the complainant claimed had knowledge of the alleged conduct at the relevant time had been interviewed is absolutely and fundamentally incorrect: a disturbing attempt at trying to validate a flawed process and deflect attention away from the actual issue that what Mr O'Byrne admitted doing was wrong and should never have happened.

The end result of this internal investigation is now a matter of public record, as it has been provided to the media by Mr O'Byrne who unilaterally released it with no regard to the further traumatising impact on the victim. The report determined, on the evidence - remembering again the evidence can only be that of Mr O'Byrne and his witnesses and not that of the complainant's - that there was no sexual harassment. It went one step further by dragging all women back to the 1950s and suggesting that the complainant consented to the conduct by virtue of her normal happy demeanour in the workplace and that this created a flirtatious atmosphere.

In validating the outcome of the flawed investigation and accepting the findings, the Labor Party is putting all women on notice and saying that we now need to be mindful of how our ordinary behaviour and actions may be taken as giving consent. Labor is saying to every woman that a pleasant smile, a bubbly personality or nervously laughing at a boss's joke is an open invitation for a senior employee to hit on you. Is it any wonder that women do not come forward when this is how they are treated when they do? Mr O'Byrne and the Labor Party would have us believe that what happened to my sister is an isolated incident that happened 14 years ago and that we should all just move on.

There are other women who have been victims of Mr O'Byrne's sexual harassment and unwanted advances, by my count, at least five other women since 2007 and as recently as December last year. With each woman the complaint is remarkably similar. Vulgar and unsolicited text messages of a sexual nature, abhorrent sexually explicit comments directed at them, physical advances that made them feel uncomfortable and unsafe, inappropriate touching of a sexual nature. Each of these women know of others.

Out of respect for these women, recognising the traumatic experience they have already been through at the hands of Mr O'Byrne and their genuine concern about how they would be vilified publicly and from the Labor Party, I will not name them in this place. Unlike some that they have encountered within the Labor Party, I care deeply about these women, and their

experiences have shocked me more than I thought it would. I want to share some of their experiences. The *Tasmanian Times* on 3 July reported allegations made by two Green volunteers. It said:

During the 2014 state election campaign, I agreed to do some letterboxing for the Greens. I received a message one day that the flyers and map were ready for the area I'd agreed to do. I went in to the Greens campaign office to pick them up. It was a weeknight, about 8pm, late February.

When I got there the door was locked. There were two girls inside and they both looked upset. I said through the glass I was there to pick up some flyers. They let me in and locked the door again.

The younger one, late teens, let's call her Imogen (not her real name), was holding back tears. She was being comforted by a slightly older girl, let's call her Chloe. Chloe pointed at the piles of flyers and went through them until I found my allocation.

It was awkward in there. I asked Chloe quietly what was going on, if there was something I could help with. The following conversation took place.

Chloe: You wouldn't believe, David O'Byrne and Scott Bacon were just in here.

Me: What?

Chloe: Yeah. We were just doing our stuff. Imogen was calling people about the flyers. I was sorting out maps. Anyway, they were walking past, down Elizabeth St. They saw us in here. They started calling out 'hey little greenies in the Green Shop' and leering at us through the window.

We ignored them. Then they tried the door, and it wasn't locked at that stage, and they came in. That was ... we didn't expect it.

Anyway, they were really drunk. They could barely walk. They were totally out of it.

O'Byrne said to Imogen, and he made it sound so sleazy, 'Maybe you and I should work on some Labor-Greens relations, hey?'

I said: 'Leave her alone. You guys have to go. Seriously, you should not be in here.' And then he said to me, 'Well you're a bit tight, aren't you? Maybe you need some Labor policy in you as well sweetie.' I said 'You can't talk to us like that. Get out now or I'm calling someone. I'm serious.'

Scott Bacon had been grinning through all but he seemed to realise it was turning bad and pretty much dragged O'Byrne out. I shut the door and locked it. As they walked off O'Byrne said over his shoulder, loudly so we could hear it, 'Well Bryan said screw the Greens; at least I tried.'

Me: Far out. What the hell?

Chloe: Yeah. Totally unexpected. They were so off their faces. And so creepy. And after they'd gone we were shaking you know. Really wound up. It was only just before you got here. A few minutes ago.

She assured me that they were going to be okay and were about to call it a night to go home anyway and if they could, avoid doing evenings in the campaign office any more.

I don't remember speaking specifically about the issue again. I was at the election night event at the Yacht Club in Sandy Bay. Both the girls were there. I talked a bit around the issue with Chloe. From memory she said something like, 'There was so much work to do, everything was a bit of a blur. So, you didn't want to dwell on anything that would get you bogged down.' I really didn't hear anything directly from Imogen on either the night it happened or afterwards.

On the night in question I had no reason to doubt anything Chloe told me. I still don't. The atmosphere in the office that night was just so charged with their emotion I remember it clearly. It stayed with me.

Mr Speaker, I have had members of the Parliamentary Labor Party confirm that this did take place. Other victims have reported to me that they too have tried to speak up or call out Mr O'Byrne's behaviour but have been discouraged and told that that is just what David is like, he is 'handsy'. It is shocking that groping and inappropriate touching can be dismissed as 'handsy'. I know that in some circles, women actively try to buddy up, so they are not at risk of being left alone with him. One victim has asked me to read the following statement on her behalf:

I am a long-term Labor woman who has experienced firsthand sexual harassment by David O'Byrne in 2020. Through recent media coverage of similar behaviour by David O'Byrne, it has become clear to me that it is pointless and unsafe to report sexual harassment to the Labor Party. I have watched from afar as David has tried to frame the conversation as being historical and that he did this when he was younger. But it was not only once, and it was not only in the past. I have spoken to multiple women who have over the years, have had an instance of harassment by him. This is a pattern of behaviour where he is concerned and he is leaving a trail of victims that now feel they have their voice taken away. Whatever the intent of the process, the consequence of the past couple of weeks is that we do not feel safe to report. We remain silent because we have seen the cost of coming forward...

It has been incredibly isolating, hurtful and disappointing that senior Labor and union representatives have been silent about women's rights and safety in the workplace, which is the core of this issue. Women have a right to be safe in a workplace and they have a right not to be sexually harassed in the workplace. Those are extremely powerful words.

It has been extremely disappointing that some within the Labor and union movement have taken to social media to defend Mr O'Byrne by trying to paint the allegations as nothing more than factional warfare. The truth is, no matter how inconvenient it may be for them, these victims come from across the factional divide and outside of the party. Clearly, there was a pattern of sexually predatory behaviour by Mr O'Byrne towards young women, particularly where there is a power imbalance. Worse still, that pattern of behaviour is known by people who can do something to stop it and who should do something to stop it. You know who you are.

While I acknowledge that Ms White has called for Mr O'Byrne's resignation and he has voluntarily removed himself from the Labor Caucus, he remains in this place and he remains a Labor Party member. If Ms White does not think he is fit to sit in her Caucus, then she should also demand that he is expelled from the party she leads. I call on her to take a principled stand, to take back the moral high ground that Labor once held on these issues, and make it clearly known that as leader of the party, she does not tolerate this behaviour. That would speak volumes to the victims and send a clear message to all members of the Labor Party that the party does stand with women.

My question to everyone in this House is how many other women have to come forward or be victims before we act? One should be enough but I have told you there are more. Some of you know who these victims are. Do you need a dozen, 20, 50 women before you step up and show leadership?

At the end of the day, this is a workplace and we all have a duty to ensure this is a safe workplace, each and every one of us, whether it is the Premier, a minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Greens or just a member. You have a responsibility to ensure that the people in this workplace are safe. You have a responsibility to set the culture of this place, one that respects women.

What we say and do matters. When a member of this parliament admits to kissing and sending sexually explicit text messages to a junior employee under his supervision, and we accept the findings that it was consensual because of an alleged flirtatious atmosphere, or we say nothing at all, we become part of the problem.

Our silence, or our acceptance of the behaviour, sends a signal to those in the workplace and to the broader community that the threshold for establishing consent is dangerously low. That is why this motion is so desperately needed. We must speak out as leaders.

As the Attorney-General highlighted earlier, the recently released Respect@Work Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report 2020 highlighted that a recent survey conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission found that, in 2018, sexual harassment in Australian workplaces is widespread and pervasive. The survey found that one in three people have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the last five years.

Let me set the record straight and be very clear to every woman: your smile does not give consent, your happy demeanour does not give consent, laughing at jokes does not give consent, what you wear does not give consent, having a drink with someone does not give consent and being in a social situation does not give consent. You should not have to tolerate unwanted sexual advances in the workplace because they come from your boss or someone else in your workplace.

You should expect to be supported when you say 'no' or 'enough is enough' and call it out. You deserve to be treated with respect. You have the right to expect that your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriately dealt with. Most importantly, you have the right to be safe in your workplace. Surely, we can all put party politics aside and, for the benefit of all Tasmanians, agree on these very basic principles.

Words alone are not enough. We must act and lead by example. We must be the model for how to handle complaints, be the model of what a safe workplace looks like and set the standard of behaviour that every Tasmanian should aspire to. I acknowledge that this debate is difficult and uncomfortable. I acknowledge that there are many good people on all sides of politics, including Labor, who feel a great sense of injustice by what has occurred and who are deeply troubled by the public discourse and victim-blaming. To those people I say, 'Be brave, speak up'.

At the March4Justice rally earlier this year, a friend held a sign that said, 'Who are you? Victim? Offender? Defender? Bystander?'. Over the last few months I have been asking myself this very question. I have decided my role - I need to be a defender. I ask my colleagues: who will you be?

In speaking to my sister last night, she personally welcomed the fact that Ms White has finally called publicly for Mr O'Byrne's resignation, but this issue is no longer just about what happened to her in 2007-08. It is about the experiences of other women and the nature of sexual harassment in the workplace. Clearly, much more needs to be done. As I said in my maiden speech, quoting Mhairi Black:

In politics there are weathercocks and signposts. Too often we see weathercocks who spin in whichever direction public opinion or, indeed, internal party politics blows them, no matter what principle they have to compromise.

We each have an opportunity here to be a signpost, to stand true and tall and principled. I urge you all to say 'sexual harassment in the workplace ends with me'. You can begin that principled journey by supporting this motion. It is your action in giving effect to the motion that will speak volumes. Do something, take action.

Finally, in closing, I note that this debate will have sparked significant community interest. I am aware that there are victims of sexual harassment listening today. To you I say, 'I see you and I hear you'. I know that this public conversation is traumatising and difficult. If you need help and support, please contact the Sexual Assault Support Service on 1800 697 877, Lifeline 13 11 14, Beyond Blue 1300 224 636, or 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.07 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, as community leaders we need to set and uphold the standards that our community expects of us. I thank Ms Johnston, the member for Clark, for bringing the motion to the House today and, as the leader of Opposition business has indicated, we do support the motion. It is critically important that we in this place not only set the tone

and uphold the standards that we expect of ourselves and others, but that we make sure that this is a safe workplace for us to be in and for staff to be in; other people to be in as well.

The Me Too movement and Enough is Enough movements have drawn unprecedented attention to the issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault, particularly against women. We have seen a real reckoning around the world in recent years, and in Australia over recent months, in particular, as women rise up and say, 'No more'. One in five Australian women experience sexual assault in their lifetime and more than half are sexually harassed. If you are a woman of colour, the statistics are even worse.

As a woman in this parliament, I have met and spoken with many members of the public and have heard too many stories from women about the pain they have suffered because of sexual assault or harassment. Any woman who has experienced this knows how far-reaching the effects can be on their careers, relationships and self-confidence. The culture that has allowed this situation to thrive for decades is now rightly being challenged. Women are speaking out about their experiences to help bring about much-needed change.

Grace Tame being named Australian of the Year this year was such an important moment for women and it sent a powerful message for all women and for all survivors of sexual assault that they will be heard. Grace's acceptance speech was equally powerful, not only demonstrating her own courage in the face of shocking abuse but also giving a voice to other survivors.

By the time Grace came to address the National Press Club a few weeks later, her story and her inspiration had taken on a whole new meaning for survivors around the country. The allegations that began with the alleged rape of former Liberal staffer, Brittany Higgins at Parliament House in Canberra had by then grown to include historical rape allegation against the federal Attorney-General, Christian Porter, an allegation he denied shortly after Grace's National Press Club speech. The federal government's mishandling of the issue employing its typical 'deflect and distract' strategy brought the treatment of women into sharp focus.

The groundswell of anger that followed led to the Women's March4Justice on 15 March which drew thousands of people around Australia to demand long overdue change. The reality is that very little has changed since then and women continue to face extraordinary obstacles when they do come forward. That is why we need to take decisive action to redress the balance and fix the system.

As Grace Tame said in her Australian of the Year acceptance speech, 'Lived experience informs structural and societal change. When we share, we heal'. As more women share their stories, we need to hear them and start the healing.

As Leader of the Labor Party, as a woman, I want to make sure we uphold certain standards and continue to foster a culture that is safe and respectful and that people can safely come forward if they have a complaint.

Labor fundamentally believes in fairness and we will continue to fight for fairness for all women. Labor already has affirmative action rules in our party with women making up around 70 per cent of our parliamentarians as opposed to about 35 per cent for the Liberals. Having women around the table, making decisions, is a critical way that we change the structure imbalance and the inequality that has seen so many women suffer for so long. We know that more needs to be done to support people who have experienced sexual assault or harassment

to ensure they can go through a complaints process without feeling unsafe or as if the deck is stacked against them.

I did say that I have felt uncomfortable watching both Rachel and David go through this process. It has been traumatic for them and we need to make sure as a party that we have a robust policy to ensure that if people have a complaint they can raise it in confidence, it can be dealt with appropriately and they are not further traumatised by going through that experience.

As a member of the review into parliamentary practices and procedures to support workplace culture, I have also indicated that I will encourage the review to adopt a recommendation from the federal parliament's review of the parliamentary workplaces responding to serious incidents to provide education programs addressing WSH obligations, respectful workplace culture and responding to serious incidents in the workplace for all members of parliament.

We in this place do set a standard and we need to make sure that we are as well-educated and informed as possible about how we can be the best in our workplaces and provide the best workplaces for those who support us. I have also said that as a party the Labor Party needs to work through where we have identified the gaps in our organisation. We can do that as part of the 2021 state election campaign review which also looks at the governance of the party to ensure that there is a robust framework for inclusive, safe and respectful workplaces. I encourage members of the Labor Party to make submissions to this process. It is currently open.

We also need to work to provide real assistance to women and families facing family violence. We can all acknowledge that there is much work to do and to be done to lead to meaningful improvements, not just in the workplace but in our society and in people's homes to make sure that everybody is safe.

As I have said, as the Labor Leader I am determined to set a clear tone for how we want people to treat each other and ensure that we support everyone to be safe. I will be redoubling my efforts to ensure that women are able to come forward and have their stories heard in a safe and respectful way.

We all need to do what we can do to improve the processes around sexual assault and harassment and ensure that all women are supported so that they do not suffer any more than they already have. As I said at the outset, the Labor Party will fully support the motion as moved today by the independent member for Clark, Ms Johnston. We will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace and we acknowledge that it is not inevitable or acceptable and it is preventable.

I join with Ms Johnston and I presume others in this parliament today in committing to promoting a safe workplace culture where women are treated with respect.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, before we continue, I welcome the second group of St Patrick's College students from years 10, 11 and 12. Welcome to the Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.15 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Premier) - Good afternoon, everyone.

Mr Speaker, I start by thanking Ms Johnston for bringing on the motion and, as has been foreshadowed, we will support the motion. The things that you raised are deeply disturbing. In thinking about how to respond today, as a parliament, as Premier, we have taken steps in terms of what we are going to do in our workplace culture here. We have started a process with Sarah Bolt and that will run its course.

I hope that we could be an exemplar in terms of our workforce, both within the parliament and within ministerial and parliamentary offices. That will be run by Ms Bolt over the course of the next three to six months. She will provide recommendations to us all in how best we can do that. I thank those members who are in the Chamber who are part of that process. That will be one way that this parliament can send a very clear message that women are safe here, that they will be heard here and importantly, there will be a process to ensure that any matters that need to be addressed can be.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition and very carefully considered some of the things that she just said, that decisive action needs to be taken, that more needs to be done. We have heard today that there are five other complainants who do not feel safe or in any way supported to come forward to the Labor Party. The question has to be asked: what are you going to do right now about this? The allegations that are being raised today are very disturbing. Again - and I note that the member, Mr O'Byrne, in the Chamber here that they are only allegations that we have heard - but your processes obviously have satisfied no-one in the way you have handled this current matter.

Ms White interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Sorry, you can mumble under your breath but the processes that have been put in place have not satisfied anyone and, unfortunately, have left many questions still to be answered, as we have heard today.

Without dwelling on the politics of the matter - and I want to step away from that - I think there are enough people on your side who have expressed their concerns of how the matter has been handled. I encourage you as the leader of the party to not wait for a review to occur. I think we all understand what is missing here and that is an independent investigatory process where people who feel aggrieved with Labor members can come forward feeling safe, feeling protected, and can have those matters heard.

Ms White - Do you have something like that in the Liberal Party?

Mr GUTWEIN - I can assure you if I was sitting where you are right now I would have.

Ms White - What about Adam Brooks? What happened in that case? This is a significant issue that we need to address. I am not denying it but you are very hypocritical in what you have just said.

Mr GUTWEIN - We know that you as Leader accept that something needs to be done. We know that your members accept that more needs to be done. We have just heard this morning, or this afternoon, that there are a number of other people who have raised concerns but feel too afraid, too unprotected, to bring these matters forward to the Labor Party. So you, as Leader, have an opportunity to put in place a process that enables them to feel protected, to feel safe, to enable a process that is independent and can be seen to be independent, to occur. That is a matter for you.

To be frank, I heard none of that from the Leader of the Opposition in her contribution. I know that others want to make a contribution to the matter raised. I will finish by saying that the movement that has occurred globally now for women speaking up, I said in this place some time ago that we hear them. As leaders in this place we have taken steps to put in place that necessary process so that we can feel confident, men and women in this place, that matters can be heard and that process will be conducted independent of this place.

I urge you, for the sake of your members and, importantly, those people that we just heard, who have issues and complaints that they do not feel comfortable or safe enough to bring forward to the Labor Party, to put in place as soon as you can a process that will enable those people to feel safe, to feel protected but importantly, for an independent process to occur that would enable those matters to be heard and dealt with. Until you do that, unfortunately, the allegations that we heard today are going to remain untested. In my mind quite clearly, this matter is something that is within your hands and you need to take the action that you have claimed needs to be taken.

[12.22 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague, the independent member for Clark, Ms Johnston, for moving urgency on a motion that affirms this House's support for women and girls to come forward and affirms our commitment to a safe workplace for women and girls.

I also acknowledge the trauma of Ms Midson and of every woman who has been affected by the conduct of Mr O'Byrne and the nature of internal Labor Party investigation. There has been vicarious trauma across the community amongst women and girls who have this nagging feeling that things are never going to change, that even in a party like the Labor Party, which makes so much of standing for gender equality, for the rights of women and girls, that you can have conduct like this that apparently is not in breach of policies that existed at the time.

Let us have a look at what sexual harassment is. It was very pithily defined by Mr David Killick in his editorial of late last week:

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Yet we have from the report undertaken by Barbara Deegan an acknowledgement that behaviour which under that definition is sexual harassment took place. Unwanted kisses and sexually explicit text messages to a junior employee from their boss - by definition, that is sexual harassment in the workplace. Yet this internal Labor Party report, which has not been made public, glosses over that. On behalf of women and girls, we want to know why? It has

the look and feel of a whitewash about it. We should acknowledge that the complainant felt utterly betrayed by that Labor Party process and what she understands have been the findings of that investigation. What does it say about the Labor Party, that the report summary of the findings said:

Barbara Deegan found whilst the respondent's conduct was inappropriate and wrong, it ... does not mean that it was in breach of the policy as in force at the relevant time.

We are not talking about last century - this is 2007-08. The report found Mr O'Byrne did kiss Ms Midson on three occasions and sent her three sexually explicit text messages, but his conduct did not breach ALP policy. That is utterly sickening. What does it say about the Labor Party? It says that there is a rot inside the Labor Party.

I acknowledge the work that the Labor Party has done to make sure women are elected into parliaments but there is a boys' club of faceless men who run the party. They will run protection for people on a factional basis when they believe it suits their political purpose. While there may be more women elected as a result of Labor's affirmative action policies, the real power, the machinery, is still heavily dominated by men.

Back to the report of Ms Deegan's investigation:

In relation to allegation 1, based on the evidence of the witnesses, Ms Deegan found that at the time the conduct occurred there was a 'consensual' and 'flirtatious' atmosphere about the interactions between complainant and the respondent.

Again, that is utterly sickening. It denies the manifest power imbalance in place at the time. A young, union employee, female, facing unwanted advances from her boss, who was twice her age. That is not a flirtatious atmosphere: it is an atmosphere where there is a power imbalance that allows for sexual harassment.

Back to the reporting:

In relation to allegation 2, Ms Deegan found in all the circumstances, given the flirtatious relationship that had existed between them at the time, she was unable to be satisfied, to the requisite extent, that it was reasonable to anticipate that the complainant would feel offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct.

That is denying the victim here their agency and voice. It is a disgraceful finding that will dishearten women and girls and discourage them from coming forward, particularly if they are connected to the Labor Party or the union movement of today. That is sad for all the good people in the Labor Party and the union movement. It goes back to the blokie, factional boys' club of faceless men who run the party. That is the challenge for the newly reinstated Leader of the Opposition, Ms White - to take on that boys' club. Unless it happens, democracy in Tasmania is sicker and sadder because we do not have a strong opposition. I wish you all strength, Ms White, in taking them on.

I was unaware at the time of the alleged incident which is reported in the *Tasmanian Times* and which Ms Johnston read out into the *Hansard*, but once it was published I took some steps to confirm the veracity of the information.

I have absolutely no doubt it is 100 per cent true. No doubt in my mind at all. It points to a pattern of behaviour of disrespect for women and girls. Two young women, at night time, volunteering for the Greens in an office, confronted by that. Let us just go back briefly to the language that is reportedly used:

'Hello, little Greenies in the Green Shop.'

They were really drunk, says this report. They could barely walk, they were totally out of it. And this story says:

O'Byrne said to Imogen -

Imogen is a pseudonym to protect the identity of these two young women, and he made it sound so sleazy -

'Maybe you and I should work on some Labor-Greens relations, hey?' He said to me -

And this is to Chloe, which is also a pseudonym for a Greens volunteer,

'Well, you're a bit tight, aren't you? Maybe you need some Labor policy in you as well, sweetie.'

There is no excuse for speaking to women and girls like this. You can be blind drunk and know that it is wrong. And Mr Speaker, I have no doubt at all that this is a pattern of behaviour. Since these allegations were first raised and the complaint was made public, I have been made aware of other women who have received unwanted advances by the member for Franklin.

I reflect briefly on what happened when I tried to defend myself in this place from the grotesque accusation of being called a racist by my colleague, Ms Haddad, who has never apologised for that. I tried to defend myself, got booted out, raised my voice once at the end - and then the next day on the lawns of parliament, Mr O'Byrne said I was screaming and hysterical. That, Mr Speaker, is gendered language. It is the language of someone who just does not get it. When I took him on about it, he denied it was gendered language, because apparently he consults other women about what is and is not gendered language. I do not know who those women are, but if he is, they do not get it either.

So, where are we? It is an almost Shakespearian tragedy. If we go back to this ambitious Labor member, I remember he undermined the former premier David Bartlett, and undermined Lara Giddings when she was premier - and we were in Cabinet with Ms Giddings. Daily undermining because of his ambition to lead the Labor Party. And so, after the last state election, because of that ambition - where Mr O'Byrne was undermining Ms White, too - we ended up with something akin to a coup. It was one of the shortest Opposition leaderships in Tasmania's history: ambition thwarted by the proven behaviour of Mr O'Byrne. Well, well, well. These are the consequences of his own actions.

Now we have a parliament in which Mr O'Byrne has been booted from the caucus, will not leave the Labor Party, is still sitting on the backbench, and is a millstone around the neck of every Labor member in this place.

I do not believe the five women who have been mentioned by Ms Johnston in her contribution are all there are. We are at a time in Australia's history where men who have sexually harassed or discriminated against women in the past are facing the consequences of their actions. The arrogance of being so ambitious, and wanting that job - and yet, behaving in a way that surely, had he thought about it for a moment, would be made public.

I have said in here before: fellas, that time is over when you could just do that and expect to get away with it. It is over.

Women and girls have not had justice yet, because last week our Prime Minister put an alleged 'rapist', Christian Porter, in charge of government business in the House of Representatives. What that tells us is that the highest level in our country, the Prime Minister, does not have respect for women and girls. It was disgraceful, and it again has traumatised women and girls across Tasmania.

Earlier in the debate on the seeking of leave, I reflected on the mood of the room, at the Anna Stewart Memorial event, among women who work in the union movement, in the community sector - simmering with rage, and this sense of what will it take - as Ms Johnston said, 'Five women, 10 women, 15 women, 50 women?' - for there to be some change. We need change in the Labor Party for sure, but we also need societal change, so that men in positions of power do not feel they can behave in lewd, harassing ways to women.

There is a measure of justice because Mr O'Byrne is no longer in the parliamentary Labor Party, which he says he has given his life to, but he is still sitting in here. Ultimately, I have been a bit cautious about saying he should resign his seat, because we are elected by the people, and the honour of being elected to this place is a compact that we have with our constituents.

How does Mr O'Byrne think he is going to represent women and girls who live in his electorate of Franklin, when he has not taken the necessary responsibility for his behaviours?

Initially, we had a threat to sue the Australian Broadcasting Commission when the story came out, and then an admission on 30 June where he said, in a statement I still cannot quite decipher, 'I acknowledge that my behaviour did not meet the standards I would expect of myself'. I still do not really know what that means. It is the behaviour that we need to model for the communities that we represent. He says, 'At the time of the reported events I genuinely believed the kiss and text exchanges to be consensual'. What kind of arrogance forms that view when you are dealing with a 22 year old junior? He further says:

However, I now understand that this was not the case. The matter has caused me to reflect deeply on the nature of consent and I have come to appreciate why the person concerned says our interaction was not consensual.

Then the Deegan Report, which none of us has seen, comes out and we have this statement from Mr O'Byrne:

The findings confirm that the public statements by several politicians about my conduct were disproportionate, unfair and opportunistic.

Talk about playing the victim. How dare he? I go on:

The statements assumed I was guilty of misconduct before any allegations were tested and investigated.

No, Mr O'Byrne admitted the misconduct. He admitted it once he got busted and yet there is this unique form of gaslighting - that is the only word I can find for it - where first you have an admission and then you have a denial that implies you feel exonerated by an internal Labor Party investigation which found that unwanted kisses and sexually explicit text messages was not, by definition, sexual harassment in the workplace. The statement from Mr O'Byrne goes on:

I hope that all politicians and public figures with an interest in this matter will now publicly acknowledge the findings and integrity of Barbara Deegan's investigation.

That is not contrition, that is a desperate pitch for political survival and probably, sadly, to keep his family together.

I acknowledge that this is a very difficult time for Labor and that having returned from the great joy of becoming a mum for the second time, Ms White has had to deal with this. I am somewhat encouraged by Ms White's statement today. I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday on behalf of the Greens encouraging Ms White to make a statement in the strongest terms in support of women and girls and a safe workplace. It is a pointer to one of the problems with the Labor Party that once the Deegan Report was finalised and there were reports of its findings, there was an attempt to make it go away with a statement on 17 August that says:

This independent investigation was carried out in line with the policy of the Labor Party and at arm's length from the Labor Party and myself.

Ms White said:

It was carried out by a highly-respected independent investigator, Barbara Deegan.

I acknowledge that this has been a difficult time for the individuals involved and the Labor Party more broadly.

I also acknowledge the investigator has concluded that no further action is required.

David O'Byrne has a clear commitment to Tasmania and will continue his strong work in the electorate of Franklin as a member of the parliamentary Labor team.

That was a failure of leadership. I have a sense that what happened over the following 24 hours is that women who are connected to the Labor Party or who have had workplace

experiences with Mr O'Byrne got in touch with his wife about that statement which attempted to make it all go away, which it was never going to do. Then we had a slightly more strongly worded statement the next day where Ms White said:

I feel deeply uncomfortable about the events of the past few days and the pain that has been caused to individuals, the Labor Party and the broader community. As the Leader of the Labor Party and as a woman I want to make sure that we uphold certain standards and continue to foster a culture that is safe and respectful and that people can safely come forward if they have a complaint.

We needed to hear something a bit more like that the previous day. The signal that went out to the complainant but also to other women who have had encounters with Mr O'Byrne that they felt deeply uncomfortable about, but also to the broader community of women and girls, is that this was going to be whitewashed, that the Labor Party wanted this to go away.

It is not going to go away. We have heard some fine words in this place when we have debated, for example, rape culture, when we have acknowledged the mighty Grace Tame and the powerful voice she is for women and girls and survivors of sexual assault and rape. I reflect on one of the most self-professed passionate feminists in this place, Ms O'Byrne, who in an adjournment debate on 16 March this year, got up on her high horse in here and said these things:

Listen to women, believe them, call out behaviours and act to make workplaces safe. There are practical things we can do.

An important message from yesterday - and this is the rally on the lawns:

... was that insecure work means that women are vulnerable in their workplace. Act to give women enough security in their jobs to be able to say when they are unsafe. Act when complaints are made.

Use your voice and use your privilege to call out the behaviours and demand consequences. Do not be more concerned about his career than the alleged assault. Do not believe him over her just because you know him. Demand better responses to sexual harassment and assault ...

And on it goes.

Every word of what Ms O'Byrne said in that adjournment contribution can be supported but it points to the utter double standard, the reason that people are so depressed about the state of the modern Labor Party in Tasmania. Say one thing out one side of your face and then when the crunch comes, do another or say nothing. The hypocrisy is nauseating.

There are other members who want to make a contribution. I very much look forward to that. I listened very carefully to Mr O'Byrne's lengthy statement this morning and I did not hear enough contrition. I did not hear that this is a person with enough self-reflection to be capable of redemption. I do not know what the end of this Shakespearean tale will be, but I know it will not end today.

I acknowledge the courage of Rachel Midson. I acknowledge the guts of every woman who comes forward with a story to tell about not being safe in their workplace, about being harassed and about being assaulted. I do not reckon there are many women in this place who have not at some point in our working lives, been harassed or discriminated against in our workplace. This is an issue that is endemic.

Until we in leadership positions take this on and force change, nothing will change. You will have women like the women at the Anna Stewart Memorial event simmering with rage and a sense of injustice. Every woman and girl is entitled to feel safe in our community. All women are entitled to feel safe in their workplace. All women should have the right to come forward and know if they make an allegation of sexual harassment, assault or discrimination that they will be seen, heard, supported and their allegation will be thoroughly and independently investigated. That is not what has happened in this case.

The events of recent months have unfortunately brought shame on us all. I do not accept Mr O'Byrne's explanation or alleged apology. I do not believe he understands what he did then was wrong, what he did when he walked into our campaign headquarters in 2018 was disgusting and wrong. I do not accept it because I believe Mr O'Byrne has fallen, that he is not acknowledging and he needs to. Ultimately, this is about his relationship with the people of Franklin and whether or not he thinks he can adequately and well represent them when he will not take responsibility for his own actions.

[12.51 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I want to make a contribution to this important matter, not only as Attorney General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Workplace Standards and falling under that workplace relations, but also as a woman for obvious reasons. The Leader of the Greens was quite right: I think that virtually every female in this place has probably experienced some of the issues to which she just referred. That is because of culture. Culture starts with leadership. We all have a right to feel safe, to feel respected and to be heard and no greater place should that apply than in our workplace.

The values we live by and the behaviours we all demonstrate do matter, so it is incumbent on all of us to ensure we set the highest standards to support safe work places and as members of parliament, that standard is set very high and rightly so. The Tasmanian community expects that of us and nothing less. Any form of bullying or sexual offence is reprehensible and should be called out whether that offence is committed in the home, the community or workplace, any workplace.

Moving on from that, all employers have a duty of care and a legal obligation to the staff working within their workplace to ensure work, health and safety standards are upheld and that they take this responsibility very seriously. We now also have more of a focus on mental health, safety and wellbeing. Unfortunately, as some of our physical injury statistics come down, we are seeing an increase in mental health and wellbeing statistics increase in the workplace. That is due to a number of reasons, but that statistic is there and is very concerning when we are talking about these sorts of issues that we are obviously grappling with that type of issue also.

All of this covers the parliamentary workplace. I wanted to reinforce that as part of this debate because the debate that has been brought on by the Independent member for Clark, Ms Johnson, is very genuine in nature. It does invite us to all make a contribution, not only in

relation to sexual harassment in the workplace but issues for women in the workplace generally. All members in this place must accept and acknowledge our duty as community leaders and we share common values when it comes to promoting a positive and supportive culture. We have all signed the Parliamentary Members Code of Conduct and understand our obligations to adhere to them and to set the standard when it comes to positive workplace culture.

The Tasmanian Liberal Party has adopted a code of conduct that clearly outlines expectations for our members, including staff and volunteers which stipulates values and behavioural expectations as well as outlining inappropriate behaviour and conduct and the steps that can be taken should this be experienced by any member within our party.

I also want to briefly touch on our record on law reform regarding sexual abuse - sexual assault, our rape reform, our family violence reform. It all speaks for itself. It is an absolute priority and has been an absolute priority of our government.

I also want to highlight we have some of, if not the, strongest provisions on consent in our Criminal Code Act 1924. New South Wales is going under significant reform because admittedly, they are very behind in this regard but we can be proud of the Tasmanian situation. I am always looking at ways of improving and whether or not we can even stipulate this even further.

I want to draw members' attention to section 2A of the Criminal Code in relation to the definition of consent because it is really useful generally in this debate. Obviously, it is in the context of crime but it also demonstrates what consent now is in relation to serious offences.

Section 2A(1) in the Code:

- (1) In the Code, unless the contrary intention appears, "consent" means free agreement.
- (2) Without limiting the meaning of "free agreement", and without limiting what may constitute "free agreement" or "not free agreement", a person does not freely agree to an act if the person -
 - (a) does not say or do anything to communicate consent; or
 - (b) agrees or submits because of force, or a reasonable fear of force, to him or her or to another person; or
 - (c) agrees or submits because of a threat of any kind against him or her or against another person; or
 - (d) agrees or submits because he or she or another person is unlawfully detained; or
 - (e) agrees or submits because he or she is overborne by the nature or position of another person; or
 - (f) agrees or submits because of the fraud of the accused; or

- (g) is reasonably mistaken about the nature or purpose of the act or the identity of the accused; or
- (h) is asleep, unconscious or so affected by alcohol or another drug as to be unable to form a rational opinion in respect of the matter for which consent is required; or
- (i) is unable to understand the nature of the act.

I mention that because again, the Leader of the Greens was saying some things which sparked my attention and I wanted to read out the definition of consent for that reason, because we have come a long way in recognising what consent means. It was certainly something Ms Johnston touched on in her contribution in relation to how women dress, silence and those sorts of issues in relation to unwanted advances. But we recognise that in the law regarding consent and specifically in relation to sexual assault and rape.

As I said earlier in question time today, Tasmania actively participated in the consultation process as part of the Respect@Work National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment and Australian Workplaces. This landmark report sets the framework for a model that is evidence based, victim-focused and based on existing legal frameworks to avoid duplication, ambiguity and undue burden on employers. As members of parliament, it is incumbent upon all of us to show leadership and act decisively to ensure our workplace is harassment free.

I wanted to again draw on the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins' statement when she handed down the report. A very succinct statement about victims and again I quote:

Victims who have for too long been silenced have found their individual and collective voice.

I call on all employers to join me in creating safe, gender-equal and inclusive workplaces, no matter their industry or size. This will require transparency -

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

MOTION

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Resumed from above.

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, before the adjournment I was quoting the federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins. I was part way through a second quote from her so I will start that sentence again.

I call on all employers to join me in creating safe gender-equal and inclusive workplaces, no matter their industry or size. This will require transparency, accountability and leadership. It will also require a shift from the current reactive model, that requires complaints from individuals, to a proactive model which will require positive actions from employers.

That is a really pertinent quote and one I chose to highlight to the House particularly because I am sure some of the female members will identify, and particularly on this topic we should have a proactive model and not a reactive one. Sadly, in most workplaces I do not think we do.

As I stated earlier today, and as the Premier has highlighted, the Government does not condone any form or types of bullying or harassment. We require all staff to abide by standards of conduct necessary to ensure the integrity and ethical standards expected of a staff member in their roles. We also acknowledge that changes to culture start with everybody accepting that there is need for change.

Members in this place know that the parliament has endorsed the call for an independent review to be conducted on the practice and procedure of the parliamentary workplace. This includes existing complaint mechanisms, frameworks and any cultural and structural barriers to reporting this conduct. That is the sort of proactive work that we should be doing. It is our hope, from the Government's perspective, that people feel safe and supported to provide information via a survey. If the outcomes of that survey, which has been conducted by our Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, show there is a need for change, a need for more support, a finding of bullying and harassment in any part of our workplaces, that that is dealt with and we put in place proper mechanisms and frameworks.

We can all agree that it is our duty as community leaders and our common values that compel each of us to ensure that the parliament is a leading practice example for all Tasmanians and promotes a positive and supportive culture in its workplace.

As Attorney-General, as Minister for Justice and Minister for Workplace Safety, and through my department, I am committed to work with the national level, as I said earlier today, as well as with stakeholders locally to progress the implementation of the Respect@Work recommendations. This is with the view to preventing sexual harassment in workplaces, amongst other issues raised in that report.

As I said this morning, within the Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs portfolio we have progressed recommendation 35 already by agreeing at the meeting of work health and safety ministers on 20 May to amend the model Work Health and Safety regulations that deal with psychological health. I reiterate from our Government's perspective that we will continue to show leadership on this issue. It is a vital issue of importance.

We will continue to work with Workplace Sexual Harassment Council and other jurisdictions to progress the implementation of these important reforms to which I have referred and ensure that we, as a government, walk the walk, not talk the talk, as I said in Question Time this morning.

I, too, do not want to dwell on the politics of this but all too often in this place there have been various contributions from various members on issues of a sexual nature, of sexual harassment, of bullying and I ask members who have made those contributions, where are they now? There is some deathly silence in this place. We have had to sit here and be approached on a number of occasions. My male colleagues have had to endure some pretty vicious unfounded attacks in this place, and the dead silence on this issue. We have had an opportunity now on this motion to speak, to put your views and to actually put some action into place.

The Leader of the Opposition can interject but her contribution today was very disappointing in that did not show the leadership to drive culture, certainly on that side of the House.

Members interjecting.

[2.36 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I will be brief but today I made a statement to the House concerning the findings of the investigation of the allegations of sexual harassment against me. I thought it was a comprehensive statement in which I acknowledged my failings and mistakes. I reflected on the nature of consent, canvassed the findings of the independent investigation, and reiterated my apology to Ms Rachel Midson.

I stand by that statement and repeat my call that the Labor Party should release the Deegan Report. I further reject the unsubstantiated allegations made under parliamentary privilege following my statement. I might reflect on that. We all have a responsibility to treat parliamentary privilege with respect.

We all hear from time to time - Tasmania particularly, parliament and politics is a very gossipy environment - rumours, innuendo, second-hand reflections and gossip on members of parliament. Very few members of parliament, I am sure, have not had rumours about them being circulated which are unfounded and unfair. We all have a responsibility as politicians to treat that with respect and to treat parliamentary privilege with respect as well. I feel like is not being appropriately used in parliament today.

Also, I want to make comment to the member for Clark, Ms O'Connor. Tear strips of me, have a crack at me, do all that you want -

Ms O'Connor - You are not the victim here.

Mr O'BYRNE - I am not saying I am the victim. I am saying you have every right to attack me in any way you want, politically, whatever.

Ms O'Connor - I am not attacking you. I just laid out the facts.

Mr O'BYRNE - You referred to my family and I do not think that was appropriate. You referred to my family in your contribution and I do not think that is fair.

Ms O'Connor - You have made multiple statements about your family. You have dragged you family into it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Mr O'Byrne, I understand you are addressing some of what Ms O'Connor has said. In order to keep the pleasantries happening in the place, if you could direct it through the Chair, Ms O'Connor and I can listen to your comment. If you turn and face and directly relate to the issue then you are just inciting Ms O'Connor to interject and then I will have to pull Ms O'Connor up. So, if you could speak through the Chair and do it respectfully, please.

Mr O'BYRNE - So, I reflect on your contribution and your reference to my family and ask that you refrain from doing that. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

[2.38 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I understand why this motion has become before the House today. I support the motion, as do my colleagues.

For me, the principle goes beyond the motion because I believe women must be safe and free from violence, sexual harassment and bullying in our community, workplaces and their home. I also believe men have the same rights and that it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to create and support cultural change across our workplaces and communities. This is something that I personally remain committed to do. Workplace safety is not just about physical safety; we need to move past this in Australia.

The amazing work and courage of Grace Tame and the courage of other women who have come forward with their own experiences and stories has led to the powerful rise of the #MeToo movement and a clear change in community expectations. However, it is clear to me that more needs to be done to create long-lasting change. As community leaders we must lead by example.

My intention in my contribution today is not to bring more pain to all those involved in the recent complaint made to the Labor Party, including David and his family or, Kristie, to your sister, Rachel, and her family. This has been a value I have maintained in providing public comments in my role as acting leader at the time, and which I will continue to maintain.

There is no doubt that this has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone involved. A lot of people are hurting. Many members of our community, members of our party, my colleagues and my friends have suffered during this time. I am deeply saddened by this, as am I deeply saddened by the place the Labor Party finds itself in right now.

I am committed to playing a constructive role in change for the better. It is critically important that women feel empowered and supported to speak up. I stated on 5 July - and I put on the record again - the party's support for the complainant, Rachel, and acknowledge her bravery in coming forward.

There has been an independent investigation, statements made and concerns aired. I have always maintained that the investigation needed to be confidential, and provide confidence and support to those involved. It is important that those involved in this process do not feel worse afterwards. It is important to make sure women and men feel supported with our party's processes, and feel safe and confident to come forward in the first instance.

This is a matter for the Tasmanian Labor Party and, as far as I am concerned, we all have a role in this. The reality is, though, that it also has implications for the communities we serve, and those who have put their faith and confidence in us, and also of course the wonderful members of our party. I acknowledge this.

We are the party of workers, and we proudly promote the rights of women. You only have to look at this side of the House, and our history, and to the make-up of our caucus, to see our support for women in the community and in the parliament. Many amazing women have made significant contributions to the Labor Party and women's movements over many years.

We have supported and will be participating in the parliamentary workplace review, because this is an important step forward for the parliament, for the culture of our workplace, and for those who work alongside and with us.

I strongly encourage the Government to consider the inclusion of local government, elected representatives and all those who work across the local government organisations across our state. They too deserve to be included in this process. If the Government is serious about workplace culture across government and local government, in its commitment to addressing workplace safety, sexual harassment and bullying, it must include local government in the process. This is something I have previously raised and will continue to do so.

This is, undoubtedly, a difficult conversation to be having right now. Something so close to us, and so raw. But that does not mean we do not have the conversation, or that we, on this side, will shy away from these issues. As I have stated, we have a proud history of standing up for women and fighting for workers' rights, and we will continue to do this. We will not shy away from that - not now, not ever.

[2.43 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, how much time remains for this debate?

Mr SPEAKER - It will finish in two and a half minutes.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will start by acknowledging the women who are at the centre of this motion that we are debating today. I commend Ms Midson for her bravery, and give her my undivided respect for the strength she has shown in continuing throughout this process and maintaining her dignity. I cannot imagine how hard these circumstances have been for her, and other women who have yet to name themselves, if they ever do.

I am really thinking of women and survivors of sexual harassment and sexual violence in Tasmania. I am aware from my conversations with the women I have spoken to that they are shocked at the finding of the Labor Party investigation, and are deeply concerned that the Labor Party has tried to redefine sexual harassment. They have tried to do this, despite the admission of guilt from Mr O'Byrne. The way they have done this is to use some very tricky wording about how the behaviour that Mr O'Byrne took was not, at the time, in 2007, a defined sexual harassment policy within the Labor Party. I find that so craven, weasel-ly and revolting, to resort to something so thin a defence in this circumstance, when it is really obvious that abuse is abuse, and you do not need a policy to say so.

It does not pass the test of any woman I have spoken to in Tasmania. It was certainly comprehensively thrown out by Yvette Cehtel, from the Women's Legal Service Tasmania, who says Mr O'Byrne has undermined his initial apology and made a mockery of it by changing his tune, and that they are side-stepping responsibility with the independent review, which appears to have tried to clear him of the sexual harassment complaints.

I find it deeply disturbing that women who want to feel that, at this time in our society, we are having a conversation that enables them to speak about abuse and harassment, but they have been re-traumatised by their own experience and told that, according to Labor Party policy, they cannot do that.

I will continue this in the adjournment.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Regional Jobs

[2.46 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: regional jobs.

Mr Speaker, hopefully, a change of pace is in order. I want to start by saying that mining operations such as MMG Rosebery are vital to the Tasmanian economy. Any thought that the state can do without mining, and in particular Rosebery, I think is wrong. You could probably say that a lot of people in the south of Tasmania do not realise that mining is such an integral component of our state economy.

Half our exports are minerals. It is vital for us that we have mineral exploration, mineral value-adding and mineral exports. What we see is that this is under-challenged. It is under-challenged in this place, and it is under-challenged in public.

We have seen the Bob Brown Foundation appear to make a lot of money out of their blockade of MMG. It has been very good for their funding-raising, because they have pretty much dropped everything else. They have dropped forestry protesting, they have dropped Venture Minerals, and now they are concentrating wholly and solely on MMG Rosebery.

MMG Rosebery is vital for the state economy, and it is definitely vital for the regional jobs of Braddon. There are 500 direct employees, or thereabouts - but it is not only just the direct employees: it is the contractors, the suppliers who supply them with materials, the transport workers, the rail network, the port, and it is also the wages that those workers spend. Not only that, it is the royalties.

When you add it all up, after 2024, the following 10 years after that will be roughly \$1 billion from the state economy if MMG Rosebery has to shut down. MMG are going to run out of tailings storage. That is going to happen in 2024, unless there is an alternative. It is vital for that alternative to be timely. It is only three years away, so the time line is very important.

We have heard the Greens and the Bob Brown Foundation talk about alternative sites when we first came into this place and entered the debate about the South Marion oak site, which is MMG's preferred site. There was talk about other sites. Once Bob Brown figured out that the other sites would also result in parts of rainforest having to be cut down to make way for a tailings storage facility, they changed their tune.

In fact, I would argue that the alternative sites would require more rainforest to be cut down than the South Marion oak site. Once they did that, they decided they needed a 'straw man' argument, and that one was paste fill. Paste fill will not work in Rosebery because it creates a potentially dangerous situation for miners. It is pretty simple, because the old workings are above the new workings. It is a mine that has been going for 85 years. There are a lot of undocumented shafts and undocumented drill holes, and putting a slurry of tailings and

cement into the old workings will put at risk the workers underneath that, in the current workings. That is an unacceptable risk.

I have done a lot of mine tours around the state - and indeed in other states - and one of the first sides you always see from these businesses is concern for their workers. They always publish and illustrate their work safety records - how many days it has been since a lost-time injury and so on. This is vital, and it is a key focus of the mining industry. No mining company would take such an unacceptable risk to their miners. If the Greens want to keep prosecuting paste fill, I would urge them to understand the particulars of this mine - that it is 85 years old and that it will not work.

But what is the Government doing about this? As I illustrated in question time, there is a legal threat hanging over MMG. Now, there are two different issues here. There are the state approvals that are currently in place so MMG can go out and do drill holes to find out the geology of the dam site, to figure out if a dam is even possible in that area.

But separate to that is the EPBC approval for the dam itself. What Bob Brown has done is brought into question the legal standing of state exploration approvals. If this is allowed to stand, the Bob Brown Foundation could use this same legal threat to stop any mineral exploration in Tasmania, if it may or may not lead to the building of a tailings dam or a mine, or something that would require EPBC approval.

The Government is silent on this. In the past they have offered to become parties to legal challenges to defend their own legislation, but they are not willing to do that this time. This legal threat will hang over every mining operation in the state, because that legal threat is untested. Why is the Government not offering to become a party to that legal challenge, to actually call Bob Brown's bluff?

What MMG is facing is that they need a tailings dam in three years. It is going to take 18 months to two years to construct the dam; it is getting very, very tight. The EPBC process might take however long. It might take a year, it might take six months. If MMG are prevented from doing any exploration while that EPBC process takes place, they may end up in the situation where only after that process is finished can they use their state approvals to do some drilling and then, lo and behold, find out that it is impossible to build a dam.

Maybe the geology is wrong, maybe there is fractured rock, maybe there is something there, but the Government is taking an extreme risk by not being party to any legal challenge here. MMG may be in the situation where they run out of time because this Government will not defend their own state approvals.

What is the Government doing here? Why will they not call Bob Brown's bluff on this?

Ms O'Connor - It is called the federal EPBC Act.

Dr BROAD - That is a separate issue. The EPBC referral is about the construction of the South Marion oak dam. It is not about a miner's right to do exploration drilling in a mining lease. They have all the state approvals in place; they were actually doing it. The Government will not back them in. You will not back them in.

Time expired.

[2.53 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am delighted to speak today on the topic of regional jobs, because there is no stronger supporter of regional jobs than this side of the Chamber. We have seen this through the election policies that we have delivered, not just at this campaign, but in previous years. We are securing Tasmania's future, and we are securing the jobs for people living in Tasmanian regional areas.

It is somewhat perplexing that the other side is coming forward with a regional jobs MPI. When they were in government, 10 000 Tasmanians lost their jobs. This will not be forgotten. They can come in here and talk about regional jobs, but it is this side of the Chamber that is delivering them.

We saw, when they were in government, an 8.6 per cent unemployment rate. The state was in recession. When they were in government, businesses actually thought the government was acting against them. This is what their track record is. Their track record is undermining confidence, and job losses across Tasmania, particularly in regional areas. I expect Dr Broad, as a spokesperson on a range of areas - including, historically, forestry - would know what his government did to jobs in regional areas. People have not forgotten.

In comparison, on this side of the Chamber, since we were elected in 2014, 28 000 jobs have been created. We are seeing employment levels growing at unprecedented rates, with 800 jobs added in July, including record female employment. Job vacancies in May were higher than pre-COVID-19 levels - the highest growth in the nation. These strong job figures are reflected in our economic growth. Building approvals are at their highest level in 25 years, and exports are hitting \$3.84 billion. This is a record high.

This morning I spoke about what the Government is doing to underpin training so that we can support jobs. I am very proud that the Budget that we are delivering will see \$135 million to underpin jobs for Tasmanians, particularly those in regional areas. This includes \$98.6 million to ensure that we can support TasTAFE. Tas TAFE is an important part of our training provision in Tasmania, providing opportunities for Tasmanians wanting to enter the workforce, and Tasmanians wanting to upskill. This is going to deliver more teachers and investment into skills, making sure it is more accessible for Tasmanians in regional areas. We will continue to make sure we are initiating the opportunities for Tasmanians.

As part of our plan to secure Tasmania's future, we have delivered Jobs Tasmania. This unit has been delivered and is helping to roll out the additional funding we have for more jobs hubs around Tasmania. Everyone in this Chamber will be very proud of the success we have seen with the south-east jobs hub based in Sorell. Through Jobs Tasmania, we are working with new communities around the state to ensure they are supported to create regional jobs in their communities. This is around Huonville, St Helens, the west and north-west, strengthening what is happening in Bell Bay and Georgetown.

This is about ensuring that we are linking employers with employees. This is about making sure that we are increasing transport, access, overcoming any of the impediments that Tasmanians have to get a job. We have a track record of delivery. We have a suite of election commitments that we are delivering, and we are making sure we deliver jobs for Tasmanians in regional areas.

I am very proud to be taking stewardship of our Local Jobs for Local People election commitment. It has a suite of initiatives that are at the very heart of making sure that we have local solutions for local people - ensuring they have the strength and the support they need, and ensuring that we are working with them to overcome any impediments or challenges they have, to be able to get a job.

We are working with employers as well, to encourage them to take on long-term unemployed Tasmanians, those with a disability, those older Tasmanians returning to the workforce. It is absolutely critical that the opportunities that we are seeing from a growing economy are felt broadly, and that Tasmanians, no matter where they live, have the opportunity to benefit from what we are delivering.

We are seeing a pilot Youth Connectors program that will be funded in conjunction with several of our jobs hubs. We are seeing the \$1.5 million Jobs Partnership Fund between the state government and the non-government sector; \$170 000 for Youth, Family and Community Connections in Devonport to provide the Fit For Work program; \$190 000 to support migrant and multicultural employment, and supporting the MRC in the south and north to extend their job readiness program.

We are also on track to continue delivering the initiatives outlined by the Premier earlier this year in state of the state:

- \$3.2 million to expand the Area Connect Service to help get regional people to work, training and education;
- \$400 000 for the Workers Connect Portal to provide information for jobseekers about local jobs;
- \$200 000 for regional job shows and events;
- \$2.4 million to expand the successful job-matching service;
- \$6.5 million for the Tasmanian Employer Bonus, as I mentioned earlier, to make sure that we are creating the opportunity and incentive for employers to take on board those Tasmanians who have been looking for work for some time; and Youth Navigators which will see disadvantaged youth have the opportunity to ensure that they have pathways into employment after they have left school.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am proud of the initiatives we have. I have spoken to many Tasmanians around the state. What we are doing is creating real opportunities. We want Tasmanians to be able to benefit from the economy. This suite of commitments that we have made will make sure that we are creating even more regional jobs.

Time expired.

[3.01 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, you would not know it in this place but two weeks ago the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change handed down its sixth assessment report which is, in the words of United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, 'a code red for humanity'. We have this puerile matter of public importance

debate brought on by an alleged scientist, Dr Broad, that makes no mention of the IPCC report, not one word.

Unlike Dr Broad and Ms Courtney, I do not have a university degree and that is fine with me but I picked up the IPCC report and I read as much of it as I could. I read the summary for policymakers and this is what I know: it is the most important issue this parliament faces; it will affect every aspect of our lives and our children's lives; it will impact on jobs in cities and towns, in regional and rural Tasmania.

We need to address it in this place and yet not one word about the state of the climate from Dr Broad and nor from Ms Courtney either, to be fair. But Dr Broad is a one-trick pony. Have a look at the *Hansard* over the last six to eight months. Almost daily he gets to his feet and, foaming at the mouth, has a crack at the Bob Brown Foundation and the Greens. It is like we are his reason to be. You could take it as flattery because he is talking about us all the time but it is also an abrogation of his responsibility to the people of Braddon. He is doing this for dog-whistling, political reasons. To marginalise a minority so that you whip up community anger is a hallmark of fascism, just as calling for stronger aggravated trespass or anti-protest laws has a whiff of fascism about it as well.

I encourage Dr Broad to expand his horizon, to think about the children in his electorate of Braddon and the young people who, while they may not have read the summary report for policymakers, they sure know that humanity is in a code red. Start acting in their best interests instead of coming here like some political hack from the last century.

That is what we are getting out of him. He does not understand federal environmental law. He is having a crack at the state Government over matters which are right outside their control. The federal Environment Minister has described MMG's proposed expansion as a controlled action. MMG was drilling that site near Rosebery without the proper approvals. MMG submitted documentation to the federal Environment Department which was inadequate and did not have sufficient environmental assessments in it. Their excuse was that they did not have time because the protesters were in the way so they just went in there anyway.

This part of Tasmania, takayna, the Tarkine, is one the world's last great wildernesses. Yes, it is sitting on top of the Mt Read volcanics. Yes, there is a long history of mining on the west coast and, yes, mining is critical to our economy but we cannot allow ourselves to get trapped by a false choice here. We can look after wilderness and we can have mining, but you have to get the balance right. For too long in Tasmania, we have not got the balance right.

That is reflected in the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council report, where Tasmanians who fed into this said 'the rhetoric around our clean, green brand is not matched by the reality' and where, to quote the report:

We heard that for Tasmania, simply making incremental improvements to sustainability will not be enough to support our brand. The quality of our environment and our practices in protecting and building our environmental value must be our differentiation in overseas markets. That will be a source of enduring competitive advantage.

The frustration Dr Woodruff and I feel when we listen to Dr Broad talk is that we know it is all about politics and marginalising conservationists. There does not seem to be any

capacity in Dr Broad's apparently vast scientific brain for understanding nuance and understanding what real balance looks like. He never talks about the values of the Tarkine unless they are monetary values. It is a one-trick political pony operation over there. What he is hoping is that *The Advocate* will pick up his rant from today and publish some of it tomorrow so his constituents can hear him dog-whistling from there.

Tasmania, the planet is in a state of code red. It is raining in the peaks of Greenland where it has never rained before. California is on fire, the Gulf Stream is wobbling, the Arctic is melting and great chunks of Antarctica are coming off it.

Tasmania's climate and local weather patterns are starting to change and that change is accelerating. If we are serious about long-term regional jobs, we have to get serious about climate action. I encourage Dr Broad to do more reading and live up to his title.

[3.08 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for bringing on this important item. As opposed to what the member for Clark called it - 'puerile' - the concept and discussion about regional jobs is really important. Just because climate change is an important topic, that should not prevent us from talking about things that are important to Tasmania, not only in Braddon but also in Franklin.

Regional communities in Franklin are reliant on local jobs. One of the first ones I will talk about is the aquaculture industry, particularly in the Huon Valley. It was disappointing this morning, in my fellow member for Franklin, Ms Woodruff's -

Dr Woodruff - Dr Woodruff.

Mr WINTER - Apologies. In Dr Woodruff's very lengthy preamble to her question this morning, she said 'the Benders are selling their shares in Huon Aquaculture after a chequered history of environmental damage, social disregard and animal welfare issues' -

Dr Woodruff - It is all fact.

Mr WINTER - Peter and Frances Bender are two of Tasmania's most successful businesspeople ever. I cannot think of too many more people who have employed more Tasmanians than those two people, who have created an industry almost from nothing and employed an entire region of people -

Dr Woodruff - It does not justify what they have done to the environment and social community.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Mr WINTER - There are areas of the Huon Valley that are completely reliant on the industry. When you talk to the workers at places like the Tassal factory in the Huon Valley, at manufacturing operations in places like Margate, when you go to places like Dover, the industry is loved by its workers and all the people who rely on that industry. One of the things I am surprised about in this place, and not just seeing the highlights on television, are some of the performances around that.

I believe Ms O'Connor, the member for Clark, mentioned 'nuance' a couple of times. The irony of listening to someone who attacks in the way she just did, talking about nuance, just because Dr Broad and Labor did not bring in the first MPI about climate change. Do you want to attack us for talking about regional jobs? I do not think it is fair. I believe you even called Dr Broad a fascist, or referred to his fascist behaviour, perhaps.

Dr Woodruff - His fascist tendencies. You have not been here long enough to hear him consistently demonising activists.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr WINTER - I am sure there are not many people watching at home, but to hear that, no matter what your view is - why do you have to treat this place and people like that? I do not understand the contribution.

Dr Woodruff - Come and listen to what your party says. Come and listen some time to some of the rubbish they dish up about peaceful protesters.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, enough.

Mr WINTER - I thank Dr Broad for bringing that MPI on.

I want to place on record my support for Peter and Frances Bender and everything they have done for the Huon Valley and across Tasmania, and all the people they have employed. I am genuinely sad to see them potentially exit the industry because I believe they have a genuine love and respect for their workers, for people. They have led the industry in continuing to employ people, and wanting to modernise the industry and continue to make it better. I really thank them for it.

On the subject of regional jobs, during the break I was very lucky to visit Bell Bay and have a chat to Bell Bay Aluminium, and to chat to the guys working at the gas pipeline as well. I saw the famous Bell Bay power station for myself. I do not think too many Liberal members have been there for a while, but it is a very important region for regional jobs and for the economy.

This morning we heard about the hydrogen plan. If it is going at all, it is hard to tell. On the radio last week we heard Andrew Forrest talking about his wish to invest half a billion dollars in Bell Bay, but he is unable to secure the power that he needs. I read the hydrogen action plan that the ministers put out. In action 2, it talks about \$10 million-worth of support services, including competitive electricity supply arrangements and payroll tax relief. However, according to Dr Forrest, there is actually no electricity for his proposed development at all. In fact, this morning the Premier could not answer the question of whether there is 250 megawatts to actually power the hydrogen, which of course is great for our climate - hydrogen energy, renewable energy, powered by Tasmania's clean green energy assets that Labor is largely responsible for.

I was very surprised at the Premier's response. We gave him three opportunities to answer the question and he was not able to. I was also surprised that the Energy minister did not make much of a murmur. We also heard Dr Forrest talking about his dealings with the Premier. It made me wonder where Mr Barnett is in all of this, and why this issue has had to

be escalated to the Premier already. How long has this been going on for? We do not have any answers, of course. The only reason we have any information at all is because Dr Forrest went on the radio and told us about it. When we tried to hold the Government to account this morning and ask the question we did not get any answers as to what is actually happening.

So, we have an action plan, with a bunch of actions, but it appears that we have no power. Until the Premier or the Energy minister updates the House, we do not understand where this development is at. Tasmanians deserve to know, and people in Bell Bay in particular will be very interested to know the status of that development.

Time expired.

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I can honestly say that I am shocked that the Labor Party decided to pick today to come into this place and want to talk about regional jobs. They have not wanted to talk about them really substantively for years.

I want to reiterate a few facts that the minister put on the table earlier. We have the lowest unemployment rate in Tasmania in over decade; 26 400 have been created under this Government and 10 000 were destroyed by the Labor-Greens disaster that they presided over including the failed economic development minister, Mr David O'Byrne, the Labor member for Franklin. Building approvals are at their highest level in 25 years. Exports hit \$3.84 billion in the year June 2021 and that is a record high.

One of the things that will secure the future of jobs in regional areas is the workplace protections from protester laws. They are going to be introduced again into this parliament. A mandate has been sought from the Tasmanian people -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, members on my left.

Mr ELLIS - A mandate has been sought from the Tasmanian people. It has been secured and lost in a landslide again. The Tasmanian people want this passed. If you want to go to the 2025 election saying that you are not going to protect Tasmanian workers from protesters, go for it, but potentially we have Mr O'Byrne crossing the floor now that he is not whipped. We might have Dr Seidel crossing the floor now that he is not whipped. It is interesting that once upon a time the school bus bullies were in charge probably of whipping Dr Broad over there. It is hard to know whether the school bus bullies are still in charge or not.

Dr Broad, you do not need to continue with this sham where you are saying the only answer is to somehow do nothing, as you keep continually trying to get the parliament to do. It is an embarrassment, Dr Broad, and it is part of the reason why you keep losing, time and time again. It is truly embarrassing.

People really want to see these protesters out of worksites. It is forestry and the only solution Dr Broad seems to have is some kind of permit system for forestry. As we have seen, the campaign from the Bob Brown Foundation - the radical activist arm with the Greens - is not just about forestry. It is about mining, it is about fish farms, it is about all sorts of regional

industries which the Greens are fundamentally opposed to, which they are trying to shut down at every turn.

The reason why we want to have the workplace protections from protesters is because it will protect all workers from these protesters rather than just one particular industry.

One of the truly sad but surprising things as well, I think, about the Labor Party's choice of personnel is the people they are now putting up in their federal space. We have heard about our friend, Labor's federal candidate for Braddon, Chris Lynch. He has now twice demonstrated that he either does not know anything about regional jobs or he does not care. He has been in direct contradiction to the two Labor speakers from today. He said that he has grave concerns about the salmon industry in the south. What have you said about this, Mr Winter? What have you said about this, Mr O'Byrne? This is a guy that you preselected who is saying that this company is trashing your waters down the south. These are your jobs. Apparently, this is your union and you are not saying anything. Is it because you are gutless? Is it because you think he is a great candidate? Is it because you think he is right? I do not know.

Are you going to go to one of these protests? Are you going to say that, 'Man, there's some serious issues down south with the salmon farming'? I do not know but the silence is deafening. Will you condemn Mr Lynch on his statements about salmon farming in the south? These are important jobs. Your electorate has more salmon farmers than anywhere else in the country and you have not said a thing about this guy.

Then mining - apparently it is a tricky question to say whether you support 500 jobs in Rosebery. Apparently, that is some kind of real gotcha moment to have some kind of commitment on 500 jobs plus all the manufacturing that goes on in the north-west, plus everything else that goes into our supply chains. It is more than half of our industry. This guy could potentially be the federal environment minister -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ELLIS - I know you guys do not even believe it because he is such a rubbish candidate. You think he has got no talent, you do not believe in what he believes in apparently. He will not tell us but if you guys seriously believe in backing regional jobs come up and say whether you believe in what Mr Lynch has said about salmon farms and mining in your electorate.

It is an absolute embarrassment and a disgrace that you guys have put him up. I do not even know why you have but he will potentially have the handle of environment minister in this country. You are complaining about federal environment laws and approvals - this could be the guy. Every person in the federal parliamentary Labor Party could have a shot at becoming the environment minister.

He does not know. He has grave concerns about regional jobs. He thinks it is a tricky question whether you are going to back them. It is truly staggering that the school bus bullies who are running the show over there are riding roughshod over these guys. They are putting up candidates who seem to not know whether they support literally hundreds of jobs in their own electorate. It is part of the reason why these guys lost, but it is part of the reason why they need to do a big backflip on the position that they keep taking to the election. You lost three

times in a row. We have taken these policies again. We have a mandate to deliver workplace protections from protesters and people want to see it.

What sort of feedback do you get when you go down to Rosebery and say, 'Gee whiz, we're going to vote against the workplace protection from protesters because we think Bob Brown is doing a great job'? I do not think it goes down too well and it did not. It is part of the reason why you got 29 per cent in Queenstown. That used to be a Labor booth. You guys really lost the plot in the last election. People are sick and tired of the Labor-Greens stitch up that you guys keep trying to run. I can guarantee if you vote against it, these guys will be on the same side of the Chamber as you.

We are going to be over this side. We are going to be trying to protect workers in these regional jobs and you do not have the guts. You cannot even stand up to your Labor candidates.

Matter noted.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 3) 2021 (No. 32)

Second Reading

[3.22 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Finance) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the bill be read the second time.

As members are aware, the 2021-22 budget will be tabled in this House on 26 August 2021 with royal assent for the 2021 appropriation bills anticipated in early to mid-October 2021.

The parliament recently passed supply bills to make interim provision for the appropriation of funds from the public account to enable the provision of government services until the enactment of the appropriation bills. The 2021 Supply Acts provide for the appropriation of \$2 202 100 000 to enable the continuation of the normal services of government, including services in respect of parliamentary and statutory offices for a period of approximately four months, to the end of October 2021. However, given the increasing uncertainty with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government considers that it is prudent to plan for the unlikely but nonetheless real risk that the Budget session of parliament may be disrupted and that 2021 Appropriation Acts will not be passed in the planned time frames.

To this end, the Government seeks the parliament's support to provide for additional supply that will ensure that if the COVID-19 situation in Tasmania suddenly changes the community is assured that government services will continue to be confidently delivered and that sufficient funds are available to meet unforeseen expenditure.

Treasury estimates that a further interim appropriation totalling \$1 660 600 000 will enable the provision of government services including services in respect of parliamentary and statutory offices for three months from November 2021 to January 2022. Treasury has determined this amount based on the methodology that was used to calculate supply for Supply Acts (No. 1) and (No. 2) 2021. Supply Acts (No. 1) and (No. 2) were based on actual agency

expenditure for the first four months of 2021 and the revised 2021-22 Estimates as presented in the 2020-21 Revised Estimates Report.

In accordance with current appropriation conventions two further Supply Bills have been prepared. Supply Bill (No.3) 2021 makes an interim provision for the appropriate of \$1 650 700 000 for the services of the government. This includes \$1 531 400 000 for expenditure on operating services. A further \$119.3 million is provided for expenditure for capital services to allow the Government's infrastructure program to continue to be delivered in the new budget year.

Supply Bill (No. 3) 2021 includes an additional supply of \$60 million for expenditure from the Treasurer's Reserve that increases the current supply to \$80 million to meet unforeseen expenditure in accordance with the section 21 of the Financial Management Act 2016.

The supply bills are administrative in nature as they provide for the continued provision of existing government services and capital expenditure, pending parliament's consideration of the budget for the 2021-22 financial year. Together, Supply Bills (No. 3) and (No. 4) seek to ensure that should the Budget session of parliament be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, funding is in place for the continuity of government services to the Tasmanian community.

I commend the bill to the House.

[3.26 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to talk on the supply bill before us.

First, I thank the departmental staff, Eleanor and Ronnie for their very clear briefing this morning, and also for their work in putting this together over the space of two weeks. From what I understand, this bill began to be drafted only two weeks ago. There must have been a power of work from the department to try to pull this together in what is a very busy time for the department in preparing for the Budget.

This is a money bill and the Opposition will not be standing in the way of a supply bill. This is obviously, as the minister say, out of an abundance of caution. We know that we are living in very uncertain times with COVID-19. We have seen New South Wales first, followed by Victoria, the ACT and now it appears Queensland again seeing outbreaks of the highly virulent Delta strain of COVID-19.

I am an optimist. I hope that we get through the Budget session without a hiccup although there is the potential for the business of government to grind to a halt as the Premier has stated if there is a case of COVID-19, especially the Delta strain in the state. Then we will go into an immediate lock down and that is a prudent response. We have seen other states, especially New South Wales, act far too slowly. As a result, in New South Wales we see exponential growth of COVID-19. That is putting the entire Australian economy at risk but also more importantly lives at risk. New South Wales is effectively seeding the COVID-19 Delta strain around the whole country.

So there is that risk and we have been extraordinarily lucky to get to this point where we are today where there is a Delta strain outbreak raging across the mainland states and we have not seen a case. I know that all of us hope that continues to be our experience of the Delta

strain: completely absent from Tasmania. However, it is prudent to plan so we will not stand in the way of this appropriation bill.

I understand from our briefing that this is based on a pro-rata, or an extrapolation, of actual expenditure from the same period last year. That is a cautious approach. There is apparently a reasonableness test in the way those figures were constructed. If it looked too big or too small I imagine there was a fudge factor or some sort of rounding up or rounding down to make sure that a department was not going to run out of money. Also, the addition of an extra \$20 million for the Treasurer's Reserve would give some flexibility to funding programs and things like that could and should be used potentially to bring in business support for example, as we talked in question time today, for people with a turnover of less than \$50 000. Maybe that would be a good use of the extra Treasurer's Reserve, because there are businesses out there hurting that do not qualify for support when they should.

If we get an outbreak of COVID-19, especially the Delta strain, in Tasmania, this will give the state enough money to get through until the end of January. Through the initial COVID-19 outbreaks, we worked together across the parliament to ensure that parliament still functioned. We put in place many strategies to try and reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading in this place but also, importantly, to our family members. We had social distancing, hand sanitisers, fewer members in the parliament, and people staying home. As a north-west member, I stayed home for a number of the sitting days to reduce the numbers. We got through that. I hope that, despite this abundance of caution, we will still be able to function as a parliament under reduced numbers and cooperate as we did before. That was one of the proudest moments in the state's parliament, where we all rose to the challenge of putting strategies in place to make sure that the parliament could still operate and operate safely. As a result, up to this point, no politicians have tested positive, no staff have tested positive, no people in the House. I hope that continues.

This is, as the minister says, a procedural motion. It is out of an abundance of caution and we are all hoping that this caution is not required. Once again, I thank the department for their efforts. Putting something like this together in two weeks must have been very stressful. I hope you get some time off in lieu but you have the Budget coming up on Thursday so maybe that is not the case.

We look forward to seeing the Budget on Thursday. We look forward to holding the Government to account and we look forward to seeing a plan from the Government. We have seen a number of documents come out from the Treasury department about the long-term financial sustainability of the state. The Government has to start outlining a strategy to get out of that. Treasury says that Government has to act and that changes have to be made, otherwise the debt is going to balloon to \$30 billion or thereabouts and the corrective actions that will be required later will have more impact than early interventions. We will be going through the Budget and holding the Government to account.

The time has come to not kick the can down the road any more. The Government has now been in for eight years and you have four years in front of you. This is your eighth budget. Tasmanians deserve to see an actual plan rather than spin and talk of taking the state to the next level. There has to be actual action. We need to see infrastructure, we need to see some reform. There needs to be a light at the end of the tunnel that is not a train coming.

How is the Government going to handle their Budget when they are spending more than they have been receiving for a number of years now? That is not sustainable. What is their plan to get through this?

This will get us through to January in the very worst case. It has been well-constructed. It is based on actual agency expenditure for the first four months of 2021. Clause 6 means there is no double dipping, that their Budget appropriation cannot be used twice, in effect. The clause states:

The Treasurer must incorporate in the estimates of expenditure from the Public Account, set out in the Bill for the ordinary Appropriation Act for the financial year ending on 30 June 2022, all money issued and applied, or to be issued and applied, under this Act as if that issue and application were to be appropriated afresh by that Act.

That covers there cannot be additional appropriation. You can only appropriate the correct amount of money. Complicated, but that is the way it rolls.

This is an administrative bill and we will not be standing in the way. It is out of an abundance of caution. Hopefully we do not need an abundance of caution. Hopefully we can get through the Budget session over the next four weeks.

[3.35 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, the Greens will be supporting the two supply bills (No. 3) and (No. 4), and recognise that this is simply a prudent measure on the part of the Department of Treasury and Finance. As Dr Broad said, it is quite conservative. It is based on actual expenditures of agencies and it is there as an insurance policy effectively in the event that we cannot take the Budget through because there has been a disruption as a result of COVID-19.

We cannot see anything contentious in these two bills. There is nothing that stands out as particularly noteworthy but there are a couple of things I would like to say.

I note what Dr Broad said about how positive it was last year when this parliament came together and demonstrated to the people of Tasmania that when the chips are really down, we can work together in their best interests. I am sure other members received similar feedback from their constituents, that feeling of gratitude from Tasmanians who could see the three political leaders working together, the House being constructive, making sure that we passed the emergency bills, that those emergency bills had protections in them that gave Tasmanians a great sense of comfort.

I note, with appreciation, that the Premier has again initiated the weekly conversation between the Leader of the Opposition, myself as the Leader of the Greens and him. They are a really important opportunity from the Greens' point of view. I know that in the conversations that we have had so far, Labor takes the opportunity as well to ask outstanding questions, queries we have about orders or arrangements and also to ask questions that our constituents are asking us. I do appreciate those conversations and they are an important part of how we collectively respond to COVID-19.

I also take this opportunity on behalf of my constituents in Clark to thank Public Health and Dr Veitch and his team, Tasmania Police and Commissioner Darren Hine and his team for the work they have done since the pandemic broke out and the professionalism of our public health response, the near-seamlessness of the processes if you need to get a COVID-19 test. There have been a few bumps in the vaccination rollout but the people who are working on the ground or in the agencies or in call centres are doing an outstanding job. Tasmanians broadly have enormous appreciation and great faith in the work that Public Health, particularly, is doing to keep us safe.

I know we are on a knife edge and the Delta variant is a beast. What we know from interstate is that it moves very quickly through a human population and is quite a different virus from what we all call the Alpha variant, which was the first one that came to the world's attention. We have been really lucky so far - and it is not just luck, I appreciate that. It is good advice and clear decision-making but there is a broad acceptance, certainly amongst senior people in government agencies, that we too are vulnerable to a Delta outbreak. We will need to make sure that we do not do a Gladys here in Tasmania and should Delta arrive on our shores, that we have a short and sharp lockdown to contain community spread.

We should also be talking to our constituents who are nervous about getting vaccinated. I hopped into an Uber last night to go to the Catholic Education dinner and got chatting with the driver about vaccination, because I was checking in on the Uber. I said, 'Oh, are you vaccinated?' He says, 'No, I'm not vaccinated'. He explained why he was hesitant to be vaccinated. As we talked, it became clear to me that there was some quite easily dealt-with misperceptions about the vaccines and the health risks. We talked about how his family, which moved here from overseas, has in the past winter experienced asthma, which I suspect is from wood smoke in Hobart. He was worried about the impact of vaccinations on asthma. These are obviously complex medical questions. I said, 'You really need to go and talk to your doctor. But I'll make an observation that there's more risk on the evidence from contracting Delta than there is from a side-effect from the vaccines.' I feel like I fulfilled my purpose yesterday in life when, as I left the Uber, the fellow said to me, 'I will definitely book my vaccination tomorrow. Thank you very much and I'm going to talk to my wife'.

These are the conversations we should all be having. Members would also be getting emails from people who may be reading things on Facebook and in other social media forums that are either deliberate disinformation or misinformation fuelled by a distrust of government and of the vaccines. Some of the mistaken beliefs are quite dangerous because we know that this virus will mutate in unvaccinated populations. We have a responsibility to not judge people who have not been vaccinated yet too harshly and to meet people where they are and talk about vaccination, and how straightforward it is.

Part of the reason there has been vaccine hesitancy is because of the mixed messages coming out of the Morrison Government. What has been described, and quite rightly so as the vaccine 'strollout', the demonisation of the AstraZeneca vaccine - I am doubled-vaxed with AstraZeneca and feel incredibly lucky to have had that vaccine. At a federal level, it has been an absolute hash. It has been state leaders, whether they be Liberal or Labor leaders - and I am going to park the way Gladys Berejiklian from New South Wales has responded out of that group who have shown the leadership, made hard decisions and done everything they could to keep their people safe. It is a neo-Liberal mindset that has put New South Wales in the situation it is. We are not seeing any clear sign that the community transmission of the Delta variant is declining yet. It is all very precarious.

We do need to have an insurance policy in our budgeting so that we can make sure our excellent public servants keep getting paid should we not, touch wood, make it through the entirety of the Budget sitting.

I have a question about the allocation for the Legislature-General. In the 2019-20 Budget, there was \$150 000 per year set aside, I quote from the Budget Papers in 2019-20, 'to enable legislative drafting support for members of parliament in consultation with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we put that proposal to the former Speaker because it is not reasonable that non-government members in this place do not have access to parliamentary drafting support. In most other Westminster parliaments, there is a provision for non-government members to be able to seek drafting support.

In the Greens, we are very lucky to have an adviser on staff who is a gifted drafter. Members who have looked at the legislation we have put on the table here will know that. We have that skill set in our office. I am not fighting this fight particularly for us. On a matter of principle, an allocation was made of an extra \$150 000 per year so that non-government members could access the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. That allocation was made two years ago. By my rough calculation, there has been \$300 000 allocated towards providing non-government members of this place with OPC support.

We asked the previous Speaker about it. She expressed frustration but provided no clarity. Finally, in a debate, when we came back after the election, on another bill I asked the Finance minister what had happened to that allocation, which was solely, as we understood it, for non-government members of parliament to be able to access OPC. We thought there was \$300 000 sitting there in the Legislature-General budget. It took a question from the Floor during a second reading debate for the Minister for Finance to say, 'Oh well, it must be there, take it up with the Speaker'.

We wrote to the Speaker and asked what happened to that allocation for non-government members to be able to draw on OPC. We got a letter back from the Speaker and we are preparing a response, but basically what we are being told is that \$150 000 a year went straight into the Office of Parliamentary Counsel in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to provide extra parliamentary drafting support for Government. If I am wrong about that, I ask the Finance minister to correct it. The Speaker has told us that if we want to access OPC, we need to come to him with the proposal and then he will negotiate it with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. No, there is no need for the Speaker to be the middle man here. Members should be able to access that resource by talking to OPC about what their level of resourcing is at the moment, how much they have on their plate, and whether they can provide help at a particular time.

The whole thing has been mishandled but it feels a bit underhand. It feels like non-government members got something and then it is quietly taken away, and that resourcing was parked in the Department of Premier and Cabinet so that the Government has more drafting capacity. That is not what the 2019-20 Budget Paper said it was for, and the 2019-20 Budget Paper certainly did not say that the Speaker of the House should insert himself as a middle man for non-government members to get OPC support.

If you step back from it for a bit and look at it through a political lens, why should non-government members necessarily flag with a partisan Speaker what their legislative agenda or intention is. It politicises that potential access that members have to parliamentary drafting support.

I would like the Finance minister to lay out where that money actually ended up. Did it end up back in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, or is it still in the Legislature-General budget? It is certainly a question that we will be asking in Estimates again as well, if we do not get a satisfactory answer today. It is in the interests of everyone in this place that legislation that comes in here is well drafted. It is in the interests of Tasmanians and our democracy that amendments are correctly worded and well drafted, so that the laws we send half-approved upstairs are robust in their language and would stand the test in a courtroom.

I feel a bit like we have been robbed of, so far, \$300 000 for Parliamentary Counsel support, and this is more of an issue for the Labor Opposition, because at this point they do not have that resource that we do, where we have a very talented parliamentary drafter on our staff. So, for all non-government members of this House, I would like an explanation on that. It just feels a bit dodgy. It might be a \$300 000 oversight, but it also might be about not giving non-government members access to Parliamentary Counsel.

I also want to note that in the winter break, after skirting the issue all the way through the campaign, we finally found out what casino pokies tax rate had been negotiated with the Federal Group, and the hit on the Budget. If you look at the difference between the tax rate that has been negotiated for venues, and the tax rate that has been negotiated for casinos, ACIL Allen, which does the social and economic impact statement work, estimated in the information that they provided to the Independent member for Nelson, Meg Webb, that the hit on the state Budget would be \$248 million over 20 years.

It is also worth noting that at no point, in the lead-up to either the 2018 election or this election, was the then Treasurer, now Premier, or any member of Government really honest about what was in the future gaming market policy framework. Tasmanians were not told that this is eternity legislation - unlike a monopoly deed, where you have a single entity to deal with, and a single piece of legislation that governs and regulates that entity, so if there is a policy change around gaming machines, you can deal with a single entity. The draft legislation, as the former gaming regulator Peter Holtz said, makes the embedding of poker machines in pubs and clubs impossible to unpick.

Worse than that, what the draft legislation does is make sure that licences are perpetually renewed. So, if I am a venue and I get a 20-year licence, and after five years I decide I want to lie on the beach in the Caribbean and not run a pokies venue anymore, I hand back my licence, which still has 15 years on it, and it is renewed and recharged and reissued at 20 years. It is eternity legislation. It will claim lives, Mr Deputy Speaker. It will be extremely difficult for any future government, that does not want to see the heart and soul being ripped out of our communities, and does not want to see people living on the breadline made poor, to unpick this policy.

It is the quid pro quo for the Federal Group bankrolling the 2018 state election. It just is. As is a casino pokies tax rate of just under 15 cents in the dollar. I honestly sometimes wonder how some of my colleagues in Government sleep at night, when they know the gambling industry helped them into government in 2018. The gambling industry helped to write the

legislation that will embed harm in our communities, take food off the table, and leave kids without shoes or dental work, for decades into the future.

The human cost of that corruption will be profound, and we can only begin to imagine it at this point, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Regrettably, it looks like there are only three members in this House who will be voting against the legislation: Dr Woodruff, myself, and the Independent member for Clark. Every one of us comes in here and says we will work in the best interests of the people of Tasmania - and yet we will see 21 of our colleagues line up to back in gambling harm in our community for generations. It is a travesty. It is a tragedy unfolding.

I hope now that Dr Seidel has announced he is leaving the parliamentary Labor Party, he will use the power of his voice and, for as long as he is in the Legislative Council - until December this year - vote against the Gaming Control Act amendments.

These amendments do not even have harm-minimisation anywhere in them because we are all supposed to wait until the regulations are written. You do not know what will happen with the community support levy because that is apparently being consulted with a small select group of stakeholders, in secret.

It is breathtakingly rotten what the corrosive influence of the gambling industry, and particularly the Federal Group, has done to democracy in Tasmania, what it has done to the lives of poor people, what it has done to people who are vulnerable to addiction, and what it has done to children.

With those few words, I will close.

[3.57 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, Ms O'Connor, has already indicated that we will be supporting these bills today.

I want to make a point about the overarching reason for these bills being debated today, and that is preparation for a potential Delta variant outbreak in Tasmania. Although we hope and wish and do everything in our powers to prevent that happening, the statistics are really against us. The chances are there will be a case of Delta in Tasmania. It is a question of how we respond and how quickly we act. I am pleased the Government has demonstrated the forethought to bring these bills and to prepare for that possibility.

I also wanted to mention the Health department's responses. It is a small matter, but I think it is indicative of planning for the Delta variant. It comes from an announcement by Susan Gannon, the chief executive for Hospitals South, about the fact that Royal Hobart Hospital has shut down its acute respiratory illness area, called the ARIA - a section that has been set aside in the emergency department as a dedicated respiratory area for people who come in with respiratory symptoms.

This is not a non-standard practice. It has been happening in other health departments around the country. I am not criticising or making any comment on the practice of closing the ARIA, but it is fortunate that the Minister for Health is in the Chamber to hear my comments. I have been speaking to paramedics and nurses and other health professionals. They have

voiced some questions about the fact that the ARIA has closed, and it is not an interim measure. It has been repurposed to provide more emergency department beds, which is fine and seems entirely reasonable. It does have an impact on how patients are received and ramped. What happens when they are ramped and what happens if they have respiratory illnesses? Ms Gannon has said, 'One thing we have learnt over the past year-and-a-half is that in a time of COVID-19 it is necessary to be flexible and adaptable. It might be necessary in the future to restart the Acute Respiratory Illness Area and, if that is the case, then we are able to do this with minimal lead time.'

The staff that have been in contact with our office have made the point that personally, as nurses and paramedics working in this area, they have had no communications about this process and they feel they do not know what the protocols and the planning approach would be for restarting an ARIA. They are concerned that if there is a Delta outbreak in Tasmania, hospitals, particularly emergency departments, want to be able to be started immediately, on hour one of day one, with the correct protocols in place for moving patients around.

You can imagine that hospital emergency departments, paramedics who are picking people up, and ramping and caring for patients on the ramp, are critical places and high-risk places where Delta can be transmitted much more broadly and seed an outbreak widely into the community.

I put to the minister that I have no doubt from Ms Gannon's comments that there has been some great thinking and planning done at the higher levels. It is not clear to me from comments I have heard that the staff on the ground, in the wards, our paramedics in the ambulances are aware of exactly what they would do, how they would change the transition of patients in order to protect paramedics, protect nurses so that they can go home to their families and continue to work in communities and protect patients from inadvertently being infected and transmitting COVID-19 to somebody else in their family and then into the community.

It is highly complicated. Paramedics working in ambulances must have a person who can sit in the cab and the cab is an infection-free space. They cannot be wearing PPE in the cab. They have to doff PPE in order to get into the cab to drive an ambulance.

This is small stuff but it is actually important big stuff. It is about making sure throughout hospitals, the education system, all our emergency response agencies, all front-facing services, that it is not just at the executive, upper-management and middle-management level where these plans are made. It is the staff on the ground being very clear and asking the questions now; pretending, doing a mock 'if we have Delta in the state' conversation, so that people can be absolutely clear. Roleplay what would happen, find out unintended consequences that might be a problem.

I ask ministers responsible to do what you can to make sure that this filters down right to the critical people who are acting and doing everything to keep us safe.

I also want, on behalf of the Greens, to thank all the people who have been involved, the doctors, the nurses, the contact tracers, the epidemiologists, the people on the end of the helpline, the people who are administering vaccines, the people who are writing comms and keeping website information up to date. To all the people in Public Health who are working very hard to protect Tasmanians today and to plan for the unwanted but probable possibility of a Delta outbreak in Tasmania, thank you so much. Your work is recognised, acknowledged,

respected. We are incredibly grateful and people I speak to in Tasmania by and large are so grateful that we live where we do and we will all do everything we can to make sure it stays that way into the future.

The other comment I wanted to make about this bill was the appropriation under the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the Minister for Climate Change. I cannot say how distressed I am on behalf of Tasmanians, young children, young adults in the school Strike for Climate, all people in this state who are concerned about the state of the climate, who have read the media reports about the IPCC, who understand we are in a code red, we are an emergency situation on the planet. To see such a pathetically small, continuingly small amount of money allocated to the Department of Climate Change is frightening.

The Greens have tabled a safe climate bill. We have done the work and we know what sort of expenditure needs to be allocated in this area. There is clearly nothing in this allocation that is going to be putting the money where it needs to be, into adaptation plans.

Local governments must be supported to adapt to climate change and develop comprehensive plans. We must have large amounts of funding into landscape restorations and soil carbon capture. We must have funding to do some updated modelling of coastal inundation and we must adapt the planning scheme and take the position on where people build and live in Tasmania in our coastal areas. We cannot keep dodging the reality: sea levels are rising, tidal inundation and coastal erosion is a major issue in so many coastlines around the state, especially in Franklin.

We see serious erosion everywhere. Houses will fall off the cliff and they will fall into the sea in the next few years in some places. Crown Land is putting its hand up and refusing to act. It leaves councils and property owners completely in the dark. Councils cannot make decisions about big expenditure because Crown Land is refusing to make decisions about ownership and responsibility and funding. There has to be a conversation. There are probably bits that are the most problematic. It is a disgrace the way this Liberal Government is refusing to deal with the reality of coastal inundation around this state.

It is only going to get worse. Where is the money to end native forest logging in Tasmania? Where is the money to transition workers into new forms of employment, especially into those areas where we desperately need people with the skills of forestry workers, protecting us from bushfires, preparing us for changing climate and the impacts on forests, looking after landscapes, retaining carbon in the soil and retaining carbon in the trees in the forest. We need those skills.

Instead of logging and removing biodiversity and emitting carbon into the atmosphere and getting rid of carbon stores which are hundreds of years old, we should be using the opportunity, using the necessity to end those practices and find employment for people, meaningful, sustainable long-term employment in industries which will grow and grow into the future. Real industries so people can say with pride to their children, this is a job for life. It is not just a job for life, it is a socially meaningful environmentally sustainable incredibly important job that you can do in your life. It is something that will give you great pride because your community, everyone, will thank you for that work. We need to make a career for people with the skills that people in forestry have that is respected across the whole community. It is an opportunity that the Liberals in government could take up, but there is no indication at all,

that a single person in Cabinet has read the IPCC report, or if there is, that person has been outvoted by everyone else.

It is clear that this Premier in no way stands for action on climate change. That is deeply concerning. We will not stop talking about this because it is the most important issue for our near-term future. We are not talking 30 years or 50 years. We are talking right now. We have to make choices today that will affect us over this term of government. There is not time to have a pathetically small allocation to climate change. It must be increased and we will do everything we can to make sure that happens.

[4.11 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as Dr Broad said, Labor will be supporting the bill. There are a few points I will make and the first is, as previous speakers have said, this is with 'an abundance of caution'. That may not actually sum it up. This is a particularly cautious approach but one we support and we hope it is not needed.

We are here because we do not have a Budget in late August. The reason we are doing this again, the second lot of supply bills this year without a Budget, is because we do not have one. Member for Franklin, Dr Woodruff, talked about not having a plan for climate change. Well there is no plan for anything in the bill because it is an estimate of what revenue would be required to get us through to the end of January in the event that we could not actually pass a Budget due to COVID-19.

We would not need to take these steps, we would not need to bring on this debate for the second time, if we had a Budget before the start of the financial year. There is no need for us to not have a Budget. We could have had one last financial year. There was no reason why we did not. It was already announced there was not going to be a Budget at the traditional time before the election was called and it is completely unnecessary that we are here, but we have no other option but to support it because it is absolutely critical.

The Opposition, and I am sure all members, will support the bill, but the point remains we should not have to do this. There is no plan. The only plan the Government has is to continue to say, 'We have a plan'. Sometimes it is in capital letters where the 'P' gets capitalised and sometimes it is not. They seem to be losing their touch on that one a little bit, but there is, literally, no plan. Without a Budget you have no certainty and you have no plan. That is why we are in this position today.

There is no doubt it creates uncertainty. Again, we have to be here so that we can be absolutely sure that the Government will have the cash that it needs to get us through to the end of January in the event we cannot pass a Budget in late August for a financial year that is almost two months old. Straight after the election we were asked to do the exact same thing and we dutifully did this, yet here we are again, doing the same thing because there is no plan.

Speakers have talked about particular issues, provisions in the budget for drafting for opposition members, the drafting of legislation, climate change and they are important issues. However, the point of the bill is that there is no strategic direction for the state within it because it is only a continuation to ensure that there is the money to get through until the end of January. That is not good enough.

We have only recently received the Tasmanian Government Fiscal Sustainability Report 2021. I will read from the Executive Summary because I am not sure if Government members have actually read it. From page 8:

The principles of sound fiscal management detailed in the Act provide an important framework for the maintenance of fiscal sustainability and development of appropriate measures to maintain fiscal sustainability.

The analysis undertaken in this and in previous Fiscal Sustainability Reports has established the importance of the following:

There are four points:

- early action to correct fiscal deterioration will mitigate the severity of the measures required to effectively maintain fiscal sustainability;
- given the composition of the State's revenue base, it is not possible to rely entirely on economic growth to maintain fiscal sustainability;
- any action to maintain fiscal sustainability must recognise and address the major drivers of a deterioration in the Budget position; and
- it is likely that effective action to maintain fiscal sustainability will require the successful implementation of a range of measures.

We wait eagerly for Thursday when the expectation from any kind of decent and good fiscal management would be that the Budget should address the issues that Treasury has quite rightly raised within the Tasmanian Government Fiscal Sustainability Report. It says the Tasmanian Budget is not sustainable. That is the entire point of the piece. As Dr Broad said, it talks about \$30 billion worth of debt by 2035 - \$30 billion worth of debt.

I remember during the GFC, the then Liberal opposition talking dramatically about relatively very small levels of debt. Yet this report talks about, in the worst outcome, \$35 billion worth of debt. It talks about unsustainable deficits continuing; it talks about the forward Estimates showing a further deterioration in the fiscal balance, a further deterioration in net debt. It talks about a further deterioration in the net operating balance and that is under the forward Estimates in the most recent budget.

What the Government has previously done with its budgets is that it underestimates its spending and shows a rosier picture than is the reality. What has got us away from having as much debt as previously forecast is simply the inability to deliver the infrastructure projects that have been promised.

In the last financial year, was it \$1 billion worth of infrastructure? Some fairly large amount of infrastructure that was proposed and nowhere near delivered, as expected.

We need a plan. We do not have a plan. All we have is the continuation of these money bills with no strategy in it. It is merely based on the estimates of what we are already spending at the moment. We should also hear from the Treasurer, who is not here for a money bill on Thursday, a commitment that we will not do this again next year; that we will have a Budget

at the traditional time. We will have a Budget in May so that we can have a plan for the next financial year instead of doing this all over again where we have to do these money bills and we have to deal with these issues.

If we had a Budget, we would not have needed to do this today. We would not have needed to do it back when we did it during the last of lot of sittings. The Budget on Thursday is a very critical document. The warning signs are there from Treasury. They are saying to the Treasurer, 'We need to do something about the Budget' and the question is whether anything will be done.

[4.18 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Finance) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank and acknowledge each member who has spoken around the Chamber. Everybody supports the legislation which is appreciated and respected.

A lot of commentary that has been made by contributors is just that, commentary. I will respond to some of the issues that I can, noting that it is a supply bill and I do not intend to get drawn into the policy matters or individual agency spending because that is not the purpose of this debate.

I appreciated, particularly, Dr Woodruff who was singling out our health professionals in the Public Health sector for the incredible work they have been doing. In the event of a further incursion of COVID into Tasmania, they would step-up to keep Tasmanians safe and we need to be able to pay them. We need to be able to continue to pay their salaries in the event that the parliament, itself, was interrupted in its ability to pass a budget in the normal way. I endorse that view. The same can be said for all our state public servants and the programs that they administer for Tasmanians. We need to be sure that they are future-proofed against the small - but as I said in the second reading speech - but nonetheless real risk that the parliament is disrupted because of a potential lockdown, knowing what we do about the Delta strain. It is a risk which is materially different from the earlier strain that affected Tasmania so much in the early part of 2020. So, thank you for the support that has been expressed.

Thank you from the Labor Party for telling us that you are looking forward to seeing the Budget on Thursday. That is good enthusiasm; we are grateful for that, that you are looking forward to seeing our plan. I note the concern or claim you have made around the Fiscal Sustainability Report. Those matters have been publicly addressed by the Treasurer.

It is interesting that maybe, for the first time in eight years, the Labor Party might now be talking about preparing an alternative budget. If the Labor Party through its spokesperson, Dr Broad, have started to talk about wanting to do something to either tax more or spend less than the Government, it will be interesting to see in the alternative Budget. Despite everything else going on in the Labor Party at the moment, they are the alternative government and so you cannot have it both ways. If you are nudging the Government to break its election promises you will be sorely disappointed.

Importantly, as well, we hope that these bills are not required. We certainly hope and expect that the Budget which will be brought down on Thursday, the appropriation bills, the quite conventional, proper Budget process, will be given royal assent by mid-October, well before these bills would even kick in, should they be needed.

Ms O'Connor - By way of interjection, and apologies, could you explain the mechanics of that? We get through the Budget and pass the Budget proper, and we have these two bills sitting here. For clarity, could you explain to the House what happens to them then?

Mr FERGUSON - Yes. Clause 6 in the bill is the key clause for me to highlight to you through that interjection, which is welcome.

Ms O'Connor - The rapid sunset clause?

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, exactly right. You have now demonstrated you are right across this. Clause 6 deals with this. It effectively provides that the Treasurer will ensure that the estimates of expenditure in the 2021-22 Appropriation Act incorporates all expenditure that has been authorised by the relevant supply act. That would be 1, 2, 3 and 4. The clause has the effect of making all expenditure incurred under a supply act as if it had been expenditure appropriated for by the appropriation acts.

It would effectively make supply bills redundant during the course of the Budget bills being passed. Subsumed, I am advised, is a better word. Before the appropriation act comes into force, the supply act appropriates an amount; an expenditure that takes place before the appropriation act is enforced, that is the Budget, occurs under the supply act. The appropriation act cannot retrospectively authorise an appropriation or its expenditure. When the appropriation bill is passed it becomes from that point forward the definitive statement of the total amount that may be appropriated for the financial year and includes and subsumes in the amount appropriated by that act the amounts that were appropriated by the supply act.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, that is oxygen-clear.

Mr FERGUSON - I am not wishing to give you an excessive response.

Ms O'Connor - It just was not clear in your second reading speech.

Mr FERGUSON - The statements in the appropriation bill about how the amount appropriated are to be issued and applied also apply from that point on. Subsequent expenditure after the appropriation act commences would occur primarily under the authority of the appropriation act.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you.

Mr FERGUSON - In relation to Ms O'Connor's continuing interest in support for parliamentary drafting, again I do not wish to enter into a substantive set of comments on this. It is outside the role of me presenting this legislation today. To assist, I would like to reiterate the comments that I have made in the previous supply bill debate to a similar question. It has been drawn to my notice, and you can have this if you wish, Ms O'Connor, from the 2020-21 Budget papers. There was a bit of commentary in there to explain the way that the funding had moved to OPC from the Parliamentary Library. The note to the papers on page 41 indicates that the decrease in Parliamentary Library service reflects the transfer of funding provided for legislative drafting under the 2019-2020 Budget initiative titled 'Additional resources for the Parliamentary Library', to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

I offer the perspective, I am going to put this as delicately as I am able: under the previous management of this House the suggestion was made that funding that could be provided to the Parliamentary Library would enable access for members to be supplementing the existing excellent service that we as members, government and non-government, receive from the Parliamentary Library. The issue here was one of achievability, of getting somebody with that resource and the continuing advice that parliamentary draftspeople who are qualified in this area, are very rare.

So, the decision was taken and this House passed a motion to seek concurrence with the Legislative Council because there was a question about how it could even be delivered. The reference we made was that it could be looked at by the House Committee. It did not progress and the decision was made instead to provide the extra funding, to provide the money to OPC, not to take the money but to provide the money as an additional budget support for OPC, for which there is now a mechanism for members of this House, Green members, Opposition members, Liberal Party private members to be able to achieve robust amendments for legislation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order. Just to help you avoid misleading the House, we were not told about those arrangements. The only reason we were told about those arrangements is because of questions that came from the Floor, from the Greens, two and half months ago. So, that \$300 000 has been sitting in DPAC that was meant for members of the House without telling us we had access.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am sorry, Ms O'Connor, it is in the Budget papers and I have just quoted from it for you: page 41, the Legislature-General chapter of the Budget papers, which deals with appropriation for Legislature-General and a very clear explanation, so I cannot be more frank about it. There is no mystery to this but I do accept that members - we have a new Speaker. I did encourage you to write to Mr Speaker and there is a process and a pathway available which effectively mirrors the process that works in the Legislative Council.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, you have had your opportunity.

Mr FERGUSON - I feel that I have honestly answered the question. Whether that is satisfactory is obviously a matter for you.

The last point I will make is that the Premier this morning answered the question around gaming reform. I do not intend to revisit that only to make the clear point that I would have to disagree with Ms O'Connor. Whatever any of our personal views are on gambling and gaming, the simple fact is that Federal has not been given, what was it the words that you said? You more or less indicated, Ms O'Connor, that they were going to get money from the Government.

Ms O'Connor - No, they are getting a sweet tax deal.

Mr FERGUSON - You said words to the effect that they are better off. Well, the opposite is true. It is a significant additional tax take that this Government will achieve. But that is a debate for another time, not today and the time will come, of course, noting that the

public consultation has recently closed. Government will consider that and a bill will be brought to this House and everybody can have their say.

The final point I will make, and it is one only that deals with Mr Winter as the shadow finance minister, I think, was wanting to make a cheap and easy political point but I cannot let him get away with it. In November last year, when the Government released the proposed sitting pattern for 2021, we were very clear about the intended date of the 2021-22 Budget. That date was set way back in November as 26 August. We were very clear that to try to bring down a Budget when there were too many uncertainties - noting that while Tasmania was doing well, there was a lot of uncertainty about Treasury's ability to navigate, to develop an economic forecast and what would happen in the economy. It was far too premature to plan for a normal Budget date. We were in uncharted territory.

The Government was very transparent. Mr Winter, unless you can correct me, I believe until today, not a person from the Labor Party has tried to make the political point that you just did. I do not believe that Mr O'Byrne made that point as shadow treasurer. I do not believe that Dr Broad made that point in the time he has been shadow treasurer. The date has been consistent: 26 August. It has always been set as thus. It has always been said that, to ensure staff across departments could be funded, supply bills would be needed. Totally consistent.

It just so happens that in the meantime, we have had an election. The Liberal Government was returned at that election and the voters have voted for our plan. Give it a capital or not, it does not matter, Mr Winter, through you, Mr Speaker.

The only uncertainty that exists today is actually looking at me right now. It is what is remaining of the Labor Party. It is a cheap and offensive shot that has been attempted to be made today by Mr Winter, because until you rose, one thing that we could all agree on was the merits of this approach for sustainable and appropriate financial management, and the way finances would be approved by this House, and the way that a Budget would be brought down on August 26. I do not think cheap shots like that should survive without being repudiated entirely. I invite the Opposition to reflect on that, because it was an unhelpful comment. Maybe late breaking and a last-minute decision to make those unhelpful points.

That said, I thank members for their contributions. We need to pass this for the continued confidence in our arrangements in the event - and I hope it is not needed, of course - that the state needs to go into a lockdown in response to a potential for COVID-19 to affect our state once more.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 4) 2021 (No. 33)

Second Reading

[4.33 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Finance) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read for the second time.

Mr Speaker, in accordance with current appropriation convention, two supply bills have been prepared, one to provide funding for the services of the Government, and the other to provide funding for the services of the Government in respect of parliamentary and statutory offices.

I have recently outlined the need for the supply bills to be introduced to parliament this financial year in my second reading speech on Supply Bill (No. 3). The information provided in that speech applies equally to this bill.

Supply Bill (No. 4) 2021 seeks parliament's approval to provide for the appropriation of \$9 800 000 out of the Public Account for expenditure on operating services in 2021-22 until the Budget appropriation bills are enacted.

I commend the bill to the House.

[4.35 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, the same comments apply as to the last supply bill. Labor supports this. There is probably no need to give any more commentary than that. We look forward to the supply bill.

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, this is a supply bill that contains the provisions for ongoing parliamentary services. The minister read out from the 2020-21 Budget paper that said:

The decrease in Parliamentary Library Service reflects the transfer of funding provided for legislative drafting under the 2019-20 Budget Initiative Additional Resources for the Parliamentary Library to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Thank you very much for that, minister. I was quoting the 2019-20 Budget, which made it really clear that the resource was intended for members of parliament to be able to access, and non-government members of parliament, too, which may well include Liberal backbenchers. But the very clear language in the 2019-20 Budget papers - because we negotiated it - was that:

Funding of \$150 000 per annum is provided to enable legislative drafting support for members of parliament in consultation with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Now, I understand there was a concern about having the person, whoever that would be, who was to be funded by the \$150 000 per annum allocation, potentially cast alone and adrift in the library. I get that from a workplace health and safety point of view, but I do not accept that the Government has been honest about what that allocation was intended for. We negotiated that with your predecessor in that chair, Mr Speaker, not out of self-interest - as I said, we have drafting capacity - but on a matter of principle. The principle was laid out in the 2019-20 Budget. It did not insert the Speaker of the day as the middle man to filter requests.

There is no place for the Speaker to do that. Why should the Speaker be the filter between requests from members for OPC support? There is no argument for that, other than a partisan argument. Pardon my cynicism, but for two years that money has not been spent on its intended purpose, which was to provide drafting support for non-government members. That is underhanded. A footnote in last year's Budget that says it has been put into DPAC does not explain why no member of this place has been told that there is a resource there that they can access.

That money was just hoovered up by the Premier's own agency - \$150 000 a year - more money going to a Liberal Government at the expense of quality drafting in this place, and good legislation and solid amendments. I believe it is a \$300 000 swindle, because we were not told that we could have access. I kept asking. I asked the former Speaker, I asked senior officers in this place, when are we going to get access? Again I will state the Greens are not champing for this out of self-interest. Our bills are really solid, they are well drafted, and we know what we are doing. To be lectured by a freshman who has not taken legislation through this place, or even moved a single amendment, is not something that I have a lifetime to waste.

Our legislation is robust and rock solid. You only need to talk to some of the terrific people in OPC. They look at our legislation and they know it is good. This is not about us; this is a principle. Now we understand with absolute clarity that the Government took the money which was intended for non-government members to have access to Parliamentary Counsel support. The Government took that money, put it in the DPAC budget, did not tell members what the new deal was and used that resource for itself. That is shifty, and we would still be sitting here in the dark if the Greens had not asked the question earlier this year about that support, if we had not written to the Speaker to try to draw that information out.

It was a budget allocation for MPs. It was not a budget allocation for Government to beef up its own OPC capacity. We are now being told we have to run it through the Speaker. That was not in the 2019-20 Budget papers, nor was it in last year's Budget papers - because it is a rubbish proposition. If we had a truly independent Speaker maybe we would be having a different conversation; but we do not, and we never have, in this place. It is not the way it works.

I believe the Government owes members of this House, who are not sitting in Cabinet, an apology and an explanation. That is \$300 000-worth of support for MPs who are not in Cabinet to draft legislation, and it was hoovered into the Premier's own department - and we were not even told about it. That is dodgy and unacceptable.

[4.43 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Finance) - Mr Speaker, to wrap up, I totally disagree with Ms O'Connor. The way that she has sought to characterise this is a smear on people and it is wrong. It is inaccurate.

Ms O'Connor - How is it wrong?

Mr FERGUSON - It is wrong, it is inaccurate and maybe only reflects that two things have happened - first, that Ms O'Connor missed the memo in the Budget papers where it was transparently -

Ms O'Connor - No, we read it.

Mr FERGUSON - I read it out to you in good faith, but you have rejected that genuine attempt to help you deal with that misunderstanding. Second, it seems to me that until the last supply bill debate, perhaps it had never occurred to Ms O'Connor to find out how she and others use the services provided for.

I should not have to say this, but last year this House was occupied with the circumstances of COVID-19 -

Ms O'Connor - Irrelevant.

Mr FERGUSON - It is completely relevant. Our efforts were almost entirely devoted to steering the state through, with the support of every single member of this House. There were very few opportunities for private members' time last year as I recall.

Ms O'Connor - It is hard, Mr Speaker, when you feel robbed.

Mr SPEAKER - It still does not make it appropriate to interject on the minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I should not have to make any of these arguments but I will continue. OPC was ridiculously busy last year, so when you say -

Ms O'Connor - They had another \$150 000.

Mr FERGUSON - You have had your say and I listened carefully. When you say that the money has been stolen or pilfered away and pocketed by the Government, at the expense of MPs of this House, I reject that.

Ms O'Connor - It has been.

Mr FERGUSON - That is a terrible thing to say. The fact is, OPC was extremely busy.

Ms O'Connor - What was the purpose of the allocation, minister?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I also draw the attention of members to the fact that it is wrong to draw the Speaker into the debate in the way that you have.

Dr Woodruff - You were the one who inserted the Speaker in this situation in the first place.

Mr FERGUSON - I listened carefully to you. Please hear me out. I quote back to you, this claim that the Speaker's role would be to filter. That is entirely inaccurate and unfair on the people concerned.

Ms O'Connor - Why should it go through the Speaker?

Mr FERGUSON - Because the Speaker is here for all of us; ministers, non-ministers, backbenchers, frontbenchers, Greens, Independents, Liberal and Labor. The Speaker serves

all of us, and the role of the Speaker in that process is purely to pass on the request on behalf of you, or another person, to be considered.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Speaker, point of order. I need the minister to understand that correspondence from the Speaker's office now comes on blue Liberal Party letterhead with the name of the Party and the electorate, which I have not seen before in my time in this place.

Mr FERGUSON - That is not a point of order, Mr Speaker. It is my job and yours as well to protect the dignity of this office and I will always act to do that. You also used the word 'partisan', and I repudiate that.

Ms O'Connor - Have a look at the letterhead.

Mr FERGUSON - I invite you to give the process a go next time you see a bill you disagree with and when you would like to get some amendments made. That is how the process can and should work. It is how it works in the Legislative Council.

I feel very uncomfortable with the tone of that disagreement. It feels wrong for Ms O'Connor to draw the kinds of inferences that she has during this debate. It is really cheap and it is unfair on the people involved. The fact is that the former Speaker was not able to make it work because it was impractical. Now there has been a way to make it work. In fact, in the latter time of the previous Speaker, the decision was taken in such a way that members would have access to a viable resource. That ought to be supported. I am disappointed those arguments have been made. It has not assisted a single person.

I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

FOOD AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 27)

Second Reading

[4.48 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The purpose of the Food Amendment Bill 2021 is to clarify and enhance the data exchange provisions in the Food Act 2003 and to correct references to out-of-date Australian Government legislation.

The Food Act seeks to ensure the provision of food that is safe and suitable for human consumption and to prevent misleading conduct in connection with the sale of food. It also enables the application of the Australian and New Zealand Food Standards code in Tasmania.

Since the act was proclaimed almost 20 years ago, there have been numerous changes and reforms in food safety regulation and these changes reflect the evolving nature of the food system, technology and business practices.

In 2015, the act was amended to allow a greater range of mobile food businesses to apply for statewide registration. Before the amendments, many mobile food businesses were required to register in each local government area in which they operated.

The 2015 amendments have successfully reduced compliance costs for mobile food businesses. The administrative burden on councils associated with the processing of applications has also been reduced enabling environmental health officers to concentrate on compliance and inspection activities in order to more effectively protect public health.

While the 2015 amendments have been effective at reducing the regulatory burden and enhancing public health protection measures, their operation has highlighted deficiencies in the data exchange provisions contained in the Food Act. Specifically, the existing provisions did not easily allow councils or departmental officers to exchange food safety data with each other or with other jurisdictions.

The Food Amendment Bill proposes amendments to the Food Act to provide for enhanced and clarified information exchange mechanisms. The Food Amendment Bill also proposes amendments to enable the Director of Public Health to establish and maintain a food business database. The amendments will facilitate compliance with and enforcement of the Food Act's provisions to enhance food safety and prevent food safety incidents.

Under the new provisions, the Director of Public Health may establish a database and authorise a council, state service agency, authorised officer and others to enter data to the database, to access and use the data in the database and to disclose information contained in the database if the director is satisfied that this would assist in achieving or implementing the Food Act objectives.

These changes will help regulators to better manage food safety in Tasmania. Essentially, they will allow an environmental health officer from anywhere in the state to access information relating to a mobile food business's compliance history regardless of where the food business is registered. This will in turn enable environmental health officers to prioritise food business inspections in a risk-based manner.

The Food Amendment Bill clarifies that information obtained in connection with the administration of the act may be disclosed to a person developing, administering or enforcing a law within New Zealand and the Australian Government or a territory or other state that corresponds to the Food Act.

The ability to exchange data in this way is important when authorities are managing a food safety issue that involves the movement of food across jurisdictional borders or when working to coordinate a national food recall or incident response. These changes will support a consistent regulatory environment for our local councils and departmental officers, thereby helping to protect our community's health and Tasmania's reputation as a supplier of safe and suitable food. It will also facilitate responsive actions to food safety incidents, support national food safety response efforts and strengthen the local council performance.

The Food Amendment Bill also corrects outdated legislative references associated with the Food Standards Code. Councils have been consulted on the Food Amendment Bill and have given support to the changes.

I commend the bill to the House.

[4.53 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on the Food Amendment Bill 2021 to let the Government know that we will be supporting this bill. It is very straightforward.

As you said, it is about increasing access to data and also making some changes with reference to the national standards as well, which is in here, and supporting mobile food vans around the state. It is making sure that the service that is being provided that councils are able to focus their efforts on environmental health and making sure that the food that is provided by the vendors meets the food safety standards, which is really important, rather than on paperwork, and trying to work across council jurisdictions.

We have many vibrant food van sole operators around the state. This policy is important in that it enables that shared data across jurisdictions. We know that those that are registered in one municipality do not necessarily trade just within that municipality. They travel across and provide different services at different communities. I was on council in 2015 when those changes happened in Burnie. It was a positive change, particularly relating to the costs associated and also to the administration of councils. It enabled councils to focus their environmental health officers on inspections rather than paperwork.

At the time we were trialling a new food van event across our city in Burnie on the foreshore area. We very quickly began to have a good understanding of what it required for vendors to be able to operate, also the paperwork that they had to do and the costs that they would endure as part of that. We know that food safety is just so important. It is also important when you have food van vendors operating alongside other local business owners in your community that we have the same standard when it comes to food safety across each of those different vendors. There should be a continuity of those standards. This enables just that.

This also highlights the important role of environmental health officers across local government. I know there have been some issues relating to shortages of environmental health officers across the state and we do need to do more. Some work has been done with the university in relation to training them locally across Tasmania as well, which is really positive. They do play a critical role.

Reflecting on COVID-19 and the outbreak that we had, particularly on the north-west coast, and how local government really stood up at the time and offered the services of their environmental health officers to be more fully involved in the community's response, it highlighted the important role they play every day in our community regarding safety and what more they could be doing in the area of infection control across our communities as well. I am sure that if we were faced with another outbreak across the state they would be ready, willing and able to stand up on behalf of their local government jurisdictions.

I will talk a little bit about the fact that each individual council has their own policy around food vans, which has an overlay to this particular piece of legislation, and that there are varying stages of development in that across the state. I have had the opportunity to work locally with a vendor in Circular Head who was very keen to set up a food van business there. He has been working with the council. I was pleased to see just recently that the council did, in fact, pass their policy. That has enabled that business to start up in the local community. Food van vendors do offer an alternative. They are important to economic development. They are critical to large-scale community events and celebrations. They have a really important role in that. Generally they are very well supported by our local communities as well.

We support this legislation. We understand the need for these changes. I thank the Government for bringing those forward and thank those business operators and vendors around the state who provide mobile food businesses for the service that they provide to our community. I thank our local government colleagues for the valuable service that they provide as environmental health officers in maintaining food safety and service standards across our communities.

[4.58 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Greens will be supporting this food amendment bill. I have a number of comments to make about it. First of all, this is about managing food security and food safety and keeping Tasmanians safe in our very rapidly changing environment. It is rapidly changing, not just from the changing nature of infectious and transmissible diseases. We are all fully aware of how rapidly - we all understand and we are mini experts in how rapidly viruses can produce variance or mutate.

There are so many other situations that food-borne diseases can change in the nature of transmission, reproduction and proliferation. It is essential that we have environmental health officers in our state who are skilled, trained, supported and provided with all the tools and resources that they need to be able to keep up to date with changing environmental circumstances and drivers of patterns of disease and risky situations that will develop.

With the IPCC predictions of rapidly accelerating climatic changes, all of which will produce environmental conditions, changes to the air and the water and the soil, all the places where different pathogens thrive and circulate within. Those changes in the environment will produce changing patterns of pathogens and changing circumstances for human disease.

I am a bit concerned reading this bill and looking at this. This is important. It is made out this is a very important mechanism for the Director of Public Health to be able to apprise him or herself of how the standards and the regulations that have been established across Tasmania are being complied with and how well they are being upheld essentially.

However, it is the last piece of information at the top of the tree and it is too late. If the work is not being done at the beginning then having a database that records or does not record whether people are complying does not help. An outbreak has already occurred, or a circumstance has already existed where there has been an environmental catastrophe with a spill, or some emissions have escaped and have created damage in the local or wider environment.

What I am not hearing is what we are doing as a state, what the minister and the department are doing to support the recruitment and retention of skilled environmental health

officers in Tasmania in order to carry out the work they have to do. It is critical work. My background is in public health and epidemiology. Environmental health is the cornerstone of public health. Fifteen of the 20 years of extra life that we as a population in Tasmania hopefully will live on average, have come from public health interventions over the last 150 to 200 years. So, it sounds like it is one of those things which is outdated but it could not be more of a modern and necessary profession. That is one of the key problems: environmental health officers and the work they do is almost invisible. I believe for the average Tasmanian and local government, the environmental health officer is just an appendage, a small appendage, somewhere down the end of the corridor and I really do not think people understand how important this work is.

When we have natural disasters: floods, extreme wind events, bushfires, that will increase, we have global pandemic in train now. There are more zoonoses that are very plausible. The connections between humans and the environment, the natural world, is increasing. We are pushing into every forested, natural habitat that is left on the planet. We continue to trade in wild animals. The likelihood of another global pandemic of a different sort is high. This means we need people who are very skilled and supported to do complex work.

Environmental health officers have around 10 pieces of legislation that they are responsible for administering. They are really the front line of the health protection and environmental management system workforce, particularly at the local level. They are responsible for everything from air, water, soil, pollution, chemical exposure, environmental degradation, also climate change, radiation, it is a huge list.

I want to speak to an excellent body of work that has been undertaken by Professor Roger Hughes, the Director of the Public Health program at the School of Medicine in Tasmania. This report was produced last year, November 2020, called 'Strengthening the frontline health protection and environmental management workforce in Tasmania - A workforce development strategic plan for Environmental Health Officers'. This is a substantial body of work and Professor Hughes summarises the workforce challenges for the environmental health workforce.

I will summarise what he has found. There is limited workforce planning or monitoring in Tasmania and there is limited accurate data about the workforce size, the attributes, the distribution, and the development needs of the workforce. Environmental health officers have delegated responsibility to enforce around 10 pieces of legislation, particularly the Public Health Act but also in this case, the Food Act and the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act (EMPCA).

The people they spoke to, the stakeholders and the environmental health officers that he spoke to in the work that he did, reported a responsibility creep, they said, without an additional allocation of resources to enable them to do the work. This is one of the things that is happening in this bill. This bill requiring a centralised database is excellent. It requires people to do another and a different sort of uploading. I do not know whether that is already information that must already be produced, probably it is. It is probably done in some written form or maybe it is not centralised. I dare say this is a more efficient way of gathering information. Nonetheless, the outcome of this bill will be that there is a new impost on environmental health officers at local governments, something else new to learn. I am aware from my experience on the Huon Valley Council that environmental health officers kept getting dished up with more

legislative responsibilities, yet there was no more environmental health officers year on year who had been funded to do the work in local councils, particularly small local councils.

Professor Hughes finds that there is an estimated deficit of at least 40 full-time equivalent environmental health officers in Tasmania relative to servicing the existing environmental health risk items and regulatory responsibilities. That is huge. That is enormous. That represents a real risk. When we are talking about these people doing the incredibly important work of checking compliance to make sure food systems are safe and secure, a lack of 40 full-time equivalent environmental health officers is of serious concern.

He said as a result environmental health officer practice is necessarily prioritised to looking at reactive investigations and enforcing legislative responsibilities instead of doing what is necessary, which is the sustainable upstream prevention practices. So, it is definitely the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff in Tasmania. Instead of trying to prevent circumstances that would lead to outbreaks, or spills, or food security breaches, they are instead dealing with things once they have happened and reports have come in. Professor Hughes said that leads to an elevated public health risk, which is the result.

He finds that there is no local workforce preparation. There is a lack of supply in Tasmania of environmental health officer graduates, which contributes to a real problem with workforce recruitment and retention. There is an unequal distribution of environmental health officers across the state, environmental health officers' services and an increased exposure of environmental health risks in regional and remote communities.

In other words, people in Tasmania are less safe from an environmental health point of view in regional and remote communities than they are in urban centres for the reason that there are not enough skilled and trained environmental health officers who are employed in regional and remote parts of Tasmania.

He also finds that the credentialing of the workforce is outdated and loosely enforced. He found evidence of pockets of under-qualified environmental health officers, also of non-compliance with the Director of Public Health credentialing requirements under certain acts, and a lack of monitoring of people's credentials to do the work they were supposed to do.

Our environmental health officers have some of the lowest salaries in the country and the salary levels are not aligned with other accredited health professionals. That means we have real difficulties in recruiting students and staff to be trained as environmental health officers and have careers in the area and of retaining people. Not only do we not train people properly in Tasmania, we have great difficulties in attracting them from elsewhere because of these low salaries and also, as Professor Hughes finds, limited career progression pathways.

This is not a good place for Tasmania when it comes to protecting ourselves in the current rapidly risk environment. All is not lost. Professor Hughes has a great list of recommendations and if the minister is not aware of this report, he might like to have a look at it. Professor Hughes recommends as a high priority that there needs to be an exploration of models and mechanisms for state-wide environmental health officer workforce management and coordination so we can consolidate our workforce.

It is currently employed by the local councils and the environmental health team in the Public Health services but he recommends we create a state-wide environmental health service,

that services local councils based on need and equity that is managed at the state-wide level and/or he provides an option, that we create and recruit two local government environmental health officer workforce coordinator roles that have a state-wide environmental health workforce development and coordination as a primary function.

Either way, the state government needs to take responsibility for the desperate, inconsistent and inadequately trained and resourced environmental health workforce across Tasmania in local councils. There has to be responsibility at the state government level for centralised training and servicing either where this is done centrally and services provided to councils or where there is a coordination management role for state government.

The other priority is to invest in the environmental health workforce over the next five years so that we can achieve a full-time equivalent workforce of 85 full-time equivalent people by 2025. That would be an additional 25 full-time equivalent people within the next four years within this term of government. That does not seem unreasonable, given the challenges ahead of us and the findings of this report.

I strongly recommend that the minister and department have a look at this report if it is not already being well perused. Possibly people are involved in this because it was a very thorough report in terms of conversations with people across the state.

It is important that we recognise that the risks for food security and food safety in Tasmania in the future will only increase. In that context everything that we can do in advance to prepare our workforce and to support them for the good work that they do is a responsibility that we have to take up with alacrity.

Environmental health officers struggle on and people basically do not even know that it is a job and a career that you could seek out. We have a lot of work to do. The creation of the database from the Director of Public Health is important for having consistent information. It is obviously important to understand when compliance is not occurring but in itself is certainly not going to be enough to ensure that we are tracking the risks to Tasmanians for food security and food safety.

We have to be working with the environmental health officers who are putting the information in in the first place making sure there is enough of them, making sure they have the right skills, and making sure they are based evenly around the state as required. That is the sort of approach we need to help us with the challenges of climate change and the transmission of food pathogens in the future.

[5.17 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I thank members for their support of the bill. Members who spoke from their local government experience perspective both spoke from their knowledge with respect to those matters.

Dr Woodruff, I understand your interest in this and also from your background in local government as well. I agree with you and thank very much our environmental health officers for the work they do, and thank you for your policy advice if I can put it that way in terms of the direction we may well look at. I took great interest in what you had to say.

I am advised, with respect to some of the matters that Dr Woodruff rose, that the University of Tasmania has commenced a graduate diploma in environmental health supported by the Department of Health. This replaces the undergraduate degree in environmental health.

With respect to the report by Professor Roger Hughes, our department is aware of the report, the Department of Health, the Environment and Division of the Department Primary Industries, Water and Environment and the Local Government Association of Tasmania, as I understand it are working together to address some of the issues in Professor Hughes' report. Perhaps I can provide a further update at some point in the future with respect to those matters. I thank you very much for raising those issues.

Regarding regulation more broadly, I believe that Dr Woodruff raised work for environmental health officers, and I believe the deputy leader mentioned some regulation as well. I am advised that these amendments, in terms of regulatory burden for businesses, do not create increased regulatory burden for food businesses in Tasmania. Instead, the amendments clarify requirements for the sharing of information between relevant authorities under the Food Act, which will make administration of the act more efficient. For example, the establishment of a mobile food business starter base will enable authorised officers to note the compliance history of a business that operates in multiple council areas. Well-run businesses with a positive inspection history may find they no longer receive additional inspections when they go to another council area because the council officer will already know that they are a compliant business. By that extension, I guess, there would be less work for the council officers themselves, if I have understood that correctly.

Likewise, if a mobile food business has outstanding compliance issues, council officers will be aware of this and will be able to focus their limited time on ensuring the business is producing safe and suitable food. In that sense, the database will undertake risk-based compliance activities. In terms of the database, it is designed with practical use in mind and with a specific purpose of enabling the sharing of information about mobile food businesses.

Consultation with local government environmental health officers occurred during the planning stage and throughout the development to ensure the final product met the design, purpose and functional requirements. Local government environmental health officers assisted with the testing of the database's functionality and operations, as I understand. Public Health staff have been involved in all aspects of planning, development testing and deployment of the database.

Local government environmental health officers will be trained in the use of the database and will start using it once these amendments pass, as I understand it. There has been a bit of activity in this space over the course of the last 18 months with respect to the pandemic as well. During 2020, temporary measures were put in place to postpone the requirement for a business or businesses to formally renew their registration under the Food Act. This was done to reduce the administrative and financial burden on businesses at the height of the COVID-19 restrictions. The registration renewal process was delayed for a period of six months.

During the height of the COVID-19 restrictions in Tasmania food policy measures were taken to enable the rapid transition to takeaway-only food service options. A key issue to be considered was enabling food businesses that did not normally have to label food to be able to trade while still providing sufficient product information that could be relied upon by allergenic customers et cetera.

During 2019, Tasmania formally introduced a food business risk classification system. This was done via amendment to the Food Act. The system requires councils to take the risk priority of the business into account when registering a food business. Subsequent compliance activities, such as determining inspection frequency, are based on the risk profile of the business. The system is based on nationally agreed principles and underpins a risk-based approach to food safety regulation in Tasmania. A series of regulator workshops were conducted in conjunction with the introduction of the system to upskill environmental health officers in the principles of risk-based inspection and regulation.

I am also advised that in 2019 the system for approving laboratories that can undertake analysis for the purposes of the Food Act were simplified and modernised, making it easier for laboratories to be approved under the act. It also simplified the reporting process laboratories need to adhere to when reporting food sampling results.

During 2019 and early 2020, significant resources were developed in Tasmania to assist food businesses by food service manufacturing to better understand allergen management. In July last year, the multiple approved forms issued under the Food Act were consolidated into a single form to simplify the application process with food business notification and registration. In 2019, statewide notification was permitted and enabled a reduction in red tape measures.

There has been a bit happening in this space. I thank the department for the work that they have done under very challenging circumstances, particularly with the focus of public health during the pandemic. I thank members for their support of the bill.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

LIVING MARINE MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS (DIGITAL PROCESSES) BILL 2021 (No. 26)

Second Reading

[5.25 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Speaker, I present to the House the Living Marine Miscellaneous Amendments (Digital Processes) Bill 2021. It is an honour tonight to move -

That the bill now be read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 and the Fishing (Licence Ownership and Interest) Registration Act 2001 to enable the introduction of digital platforms and processes in the regulation of sea fisheries in Tasmania.

In 2016-17 initial funding was allocated to the development of the Fisheries Integrated Licensing and Management System to maximise efficiencies for fisheries management and quota monitoring. That led to an additional \$5 million Government commitment to develop

and implement digital licensing and reporting tools for the Tasmanian commercial wild capture fishing industry under the Fisheries Digital Transition project.

Stage 1 of the project delivered the first iteration of an online platform for the making of licensing applications in March 2020. This bill is a fundamental aspect of the project as it will enable the rollout of full functionality in the licensing platform, as well as a digital catch and effort reporting platform. These platforms will maximise efficiencies for the fishing industry, fisheries management and quota monitoring. This bill enables paper-based processes to continue alongside the rollout of digital tools. This means that industry can elect to use either paper or the digital platforms.

Digital tools will make it significantly easier for industry to deal with the regulator and will streamline administration of the wild capture commercial fishing industry. This bill enables digital licensing processes while retaining existing licensing criteria. It ensures that discretionary considerations, such as whether someone is a fit and proper person to operate in the Tasmanian sea fishing industry, will continue to be assessed by a person. Factual criteria will be determined by an approved computer program where appropriate.

This bill will not change the current catch and effort reporting requirements for the commercial wild capture fishing industry. It will just allow industry to comply with those requirements quickly and easily using digital tools. This bill will deliver on the Government's commitment to enable the use of efficient and modern digital tools and technology for the Tasmania commercial fishing industry without increasing the regulatory or administrative burden.

The bill introduces amendments that will allow licence holders and holders of abalone quota held under a deed of agreement to authorise licensing agents to carry out specific licensing transactions on their behalf. This is consistent with the model established by the Commonwealth agency regulating commercial fishing, the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.

This bill ensures that fisheries officers have appropriate powers to require the production of information held on phones, tablets and other devices used to make applications or submit required records. Evidentiary provisions have been amended to contemplate digital transactions and the use of digital devices.

This bill inserts provisions in the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995 and the Fishing (Licence Ownership and Interest) Registration Act 2001 to ensure that documents can be given and received electronically. It provides that specific registers can be kept and maintained digitally and that people can more easily access their own data stored in the registers. Importantly, the bill ensures that existing licence-holders will be carried over and will not be required to reapply for their licences. This bill is an important first step in ensuring modern, efficient regulation of the industry. These amendments will be built on by the review of the Living Marine Resources Management Act announced in the 2021 Budget.

I commend this bill to the House.

[5.30 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise today to support the Living Marine Miscellaneous Amendments (Digital Processes) Bill 2021 and note that Tasmanian Labor is in

support of these amendments. As we understand it, the amendments seek to support an important industry within Tasmania by making digital improvements to processes to ensure better access to data and information into the future, should such fishers choose to use it.

What is important with these amendments, is they seek to restructure general provisions for fisheries licences to enable these automated licences to be completed and also to enable fisheries catch and effort reporting via the approved electronic recording systems or via their current paper-based log books.

As we understand it, there is no expectation of a greater load to be placed on this industry as a result of these amendments and that they are simply there to future-proof the industry to ensure a more contemporary and digital process into the future.

Currently, data is recorded on paper, perhaps in triplicate using carbon, put into an envelope and submitted for reporting. If someone chooses to continue to go down this process, that is completely possible; however, it also provides for the digital reporting of data required. This data can be re-accessed by an individual for their own purposes into the future also, which could be useful for the development of their operations but, equally, is accessible by others to ensure compliance and regulation.

These amendments have the support of the Tasmanian Labor Opposition in order that they are an improvement to the processes of this industry.

[5.32 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, first, I ask the Government to be a little bit more thoughtful about planning out Government business for the day because we have all been caught on the hop a bit, about 15 to 20 minutes ago, by the sudden notice that this bill was coming on today. The Government needs to get its house in order out of respect to particularly non-government members in this place. I have had to refresh myself on a bill that I had not looked at for some time.

We will not be opposing the Living Marine Miscellaneous Amendments (Digital Processes) Bill 2021 and understand that it relates to a \$5 million Government commitment to introduce digital licensing and reporting tools for the Tasmanian commercial wild capture fishing industry under what is described as the Fisheries Digital Transition Project.

My understanding is that the Tasmanian wild abalone fishery is the largest abalone fishery in the world and that we produce about 25 per cent of the global catch of abalone. There have been increasing concerns raised by experienced divers with, in some cases, decades of abalone fishing, that the resource in Tasmania is being over-exploited. If a new digital system improves the capacity of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment to ensure they have the capacity to monitor and to ensure compliance, that is a positive.

Going right back to when my colleague, the former member for Bass, Andrea Dawkins, was in this place, we had abalone fishers or licence-holders approaching us on a regular basis, saying that the fishery is in deep trouble. I just found an article from the ABC that is now five years old and I am absolutely certain under this minister, who is all about growth, growth, growth, growth, growth and 'don't listen to the scientists' and 'don't make any sudden changes

that affect an industry', that the state of the fishery has not substantially improved in the last five years.

The ABC report quotes one long-time diver who wanted to remain anonymous because of their concern about ramifications for them.

Quote:

... to put your face to a complaint is cutting your own throat, in the industry, but fishers and licence-holders wanted to sound the alarm about the state of the world's largest wild abalone fishery.

Quote:

... said one long-time diver, "The abalone stock on the bottom is just depleting, flat-out. We've had downturns before but never this bad. It is the worst I've seen it."

And the quote continues:

Over the last 12 months it has really fell off a cliff, especially around the west coast", said another diver.'

To illustrate, the ABC reports said in some places where divers could land 250 kilograms in an hour a few years ago, they can now only hope to get around 40 kilograms. In some cases, according to people with deep experience and long-time experience of this industry, abalone grounds have not just been thinned out, they have been wiped out. Here is a quote from a diver: 'I am going into gulches that used to have good fish in them that have got none. We've fished those gulches out.'

I also note that this issue of the depleted state of the abalone resource and the over-fishing became topical again in Tasmania a couple of years ago when there was quite heated debate at senior levels of the abalone industry about the state of the resource and why it was in so much trouble. I had spoken very recently to representatives of the recreational fishing sector who are extremely worried about the state of the abalone fishery. There has been mass, as we understand it, buy-up of licences, so we have a problem here, and a minister who is always gung-ho for growth with one of the most important living marine resources on our island.

Perhaps the minister could explain to the House how the new digital system will assist fisheries officers to ensure there is compliance with licensing conditions. Will there be extra resources put into DPIPWE for monitoring of abalone take? We know that this is an industry that has been subject to illegal fishing, the theft of abalone, arrests here and interstate. We would like to hear from this minister what is being done to ensure the long-term sustainability of a resource which its own people, who have been working in the industry for decades, say is under enormous stress, firsthand accounts from divers that whole gulches have been fished out.

We have heard the concerns of people working in the abalone sector. Has the minister heard those concerns? Was he paying attention a couple of years ago when this issue became very topical and there was heated debate amongst people with prolonged experience of the abalone sector?

This is a minister who has ramped up native forest logging, wants mines all through the Tarkine, has approved duck-shooting against his own agency's advice, and has made promises to leatherwood beekeepers, that he is just not keeping. I hope members understand our level of worry about this minister's capacity to keep an eye on this fishery, to have a look at what is happening with the sale of licences. As we understand it, a significant number of licences are now being sold to foreign interests. What is the benefit of this to Tasmania? What is the long-term outlook for the abalone fishery?

We would like the minister to back up any statement he makes on the state of the fishery with some evidence, with some material from his own agency or from IMAS or UTAS, or any other scientific body here that may be doing some of this work. In every area of this minister's portfolio, there are significant and worrying problems. We have talked about some of them. Another problem is the state of our surface and ground water. The minister wants the agricultural sector to be 10 times its size by 2050, when only the week before last Dr Coughanowr - who for many years headed up the Derwent Estuary program - produced a report, based in part on a report this minister tried to hide. The report showed that in every major river system in Tasmania there are enormous pressures, and a number of our important river systems - from the Derwent timtumili minanya to the South Esk up to the Leven - are in a serious state of decline.

When you are the Minister for Resources, it is not simply about clichés and desk thumping, 'wood is good', 'water is liquid gold' - all of that rubbish that comes out of Mr Barnett's mouth. You have a unique responsibility in that portfolio to make sure that you are not opening it up to unchecked plunder that leaves our children far poorer; that is, poorer not only economically, but also poorer in terms of our health and wellbeing and our food security, and our access to clean, fresh, potable water.

This is another area of Mr Barnett's portfolio where we believe there are red flags going up. We would like him to address the concern which has been expressed to us by abalone divers, and aired publicly in the media, on ABC radio, and which, no doubt, the minister's own agency is raising with him, in terms of the sustainability of the abalone fishery right now, more than five years after there was a serious ringing of alarm bells by the industry, and 10 years after the first noises of real concern started to be heard from within the abalone fishery locally.

It is a very unique responsibility to be the Minister for Resources, and your role should not be seen as enabling over-exploitation of resources that belong to all the people of Tasmania. They belong - not to the government of the day, not to licence holders, not to foreign interests - but to the people of Tasmania. Most Tasmanians cannot buy abalone; it is not available or they cannot afford it. It is in the broader interest of the community to know that there is some sustainability around this fishery, because all the signs are there right now that there is not.

[5.44 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Speaker, I thank very much those contributions that have been made on behalf of the Labor Party and the Greens. It is greatly appreciated, along with the indications of support for this very important reform legislation to streamline the process, cut the red tape and make it easier for fishers to fish. That is the long and short of it. I look forward to responding to the remarks that have been made by Labor and also the Leader of the Greens.

Congratulations to the member for Bass and shadow minister for primary industries and water on their first contribution to a bill. I thought it was very coherent, erudite and succinct and made the point well, and supported the bill on behalf of the Labor Party. It is most welcome. I acknowledge the passion and the interest in the primary industries and water sector, particularly in the fishing side. We caught up on this matter a few weeks ago. My love for angling and the shadow minister's interest in fishing is recognised. The remarks about the legislation being futureproofing, contemporary and looking forward are accurate remarks on behalf of the Labor Party and I appreciate that it has been taken on board.

I have visited the Marine Board building where department representatives are currently based to implement the paper-based system, as so well put by the shadow minister. It takes time and effort. Yes, there are copious amounts of paperwork and red tape. This will go a long way to improving that system, making it digital, and streamlining the process. I will make it easier on all sides, not just for the fishers, but for those in the department implementing the measures to ensure appropriate monitoring and management of the fishery. Your recognition of that is appropriate and sensible.

In response to the Leader of the Greens, I note the legislation has been on the notice paper for some time. I acknowledge your point about the timeframe; but it has been available. I commend you for your prowess in this place to get to your feet and speak so eloquently. The Government's position is based on science and evidence. Certainly, from my point of view and on behalf of the Government it is important; we need to get the science right. When I go fishing from time to time, I wear a hat - it says, 'fish for the future.' That means developing a sustainable fishery, not just in the recreational space, but recreational and commercial across our fishery.

We are an island state. We are blessed with that natural advantage for Tasmania. It is a competitive advantage, but it is a natural advantage. We need to ensure that it is protected and preserved and promoted for the years to come. Fishing for the future is important.

Ms O'Connor - How do you plan to do that?

Mr BARNETT - I will respond to some of those remarks you have made. We are into sustainable growth. This legislation will make compliance and monitoring a lot easier. I will also address a few remarks on the abalone industry.

As a Government, we have provided, over a long period of time, a lot of support for this industry. We are very proud of it. It is the world's largest wild abalone industry - 25 per cent of the total annual global production of wild-caught product. I pay tribute to Darwin Hansen's father, Al Hansen, who passed away only a few months ago. I had an opportunity to make a contribution at his service. He certainly pioneered the abalone industry and the processing industry here in Tasmania but there are some 11 000 recreational abalone licence holders each year, and it is also a culturally important fishery for Tasmania's Aboriginal communities. I want to acknowledge that.

Getting a sustainable harvest strategy in place is really important. We rely on the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies, the CSIRO and other advice and evidence through the good work of our department. We consult with the fisheries advisory committees that provide advice to me as the minister and the Government, and they are made up of industry stakeholders and

the public, people who know their stuff - and it is appreciated. I want to put on record my thanks to those advisory committees.

We have a sustainable abalone fishery for the long term, and that is what we are seeking. Yes, there are real concerns in terms of abalone stocks along portions of the east coast, and we have made some tough decisions. I have had to make tough decisions. Certainly, some key measures in recreational fishery have been implemented, including the revised bag and possessions limits and the new boat limits. For commercial fishery, just last year, in terms of catch reduction for the 2021 quota year, a catch of 833 tonnes was set - a drop of 18 per cent, which sees the catch at historically low levels.

I make that point because, if you were just listening to the Leader for the Greens making certain criticisms of the Government, we made that cut. It was a tough call, an 18 per cent cut, but I think it is fair to say that broadly, across the industry, it was appreciated. It was supported, although it was a tough call. It has been very challenging for those in the industry. I do not deny that one bit, and we will do everything we can to support them through those tough times.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and the China market issues, the 2020 quota was largely utilised. I am aware of some recent changes at the Tasmanian Abalone Council at the board and executive leadership level, and we are monitoring that very carefully.

In addition to that, we have the \$5 500 000, Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund. This is a huge support for this industry. We are backing it in. We are supporting it. I could say more, but I think it says a great deal when a government is prepared to put that sort of money on the table, working in partnership with and shoulder to shoulder with the industry - the Tasmanian Abalone Council and the fishers and those involved in the industry.

That reinvestment fund does a lot, and it is over a five-year period. One of the areas of great interest is *Centrostephanus*, the long-spined sea urchin. The initiative has been a great success in terms of removing *Centrostephanus* from the east coast, with the waters coming down from New South Wales, Victoria, down our east coast. With the climate change, the water has warmed, the *Centrostephanus* has come down, and it is adversely impacting our marine wildlife and the marine environment on the east coast. Where a harvest approach is not feasible, measures to reduce the sea urchin numbers directly via a subsidy on the take of urchins and the culling of urchins has been working, so I want to indicate that we have had some good results.

I can advise that around 1000 tonnes of urchins were removed under these programs in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 seasons combined. The current 2020-21 season is already the second highest recorded, with more than 450 tonnes removed. I am absolutely delighted with that news, and happy to update the House accordingly. It is a very good thing.

Our commitment more generally to fishing is on the public record - the wonderful support we have given prior to the election in terms of the \$1 million funding support for the inland fisheries for infrastructure upgrades, the \$2 million funding support for the sea fisheries infrastructure upgrades, and a whole lot more.

I am delighted to be backing it in, not to mention the fact that we have a sea fishing strategy that goes for 10 years. This is a draft that will be finalised in due course, where we

can say we have a 10-year strategy, long-term planning, sustainable fishing, and opportunities that encourage fishing, but with sustainability being a key motivator all the way through.

I could talk more about that, but today we have to focus on the amendment bill before us. It is a great pleasure and honour to say that we are backing in not only the recreational fishing industry with a 10-year strategy, but also \$1 million for our wild fisheries action plan, and \$250 000 over two years to support the emerging marine industries.

On our island state, surrounded by water, we have here what the rest of the country and the world really needs, and that is the CRC for marine bioproducts. This is exciting. We have recently locked this in. Not much attention has been given to it, and it should be. This is a real opportunity for Tasmania, whether it is seaweed or other marine opportunities for commercial use in Tasmania. We have a joint venture with the South Australians and I am delighted with that. That is on the back of the CRC for the blue economy, focusing on our marine environment, our marine engineering, renewable energy and marine farming. We have it here in Tasmania and we are making the most of it, and I am delighted with that.

With our wild fisheries action plan, we have the \$2 million to support those in the wild fisheries sector. We have \$350 000 for immediate oyster industry relief, and \$150 000 over three years for the Tasmanian seafood trail site. We have so much to talk about. Unfortunately, this is not the exact time to be commending the fishery sector for its resilience and its plans for the future, but this bill will streamline the process, cut the red tape and I am encouraged by where we are at.

With this \$5 million investment by the Government, on behalf of our taxpayers, to back in this amendment, to make it easier for compliance, monitoring, management and for our fishers to do what they want to do best - and that is, fishing - I am pleased to be a responsible minister bringing in this legislation to help make a difference.

In conclusion, I commend the department. They have done a terrific job over a long time. I visited the Marine Board Building and get briefed regularly, and they interact with the key stakeholders and the fishers. Last week I was at St Helens with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council and the Stay Afloat campaign with Julian Harrington and his colleagues, the marine police and others. They do a great job.

To the department who are out on the ground, face to face with the fishers, and also providing advice to me, my office and the Government, a special commendation to Deidre Wilson, Ian Dutton and Marion March. Thank you for all your work to bring this forward and to make it happen.

I put that on the record, because quite often they go beyond the call. They do the work that needs to be done to ensure that, as ministers and as a government, we can get the results that are needed to deliver a sustainable fishery that will deliver real opportunities for families well into the future. I commend this bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

[5.59 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House now adjourn.

Malcolm Crosse - Tasmanian Angling Hall of Fame

Mr BARNETT - (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I pay tribute to Malcolm Crosse, this year's inductee into the Tasmanian Angling Hall of Fame.

I was privileged a few weeks ago to officially recognise Malcolm's achievements in person at Four Springs Lake on the opening day of the trout season on 7 August. I was joined by many excited members of Anglers Alliance Tasmania - anglers, mums and dads and their kids out there at the beginning of the season. My counterpart, Janie Finlay, was there also to commend Malcolm Crosse and also have a fish on opening day. Likewise, I enjoyed a fish on opening day with Malcolm after the induction.

The induction statement is rich in evidence of Malcolm's tremendous contribution to angling in Tasmania. I would like to take a moment to read a statement to this Chamber with respect to the induction statement:

A gift of 'Fly Fisher in Tasmania' by David Scholes lured Malcolm to Tasmania in 1969 to follow his passion of fly fishing, resulting in his contribution and service to Tasmanian freshwater angling.

Malcolm joined the Southern Tasmanian Licenced Anglers Association, Clarence Branch, where he served on the committee of this club and was elected as its President in 1971.

Also in this year Malcolm joined the Tasmanian Fly Tyers club and over many years served as a Committee member, Secretary and President. He was awarded Life Membership in 2011.

In 1989 he joined Fly Fish Australia where he also served for many years as Secretary, President and Board member pursuing fly fishing around the world as a competitor and Team Captain. He also participated as event organiser at a State/National and International level for several Fly Fishing Championships. In 1997 he was awarded Life Membership of Fly Fish Australia.

In 1999 'The International Sport Fly Fishing Federation' recognised Malcolm's commitment and dedication to trout fishing both nationally and internationally. After joining the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Association in 1990, Malcolm competed in a number of Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championship events and he was the event co-ordinator for this organisation

in a number of countries. In 2020 he was made a Life Member of the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Association.

Malcolm was responsible for the production of the books 'Australia's Best Trout Flies' and 'Australia's Best Trout Flies Revisited', both books promoting trout fishing in Tasmania.

As the Project Officer for Anglers Alliance Tasmania (AAT), Malcolm engineered, installed and maintained AAT's webcam network covering many Tasmanian lakes and which are viewed worldwide. This was one of many projects he worked on along with a period of time on the Inland Fisheries Advisory Council.

I must say, those webcams can be awfully helpful to know what is going on in our central highlands in those lakes.

The culmination of many years of service saw him bring the World Fly Fishing Championships to Tasmania in 1999, working as Director of Operations and showcasing Tasmanian trout fishing to the rest of the world.

Malcolm has always promoted Tasmania as being one of the best trout fishing destinations in the world as few others have. His passion for fly fishing has been ably supported by his wife Kaylene who has also been recognised for her contribution to trout fishing.

Thank you to ATT for putting that in as a statement for the induction. It is totally supported by me.

I personally know Malcolm. I have known him for many years and also Kaylene. I have fished with Malcolm at Penstock and my wife, Kate, is a good friend of Malcolm and Kaylene. Also my son, Ben, has enjoyed some time with Malcolm.

Yes, I am somewhat biased, but he is a terrific guy. He should be acknowledged in the way we are doing tonight and it is a great congratulations to him on his hard work. Working with him on the World Fly Fishing Championship organisation in December 2019 was a fantastic outcome for November/December, having nearly 30 countries represented at that event. It was very windy, but a great success. As they say at the Olympics, it was the best ever World Fly Fishing Championship. Malcolm can be very pleased and proud of his achievement.

We have 24 000 licensed anglers in Tasmania and it is looking like a very good season. Solid winter rainfalls, rising lake heights; the conditions are looking good.

Thanks to the Inland Fisheries Service, we have seen about 20 000 transferred to regional dams and lakes. The Government's tagged trout promotion has already seen one lucky angler hook \$2000. I enjoyed meeting with Michael Deppeler and his children, Lucy and Liam, on 11 August on the Derwent River not far from Norseke where he was in his boat and he caught that wonderful \$2000 brown trout. There are many more to catch, ladies and gentlemen. Fishers of all persuasions out there, please get out there and enjoy.

We have put \$100 000 in over the next two years to promote angling because it is part of the Tasmanian way of life. People enjoy it and I commend them on that. We are certainly out

there to support more women, more young people, we now have 10 amenities at the 10 popular fishing locations around Tasmania which we have funded and is well appreciated.

We are working on the draft inland fisheries strategy that will support continued development of infrastructure facilities and access for the fishing experience, support angling clubs to promote junior angling, encourage female participation and young people and engage anglers in the stewardship of the state's inland fisheries and waterways. This should be released in the coming months.

In conclusion, it is a great part of the Tasmanian way of life. I encourage all Tasmanians to get out there and enjoy it. As a Government it is an absolute honour and pleasure as minister to be promoting the inland fishing in Tasmania and to really enjoy it. Get out there and have a go.

Mr David O'Byrne - Process of Investigation into Claims of Sexual Harassment

[6.06 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to continue some comments on the matters that have been circulating in this place today, but have been widely discussed in the community for the last couple of months. That is in relation to Mr David O'Byrne and his sexual harassment of Ms Rachel Midson in 2007. My focus is on the processes that have been undertaken to investigate that complaint and the actions as a result. The processes undertaken are deeply distressing for Tasmanian women and girls, particularly the majority of us who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse, humiliation, intimidation or violence.

It is the majority of women who have had an experience like that in their life. The March4Justice happened in March this year on the back of the disgraceful, shameful behaviour in federal parliament. The failure of the Prime Minister to listen to Brittany Higgins, to attend the March4Justice rally, the outrage of women around Australia was palpable. All of us who were present at the March4Justice rally, along with Grace Tame - who spoke so powerfully - felt very clearly that the time was up and we have to do everything we can as individuals in every capacity we have to make sure we do not let this behaviour go unspoken and without consequences.

I committed myself as a member of parliament to do everything I could to talk about positive actions and to be very clear we must have consequences for behaviour which is unacceptable. It always has been, but it has to be called out and made unacceptable through consequences for actions that have been taken.

The Labor Party's investigation into David O'Byrne's admission of sexually harassing his junior employee, a woman 16 years younger than him in 2007, found he was not guilty of sexual harassment. That is an impossible finding. I cannot actually understand how it is possible Ms Deegan and anyone else who was involved in that process can look at themselves in the mirror in the morning. I cannot understand how, after a man has made a public statement acknowledging guilt, acknowledging the behaviours that Ms Midson accused him of, that they could find him not guilty of sexual harassment.

The only way they did that was through weasel words and a pathetic act of language to say that although they found the conduct was inappropriate and wrong, it does not mean that it

was in breach of the policy as in force at the relevant time. So because the Labor Party did not have a policy, or did not have an adequate policy, that said that members must not sexually harass other people, therefore it could not have been sexual harassment because they did not have a policy written down, words on a paper.

Any form of abuse, any form of malpractice, any form of bad behaviour, any form of corruption that was not written down on a piece of paper, or still is not written down on a piece of paper, is not a problem because it is not written down on a piece of paper. Well, women in Australia, women in Tasmania and girls, we do not have to have it written down on a piece of paper.

It is manifestly unacceptable to use power in a workplace and to intimidate a younger person and to interpret her beautiful young energy and dynamism and bubblyness as evidence that sex is on the cards. This is what has happened, the so-called flirtatious atmosphere that was referred to by Ms Deegan. She said she found that at the time the conduct occurred there was a 'consensual and flirtatious atmosphere about the interactions between the complainant and the respondent'. What that means is that a flirtatious atmosphere, in other words, the friendly, energetic and bubbly nature of Ms Midson as a young woman in the workplace was taken as an invitation to have a sexual relationship and it was interpreted as consent.

That is clearly what Mr O'Byrne interpreted it as. As he said, when he has tried to backtrack on his statement, he understood it was consensual. It is clearly not okay for a woman not to be able to express her true self and have that taken as a licence for sexual advances.

Women would remember the General Angus Campbell statement which came out, also in March this year. It just happened to be at the same time as the March4Justice around that period. He made some really interesting comments to female defence force cadets. He advised them, if they wanted to look after themselves, then they needed to practice the four As. They needed to make sure they did not drink alcohol, do not stay out after midnight, do not go out alone and do not look too attractive. Women reject that. We are looking for action from the Labor Party, not words.

Young Farmers' Gathering - Longford **Young Tasmanian Farmer of the Year**

[6.13 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I share with the House and the community of Tasmania a number of fantastic events that I have attended over recent weeks in my new role as shadow minister for primary industries and water, and how they intersect across my roles of small business and start-ups.

I have been really grateful for the opportunity to meet with a number of peak bodies, including the TFGA, Tas Rural Youth and Rural Business Tasmania. It has led me to attend two really important events that speak to the future of our agricultural sectors in Tasmania in succession, growth and opportunities and the strength and skills of our young people.

The first event that I attended was in Longford, facilitated by the TFGA. It was a young farmers' gathering. It was one of the first gatherings that they had facilitated recently, an opportunity for them, from the TFGA, to share their strategic plan. It was positively welcomed

by young farmers from our region. It was so positive that they are actually going to duplicate that event across the north-west coast and into the south.

It was on the eve of a different event put on by Rural Youth, the Young Tasmanian Farmer of the Year competition. Myself and the minister, Mr Barnett, attended both of these events. I wanted to reflect this evening on the positivity and the confidence that I hold in this sector from my experience of the dinner that was held at Quercus Park.

The Young Farmer of the Year event tests either young people working in the sector or young people with a keen interest in the sector, young people who might be connected to Rural Youth for either social or personal development experiences. It provides them with an opportunity to develop skills, to demonstrate their skills and also to test themselves against a number of criteria.

It was a great evening to see the different modules that were completed celebrated, with a number of finalists recognised in each of the modules. There were 12 finalists in this event drawn from right across Tasmania. The modules they are tested on are really interesting and curious. When I arrived, I had the opportunity to discuss with a number of the mentors and judges, the different elements.

One of our Tasmanian seed producers had the seed identification category. It was won by the overall winner of the event, Andrea O'Halloran. It was an opportunity for young people to test their ability to identify a seed. Not to be too tricky, but from memory, I think it included a black jelly bean inside the bag for identification, just to see if they knew all the different shapes and sizes of the seeds.

In addition to Andrea O'Halloran winning at the seed identification category, they had categories of first aid, load securing, comprehension, home economics I thought was interesting. At my table, Brodie Hill spoke of his expertise in patching some pants and poaching eggs. It was nice to see that included. Their ability to set up a sprayer set, biosecurity, a water trough set up, farm safety. At the dinner, two modules were completed. One was a quiz and also public speaking.

What was really interesting across the six finalists being tested in the public speaking sector, was their confidence as young Tasmanians to speak across a range of topics only handed to them moments before. Their ability to be insightful, serious, informed but also lighthearted in their presentations was impressive.

The public speaking section went well. It was judged by the minister, Mr Barnett. But I have to say, Mr Barnett, in the quiz, although the young people presented their expertise in the quiz, Josh Mison came out successfully there. The minister was tested himself on the ADF. The minister had just announced the Agricultural Development Fund not long before, but perhaps thought it might have been our lovely defence services and found himself not as successful as others in the room.

However, the purpose of speaking tonight is to congratulate Rural Youth, not only for their great organisational contribution to this sector in Tasmania but for the work that they do in presenting the Young Farmer of the Year competition, and to stand and congratulate Andrea O'Halloran who was the 2021 Young Farmer of the Year. She is a 29-year-old young woman from the Tamar Valley who works as an agronomist in the berry industry and who has studied

agricultural science at the University of Tasmania. No doubt she is a really positive representative of the future of this industry.

This evening I congratulate Rural Youth who have met their vision in this event. Their vision is to connect, develop and celebrate young Tasmanians. It is one of my very early experiences in this shadow role and it was really positive and confidence-inspiring to see such a broad range of young people from a lot of different sectors demonstrating their interest in agriculture and the future of agriculture.

Congratulations to Andrea and to Rural Youth Tasmania. We have a promising future industry ahead.

Men's Resources Tasmania Orford Thank You Event

[6.19 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Resources) - Mr Deputy Speaker, that was really interesting. Thank you for that contribution.

Tonight, I will speak about two subjects, the first of which was a wonderful experience that I had and that was last evening at 7 pm to join Men's Resources Tasmania for their vigil which they have held for 24 hours just here in our forecourt and on the lawns.

I have been a supporter of this organisation for a long time, in fact going back to when I was first Health minister. This very small group has generated significant interest and reach right across the community. They do it on the smell of an oily rag but such is the passion of the men involved to really do more for men and men's health, particularly in the space of mental health and suicide prevention. This is a subject very close to my heart and I know others here as well.

I am very grateful for the invitation to have attended the vigil, noting that Men's Resources Tasmania are looking for a new opportunity to enliven their activities. They want to do more to support and lead the development, support and promotion of their key events and health promotion resources that relate to male health and wellbeing. Some of those they mention are Men's Health Week, which was back in June, and International Men's Day, directly related to men and boys and through support to other community and government sector organisations.

We hear a lot about women's health and women's issues, and that is right and proper. Last night during the address it was made very clear that this is not a contest. It is not a battle of the sexes, and anything that is done to improve men's health and men's mental health should not come at the expense of any other programs, just to be clear.

The development of male wellbeing-oriented services and programs that Men's Resources Tasmania can use to develop sustainability and independence - they want to get more involved with advocacy, with male perspectives on community issues. Again, I mention male suicide prevention. They also want to do more in developing and delivering training in service delivery to key government and community sector organisations. I support and endorse those aspirations and I hope others here will as well.

Last night the thing that - I won't say surprised me, but the thing that pleased me was that when I arrived after dark to see the fire pit lit up and a circle of people gathered around it, at least one quarter, possibly a third of the attendees - maybe about 60 or 70 people - were women. I thought that was great because it is not just men, it is families and it is the women who love these men who felt so strongly about the cause.

The vigil, as the promotional material outlined, was a vigil for our brothers, our partners, our dads, our sons and mates lost to suicide. The name of the vigil was 24/7 and a very challenging reason for that is because, as the material states, every 24 hours Australia loses another seven men to suicide. This is an important cause. It ought to bring us together. I encourage them and thank them for the great work they are doing in their own small way, particularly Brendan Sullivan, the president, and I would like to single out Jonathan Bedloe, who is the vice president. He has been a former president and one of the main founders and visionaries for this organisation. The House should support and endorse them and give them more encouragement in the future, as we do more to support men and women to live their best lives in Tasmania, noting the importance of every individual human being.

Briefly, at the weekend I had the great privilege of attending our Orford Thank You event. It was to say thank you to the community, particularly of Orford and Triabunna, and the south-east coast region, who were cut off from their main highway from 29 May for the urgent removal of rocks that we had identified as posing a high risk of falling onto the road.

Of course, the community was kept supported. We did not allow the community to be isolated. We upgraded Wielangta Rd in record time and kept it open, kept it constantly upgraded, and it was an important thing. But it was still a disruption in the lives of the community. Our thank you event saw more than 300 people attend, which was fantastic. We had the Rotary Club, we had a range of local businesses, we had Ange Boxall, the local singer/songwriter, performing her work, and it was a fantastic event. Again, I say thank you to the community for working with us, particularly the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council and their mayor, Robert Young, the general manager, Greg Ingham. It was great to work with them as we communicated every single day how the progress of that work was going and what people could expect.

The range of community supports we put in place was appreciated and I am pleased to tell the House the Government got a lot of thanks, our civil contractors got a lot of thanks and our local community were wonderful to work with. Again, thank the community for its understanding during that very disrupted time and, in particular, everyone, including the 61 contractors who got involved with that project and potentially saved lives here in Tasmania.

Mr David O'Byrne - Claims of Harassment in the Workplace

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight, I rise on the adjournment to add some comments. I would have liked to speak and no, I am not going to reflect on what we have discussed earlier in the day, but I would have liked to have raised my perspective on some of the recent events surrounding David O'Byrne and Rachel Midson, and I have some thoughts that I would like to put on record about that.

I will start by saying that I will stand by Rachel Midson, and I will use her name because she has publicly stated that it is okay to do that. I have always stood with Rachel and I will

continue to stand with Rachel. I believe her, and that is what we are meant to do. We are not meant to cherry-pick sexual harassment. That is not how it works. You either stand with women or you do not stand with women. It is pretty black and white. You do not get to say, 'I stand with you but ...' It is like saying 'I'm not racist but ...', 'I would agree that you may feel that you are being sexually harassed but ...' That is not how it works. You either do or you do not, you stand with women or you do not stand with women. You do not cherry-pick it. That is how it works.

I wear this gold bracelet. This gold bracelet is from a nugget - I was telling Mr Tucker about my gold bracelet the other day. It is from a nugget from about 200 years ago when my family first came to Australia. A gold nugget was found and there was a ring made from the nugget and there was a chain made from the nugget. The first male of each generation in my family wears the signet ring and the first female of each generation in my family wears the gold bracelet. It is a bracelet of responsibility and you have a responsibility when it is given to you. My own mother wore this bracelet and when she retired from politics, she gave me the gold bracelet. When she gave it to me she said, 'Be thou strong and very courageous'. That is what this bracelet is all about.

So yes, I will continue to support women who have been sexually harassed. I do believe Rachel and I would like to put that on the record. I have put that on the record. That is certainly not anything that I have hidden. I have been a strong Labor voice in relation to that. Like I said previously, I do not believe that you can choose to support some women and you can choose not to support other women. It has nothing to do with the person you may know, and it has nothing to do with your association with the person. If a woman comes to you and tells you their story that they have been sexually harassed, you support them and that is it. You ask what you can do to help. You ask if they are okay. You ask if they have got the right support networks around them. That is exactly what I have done for Rachel when she came to speak to me.

I do not think she has been treated with respect through this whole process. I do not think she should have even had to speak publicly and provide her personal story. When she did that I was more than happy to stand by her side. We are public people. We are meant to speak on behalf of our community. That is why people elect us as representatives, especially Labor representatives. That is one of our core values: that we support women. That is what we do. We also support workers; that is what we do. They are our Labor values. That is what we are meant to do so I will continue to stand with Rachel and I have been contacted by a lot of people providing some support. But really it is not about me, it is about Rachel and it is about claimants. I will continue to stand by them because that is what we should do.

I am not going to speak to the investigation in itself and I do not want to cast any blame on particular people. I do believe her though and I will continue to support her and I believe complainants and I am really concerned that what we have done is create an atmosphere where people who are sexually harassed - especially in workplaces - will stop, feel they are not safe to share their stories, that they will not be believed, they will be put on trial and they will be investigated. It is not the 1920s anymore someone said this morning. It is the year 2021.

We have come so far, but unfortunately, we are still cherry-picking sexual harassment which is completely inappropriate.

Catholic Education - Anniversary

[6.30 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to say thank you to the conveners of the most marvelous dinner celebration held last night in support of Catholic education which was celebrating its 200th year anniversary in Australia. It is a remarkable story of people who came to this place very early in the birth of what we now know is Australia and set up schools.

In Tasmania, we have a large number of Catholic schools and a large number in my electorate. My family in particular has had long and very productive, fun and interesting journeys through some of the schools we have here, in particular St Virgils College which is a great school. I will not sing the school song.

It might be a good time to reflect briefly on the importance of education, the importance of having choice around schools, formats, values and culture and each one of the schools in the Catholic system has its own dynamic and its own culture.

I have kids who have gone through the Catholic system. I, myself, did not. My parents are products of Sacred Heart, St Marys, St Virgils, and grandfather and great uncle, through St Virgils in the first year, ran a matric class. I have been delighted to work with that school, Catholic education and the Edmund Rice folk who are amazing and who also run St Francis Flexible Learning Centre, of which I am a great supporter. I have had the great benefit of working with them to support the reinstatement of both the early learning years at St Virgils plus the matric years.

A great thing for those of us who were kicking around in the 1980s and there are a few of us in this room remember those days of the great sporting contests between those two large boys' schools, Hutchins and St Virgils.

The matric classes will be held at Austins Ferry and commencing next year, sadly we have missed it for my family, but I am hoping it will be a fabulous thing to have that school fully formed and back again.

I congratulate the Year 10 girls at Mt Carmel who have had a pandemic year somewhat interrupt their end of year celebrations, but I know as we were involved their end of year formal was absolutely marvellous.

The people who were in the room last night are absolutely the salt of the earth. The teachers, the administrators, all of those people from all of the schools across Tasmania are really wonderful people.

I had the great delight to sit next to Brother Pete who has been around for a long time. He would not mind me saying that and he told me a little about his story. He said he was 81 now and he remembers travelling back in the day and has helped with refugees, prisoners, as a visitor in the prison system and has reapplied to go back into visiting into the prisons. At his age, he is very seasoned.

Those are the sorts of people who are at a grass roots level and we can appreciate because it comes from a place of values, from a place of love, of community and of spirit and is to be celebrated; lots of fun, jokes, great food and entertaining music because they love to celebrate.

St Francis' Flexible Learning Centre will be moving to its new digs in Springfield Avenue soon. I encourage everybody to get behind them. Ms Johnston is nodding, and I am sure she is with us on that program. I love what they do for the kids who need to be brought in and assisted. They can make great strides very quickly through those sorts of programs. I am a big fan of that.

I was also very taken with the minister, Mr Ferguson's comments about men's mental health and the issue of suicide in particular. It is a very serious issue and I add my voice to his comments. Thank you very much to everybody in the Catholic system for 200 years of excellent work. May there be another 200 years of it.

Free2b Girls

[6.35 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak on the Free2b Girls program. It is close to my heart, as the Free2b Girls was founded in my home town of St Helens. It is also one of those small things that has been a success in the community. The group began in 2017, when two women recognised the need in our community for a place where girls could go and simply be themselves, separate from school and home, and separate from the pressures of life.

In collaboration with the St Helens Neighbourhood House, the founders organised a weekly venue, a budget for food and collected materials for activities. They decided to call the group Free2Be, and advertised it in the school newsletter as a space for girls aged between 10 and 16, where they can be free to hang out, express their naturally creative selves through music, dance, art, craft and cooking. The space will run in a way that encourages freedom within the boundaries of safety and respect.

The need for a space like this was clear. In the first week of the doors opening, three girls came along; but within a month there were around eight. Since that first week there have been up to 15 girls regularly attending each week in our small community of St Helens. Since the group's introduction into the St Helens community, its founder, Tani Longoulant, was inspired by the community effect, and has since expanded the group by producing a program for more communities to use across Australia, as well as across Tasmania. Tani's background as a counsellor and a social ecologist aided in the development of the program, alongside research in various areas, including youth engagement, neuroscience, psychology and educational physiology.

Free2b Girls groups are run in a way that encourages freedom, choice and creativity within boundaries of safety, tolerance and respect. All women running Free2b groups are trained in this approach, to emphasise the free in Free2b Girls. The founders provided the training and the policies, wading through all the red tape involved, so that the women running the groups can focus on providing the best possible experience for girls in the community.

The help and resources do not stop there. Free2b provides funding strategies, advocacy and program development. The program is aimed at girls aged 10 to 16 living in regional communities, and provides early intervention into personal development and social inclusion of the participants. Through focusing on their creative capabilities, positive attributes and contributions to their local communities, the girls are able to build self-belief and identity. The program is unique, in that it can be tailored to each girl and regional town, depending on the situation and needs. Each group strives to create a positive relationship between the girls and their community.

I make particular mention of Patricia - Trish O'Duffy - who was the manager of St Helens Neighbourhood House, where the St Helens Free2be Girls group is hosted, along with a long list of other community programs and groups. Trish has been a long-time supporter of the program, and fostered a relationship with the founder, Tani, to jointly produce a positive outcome for girls in the community.

As I mentioned, the group fell on hard times during COVID-19 due to financial pressures. Many of the volunteers not only donate their valuable time but contribute financially to things such as food, crafts, supplies and perhaps most expensively their travel costs.

Volunteers drive from Longford to Campbell Town, St Marys to Fingal, and Scamander to St Helens at least once a week and sometimes more. Unfortunately, many of the volunteers have suffered as a result of the pandemic and have been unable to travel to support the groups. With the help of the Premier's Discretionary Fund, we were able to support hard-working volunteers by establishing a fuel fund. This aids volunteers who spend significant time and money travelling to and from meetings and activities, on top of the time they already dedicate to the cause.

In addition to rolling out the program across many communities, both in Tasmania and on the mainland, Mrs Longoulant is exploring a similar program for boys in our regional communities. I strongly encourage these women in the community that have time to get back to look at contacting the founder, Tani, on the website - free2begirls.com.au. The groups rely heavily on grassroot participation and it only takes one member of the community with a spark to get the ball rolling. Inquire today if there is a group in your area or even look at starting up a new one.

I look forward to continuing my relationship with this important group in our community. I also look forward to watching the program being rolled out across more regional towns across the state and across the mainland, and particularly to boys in our regional communities.

Homelessness Week Vinnies Community Sleep Out

[6.42 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, during the winter recess, we had Homelessness Week which was a really important event to recognise people who are perhaps doing it the toughest in our communities right across the state and around the country as well. Some of these people are truly in dire circumstances. Whether they are young or old, male or female, black or white, they all deserve our respect, our care and our hard work, to make sure that their lives can be better and that they get the support that they need.

I took part in quite a few events, but one that really stood out to me was the Vinnies Community Sleep Out rather than the more high-profile CEO Sleep Out. It was organised by Family Based Care which is a wonderful organisation in my electorate. It was founded in Burnie and it is one of the largest service providers for people receiving aged care, disability care and vocational services right across Tasmania.

They have offices in all the big towns and they also have outreach onto the islands and Bass Strait as well as the west coast, getting into all of the communities where people need just that extra care and help. It was a cool night in Burnie and a group of about 20 hardy volunteers, including myself, put their hand up to sleep under a box on a beautiful Tasmanian winter's night. Luckily, it wasn't raining. We were fortunate enough to be placed, as the rules state, in an area where you can be blocked off or locked in, so you don't have any trespassers coming through.

It was at the Burnie Arts and Functions Centre, courtesy of the Burnie City Council. Even that is a reminder of how fortunate we are when we are playing pretend in some of these Homelessness Week events. There is a lot of difference between being well fed and sleeping under a box in the courtyard at the Burnie Arts and Functions Centre to being, potentially, a young lady sleeping under a bridge or in the doorway of a building. The difference that makes for your safety and your sense of wellbeing is truly enormous.

We were lucky enough to be visited by some great people during the night. They gave us more of a sense about the services that are available for people living with homelessness in our community, and also some of the challenges. A big shout out to the Vinnies Soup Van which does great work across our community, particularly in Burnie and Wynyard. They provided a lovely meal, prepared with a lot of heart - a two-course meal, soup and dessert - so we were really treated to the best of the best on that night.

It was important to have a nice, warm meal in your tummy when you know that you have a long cold Tasmanian winter's night ahead of you. It can make a big difference. As I say, the fact we only needed to do it one night was a real reminder of just how tough a lot of people are doing it when they do it night in, night out. Having a bit of warm soup from the Vinnie's soup van is actually an unusual privilege.

It was raising money with the Vinnies CEO Sleepout for that wonderful organisation, St Vincent de Paul. Founded by St Vincent de Paul, who was essentially a saint for us in sixteenth century France, he was actually the pastor for 1200 galley slaves from North Africa, people at the very margins of that society in a very brutal time where they were given nothing and no support. For Vincent de Paul, before he was canonized to dedicate his life to those people and people like them, that ethos has continued on today.

He cured the sick through the founding of hospitals, he fed the hungry and looked after those who were pushed to the very edges of French society at that time. His legacy lives on through our society, through the work of people like family-based care and Vinnies who are looking after homeless people in our community here in little old Tasmania and right around the world each and every night and doing a wonderful job.

Between us there were about 20 volunteers with donations and an auction that was done by a fantastic north-west auctioneer, Andrew De Bomford we were roughly able to raise about

\$3300. There were some very keen bidders and some very hotly contested auction items, particularly tents, sleeping bags and other sleeping arrangements that normally you cannot get away with. Normally you have to sleep with a box but if you put in enough money for a good cause then they can help you out and try to make you a little more comfortable.

It was a rough night but it was a dry night. It felt absolutely retched the next day, but it was a real reminder about how lucky we are and how grateful we should be to know we have got a safe family at home and a warm home to sleep in every other night. There were a few other events I attended, lucky enough to represent the minister at the homelessness week event in Devonport organised by a wonderful youth organisation, Youth and Family Community Connections in Devonport. They do incredible work with young people right across the north-west and give them a sense of purpose, a sense of community and fellowship and also make sure that their tummies are full, and they can get access to the services they need, particularly mental health. As we all know, it is becoming an increasingly big problem for young people who are struggling through this time of pandemic.

I congratulate all the organisations in the north-west and around Tasmania that were involved in homelessness week. Next year, even if we are able to make sure there is one less person who sleeps in the streets, we will have done a good job.

The House adjourned at 6.48 p.m.