PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 6 May 2025

REVISED EDITION

Contents

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The Speaker, **Ms O'Byrne**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

QUESTIONS

Federal Election - Swing to Labor

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.01 a.m.]

Your party was resoundingly rejected by Tasmanians on the weekend -

Mr Ellis - Your party is in administration.

The SPEAKER - Alright, we are not going to start that way. Minister Ellis will cease interjecting during the question being asked. The member will start his question again.

Mr WINTER - Your Liberal Party was resoundingly rejected by Tasmanians on the weekend. You polled only 24 per cent, the worst of any state, with a swing to Labor three times as high in Tasmania.

After 11 years, Tasmanians have given up on you and your minority Liberal government. You are responsible for an unprecedented budget disaster, the ferry fiasco, and 7000 full-time Tasmanian jobs have been lost since you went into minority, something you promised not to do. You broke your promise that we would be the healthiest state by 2025. You broke your promise that education results would be at the national average by 2022. On your watch, young people are leaving for the mainland in record numbers.

Do you accept responsibility for the wipe-out your party suffered on the weekend?

Mr Abetz - Do you accept responsibility for being in admin?

The SPEAKER - Thank you, minister Abetz, you do not have the call, the Premier does.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I was reflecting on the result on Saturday night, and the humbleness of victory of the Prime Minister against the hubris of the Leader of the Opposition, who is still in administration by the Commonwealth. I look forward to working with Prime Minister Albanese, as we have done over the last three years, delivering - despite our political differences - in health, in education and in infrastructure.

Members interjecting.

Mr Willie - You admired Peter Dutton last week.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We put politics aside for the benefit of Tasmania. I have worked well with the Prime Minister. I also acknowledge the contribution of Peter Dutton and his service to public life over the last couple of decades as well. I say clearly, whilst I enormously respect Peter's contribution to public life, I am no Peter Dutton. I say with absolute certainty, Mr Winter, you are no Anthony Albanese either.

What will drive me is what is best for Tasmania. That is why our Education minister in Tasmania sat down with Jason Clare, the federal Education minister, and struck a growth funding for public education over the last decade. That is why all our ministers sit down with ministers federally and do what is best for Tasmania. It is exactly what will drive me.

I note you crave progress, as you said. Progress - an interesting word. You do not crave power but you crave progress. If you do crave progress, how about putting politics aside -

Members interjecting.

Ms Finlay - Do you not understand progress, Premier? How about progress on the *Spirit*s?

The SPEAKER - Members on my left. Ms Finlay.

Mr ROCKLIFF - for once in your life and standing up for Tasmania, unlike you did when it comes to road and bridge funding in Tasmania.

Members interjecting.

A member - You backed the nuclear plant.

The SPEAKER - Order. The House will come to order. The Premier will be heard in at least relative silence.

Mr ROCKLIFF - When you had an opportunity in this place to stand up for Tasmania over infrastructure funding into the state, you squibbed it. I say this clearly: I will always -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - put Tasmania first. I know full well that the member, who says he craves progress - now is the time for you to step up and put politics aside for progress. When it comes to key -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The House will settle down. I understand it has been a big weekend for everyone, but I remind you that the only interjections that I am allowed to hear - or wish to

hear - are 'hear, hear' or 'shame'. Please show some respect, otherwise the students who we will recognise soon will have a very dim view of your behaviour.

Government Agenda - Job Cuts and GBE Privatisation

Mr WINTER question to PREMEIR, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

You say you are no Peter Dutton, but Peter Dutton had a plan to cut 41,000 jobs from the public service. You have announced a plan to axe 2500, which is three times as many per capita. Earlier this year, Peter Dutton tried to mimic Donald Trump by announcing his shadow minister for government efficiency, and a few weeks later you announced you were going to establish a Tasmanian efficiency and productivity unit: Tasmania's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency). Peter Dutton has an unpopular plan - or had an unpopular plan - to spend $600 billion on nuclear power, which you supported. You have an unpopular plan to privatise Tasmanian assets, including parts of Hydro, which will mean less money for schools and hospitals.

After this terrible agenda was roundly rejected on the weekend, and especially so in Tasmania, will you be rethinking your plan to cut jobs, privatise assets and rip funding from Tasmanian schools and hospitals?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. You have also been very clearly found out when it comes to taxing Tasmanians, I have to say, which I am sure we will come to later on. I say very clearly that, as opposed to the member, we have a clear plan and we are sticking by it and sticking with it, because getting to a good pathway to surplus -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left.

Mr ROCKLIFF - A pathway to surplus. The economy is strong in Tasmania. I am proud of the fact that we are leading the nation when it comes to key economic indicators.

The member talks about privatisation. You believed in privatisation, Mr Winter, so it is about time you were honest with the Tasmanian people as well, rather than flip-flopping. You say one thing on northern radio and another thing on southern radio. You have one position when it comes to privatisation for one constituency and another for another constituency.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Anyway, back to the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, who I congratulate on his election. I am interested in where Anthony came from. He was a battling person when he was in his younger days, when he did it tough. I admire that courage. I am interested also in my political opponent and his background and what drives you. You say you crave progress in all of that. I am interested in doing the research on you, Mr Winter. A message from the Labor leader Dean Winter:

> I was born in Tasmania's glorious west coast, born in Tasmania's glorious west coast, and I love the west coast, which is absolutely a fantastic part of my electorate.

Humble beginnings, as you try and portray yourself. However, then go to another pamphlet when you are standing for local government:

> I was born and raised in Kingston Beach.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are standing for premier and claim you were born in the west coast -

The SPEAKER - The House will settle down, both sides.

Mr ROCKLIFF - but when you are standing for local government in Kingborough, you say you were born in Kingston. Will the real Dean Winter stand up?

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I will allow the House to settle down, both sides.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Mr Willie and Ms Brown. I just asked everyone to settle down.

Recognition of Visitors

The SPEAKER - Can we acknowledge in the gallery the year 6 students from Hutchins School who are having quite the education this morning. We will have some counselling for you at the end of the session. It is going to be great.

Members - Hear, hear.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Future of Project

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.11 a.m.]

Tasmanians were already on the record as overwhelmingly rejecting a new stadium before the last election. Your first announcement in the campaign in February last year was to promise them you would cap government spending on the stadium at $375 million and 'not a red cent more.' Now, you finally dropped the fiction that there will be any private investors partnering in this loss-making venture. This means Tasmanians would be on the hook for all

the cost, all the loan repayments. The $375 million cap on spending you promised has now ballooned to a likely $2 billion in a decade's time. It will be an intergenerational debt catastrophe.

You have treated Tasmanians with contempt and you have betrayed them. Will you abandon building a stadium the majority of Tasmanians do not want and cannot afford, or will you resign?

Members interjecting.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I will not abandon such an enabling project and I will continue the good fight for the future generations of Tasmanians for very good reasons. This is why my message to those who crave progress is that they put politics aside and start backing in -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left, you did not ask the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - key developments such as the Macquarie Point stadium because it will be good for Tasmania, as tough as it is politically.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course, we remain committed to the $375 million investment in capital.

Dr Woodruff - It means nothing.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Greens, you have had the question. You have an opportunity for a supplementary.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We always said there would be borrowings. We will own this stadium infrastructure and the enabling infrastructure, a Tasmanian government asset and a people's asset. It will be the enabler for the hotels that will be built around it and the hospitality venues. We will have a 1500-seat convention centre, which guarantees bed nights for hotels that will invest in the precincts and, no doubt, elsewhere across the CBD of Hobart. It is about the long-term view and what is best, rather than short-term politics.

Admittedly, you have always had a consistent position - I will give it you that, unlike those opposite.

Mr Winter - You changed position yesterday.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our position has always been consistent.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Settle down on my left.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Premier, I will hear the point of order and the House will settle down.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier is being dishonest. He said multiple times since the election $375 million and not a -

The SPEAKER - I need to hear the point of order.

Dr WOODRUFF - Will he be relevant to the question and be honest with Tasmanians about the full cost he is putting them on the hook for?

The SPEAKER - The question was: will you abandon the project or will you resign? The rest was contained in the preamble. Therefore, the Premier is currently being relevant to the question. I have ruled on it but am I hearing another point of order?

Mr ABETZ - Yes. The reflection on the Premier of being dishonest is unparliamentary. It is a reflection that needs to be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER - If the Premier takes offence to that statement I can ask the member to withdraw. I remind members that we have been trying to be a little bit more reasoned with our interjections and reflections on members in this term, but if the Premier is offended, I will ask the member to withdraw.

Dr Woodruff - But it is -

The SPEAKER - No, I am sorry. I have asked the Premier if he would like to have you withdraw the comment about dishonesty.

Mr ROCKLIFF - For consistency in this place and for a safe work environment - and we have young people watching question time -

Dr WOODRUFF - Supplementary question, honourable Speaker. The time expired.

The SPEAKER - The member will resume her seat. I have asked the Premier to state if he would like to have the comment withdrawn. He does not need to make an argument about it. I am assuming he is saying he would like the comment withdrawn. The member is asked to withdraw the comment about dishonesty as it has offended the member.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Yes, thank you.

Dr WOODRUFF - I would like some clarification.

The SPEAKER - There is no clarification.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I do not actually remember the words he would like me to withdraw. The word 'dishonest'? Can we not use the word 'dishonest' in the Chamber?

The SPEAKER - Could you resume your seat. The Standing Orders work in a number of ways. There are words and language that are absolutely unparliamentary and I will take action on immediately. The other ones are if a member takes offence to a word that is used, they can ask for it to be withdrawn, and it should be withdrawn immediately. Otherwise, if they feel they have been misrepresented, they have an opportunity at a later hour to make a case on misrepresentation.

In this circumstance, the Premier has said that he is offended and would like you to withdraw. I ask you to withdraw the comment.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am happy to do that, honourable Speaker. I also seek your clarification. In this place, it has been understood that using the word 'lie' is unparliamentary and can only be substantiated within substantial motion -

The SPEAKER - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - to be debated within a substantial motion. Now I am hearing that any time we talk about 'misleading', 'dishonest' or 'falsehoods', it appears that that can be construed as a matter on which to take personal offence.

The SPEAKER - First, there is no mechanism for you to ask questions of me in this place. You can come and see me afterwards about it. I am happy to clarify that the Standing Orders are very clear: if a member feels offended by a comment, the member has always had the right to say that. The fact that the members have not historically been offended by the word 'dishonest' does not change that. You are correct that words such as 'lie' can only be made in a substantive motion.

I am happy to deal with this outside the Chamber if you would like to come and see me. However, we all agreed in the early days of my Speakership that we would be more respectful of people in this place. 'Dishonest' is not a phrase that has normally been ruled out and is not going to be ruled out by the Chair. I am not going to rule it out. However, if a member says they are offended, they can ask for it to be withdrawn, and that has ever been the case.

This is not the place to have a debate on this, Dr Woodruff. You may come and see me in my rooms or write to me afterwards, or you may move a substantive motion in this House about that, if you wish. You also have the option to move dissent in me asking you to withdraw the word 'dishonest'.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, honourable Speaker. A supplementary question.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question, but your question was quite defined.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier always said that it would be borrowing. He is, again, now presenting another dishonest statement to Tasmanians. On multiple occasions he has been on the record for saying $375 million and not a red cent more.

Can the Premier confirm that his announcement that private investment will not be sought means that Tasmania will be paying the cost of the stadium themselves, and there will be no other private partners involved?

The SPEAKER - I am happy to take that as a new question if you wish it to be a new question, but your original question, whilst containing a long preamble, was quite distinct: 'Will you abandon it or will you resign?' The Premier answered both of those questions. I am happy to take it as a new question now if you would like, or give you the call for a second question later.

Dr Woodruff - It was on the question. The supplementary question was on something that the Premier said during his question. I am asking him to confirm if that is true or not.

The SPEAKER - I am going to rule that it is not an appropriate supplementary question given the nature of the defined question that you asked. I will at this stage give the call to someone else. You have every opportunity to raise this with me separately or to move dissent.

Antisocial Behaviour - Funding for Early Intervention

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.18 a.m.]

The community has been shocked by recent antisocial behaviour in parts of our community. People have become fearful and rightfully want to be able to feel safe when they move about our cities and towns. The causes of this behaviour are varied and complex, and the solutions required must be layered and proportional. The violent actions of a small group does not happen in isolation, and this problem has not just appeared over the last few weeks.

Whilst the community is asking what is being done about this behaviour today, I and many others are asking why organisations that intervene early and work with young people, such as the highly successful Tasmanian Bike Collective run out of Risdon Vale, Rokeby and Huonville, have to beg for subsistence funding year in and year out simply to do their essential work. Every dollar invested in early work saves thousands of dollars in the future. Why does your government fail to provide the resources and funding certainty required to divert young people from engaging in antisocial behaviour when you know it is a good investment in community safety?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member very much for the question. I appreciate the sentiment in which it was asked. I have reflected on the last few weeks and have had very strong feedback from certain areas around Tasmania where people are fearful in their community. It is important to respond to that in terms of more police resources in hotspot areas of youth crime around Tasmania, and we have done so.

What is also very important, putting aside tough-on-crime, is tough-on-the-causes-of-crime, and allowing young people the opportunity to be better citizens. It is one thing to address the crime on the streets but what is important is that it is addressed through a number of ways - the justice system, but also those very key investments that you speak of, so that we ensure that young people come back into the community, on the streets if you like, as positive contributors and positive citizens to their community.

That is why it is important that we are investing in the facility at Pontville and that therapeutic model within the youth justice system. That is why this week, I believe, we have the Youth Alcohol and Drug Service (YADS) commencing as well. The programs that you speak of are very important. The bike collective is one of those areas that I believe in, as I do when it comes to the bipartisan support we had at the last election for investment in JCP Youth, some $3.7 million over three years to support 90 additional young people at risk.

I take your question as a very key message for our government that we need to invest in diversion programs to support our young people leading not a life of crime, but a life of contribution to their community. That is why it is not just the punitive aspect of youth crime to deal with, but also the therapeutic aspect in encouraging our young people to be better citizens. Supporting organisations, such as you have just mentioned, is so critical to this. I take a very clear message in your question about supporting some of these organisations.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Trust in Government

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.23 a.m.]

Whether it is jobs, the budget, minority government, the *Spirit*s, the health system, school results or housing, you have failed to deliver on almost all of your promises. You basically have the same policies as Peter Dutton did when it comes to public sector job cuts - lots; and funding for schools and hospitals - less. Now you have broken the biggest promise you made during the last state election: a cap of $375 million and not one red cent more on the stadium project.

Premier, if Tasmanians cannot trust you to deliver on the promises you have made more than one hundred times, what can they trust you on? How will Tasmanians ever believe another promise that you make?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. We are delivering on our commitments. I reject the premise of your question. We are growing our economy. State final demand grew 3 per cent in the December quarter compared to 12 months ago, topping all the other states in growth over this period. You want to talk Tasmania down at every single opportunity and -

Mr Willie - It is debt-funded public spending that is doing that. You are on a different planet.

The SPEAKER - Member for Clark.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am very pleased to see that the business conditions and the confidence in the business conditions of business in Tasmania is also leading the nation as well. We have created an economy that is sustainable, that has halved the unemployment rate over the last decade and that allows us to invest in those essential services that Tasmanians care about when it comes to health, education, public safety, community safety, housing. We will work with the federal government to deliver on that as well.

You come in here and talk about trust and what the Tasmanian people's view is -

The SPEAKER - Direct your answer through the Chair, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am not sure - do they trust a leader that does not even know where he was born, in actual fact? Was it Kingston Beach? Was it the west coast? It appears that there is a third place that Mr Winter was born -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left. Members on my right.

Mr ROCKLIFF - when he was running for the seat of Hobart. Of course, then he was 'born and raised in Hobart.'

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my right will calm down.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have to ask, the question clearly is - you talk about trust and you talk about being honest with people. Was the leader - was it Queenstown, was it Kingston, or was it Hobart?

The SPEAKER - Premier.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Where was the leader born?

The SPEAKER - Premier.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Where were you born?

The SPEAKER - Premier.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Premier, if you could for a moment allow me to hear the point of order. I have a point of order from Ms Haddad.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Stop, I cannot hear the member.

Ms HADDAD - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance.

Members interjecting.

Ms HADDAD - The Premier clearly thinks he has a zinger here, but what relevance does this have to his massive broken promise to Tasmanians?

The SPEAKER - I will call the Premier to the question.

Mr Winter - This is the most embarrassing performance you have ever put on.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my right, I cannot hear anything.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The Premier has the call and is the only voice we are going to listen to right now. He has six seconds.

Ms Brown - You are the Premier of the state for goodness' sake.

The SPEAKER - The member for Franklin is warned. The Premier will resume his seat. His time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WINTER - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Mr WINTER - I will ask the original question, honourable Speaker. The Premier made the commitment more than one hundred times that he would cap the spending on the stadium at $375 million. How can Tasmanians ever trust anything he says ever again?

A member - He is lucky he did not run for Launceston.

Mr Abetz - What would he choose if he ran for the Senate? He would be befuddled.

The SPEAKER - I will call the Premier to the original question.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my right are not being helpful right now or even amusing, thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I am not sure there is a fourth place that the member was born but 4 May was his birthday.

Members interjecting.

Mr Winter - Point of order, honourable Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I will hear the point. The Premier has only been speaking for 15 seconds.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Premier, I appreciate the fun that you are having today and clearly everyone is enjoying it on your side, but I will draw you to the question. Members on my left will stop when I am giving a ruling in their favour.

Mr Willie - You just got smashed in a federal election and you are carrying on like this?

The SPEAKER - The member for Clark is warned. The Premier has the call.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our policy stated it was clearly $375 million capital. We would need borrowings. We have always been open about that.

Mr Winter - No you have not. That is blatant misleading.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Tasmanian government funding commitment to the stadium development is denoted at $460 million. This amount includes the Tasmanian government's commitments -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Support for Project

Mrs PENTLAND question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.28 a.m.]

The *Mercury* newspaper has revealed that your federal Liberal colleagues in the final days of the election strongly considered dumping their support for Macquarie Point Stadium. How can you expect Tasmanians in the north of the state to support this project if even your own colleagues have serious doubt?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I will point out some facts about commitments to Macquarie Point and the stadium infrastructure. The federal Labor Party supports it with $240 million. A few weeks ago, the Labor Party in Tasmania said they had unconditional support for the stadium.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, shame on them.

Mr Rockliff -Take it up with them.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, that will do. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Our position is clear about the stadium and that particular investment. It is a tough sell, Mrs Pentland, particularly in your electorate. It always has been. You know what? I know a number of members visited South Australia over the weekend and the Adelaide Oval was a tough sell. I understand that most of them -

Dr Woodruff - Who paid for that?

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, if you have a substantive contribution to make, you may seek the call. You will cease interjecting and are warned.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There have been tough sells all around the country. What is interesting is the Queensland government - enabling legislation for the stadium infrastructure there. I believe enabling legislation was required for the Adelaide Oval, enabling legislation for infrastructure in New South Wales and enabling infrastructure for Western Australia.

What we are progressing is not unusual, but it is tough. It is difficult, but we believe in something. I went for a motorbike ride the other day. I called into Latrobe for a pie at the Latrobe Bakery - beautiful, it was - and a more senior citizen came up to me and she said, 'Mr Rockliff, you keep going with that stadium. My young granddaughter wants to play for the Devils and she is so excited about it.'

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Member for Clark.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I get that a lot around Tasmania. I do it for them. I do it for the young kids in Geeveston, for example, who will never be able to afford to watch an AFL match interstate - the people in areas of disadvantage around this community. I understand it when they believe that one day they can play for the Tasmanian Devils. It gives them hope and aspiration and that is what we need to instil in our young people. You talk about insuring our young -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Financing Model

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.32 a.m.]

You have changed your position on the stadium again. It is hard to keep up with, let alone believe what you say anymore. It is clear to me that your latest position - at least in the last 24 hours anyway - is that you have abandoned private investment as a financing option and are going to try and build it yourself. The reality is that you are obliged to see through the

Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) process, at least until - or should I say 'if', and that is a big 'if' - your enabling legislation is approved by parliament.

Given this seismic shift in your financing model, will you require the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) to submit a revised economic case to the TPC, and will the community ever see this latest return on investment figure?

ANSWER

The answer is no, because it is part of the original business case. I reject the premise of your question, because we have been entirely consistent when it comes to the capital we will invest, the borrowings we will need and the federal government contribution. The private sector's role, as I said before, in this enabling infrastructure will be to invest in the land around the stadium and the increased opportunity in the visitor economy. It is entirely consistent. You will play your politics to suit your agenda, as will the Greens and, no doubt, others, but like in other states, when we make a decision, we have to get it done.

You and I had a conversation about the challenges of youth crime in your community and I thank you for that conversation. There are challenges, of course, elsewhere around Tasmania, which I have delved into in terms of the question from the member for Franklin.

In my answer to the member for Bass, Mrs Pentland, I was talking about opportunity for our young people. This is not about me, and actually, it is not about you. It is about the aspirations of our young people and giving them hope and opportunity. I can foresee down the track that there will be people and young people who would otherwise be diverted from being less productive members of our community to being productive members of our community: maybe not playing for the Tasmanian Devils, but certainly being part of it.

I met someone yesterday who is now employed by the Tasmanian Football Club - an ex-Tasmanian, born in Smithton, who went to Queensland and was going to set up his life up there until he saw the launch of the team. He is now down here investing in Tasmania. He brought his family down with him and he pointed to seven other people around that table who got on planes and are now working in Tasmania as a result of the Tasmanian Devils. It is not just about the Devils though, it is about the economy around them. It is about the $8 billion and probably more now, because I was quoting these figures a couple of years ago. The stadia economy is $8 billion in the nation. We can be part of that.

I am not flattening suburbs to build a stadium. We are redeveloping land that has been ripe for development for decades, and no-one has got off their backsides to do anything about it.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

The SPEAKER - I am hearing a supplementary question. Your question was quite specific.

Ms JOHNSTON - Yes, it was. The Premier certainly answered the first question but my second question was: will the community ever see the latest return on investment figure? The Premier answered the first question about MPDC. The second part is about the community.

The SPEAKER - I draw the Premier to the second part of the question. Would you like to repeat the second part?

Ms JOHNSTON - Will the community ever see the latest return on investment figure?

Mr ROCKLIFF - My apologies. Yes, they will.

Mr Abetz interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Minister Abetz is warned.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Sale of Land to Fund Project

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.37 a.m.]

Labor supports a stadium and we support it being approved, but we do not believe Tasmanians should be misled about how you are delivering it, especially given your track record with major projects like the *Spirit*s. You have told the ABC you expect to borrow up to $200 million through the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, part of the Tasmanian government, and seek to repay some of that by selling off land and other assets at Macquarie Point. What exactly do you plan to sell around the stadium, Premier? Is it everything, including the Antarctic precinct? Has it been valued and if so, what are the valuations for each component that will be put up for sale?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I will read the AFL Club Funding and Development Agreement 2023, page 1:

> Explanatory notes:
>
> Clause 21.2(a): Funding Commitments
>
> The Tasmanian Government funding commitment to the Stadium Development is denoted as $460 million. This amount includes the Tasmanian Government commitment of $375 million and a further $85 million to be procured through borrowings against land sale or lease for commercial uses.

Mr Willie - It has gone up now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is likely, obviously, that the $85 million is going to be clearly more than $85 million. Look, we have consistently been open and transparent here.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have been taking questions on this for three years. Parliament, Public Accounts Committee -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left. Order.

Mr Willie - You never tell the truth.

The SPEAKER - Member for Clark, Mr Willie, you have asked your question. The Premier is answering it. I accept you do not like the answer, but the Premier is answering the question. I will hold him to do that for the next one minute and 53 seconds.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Macquarie Point was strategically chosen for a reason as the preferred location due to its location adjacent to the central business district and surrounding areas. Those who have been to Adelaide Oval would appreciate the fact that - firstly, there was an enormous opposition to it: in actual fact there was bigger opposition in Adelaide than in Tasmania - but also the proximity to the CBD and the opportunity for investment.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order, Standing Order 45, relevance. My question was specifically about what is being sold around the stadium, whether there has been an evaluation, and what the government expects to receive in return.

The SPEAKER - Premier, that was the question. I will draw you to answering that question now, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - In the Stadium Business Case 2023, page 9:

> The Tasmanian Government has announced a commitment of $375 million (in addition to existing funding for works at Macquarie Point and the value of the land). The AFL will contribute $15 million towards construction costs.
>
> A further $85 million is proposed to be funded through borrowings against land sale or lease for commercial uses.

- unlocking the precinct for development opportunity. You need enabling infrastructure with a 1500 seat convention centre to attract private investment for a hotel, for example. That is the investment model. In the absence of that, there is no guarantee you will fill those bed nights.

The economics around the stadium, the enabling infrastructure and what it can do for our community are pretty simple.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering your question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - A not unexpected supplementary.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. My question is: has there been evaluation about the Macquarie Point Stadium? What exactly does the Premier intend to sell? Does it include the Antarctic precinct? What do you expect to receive for that?

The SPEAKER - That was the original question, Premier. I will draw you to it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I have been very open and transparent -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left. Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As will be evidenced in the budget, exactly the investments that we are making into the high-performance centre in Kingborough.

Ms Howlett - Yes, absolutely. The kids are going to love it.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Fantastic.

The SPEAKER - Premier. Having conversations with your side is also not appropriate right now.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Of course, the stadia as well, open and transparent.

Mr Winter - Answer the question then.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left. When you interject, he does not answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Lease and land sale, of course, will be part of the economic opportunity and unlocking those land sales, to support private investment and investment -

Mr Willie - Are you including the Antarctic precinct?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, Mr Willie -

Mr Willie - Answer it.

The SPEAKER - The two of you will stop having a conversation or you can both go outside and have it. The Premier will answer the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will work through these matters with Macquarie Point Development Corporation in a very open and transparent way.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Premier Rockliff's Comments

Dr WOODRUFF question to Premier, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.42 a.m.]

The record shows now that you will say or do whatever it takes, true or not, to get the stadium approved. You have been dishonest to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community about plans for Macquarie Point, dishonest about the stadium -

Mr Abetz - Point of order.

Members interjecting.

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, you have ruled that using the word 'dishonest' is not unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, I do have to hear the point of order. I will take the point of order and the clock will stop for the question.

Mr ABETZ - The continual use of the word 'dishonest' is clearly a reflection on a member of this place. The Premier has indicated that, previously, this is a reflection on him and if we are going to have a good workplace, a good culture in our workplace, that sort of language should not be used. I would invite the member for Franklin to withdraw.

The SPEAKER - I will invite the member to remind himself that only the individual member who is reflected on can say they have been offended. I was listening very carefully to Dr Woodruff, who did not say he was dishonest, but I will hear the question from the beginning again.

I ask all members if we could just be a little bit respectful of each other in this house. I appreciate that this is a big week for everyone. There are some significant things that have gone on in the last few days, but I want members to be respectful in their interactions.

I will ask you to start the question again and if the individual member is offended, they may take the point.

Dr WOODRUFF - Before I do, can I seek your -

The SPEAKER - No. You cannot continue to pretend that there is a point of clarification question. You may argue against the point of order if you wish, but I am giving you the call again and I have not accepted -

Dr WOODRUFF - I am seeking to argue against -

The SPEAKER - I have not accepted the point of order and I have given you the call and we will start your time again.

Dr WOODRUFF - Alright. Premier, the record shows now that you will say or do whatever it takes, true or not, to get the stadium approved. You have been dishonest to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community about plans for Macquarie Point. You have been dishonest

about the stadium not being a condition for the team. You have been dishonest about the cost of the stadium. You have been dishonest about the Tasmanian Planning Commission and its experts. You have been dishonest about the amount of taxpayer funding that will be used.

You clearly understood all along that this is a dog of a project that is overwhelmingly opposed by the people of Tasmania. Is that not exactly why you have resorted to such desperate dishonesty? In your reckless pursuit of this stadium, you have gone from being respected as a person of integrity to having sold out Tasmania to the AFL. Is this what you call honourable leadership?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question, and it is ironic, laced with irony, because the Greens have made an art form out of changing the goal posts. That is what you do every single time. You come into this place and over time you move those goal posts a little bit further and further to your grand vision. Your grand vision is where no one has work, no one has a job, and no one has hope - that is your ultimate grand vision.

My vision is for a strong economy that allows for aspiration, that ensures that every Tasmanian, through that strong economy and that investment and along the way, irrespective of your circumstance or where you are born across this wonderful state of Tasmania, that you feel empowered, valued, supported and respected to be the best you can possibly be.

This is why I am pursuing this opportunity with vigour. Like the *Mercury* editorial said today, it is the right time for grand vision. Tasmania is on the cusp of something big. History shows that major infrastructure, when done right, pays dividends. It is time to put politics aside and get on with the job, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr Bayley - It also backed you guys in the federal election, and how good was that?

The SPEAKER - Deputy Leader of the Greens.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You will have a vote in this place like you always would have done when it comes to the Project of State Significance process - which you opposed. You will have your vote in this place when it comes to the enabling legislation as well. I respect the fact that we have different views and your view has been -

Dr Woodruff - Clear all along.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Clear, and my view has -

Dr Woodruff - Changed all the time.

The SPEAKER - The Leader of the Greens, you are already under a warning.

Mr ROCKLIFF - been very clear: very clear, in wanting the stadium and the team and the economy that is generated around it, and attracting people to Tasmania and giving our young Tasmanians hope and aspiration. That is what drives me. Yes, I will wear some skin along the way, but that is what leadership is all about. You lose skin in the tough times, but the

tough times are for people to stick to their guns as well and believe in something. That is exactly what I will do.

Dr WOODRUFF - Honourable Speaker, I asked a supplementary question.

The SPEAKER - Yes, this is a supplementary, yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - I asked the Premier whether his repeated dishonesties to Tasmanians was what he called honourable leadership?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my right, including Mr Ellis.

Dr WOODRUFF - He did not address that question.

The SPEAKER - Could I ask you to state that again? I could not hear you over Mr Ellis.

Dr WOODRUFF - I asked the Premier about his repeated dishonesties to Tasmanians on multiple occasions. The question was whether that is what he calls honourable leadership? He did not answer that question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe I did.

The SPEAKER - I think the Premier did address the issue of leadership in his answer, but you have your statement now on the record.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Criticism of Dr Gruen and Tasmanian Planning Commission

Mrs BESWICK question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.48 a.m.]

Despite trying to discredit Dr Nicholas Gruen and the Tasmanian Planning Commission panel members under parliamentary privilege, you have now agreed with them when it comes to funding a stadium via a public-private partnership. Do you now concede that your criticism of Dr Gruen and the panel members, including the suggestion their work was tainted, was unfair, and are you willing to offer them an apology?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The matters of Dr Gruen and TPC have been well canvassed. My views do not align with the premise of your question, with respect. What I am interested in is progress and progressing this project, as difficult as it is. I will be criticised along the way. Others will also be criticised along the way. Some of the criticism has been put forward to Dr Gruen, in particular, about the report. I do not agree with the premise of your question. I see no need for an apology and I will stick to my guns.

State Service - Non-Essential Jobs

Mr JENNER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.50 a.m.]

You announced a hiring freeze on non-essential jobs months ago. Since then, you have been unable to provide a description on what those non-essential jobs are. Of course, one wonders if they are non-essential, why they were employed in the first place? Can you finally provide us with an answer on what jobs your government considers non-essential?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Tasmania needs the right-sized public service, one that delivers for Tasmania and Tasmanians as efficiently as possible, that meets the needs of the community and is sustainable. I have repeatedly said, in this place and elsewhere, the investments we made, including investments in people, were necessary through the pandemic, particularly in our health sector, indeed, those services including COVID@homeplus - what that has developed into now remains. Those health and education services, and the front-facing services are very important. That has been never more evident than the last few weeks when we have had that unfortunate spike in crime hotspots in certain areas around Tasmania, which has required more police resources.

Your question is a good one. Which roles are considered essential will be dependent on the operation, the environment and context of each individual agency. That will be determined by the heads of agency.

It is challenging to provide a one-size-fits-all definition in what is such a diverse workforce. A broad definition of an essential worker is an employee in a front-facing role that the head of agency deems essential to deliver critical services to Tasmanians.

A broad definition of a non-essential position is a position that could stop, or a role or function that could be reduced, redesigned or transitioned to a digital service, for example. The public service environment, the way people communicate and the way people access services is changing. Digitisation has been a key driver of that.

UTAS Stadium - Reduced Spectator Capacity

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.53 a.m.]

Tasmanians do not trust you to deliver major projects competently after the ferry fiasco. Can you confirm that spectator capacity at UTAS Stadium will be reduced to 17,500 following your $130 million redevelopment? How can you manage to spend so much money for less capacity?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker I thank the member for the question. It is very negative.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left, you had the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The Labor Party is in no position today to talk about births, given the Opposition leader does not even know where he was born, so I would steer clear of berths, if I was you.

Mr WILLIE - Point of order.

The SPEAKER - Premier, I am hearing a point of order. Members on my right will be silent to allow me to hear it.

Mr Winter - Look at your backbench, they are embarrassed by you. They are not even laughing.

Members interjecting.

Mr WILLIE - That is irrelevant to the question, honourable Speaker, so point of Order on relevance.

Mr Winter - Turn around and have a look at them.

The SPEAKER - I will call the Premier on relevance to the question.

Mr Winter - They are embarrassed by you. Have a look up the back.

The SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, you are given great latitude with interjections. It ceases now. Premier, to the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank Mr Garland for his question. Sorry, is it Mr Willie, because the first time I saw this was Mr Garland? They have run out of questions and so they are trawling other members' Facebook.

Members interjecting.

Mr Winter - Have you lost it or what?

Mr Willie - Are you insulting Mr Garland? Are you are saying his legitimate question is not valid?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The Leader of the Opposition is warned. Premier, entertaining as it was - the Leader of the Opposition is warned. The member for Clark is warned again, the member for Clark, Ms Haddad, will cease her interjections, the Premier will be relevant to the question and we will get through the rest of this day. Could you also please refer to the member for Braddon by his appropriate title? Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I believe Mr Garland raised this issue. I am aware of some commentary regarding seating capacity at UTAS Stadium. I sought advice from Stadiums Tasmania in relation to this matter. The minister, Mr Duigan, has sought the advice.

We are advised that, as part of the redevelopment project, the project team identified the venue's capacity classification realignment with the Green Guide. The Green Guide is the internationally recognised guide for the safe management of sports stadia. Stadiums Tasmania has advised the previously used number of 19,500 capacity was closer to an occupancy permit number established several years ago. This number is based on toilet and exit provisions, and not the availability of safe viewing positions at the stadium.

Mr Willie - $130 million for less.

The SPEAKER - Mr Willie, would you like to stay in the Chamber? because this is absolutely your last chance?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am advised that the 2012 occupancy permit figures for standing areas was 5419. The Green Guide safe standing principles include a number of criteria and provisions across safe access and circulation, appropriate viewing standards, wheelchair provision, crush barrier arrangements, standing area, gradient and level standing -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired. I will remind you, even by interjection, to refer to members appropriately. Ms Brown, member for Franklin, you are warned again. You saw me watching you and continued to interject. Dr Woodruff has the call.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Tasmanian Planning Commission Report

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.57 a.m.]

You have consistently rubbished the Tasmanian Planning Commission's report on the stadium. You have called it 'tainted', said that they had a predetermined view and that it should be given no weight, but at a briefing yesterday, government officials explained to us that they have used the issues from the TPC's report - over 130 of them - as the basis for the work that they are preparing on a stadium bill, its permit and conditions.

While you slam the TPC's report in public, behind the scenes you are relying on it - another falsehood. The big difference is what happens next. Rather than independent planning experts developing conditions for the stadium, your staff will make up their own. How convenient. Premier, will you admit your problem with the planning commission is not that they have been bad at their job, but that they have been good at it?

Is it not true that the real reason for your special legislation is simply that you want to cook up conditions that suit you best, and you want to deny MPs and the public the opportunity of receiving an independent recommendation about the project?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. I believe that I said last time we were in this place that we will work through the issues, and I have certainly said it publicly. People are still submitting their points of view on the stadium until 8 May. That will continue, and those views, including the issues presented by the TPC, will be informing the legislation. I have been entirely consistent on that matter.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - Hold on - a supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Dr WOODRUFF - Will you admit, Premier, that the special legislation relies on keeping MPs, MLCs and all Tasmanians in the dark by not allowing the planning commission's report to be properly completed?

The SPEAKER - That was the original question. I think the Premier went to address it, but I am happy to hear it again.

Mr ROCKLIFF - No, I do not accept that.

Kingston High-Performance Centre - Cost

Ms DOW question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.59 a.m.]

With the *Spirit*s project now six years overdue and $500 million over budget, Tasmanians do not trust you to deliver major projects. Premier, what is the latest estimated cost of the high-performance centre in Kingston? Have you received any advice that the $60 million of state funding will be insufficient and that it will, in fact, cost approximately twice that amount? Noting the high-performance centre was supposed to be completed by the end of this year - 2025 - can you outline when you expect construction to be completed?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. As I said today, when it comes to the high-performance centre and the stadium, that will be in the budget in all transparency. We know the AFL and AFLW team training and administration centre is a key requirement to support, grow and underpin the Tasmanian AFL Club and the Tasmania Devils.

It is also a key requirement to support the AFL licence, and that has been very clear as well. We have committed $60 million for the Tasmania Devils training and administration centre, with the AFL committing a further $10 million. This facility will be the home of the Tasmanian AFL team. It underpins future player retention and provides state-of-the-art facilities for Tasmania's AFL, AFLW, VFL, VFLW players along with youth and academy programs.

There was some discussion in the community about location and the Kingston location is the best cost and community outcome; it has the support of the club and the AFL. The Kingston Twin Ovals also offers the best opportunity to value-manage the cost of the project. I believe you mentioned timelines. The high-performance centre is on track to be ready for the Tasmania Devils entry into the competition.

Mr Willie - You are in breach of the agreement.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are working towards achieving a practical completion of the facility by 31 October 2027 as required under the AFL agreement. The functional design brief in their master plan for the Kingston site was endorsed by the project steering committee on 4 February 2025. I am advised - now, I have mentioned the commitment of funding. There are several steps that need to be finalised before our final cost is known. That is finalising a functional design brief to meet the requirements set out in schedule 9 of the AFL agreement, finalising a concept design and, of course, market engagement.

Once all these steps are complete, the Tasmanian government will be in a position to consider a final budget for the project and the community will be kept informed once this work is completed.

Supplementary Question

Ms DOW - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary.

Ms DOW - Premier, will you guarantee the cost to Tasmanians of the high-performance centre at Kingston will be $60 million?

Mr Ellis - Why are you asking this question?

The SPEAKER - I will stop the member. Minister Ellis, you are warned. We are getting very close to half of you not being in here. Could you commence the question again?

Ms DOW - Premier, will you guarantee the cost to Tasmanians of the high-performance centre at Kingston will be $60 million and not a red cent more?

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the member for the question. As I said, there are a number of areas that we are working through, and we will be open and transparent with the final investment for the high-performance centre.

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Closure

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.04 a.m.]

You have moved heaven and earth to fulfil your commitment to a stadium at Macquarie Point. Yesterday, in a briefing with departmental staff, Greens MPs heard about all the activity being undertaken by public servants to make this happen. We heard agencies are being pulled

off their regular duties for day-long workshops to develop plans. Multiple and specially dedicated staff are being required to prioritise a response to the 130 problems the TPC has identified with the stadium.

At your direction, the public service is pulling out all stops to make the stadium happen as you promised but your government also promised to close Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) by late last year. Despite repeated statements of your intention, Ashley is still open and now will not close until 2028.

Premier, what about that promise? Why are teams of staff not being pulled off regular duties and expected to overcome hurdles in less than two months to achieve it? Does it not just show how rotten your priorities are -

The SPEAKER - The time for asking the question has expired -

Dr Woodruff - Why have you not pulled out all the stops to close AYDC like you have done to ram through your stadium?

The SPEAKER - The time for asking the question has expired. It ended with the question about why staff were not focused on this project.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for highlighting the very good work of our public service. The public service engaged with the Bridgewater bridge, the new Brighton school, the new school at Legana, the upgrade of the Mersey Community Hospital and the Mental Health Precinct under minister Jaensch's portfolio. I commend minister Jaensch on securing some $150 million plus for youth detention facilities. I thank minister Jaensch for the work done and for working with our hardworking public service on this very important matter.

We are committed to closing Ashley. It will be closed. We are committed to building a new facility at Pontville - a facility that is about ensuring that the young people who enter it are supported when they leave it to be more productive members of our community. That is why it is key in the design infrastructure and the work that is being done. There is a huge amount of work that is being done; it is the focus of the public service as there are lots of focuses of the public service.

For a day in government, there are many issues that our public service put their attention to, and I commend them for that and that hard work, including the Pontville facility. Great work, in actual fact. The best that you could do to ensure the timeliness of the project is to support minister Jaensch's legislation.

Salmon Industry - Publication Date of Mortality Data

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for the ENVIRONMENT, Ms OGILVIE

[11.07 a.m.]

The number of salmon deaths is declining, much like your party's vote. In data released yesterday by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in March, there were only

3300 tonnes of salmon to dispose of, or approximately 850,000 dead fish. The mortality data for February was released by the EPA on 25 March 2025. One would expect the mortality data for March to be released one month later, which would have been Monday 28 April. Curiously, the March data was only published yesterday, after the federal election, instead of the week before.

Noting your government held off releasing information about how it would finance the stadium until after the federal election, I ask you, minister: did you or your department request the EPA to delay publication of the March salmon mortality data until after the federal election?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, the answer is no, of course I did not. I have spoken very clearly and very openly in this Chamber on a number of occasions during what has been a fairly traumatic event, which has now come to conclusion, in relation to the salmon mortality event. Let me be clear: the EPA is an independent organisation. It takes its role very seriously. We take that independence very seriously. I repeat what I have said previously in this Chamber: as Minister for the Environment I would never seek to direct the EPA in any regard.

Project of State Significance Process

Ms DOW question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.09 a.m.]

You do not have the power to unilaterally withdraw from the Project of State Significance (POSS) process. You need the approval of parliament. I understand from the briefing Labor received last week that your enabling legislation will contain such an approval. I also understand that if the Legislative Council rejects your legislation, the Planning Commission's assessment will simply continue as per normal.

Have you made a big mistake by trashing the process and the Planning Commission's integrity? After everything that you have said, will your position as Premier be untenable if the Legislative Council rejects your legislation and votes to keep the POSS going?

The SPEAKER - I remind members to be very careful reflecting on the other House in any way in their contributions, please.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. We will be working with all members of parliament. Some of the questions today have been about the government offering information and briefings to the Labor Party, to the Greens and others in a transparent way. You are coming here and asking me questions that you have received from an open and transparent briefing that we have provided you.

Members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are ensuring we engage all members of parliament on the way forward. We will do so with members in the other place as well. That has already commenced with briefings with individual members.

The SPEAKER - I will remind members that being a bit quiet and interjecting is still not okay. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for the Environment are both serial offenders and are continually having conversations and full sentences. I am not going to warn you, but I am going to tell you that I can hear you when you are both talking across the Chamber all the time. I will start ruling it out of order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you Speaker, I respect your ruling there.

It is very clear, Ms Dow, the implications of the legislation, should it not pass the parliament. You can smile away as smugly as you like, but if it does not pass the parliament, you are destroying young people's aspirations.

Mr Bayley - No, the POSS process continues.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, no, because everyone gets a vote in this place, and the other place as well. It is about all of us -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Members on my left, order. Members on my right as well.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is legislation being drafted, tabled in other states of Australia and has been on similar projects. The parliaments in those places can see the opportunity. This is a huge opportunity for Tasmanians and Tasmania. Your leader says that he craves progress. If the leader craves progress then get on board, put politics aside, and support the legislation.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Water Catchment Petition - Treasurer's Comments

Ms BADGER question to TREASURER, Mr BARNETT

[11.13 a.m.]

My question is from Lyons constituent, Fiona Beer and Safe Water Hobart, for whom I sponsored a 2024 petition calling on the government to establish a water catchment authority for the River Derwent.

Treasurer, we welcome your sensible response to our petition. You articulated community concerns and the urgent need for a water catchment authority very well. Kudos. Your response said:

> The government does consider it necessary to create a standalone catchment authority.

Before what should have been a celebratory interview, a journalist informed our group that your office told the media that the petition response was incorrect and that it was intended to say:

> The government does not consider it necessary.

Surely, you would not table a petition response missing such a critical and operative word. No one from your office or the government has contacted our group or Ms Badger MP with a correction. Which is true, Treasurer - the formal petition response you tabled in parliament, or what we understand you have told journalists?

Youth Crime

Mr BEHRAKIS question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

In recent times I have had numerous business owners and residents in Clark raise the issue of increasing violence and youth crime. I acknowledge your comments that 'Everything is on the table and under consideration to address the issue'. Premier, can you outline what initiatives the government is currently considering to address the issue and ensure appropriate consequences to dissuade violent offences?

Renewable Energy Dividend Policy

Ms FINLAY question to TREASURER, Mr BARNETT

A constituent has asked me about your Renewable Energy Dividend policy. Minister, can you please advise when the dividend will be paid this financial year and how much the dividend will be?

Mobile Reception in Regional Tasmania

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for INNOVATION, SCIENCE and the DIGITAL ECONOMY, Ms OGILVIE

Mobile reception in many regional areas of Tasmania remains a significant concern. While I understand the Tasmanian Government continues to work with the Australian Government under the Mobile Black Spot Program to improve coverage, it is clear that further action is urgently needed.

For example, over the Easter period, reception around Little Swanport on the east coast ranged from poor to non-existent. This is a serious issue in a region that relies heavily on tourism and has growing residential needs. Even the State Growth website which informs Tasmanians about new and expanded telecommunication services was ironically inaccessible during that time.

On behalf of my constituent, can you please update us on the current status of the Mobile Black Spot Program in Tasmania and what further steps are being taken to improve mobile coverage across the state?

Hermal Mill

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for BUSINESS, INDUSTRY and RESOURCES, Mr ABETZ

A constituent of mine, John, has raised concerns about the new $190 million Hermal mill and the hundreds of jobs that the Hodgman Liberal government promised at Hampshire more than seven years ago. John wants to know:

(1) How much money has been provided by the state government to the Hermal Group since 2017?

(2) Has the Hermal Group abandoned its plans for this project?

(3) When were you planning on telling north-west Tasmanians that the project that your government promised is not going ahead?

Time expired.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

No. 8 of 2024 - Climate Change and Demand on Water Catchment Use

Mr Barnett tabled the response to a petition tabled by Ms Badger on 19 November 2024.

See Appendix 1 on page 137.

TABLED PAPER

Report of the Standing Orders Committee on Operation of Sessional Orders

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the report of the Standing Orders Committee on the Operation of Sessional Orders. I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Motion agreed to.

See Appendix 2 on page 140.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

No. 14 and 16 of 2024 - Stop Wind Farms, Marinus Link and Compare Better Solutions for All Tasmanians

Mr Abetz tabled the response to a petition tabled by Mr Garland on 27 November 2024.

See Appendix 3 on page 154.

No. 11 of 2025 - Swanwick to Coles Bay Bike Track

Mr Abetz tabled the response to a petition tabled by Ms Badger on 13 March 2025.

See Appendix 4 on page 160.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 43 of 2025 - Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area -Fire Management Plan

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

See Appendix 5 on page 163.

No. 44 of 2025 - Maria Island National Park

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUIGAN

See Appendix 6 on page 166.

No. 45 of 2025 - The Next Iconic Walk - Measures to Prevent the Spread of *Phytophthera*

Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for PARKS, Mr DUIGAN

See Appendix 7 on page 167.

No. 50 of 2025 - Tobacco Action Plan

Ms BURNET question to MINISTER for MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mr JAENSCH

See Appendix 8 on page 169.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

Assent to Bills

The SPEAKER - I am in receipt of two messages from Her Excellency, the Governor, which I shall read:

> A bill for an act for the appropriation of $467,512,000 out of the public account for the services of the government financial year ending 30 June 2025 having been presented to the governor for the royal assent, she has, in the name of His Majesty the King, assented to the said bill.
>
> A bill for an act to amend the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023*; a bill for an act to amend the *Public Health Act 1997*; a bill for an act to amend the *Anatomical Examinations Act 2006*, the *Food Act 2003* and the *Poisons Act 1971*, to repeal the *Mental Health (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2013* and the *Optometry Offences Act 2010*, and to revoke the *Tasmanian Health Organisations Tasmanian Health Service Order 2015*; and a bill for an act to amend the *Family Violence Act 2004*, having been presented to the governor for the royal assent, she has, in the name of His Majesty the King, assented to the said bills.

YOUTH JUSTICE FACILITY DEVELOPMENT BILL 2025 (No. 19)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Jaensch and read the first time.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Honourable Anthony Maxwell Rundle - Former Premier of Tasmania

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That this House expresses its deep sadness of the death on 4 April 2025 of the Honourable Anthony Maxwell Rundle, former Premier from 1996 to 1998, Minister of the Crown from 1992 to 1996, a former Speaker of the House of Assembly from 1988 to 1989, and a Member for the Division of Braddon from 1986 to 2002, and places on record its appreciation for his service to the state and, further, that this House respectfully tenders to his family its sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

It is a very great privilege for me to stand here today to honour my friend and mentor, the 40th Premier of Tasmania, the Honourable Tony Rundle. Born in Scottsdale and educated in Launceston, Tony started his working life as a cadet journalist for *The Advocate*, including working in Queenstown and playing footy on its famous gravel oval before taking off to the big smoke in London.

He spent a decade in the United Kingdom working in journalism, marketing and public relations before returning to the north-west with his family. Tony moved into real estate and quickly established himself as a leader on the coast as chairperson of the Port of Devonport Authority and the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania. It was this business, leadership and, indeed, world experience that Tony would eventually bring to his role in parliament and the premiership.

In 1982, Tony decided to enter politics, but was not successful at his first tilt. He was subsequently elected as Member for Braddon in 1986 and went on to win five consecutive elections before retiring before the 2002 state election, just prior to my own entry into parliament in that year. I paid tribute to Tony in my first speech.

Tony held his seat for 16 years because he never forgot the fundamentals. First and foremost, he was a Member for Braddon, working in the best interests of his community. He also served as Speaker of this House in 1988 and 1989 and served in numerous ministerial roles including forestry, mining and energy.

Tony became Premier following the 1996 election, an election which saw the Ray Groom government lose its majority. Ray resigned from the position of Premier in keeping with his pre-election pledge to not govern in minority.

Tony said it came as a shot out of the blue when Ray said he was standing down and asked him to put his hand up, but he accepted, albeit with some trepidation. While Tony may have been Premier for a relatively short period of 30 months, it was a tumultuous time to govern, and Tony never turned away from the challenge of leadership.

Early on in that year, Tony led Tasmanians through our darkest hour: the 1996 Port Arthur tragedy. I acknowledge people may well be listening to this with lived experience and heartache, and this would be very triggering for those listening to this contribution, reflecting on Tony's contribution to this absolute tragedy.

With the eyes of the world on Tasmania, Tony was a tower of strength and compassion, not only for our people who were in shock and grief, but together with the Prime Minister, John Howard, he drove sweeping reforms to gun laws that all Australians benefit from today. I want to touch on that just a little more, because it was only a little over a month into his premiership that Tony got the call from then-Attorney-General Ray Groom, who had received a very frantic call from a Port Arthur site staff member.

Within minutes Tony was on his way to Hobart and the police operations room, subsequently visiting those injured in hospital and later ensuring that he went to the mainland with the Tasman mayor at the time, Neil Noye, urging visitors to show their support for Tasmania by coming back to our wonderful state, as tourism had been deeply impacted in the wake of the tragedy.

In talking about the tragedy 10 years on, Tony said it had shown him the very best and worst of human nature - the worst because of what happened, but the best being, and I will quote him on this:

> … the way my fellow politicians never flinched or buckled despite a great deal of pressure as we moved down a difficult route of gun law reform.

Tony went on to describe the turmoil and trauma of supporting a psychologically shattered state and its people, where no-one had ever dreamed such a horror could possibly occur. He said the tragedy knocked the stuffing out of the state. It was such a low point for Tasmania, but I believe Tony Rundle handled the tragedy and its aftermath with great courage, strength, conviction and compassion, and we sincerely thank him for that.

In the midst of that, Tony was also leading a government in minority. In his case, it was the Greens who kept the Liberals in office during that time, although the agreement was never formalised like Labor did in 1989 and again in 2010.

I want to talk a little about that time. Tony once said in relation to being in minority that he was 'determined history would not judge us as a hopelessly compromised do-nothing government'. So even with the pressures of government and the tragic start to his premiership, dealing with national gun laws and a state lost in grief, Tony became one of the most courageous and reformist leaders, and he set an ambitious agenda for our state.

He understood the important role of the private sector and the need to bring Tasmania into the 21st century. He was a Premier of conviction. As one journalist described it, Tony Rundle tried to reform the living daylights out of Tasmania.

In 1997, Tony released the government's landmark direction statement, crafted by the government and its agencies, challenging agencies to think outside the square about measures that would take Tasmania forward. On reflection and after his premiership, Tony himself described the statement as setting the bar too high, including by significant local government reform and a 99-year lease of the Hydro.

Stepping back, while in the Premier's chair, Tony signed Australia's first Regional Forest Agreement with the Australian Government, an amazing feat given the Greens were keeping the government in office, as it facilitated the logging of native forests on public land. In fact, Tony did think that would be the end of the minority arrangement, but it did not happen.

By mid-1998, Tony had judged that his reform agenda was being thwarted by the hung parliament and nominated an election day. He said, and I quote:

> The political divide between the Rundle government and Christine Milne's Greens was always going to be a bridge too far, particularly as we refused any formal alliance and we were adamant we would not compromise policies or principles to stay in power.

and as they say, the rest is history. In 2014 and looking back, Tony said:

> Every administration is entitled to guard its legacy. I am convinced that for a minority government in power for a mere 30 months, our record will stand scrutiny.

It does and still does. What the Rundle government delivered in such a short time is quite remarkable for any leader of any political colour, many of those initiatives standing the test of time.

Tony believed that, too. He said in 2014 that his government was one of the most productive in Tasmania's history and told his party room in 1996, after refusing any agreement with the Greens, to buckle up for a rollercoaster ride.

First there was Basslink, devised by Tony Rundle, who set up the steering committee and called for private equity investment for the project. This was then opposed by opposition parties.

Tony created major projects and was remarkably successful in signing up Qantas, Vodafone, Westpac, Ansett and Centrelink, creating around 400 jobs in call centres and taking over, I believe, what was Steve Kons' family supermarket in Burnie to create the call centre there as well.

He signed up a US giant, Duke Energy, to conduct a feasibility study into bringing gas undersea to Tasmania, and this project, as well as Basslink, was delivered by the following Labor government, following the minority Liberal government's defeat.

He worked to reopen the Port Latta facility with nearly 400 jobs. He remodelled TAFE Tasmania. He strongly supported the extension of shop trading hours. He established the Superannuation Provision Account to help meet the state's public sector superannuation liabilities, which was, of course, a very important reform in that area at that particular time.

He oversaw the restructure of the valuable lobster industry for the state, which was a very difficult time, and I recall that.

In a partnership with the Canadian province of New Brunswick, which was once a rust-bucket province, as he described it, he established partnerships to value-add our IT industry. Part of that work was also establishing Service Tasmania, the first one-stop-shop service of its kind in Australia.

While describing himself as reasonably right wing, he also achieved some important social reforms including decriminalising same-sex partnerships, described by Rodney Croome as one of the most important achievements, which ended a long and divisive debate. Rodney expressed that view following Tony's passing in a letter to the editor. I rang Rodney to thank him for that acknowledgement.

Tony also led the apology to the Stolen Generations, the first state to do so. If you add additional gun laws to the agenda, Tony was a true reformist in a short period of time. I will come to that in the conclusion of my contribution today.

After retiring from politics, Tony did not go quietly into the sunset at Mission Beach, but remained quite active as a commentator on politics and on many things Tasmanian. He said he once believed the 24-hour media cycle had put modern politicians under enormous pressure, but lamented politicians who were more focused on getting elected rather than gutsy decision-making.

Tony was made an Officer of the Order of Australia on 14 June 2010 for, among other things, his work on gun law reform. Tony, true to his nature, credited his wife Caroline, whom I have had some conversations with over the course of the last month or so, for her support in

enabling him to achieve what he had, saying, 'Caroline has been a quiet but astute political judge and her advice has always been sound.'

After leaving politics, Tony became chairman of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, located in Brisbane, for several years. As much as the late Michael Hodgman was a staunch monarchist, Tony was a vocal and staunch republican, but did not believe Australia would ever tackle it. I was not aware of Tony's republican views, I must confess, until I read about this.

On a more personal note, I always found Tony to be intelligent, kind and considered. He was a remarkable man. He was respected by all sides of politics. I recall those days in that minority government and how challenging that must have been and the social reforms that were made. Tony's contribution to the social reforms was allowing a conscience vote from the Liberal Party on some of those social reforms. He contributed to the economic agenda, the local government reform agenda, the energy agenda, and gun law reform, which was difficult in the rural and regional heartland for a conservative government, and we all remember that clearly.

I really admired Tony. I caught up with him a few times as a Young Liberal in those days and a younger person in the party in those days. I admired his great courage and his conviction. Sometimes in my more contemplative moments in this job I do draw on Tony's strength at that particular time and his conviction and putting it out there. That was a really challenging time, and a policy agenda first, if my memory serves me correctly, around the Nixon report, which was commissioned by the Rundle government. Not all of that report was presented as the public-facing policy aspirations of the Rundle government at that time, but most was.

Then the following government picked up some of those early policies around gas and other matters and, to their great credit, saw them through, which is a fantastic transition between two governments for the betterment of Tasmania.

I reflect on Tony's farewell. I did offer the family a state funeral, and Tony would have been absolutely well and truly entitled to a state funeral, but he was understated in nature and a quiet person. My view is that he had very clear views about his farewell which did not include a state funeral. That was the type of humble man that I knew Tony as.

I was very privileged to attend his farewell in Kimberley, where his mum grew up. I do remember Tony giving a beautiful eulogy at his mother's funeral in Devonport many years ago; a very appropriate resting place for a humble and dignified man.

I did receive the call to alert me to Tony's passing. I was with my wife, Sandra, at the time. I do not often shed a tear but I could not get the words out when I said that Tony Rundle had passed away.

Some might say that that is a reflection of the fact that I have not really had the time to grieve for my own father, but it was also that he had such an impact on me personally and an impact on this state. He was a man I truly admired. I did more than tear up because we had lost such a great person in Tasmania and from our Liberal family, a person we could be and are enormously proud of. He was one of our great leaders, a man of conviction, courage and, through those dark days of April 1996, clearly a man of great compassion as well.

I pay tribute to Tony. Our thoughts, prayers and condolences are with Caroline, his daughters Helen and Jane, and his three grandchildren. They all spoke beautifully at Tony's farewell at Kimberley, alongside a great eulogy from former Premier Ray Groom. Vale, the Honourable Tony Rundle, AO. May you rest in peace.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the Labor Party about a remarkable Tasmanian leader. Tony Rundle was a dedicated servant of the Tasmanian people who has left an enormous legacy for Tasmania and its people. I acknowledge the Premier's beautiful personal remarks about someone who made an important mark not just on Tasmania but also on the Liberal Party.

I did not have the pleasure of meeting Tony, as many Members in this place did, particularly those opposite. On behalf of the Labor Party, I extend our condolences to his family and, I am sure, to many friends within the Liberal Party, across Tasmanian politics and the community he represented so well for so long.

Tony Rundle was born in Scottsdale and embarked on a journey that would see him rise to the highest office in the state. Before entering politics, Tony was a journalist and real estate agent, professions that honed his communication skills and deepened his understanding of community. In 1986 he was elected as the Member for Braddon, a position he held with distinction until 2002. His commitment to his constituents and unwavering dedication to public service were evident to all throughout his career.

In 1996, he became the 40th Premier of Tasmania, a position he held for two years. His tenure as Premier, though brief, was marked by significant achievements and courageous decisions. In Tony's inaugural speech in the parliament, he said:

> I looked in the Members' Lounge and saw that politicians are allocated numbers. I am not sure what my number will be; I think I am somewhere in the 600s, since the House began in 1856. I come to this place under no illusion; I do not suggest for a moment that I will be the most outstanding member to pass through these portals, but I hope that history will not judge me to be the silliest either. Time will tell.

He left this place as one of the few to rise to the position of Premier, and is one of the most respected Members of this place.

Undoubtedly, the most challenging moment in Mr Rundle's premiership came just weeks after he took office with the tragic Port Arthur massacre, which was, perhaps, the most challenging moment in Tasmanian history. On that fateful day, a lone gunman, Martin Bryant, armed with semi-automatic weapons, embarked on a horrific killing spree. He took the lives of 35 innocent people and injured 23 others. The impact of that senseless act of violence was felt deeply across Australia, across Tasmania and the whole world. Families were shattered, communities were left in shock and a nation mourned the loss of so many lives. The Port Arthur massacre was not just an attack on individuals; it was an attack on our collective sense of safety and peace. I was 10 years old at the time and I remember the moment very vividly, listening in the car on ABC radio and hearing the news come through.

It was a time when our state needed strong leadership and, undoubtedly, Premier Rundle stepped up and provided that leadership. In the wake of the tragedy, Australia came together to ensure that such an event would never happen again. Under the leadership of then Prime Minister John Howard and with the support of state leaders, including Tony Rundle, the National Firearms Agreement was swiftly enacted, and it remains today.

This landmark legislation introduced strict gun control measures, including a ban on semi-automatic and automatic firearms, a national gun registry, and a gun buyback program. These reforms have been credited with significantly reducing gun violence in Australia and have become a model for countries all over the world. We have never seen the like of this sort of devastation in our country since. That is at least in part due to the leadership of Tony Rundle.

The strength of our state lies in the ability to come together in times of crisis to support one another and enact meaningful change. The legacy of that massacre is not just one of sorrow, but of resilience and hope. It reminds us of the importance of being vigilant, of compassion, and of the collective will to make our community and our society safer. This decisive action has had a lasting impact on the safety and security of our nation.

Tony Rundle's government was also instrumental in advancing social justice. In 1997, under his leadership, Tasmania decriminalised homosexual activity - a landmark decision that reflected his commitment to equality and human rights. It was a reform that pulled Tasmania out of the socially conservative darkness and on the path to becoming one of the most welcoming, open and progressive states in Australia. We are all thankful for that.

That same year, Tasmania became the first state to issue a public apology to the Stolen Generations, acknowledging the pain and suffering caused by past policies and reaffirming the state's dedication to reconciliation.

Throughout his career, Tony Rundle was known for his integrity, his willingness to collaborate across party lines, and his dedication to the people of Tasmania. His legacy is one of compassion, courage and steadfast commitment to making Tasmania a better place.

As we remember Tony Rundle, let us celebrate his contributions and be inspired by his example. He showed us that true leadership is about serving others, standing up for what is right, and working tirelessly to create a more just and equitable society.

To reflect on his remarks in his inaugural speech, history will judge Tony Rundle as a leader who stepped up when we needed him to do so. Vale Tony Rundle.

Members - Hear, hear.

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to offer condolences to Tony Rundle's family on behalf of the Greens and to recognise the loss for many within the Liberal Party, including the Premier. I thank him for his words.

The late Premier Tony Rundle was thrust into the leadership of the Liberal government in Tasmania following the 1996 election. Former Premier Ray Groom had said he would not govern in minority and so, when no one party secured a majority in the 1996 state election, he stood down and Tony Rundle became Premier. Labor refused to engage in discussions to form government with Greens holding the balance of power and so Tony Rundle was sworn in.

From north-west Tasmania, this former journalist and advocate for logging and mining, and the road through the Tarkine had previously been on the record saying that the Hobart suburb of Battery Point had more wilderness in it than the Tarkine. It did not augur well for the Liberal minority government.

However, only a few weeks after being sworn in, the Port Arthur massacre occurred, with 35 people dying. It changed everything. Tasmanians went into shock. People everywhere reflected on the horror of the massacre and how it could have been visited upon them in Port Arthur that day. The community needed united and strong leadership, and Tasmania's three political leaders, Premier Tony Rundle, Labor Leader Michael Field, and Greens Leader Christine Milne, stepped up. Political infighting was not an option.

Not only did they collectively visit the massacre site, but Mr Rundle and Ms Milne visited the wounded in hospital together. As Ms Milne remembers, Mr Rundle spoke with relatives, friends and staff, and calmly accepted the sometimes hostile reaction of the victims' relatives. He was determined to do everything he could to support the community and bring Tasmanians together. In so doing, he also earned the respect of the parliament and the community.

Tony Rundle included the Greens and the Labor Party in subsequent negotiations on gun law reform, and it was Tasmania's agreement to pursue strong gun law reform that enabled then-Prime Minister Howard to pursue this critical and historically significant reform nationally. If Tasmania had not supported gun law reform, it would not have happened nationally.

The significance of those reforms has stood the test of time. There have been no gun massacres in this country since, and Tasmania and our laws stand as a beacon of hope for other countries around the world which are today battling gun violence.

These negotiations paved the way for further reform negotiations. A degree of trust had been established. Gay law reform came next.

Premier Rundle led a party in which the Attorney-General, Ray Groom, was totally opposed to the decriminalisation of homosexuality, but with the Greens committed to this reform and having the numbers with Labor's support, Premier Rundle agreed to give the Liberal Party a conscience vote, and further agreed that if the legislation passed the House of Assembly that he would then instruct the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council to facilitate the bill. It became law and made history, with decriminalisation finally achieved in 1997.

Then came, as former Greens leader Christine Milne describes, 'one of the best days ever in the Tasmanian parliament', and one of the days of which she was personally most proud in her 25 years in politics. On 13 August 1997, only months after the report was released and 11 years before Prime Minister Rudd apologised, Premier Rundle apologised to the Stolen Generations of Indigenous people in response to the 'Bringing Them Home' report. Premier Rundle said:

> The apology is made not only to recognise the fact of the separations but also to further the reconciliation process by accepting that these removals should not have happened. In short, Sir, it is necessary to do so because, as has been said by an elder of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, Mrs Ida West - and

> I quote - 'it is important to say sorry to them because what happened was so terrible'.

Honourable Speaker, Tasmanian Indigenous woman Annette Peardon was invited to address the Tasmanian Parliament, the first person to do so in 100 years. She said on that day:

> Mr Speaker, Premier, honourable members, this is a historic occasion. It is a welcome gesture of the Government and the Parliament to apologise for what must be seen as one of the most tragic events in my people's history. I believe it is the first time any Aborigine in Tasmania has entered the Chamber of the Parliament in session and I believe it is the first time anywhere in Australia an Aboriginal delegation has been invited to address the Parliament in session.
>
> The policy of removal of Aboriginal children from their people was born out of ignorance, ignorance for the basic human rights of Aboriginal children to be raised by their people. It was a policy of genocide, make no bones about it. The policy was deliberate and calculated to make Aborigines like white people. To make us ashamed of who we are. To deny our heritage and our families. That we stand before you today as the proudest of Aborigines you have ever seen or heard is evidence the genocide policy could not work. Today's response by this Parliament is a sign of community maturity; of the State of Tasmania facing up to the responsibilities of harm caused to Aborigines by official policy instead of hiding behind notions of popular history.

When she finished her speech, the entire parliament rose to its feet and gave her a standing ovation.

Honourable Speaker, social law reform, gun law reform, gay law reform and the apology were not the only reforms that Premier Rundle pursued. He recognised the economic development model for Tasmania needed to change. We needed to diversify, so he pursued the Canadian province of New Brunswick's model of pioneering information technology. He reflected at the time:

> We established productive partnerships with New Brunswick. Nortel, a North American IT innovator, set up an operation here helping us value-add our IT industry. This included working with Stephen Haines to create Service Tasmania, a one-stop shop for government transactions and arguably the nation's most sophisticated. As a result of this, call centres were established and laptops were promised to Tasmanian students and teachers.

Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, his progressive reforms were undone by his determination to sell the Hydro and his insistence on the development of a Regional Forest Agreement, and also his undermining of democratic representation by reducing the number of councils and parliamentarians. When two of his Liberal Members, Bob Cheek and Michael Hodgman, threatened to cross the floor to vote with Labor's Jim Bacon in order to reduce the numbers in parliament with the purpose of disadvantaging the Greens in an attempt to eliminate the chance of a minority government, Premier Rundle gave in to them and forced the legislation through the parliament. He then called an election, which he lost. After more

than a quarter of a century, the attack on the parliament was rectified with a reinstatement of the 35-person House of Assembly that sits here in the Chamber today.

Reflecting on Tony Rundle's substantial contributions to public life in Tasmania, it is more than fitting to say he was a person who had the courage of his convictions. He faced up to the challenges Tasmanians faced, and while we may not agree with all his solutions, we can agree that he was focused on the future and dedicated to delivering what he believed was in the best interest of our state and our community.

On behalf of the Greens, I give my condolences to Tony Rundle's family, to his wife Caroline and his daughters Helen and Jane, and all the rest of his extended family. You should all be rightfully proud of the contributions he made to Tasmanians' lives. The legacy he left lives on to benefit future generations. Vale Tony Rundle.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - I would like to concur with the remarks of my colleagues. I particularly acknowledge the tribute of the Premier and the personal relationship that the Premier had with the late Tony Rundle. The Premier described him as a mentor and a reformist, and that is absolutely acknowledged and agreed with wholeheartedly.

Today is obviously an opportunity not only to mark his passing, but also to reflect on his service and the lasting contributions he made to our state and indeed this nation. He was a man of remarkable character and dedication. As we know, he served the people of Tasmania in this parliament for some 16 years as a Liberal Member for Braddon, from 1986 to 2002. Many have reflected on his time as Premier from 1996 to 1998, but he was Treasurer under Ray Groom, who was Premier from 1992 to 1996, and he was Speaker of this place in 1988 and 1989.

That is when I first met Tony Rundle: during his role as speaker in the Gray Liberal government. I was serving as a junior senior adviser to Robin Gray at the time, and I found him to be caring and supportive of a newish young adviser. He was intelligent, inquisitive and compassionate, and he certainly had the courage of his convictions, a quality that was shown so many different ways during the course of his parliamentary career.

As Treasurer and likewise as Premier, he showed foresight with regard to that long battle for changing our shop trading hours laws. Some in this place might remember it was a long battle, but he did ultimately bring that forward and through to something that we now accept as commonplace in our community. He followed bold and progressive steps to advance the cause for his community and the Tasmanian economy. He believed in a sustainable budget. He introduced the superannuation provision account, which was a critical move to ensure the future public sector liabilities were responsibly managed, an important point even today.

He was a forward thinker; he was into long-term planning and responsible governance and he did not shy away from those challenges. He saw the challenges as opportunities - an opportunity to evolve, adapt and thrive. We have heard about the establishment of Service Tasmania. That was a visionary establishment and initiative at the time, and it is still with us today, to great effect and great benefit. It was in every sense a reform that he followed, and he put people first.

There has been reference to the Regional Forest Agreement, first signed in 1997. I remember in my first few weeks in the Senate in March 2002, we were reflecting on the Regional Forest Agreement when we were debating and passing the resource security legislation, and we reflected on and thanked Tony Rundle for his leadership at the time.

This is going back to the early 2000s, thanking Tony Rundle for his leadership in signing that Regional Forest Agreement, backing our productive industries as he did. I would like to read a quote from his first speech, where he said:

> I support the present policies of balanced development of the state's resources, including forestry, and the right of Tasmanians to the dignity of employment. As I said previously, I will be a constant champion of those members of the Tasmanian community, with ideas and initiatives, who want to put them into practice to generate jobs and wealth for the state.

That is vision and foresight and something that, even today, we stand by in terms of that balanced approach, supporting our productive industries and our growing economy. There has been reference to his leadership in setting up Basslink, a visionary approach at the time and something, of course, that is critically important to Tasmania. Here we are, not only talking about a further link, but getting on with the job of a further link between the mainland and Tasmania.

Of course, in terms of Tony Rundle's leadership, particularly as Premier, in fact weeks after he became Premier, none was more harrowing or of such transformation than the tragedy that struck our state on 28 April 1996. Just six weeks into his leadership, all of Tasmania and the country were shaken by the horrific events at Port Arthur: 35 innocent lives lost and what remains, quite frankly, one of the darkest days in Australia's history.

It was an act of unimaginable violence and it left our community devastated, frightened and grieving. It was Tony Rundle who rose to the occasion to meet the gravity of the moment. He knew, he empathised with the community in their grief and started the healing process. He did that in different ways. He convened the Tasmanian parliament, where all 35 Members of the House stood together in unity. As a result, a motion of condolence was passed and the House observed a solemn minute's silence. Then the House adjourned for a week at his recommendation and leadership.

That had not occurred in this place since the Mount Lyell mine disaster of 1912. It was a mark of deep respect as a result of what had happened at Port Arthur. His leadership, of course, was not only confined to words, but he recognised clearly there needed to be action and he worked closely with Prime Minister John Howard. We give great credit to John Howard for that leadership in delivering one of this nation's most significant reforms in terms of public policy. That was the National Firearms Agreement. The agreement provided sweeping reforms to our gun laws, including the ban of semi-automatic rifles and shotguns; the introduction of uniform licensing and registration systems; and the national buyback scheme, which I think many in this place will remember.

It was a bold move. There was a lot of resistance in various quarters, yet Tony did not waiver. He stood firm and he had principle above politics at every turn. I want to commend and congratulate and pay tribute to Tony as a result of that true leadership. The state was grieving and he helped it heal. He was certainly at his finest then, as a leader for the people, a

protector of the public, and a statesman who placed the welfare of others above all else. I know Tasmania will be forever grateful for his steady hand during that time of greatest need.

As has been acknowledged, as Premier he did provide a formal apology to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. It was a significant and heartfelt recognition of those historical wrongs and a gesture of reconciliation, and I think that should be acknowledged. Those who knew Tony personally certainly speak of a man who was kind, who was thoughtful, who was wise, and who was a man of courage and conviction. He led in so many different respects. His legacy is not just one of policy and reform, but one of values and principles. I believe those values of courage, compassion, fairness and vision, looking ahead, will continue to shape Tasmania today and well into the future. It is so important.

I pay my condolences to his wife Caroline, to his daughters Helen and Jane, and to family and other friends. We honour his memory today, not just as a former Premier, but certainly as a person who deserves that respect and that honour. His service and spirit will not be forgotten. He has left behind a better Tasmania: stronger, fairer and more future-focused. May he rest in peace.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and thank you also to our colleagues in this place who have made their contributions so far. I particularly want to thank our Premier for his very personal reflection.

Today I rise to honour and remember the life of Anthony Maxwell Rundle, a remarkable leader, a fourth-generation Tasmanian, a dedicated servant of Tasmania and a long-serving Liberal Member for my electorate of Braddon from 1986 to 2002, as well as Premier of Tasmania from 1996 to 1998.

In his inaugural speech to Parliament, Tony highlighted important issues that continue to resonate here today, including the crucial role of the state's port system and airports in enabling the success of our economy and a strong interest in deregulation, while emphasising the necessity for governments to avoid unnecessarily burdening innovative and enterprising Tasmanians with excessive red tape; familiar themes for us today still.

Tony's leadership as Premier of our state was characterised by courage, compassion and a steadfast dedication to the principles of justice and equality. His tenure as Premier was not without its challenges, but he faced each one with resilience and a deep sense of responsibility. His values are evident through his significant contributions to public life in Tasmania, which still impact us today.

An important legacy of Tony's work is his leadership in the aftermath of the Port Arthur massacre in 1996. Tony actively led gun law reform in Tasmania and contributed to the nationwide push for stricter gun-control laws, working closely with then-Prime Minister John Howard to advocate for and implement the 1996 National Firearms Agreement.

Former Premier Ray Groom recently characterised Tony's efforts as demonstrating great compassion, sensitivity and leadership. Tony's ability to work effectively with all sides of politics on this reform set an exemplary benchmark for Tasmanian politics. Tony's leadership

will also forever be associated with significant social milestones towards equality and respect for human rights in our state.

Under his leadership, Tasmania decriminalised homosexual activity in 1997. For younger Tasmanians looking back today, it may be hard to imagine, but there was a time when homosexual activity between consenting adults was illegal in Tasmania, carrying a maximum penalty of 21 years in jail. Today, Tasmania has nation-leading, progressive LGBTIQA+ laws and protections.

Also in 1997, Tasmania became the first state to make a public apology to the Stolen Generations. On 13 August 1997, Tony, as Premier, moved a parliamentary motion that included the words:

> That this Parliament, on behalf of all Tasmanians, expresses its deep and sincere regrets at the hurt and distress caused by past policies under which Aboriginal children were removed from their families and homes, apologises to the Aboriginal people for those past actions and reaffirms its support for reconciliation between all Australians.

This act of reconciliation acknowledged the pain and suffering caused by past policies and was a powerful gesture towards healing and unity.

Tony's leadership has left an important and ongoing legacy on the state's economy as well. His government initiated the Basslink project, leading to the connection of Tasmania's electricity grid to mainland Australia, which continues to enhance the state's energy security and economic integration today.

I would like to highlight Tony's pivotal role in the establishment of the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement during his tenure as Premier. Tasmania became the first state to sign a Regional Forest Agreement in 1997. Today, Tasmania's Regional Forest Agreement continues to balance the economic, social and environmental values of Australia's forests. Our renewable and sustainable native forest industry supports more than 1000 jobs across the state and generates hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity. As a fellow representative of the great electorate of Braddon, Tony's legacy in this area resonates with me. I too am proud to represent a region of the state that makes things and grows things. This government continues to be the strongest supporter of our native forest industry, which is sustainable, renewable and world-leading.

As we reflect on Tony's life, let us remember the values he stood for: courage, compassion, and a commitment to making the world a better place. We remember his dedicated service to our state over his long career in politics, for the leadership he provided and how much he achieved across such diverse dimensions of the social and economic life and character of Tasmania.

I want to thank him in particular for being such an influential mentor to our Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, who faces many of the same issues and challenges today as Tony did in his time as Premier, and who embodies the same values of character, conviction and commitment to do the right thing by Tasmania and Tasmanians above all else. It was these qualities in our Premier that inspired me to enter politics as well.

Tony's passing leaves a great void, but his many important legacies continue to inspire us. Vale and thank you Tony Rundle.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Honourable Speaker, when we are called to serve, we rarely get to choose the timing of the circumstance in which we do so. Life has a way of thrusting extraordinary asks upon extraordinary people when they enter public life, to take up burdens that they could never have imagined. While we in public life do not get to choose our time, it is what we do with that time that truly matters.

The life in the service of Tony Rundle offers a shining example of that. I rise today to honour and reflect upon the life of the Honourable Anthony Maxwell Rundle, Officer of the Order of Australia, former Premier of Tasmania, and esteemed former Member of this place: a man of quiet integrity who served our state with deep commitment and principle.

I have had the opportunity to meet Tony and his wife Caroline. Even as a brand new Member of Braddon, I enjoyed the opportunity, and perhaps testing, to assist on constituent matters including irrigation and a whole range of things. I am sure the Premier probably had a similar experience when he started out as well. Margot and I were immensely grateful for their messages of support in our journey, including in the uncertain times for our family during the recount immediately following the 2021 election.

Tony was born on 5 March 1939 in Scottsdale, Tasmania, a place so nice that it could almost be the north-west coast. From the rural north-east of the state, he began a journey that would take him to paradise, but also through journalism, to business, and ultimately to the highest office in Tasmanian Government.

Tony entered this place in 1986 as a Liberal Member for Braddon. He was re-elected at four successive elections, and that is a testament to the trust placed in him by his constituents and to the integrity with which he carried out his responsibilities. His parliamentary career was marked with service across numerous portfolios. He served as Speaker of the House and later held significant ministerial responsibilities including forests, mines, energy, finance, and economic development. He twice served as Treasurer and played a pivotal role in shaping Tasmania's financial direction during a time of considerable economic challenge.

In 1996 following a finely balanced election result, Tony Rundle became the 40th Premier of Tasmania. He led a minority government that reflected his ability to lead with negotiation and purpose rather than confrontation.

As Premier, Mr Rundle's leadership was tested early and profoundly. Following the Port Arthur massacre, surely one of the darkest chapters in our state's history, he rose to that moment with dignity and resolve. In that moment, he was a pillar of strength for the local community, first responders, our state and our nation.

From the horror of that moment, he never lost sight of the need for change that flowed from it. He worked with federal and state counterparts to help secure the 1996 National Firearms Agreement and delivered historic gun law reforms.

My first bill in this place as minister was to bolster community safety with amendments to the *Firearms Act 1996*. Though I had only just begun primary school when the principal act was passed, I remember in 2023 peering down at those words, 'An act to amend the *Firearms Act 1996*'. I remember the gravity of those words taking my breath away. In all these years on, his leadership in and after great crisis bears few peers.

His government also led social reform. In 1997, Tasmania became the last state in the nation to decriminalise same-sex partnerships. Love is love. While the road to reform was long, it was under Tony Rundle's leadership that it was finally achieved with grace and with great political courage.

That same year, the Rundle government passed the first parliamentary motion in Australia apologising to the Stolen Generations. It was a moment of symbolic importance and one that contributed meaningfully to national reconciliation. The journey that Tasmania went on echoed far afield, including in homes in the remote Kimberley region.

Speaker, these were not small accomplishments, and they reflect a Premier who led with a strong moral compass, even when the political cost was high.

He was also a politician who believed in competent administration of public affairs. His Service Tasmania reforms and many others again led the nation. He offered a model to us that government is as much about the small interactions with everyday people as it is about the big reforms.

Tony Rundle was not a man of theatrics. He was calm, deliberative and deeply respectful of the institutions of government and the people they serve. His style was measured, his leadership steady and his purpose clear.

Tony retired from Parliament in 2002, but continued to serve in public life, including as Chair of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority. He later returned to his beloved Devonport where he lived quietly until his passing on 4 April 2025 at the age of 86. He is survived by his wife Caroline and his twin daughters Helen and Jane, all of whom he held dear.

Speaker, today we honour not just a former Premier, but a statesman of rare decency and character. Tony Rundle embodied the very best of public service. He governed with integrity, and his legacy continues to shape Tasmania and our nation.

I will offer the final words of my speech to Prime Minister John Howard, who spoke of Tony's legacy immediately after his premiership in 1998:

> Tony Rundle had the courage and honesty and the tenacity and the commitment to the future of Tasmania to call Tasmania's challenges for what they were. And he offered, alone of the political leaders in the last Tasmanian election, he offered an honest solution to a deep and enduring problem.

He went on to say:

> … and the fact that Tony was willing, at very great and ultimately significant political cost to him to put that argument, won him the admiration of Liberals

around Australia, won him the most precious commodity of all in public life, and that is respect.

There is nothing more important in public life than respect. It is not the length of time you are in Government. It is not the length of time you are in Parliament. It is not the number of glib remarks that you can make about your opponents. It is whether, at the end of the day, you can look yourself in the mirror and say, 'I did that for the interest of Tasmania,' or, 'I did that for the interests of Australia.' Tony had the courage to do that, and I admire him for it.

Speaker, on behalf of this place, I extend our deepest condolences to his family and his loved ones, including our Premier. We thank them for sharing Tony with the people of Tasmania. May he rest in peace.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mrs BESWICK (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I welcome the chance to pay tribute to Tony Rundle, a former Premier and a much loved Tasmanian. While I unfortunately did not know the former Premier personally, I do recall that he was once in attendance at an Anzac service when my sister played the Last Post. His reputation among the people of Braddon is one of a compassionate leader who stepped up during a very challenging time for our state. When he became Premier following the 1996 election, Tony Rundle could not have imagined the tragedy that was about to engulf our community. His leadership following the heartbreak of Port Arthur provided support at a harrowing time.

Alongside Prime Minister Howard, Premier Rundle's determination to strengthen Australia's gun laws was widely admired. It is a legacy I am sure he was enormously proud of, and rightly so. I have no doubt that his leadership has made our state a safer place, and it meant that something meaningful came from the darkest of days. Tony Rundle's response to the tragedy of Port Arthur is a reminder that you cannot predict what will shape - the rest of my speech.

He was a much-loved gentleman, and I want to pass on my condolences to his family. Thank you that we have had this opportunity this morning.

Members - Hear, hear.

The SPEAKER - There being no further speakers to the motion, I will add, on your indulgence, words from the Chair. I knew former Premier Rundle in my very early parliamentary days as well, and his leadership during Port Arthur and his bringing together of this House to stand as one was exemplary and earned him much respect. For anyone who is listening who has a direct connection with the events at Port Arthur, I encourage you to seek whatever support you need today given the nature of some of the contributions.

I can advise Members that as a mark of respect, we have relocated former Premier Rundle's portrait to the landing outside the parliament for the next week. Members may wish to go and have a look at that piece of work by Mr Dyer, who former Premier Rundle chose. With that I ask Members to signify their support for the motion by standing.

Motion agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

[12.19 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I further move -

> That a copy of the foregoing resolution be forwarded to the family of the late Mr Rundle.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Leave to Debate Motion Without Notice

[12.19 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion to seek leave without notice for the purpose of moving a suspension of Standing Orders to debate the following motion. I move -

> That the House has no confidence in the Premier on the following grounds:
>
> (1) On the first day of the 2024 State Election campaign, Jeremy Rockliff announced a central promise to the Tasmanian people. When it came to government funding for the stadium, he said on 7 Tasmania Nightly News, 15 February 2024 his "clear commitment is that the 375 million dollars will be invested and not one red cent more."
>
> (2) This promise was made due to the unpopularity of the stadium with voters, with senior Liberal party campaign figure, Brad Stansfield, describing it as "the biggest pile of stinking poo in the state, politically… We spent the entire campaign variously trying to polish that turd, or to cover it up and disguise"; "the biggest single drag on the Liberal campaign"; and "the main issue in this campaign" during the FontCast on 26 March 2024.
>
> (3) Without this promise Jeremy Rockliff's chances of being re-elected as Premier would have been significantly reduced, and that he may not have been able to form government.
>
> (4) This promise is therefore fundamental to Jeremy Rockliff's position as Premier.
>
> (5) In making this promise, Jeremy Rockliff has no evidence to suggest that it would be possible to achieve it – let alone any basis for making a guarantee – and was intentionally, cynically and dishonestly seeking electoral advantage.
>
> (6) The Premier has continued to repeat this promise without basis on dozens of occasions in Parliament including:
>
> (a) Stating on 22 May 2024 "We have capped at $375 million. Not a red cent more, if that is the right terminology, will be spent and invested into the stadium. We made that very clear at the beginning of the election campaign."

(b) Stating on 19 September 2024 “We are investing $375 million in this project and not one red cent more.”

(c) Stating during House of Assembly Budget Estimates, on 23 September 2024 “We will be investing $375 million and the rest will be coming from private resources.”

(d) Stating during Legislative Council Budget Estimates, 24 September 2024 “We will be investing $375 million, Ms O’Connor. Happy to be held account to that when the time comes. The other aspects of course, we expect private investment in the Macquarie Point precinct and stadium. Can I assure you that we have drawn a line in the sand. It will be $375 million which we will invest once.”

(e) On at least 15 further occasions in 2024 Budget Estimates for the House of Assembly and Legislative Council.

(7) The Premier has now abandoned his pretence of seeking private investment for the stadium.

(8) Other than a small contribution from the AFL and $240 million from the Federal Government, Tasmanians will now bear the entire cost of building the stadium, including all cost overruns.

(9) The Premier has broken the promise that secured his election – a cost cap of $375 million for the stadium.

(10) The Premier has spent over a year misleading Tasmanians and the Parliament about the stadium cost cap, having repeated this claim without any evidence that it could or would be achieved.

(11) The Premier:

(f) Lied to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and treated them with contempt by promising a Reconciliation Park at Macquarie Point and using the Mercury newspaper to announce a stadium for the site instead.

(g) Lied to Tasmanians when he said the stadium would not be a condition of the AFL team deal.

(12) The Premier is in clear breach of the Standing Orders and has flouted the Ministerial Code of Conduct by being dishonest and misleading with Tasmanians.

(13) In breaking such a fundamental promise to the Tasmanian people, Jeremy Rockliff’s integrity is in tatters, he cannot be trusted, and his position as Premier is untenable.

Honourable Speaker, if this seeking of leave is granted, we intend to lay out our debate in a substantive way, but at the heart of this matter, what we are looking at here is the Premier being dishonest with the Tasmanians from the very beginning in order to achieve his position

at the election when he knew that two thirds of Tasmanians, the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians at the time, hated the idea of the stadium and the cost it would bring down on us.

He has repeatedly been dishonest; he has deceived and lied to Tasmanians at every opportunity for scrutiny that has been afforded to us as members of the Greens and also other members of parliament who have asked questions. He has been dishonest in the media and under scrutiny, and now he has revealed to Tasmanians that there will be no public-private partnership. Tasmanians will bear the full cost.

We have no confidence in the Premier and we wanted the chance to lay this out.

[12.25 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, against my better judgment, I accept that the tradition of this place is to accept the leave motion to go through so we can deal with the substantive nature, if you can describe that in relation to the Greens' motion. This is a stunt and to bring it on at the time that it has been is, I must say, somewhat distasteful, but we can canvass those matters later. The government will not oppose leave.

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, we, as is our usual process, will be supporting the seeking of leave. I will not be standing in the way of the seeking of leave. However, we have made it pretty clear how we feel about the second process, the suspension, but we will be threshing that out in the debate, so we will just get on with that.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Debate Motion Forthwith

[12.26 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honorable Speaker, I move -

> That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent such a motion from being dealt with forthwith.

At the heart of this is the reality of what we have witnessed over the last year, starting with the first day of the election campaign and continuing with the announcement made by the Premier just recently that there will be no public-private partnership that will be coming. This is the magic fairy that the Premier has been pretending to Tasmanians all year will be there to fill what we now understand is an enormous gap between what he promised - the red line in the sand; $375 million and not a red cent more - and the truth of what the stadium is going to cost.

Those final figures have not come out yet, but it is very clear from the successive reports that have been done by Saul Eslake, Nicholas Gruen and now the Tasmanian Planning Commission panel that it will cost us in the order of something like $2 billion over the next decade. It will be an enormous intergenerational debt for Tasmanians. It will put at risk our credit rating. It is such a loss-making exercise that the Premier and his staff and the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, despite working flat out with a full resources of government,

have failed to find anybody who is willing to put their money on the line to get involved with this venture. Every single estimate, KPMG, the government's own business case, and every successive following business case that has been done, has found it will lose money for every dollar that is spent: 47 cents in the dollar.

What we are talking about here, at its very heart, are the reasons that the Premier chose to make that promise to Tasmanians. He knew he was utterly on the nose in Bass and Braddon. It has played out and shown out again and again - every poll shows that 2/3 of Tasmanians, and especially people living in Bass and Braddon and Lyons, do not want this stadium. They do not want the stadium because they know how incredibly important it is that that cost, upwards of $2 billion, is spent on critical services, healthcare, housing.

They also know that there is an excellent stadium in the north. It is gratuitous and wanton to lay down to the AFL and to give in to them on what can only be described now as the Premier's vanity project, when there are such incredibly important services that need to be funded. We are looking at a budget that is about to cut the guts out of these important services.

What we are also looking at is a corrupted process. It is the worst we have ever seen in Tasmania's history, seeking to ram through legislation to fast track, rubber stamp, and approve this massive development.

What we have seen over the last year, on every occasion the Greens have had the opportunity to ask the Premier this question in Budget Estimates, in Question Time, at every opportunity, we have asked him to fill in the details between $375 million and the real cost of the stadium. He has continued to perpetrate the lie that there will not be $375 million spent or more than that but what we know is today, he is still pretending to Tasmanians that there are some different buckets of money: there is capital money and there is other money, as though it is not Tasmanians who will be footing the whole cost.

That is the point here. He has lied to Tasmanians. He made a promise in the election and that was a promise that he could have kept. Today he can keep that promise. If he wants the confidence of this House, he needs to not mislead, not be deceitful any longer. He needs to stop with the lies. He either needs to say, 'I admit I made a promise, I have broken that promise and stand on his word and be honest with Tasmanians - what he needs to do is to walk away from the stadium project because what he is going to do is push through something that Tasmanians do not want. We do not need it and it is going to cost us a fortune for generations to come, money that should be spent elsewhere.

We are calling on the Premier to recognise that he made a fundamental promise to Tasmanian people, that his integrity is in tatters, he cannot be trusted, and now his position is untenable as Premier.

Time expired.

[12.31 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Business, Industry and Resources) - Honourable Speaker, it is a truism that the weaker the case, the more extravagant and extreme the language. That is exactly what we have heard from the Leader of the Greens.

Let us be absolutely clear: those of us who are romantics will remember Valentine's Day 2024 when the election was called. On that day the Premier indicated that there would be borrowings associated with the stadium. In relation to the business case, the strategic business case, you go to page 9, you go to page 65, and it is absolutely clear that there would be borrowings as well.

Sure, in an interview here and there, you might not say exactly all the words, but on the official launching of the campaign, in the official strategic business case, it is there for all to read, see, understand; other than those who wilfully seek to ignore that information for their own cheap political purposes. The federal Labor Party, we are told, had a huge victory in Tasmania. It would be fair to say that the polls and the election result would indicate that. Guess what one of their policies was -

Dr Woodruff - You scraped through.

Mr ABETZ - What, scraped through? As a Liberal, I wish I could say that, but in fairness, the objective evidence is that, unfortunately, Labor did a little bit better than scrape through. They had a policy of $240 million towards this project. The person who was the most anti-stadium using colourful and - well, colourful language, I will leave it at that, Senator Lambie, hoping to ride in on this alleged wave, is now struggling to keep her seat. When you have a look at the Senate result, whatever that may be, it would be fair to say there will be four out of the six senators who back in the stadium.

We know from the Greens that they have opposed the stadium from day one. They actually voted against the Project of State Significance mechanism. Now, they champion it. Why did they vote against it? They thought it might be a pathway for the stadium. Now that they see it as a pathway to stop the stadium, they are supporting it. This is the duplicity of the Tasmanian Greens. In relation to the Premier personally, with the language that the Leader of the Greens uses like 'dishonest' and 'lying'- really, look in the mirror. It reflects so badly on yourself to use that sort of language.

Sure, you can disagree on policy issues. You can disagree in relation to how things may or may not have been said; but to so egregiously reflect on the integrity of the Premier is something that I trust Ms Woodruff and the Greens will reflect upon and say, that was not our best moment, especially on an occasion such as we have just dealt with only a matter of a few minutes ago.

The House can be absolutely assured that all those who sit behind me have absolute confidence in our Premier and his commitment and conviction, that this stadium, with all the hurdles it has faced and will continue to face, will be transformational, not only of that ugly industrial wasteland that is currently Macquarie Point but it will also be socially transformational for our young people in particular; for those that have an aspiration in relation to sport; those who have an aspiration that there will be significant cultural events; those who have an aspiration that we can invite international conferences with over 1000-plus people, because we will finally have a facility that can cater for that.

This will be transformational and that is why the Premier has been so vehement in his support for it; a great project. Everywhere else around Australia, what we have seen is people opportunistically opposing the stadiums and then supporting them. As for the comments on the Premier, completely and utterly rejected. He is a man of honour.

[12.36 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, as outlined earlier, we will not be supporting the suspension and there are a few reasons why. First, we have made it fairly clear that the first motion of no-confidence that we support will be the one that we move. Second, we just have to have a bit of perspective here. If successful, this motion, in effect, brings down the government. A motion of no-confidence in the Premier is more than likely going to bring down the government.

This is very serious. The Greens today are playing with fire. I note that we have literally just had a federal election. I do not believe that Tasmanians are ready for another state election. It would reflect poorly on all of us. This is a time when we know that things like business confidence are hanging on by a thread. We have just had information that, once again, housing approvals are plummeting. We are just about to face a horrendous budget, and what this state actually needs right now is stability. If this motion is successful, it would cause chaos because it would delay the Budget and delay the discussion we need to have as a state about the future of the state and the Budget itself.

This is also a test of the government's supply and confidence agreements, which we know are in tatters. However, the Greens are playing with fire. The reason the Greens can do this is because nobody wants to have discussions with them about forming government. They are on the outer. This was similar to what we saw in the federal sphere. The Greens in this place have not reflected on this and they do not reflect on the fact that nobody wants to talk to them about forming government, especially after their politicising led to their disastrous federal result. The Greens playing hardcore politics is the reason why they were smashed all around the country. However, once again -

Dr Woodruff - We were not smashed in Tasmania.

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Dr BROAD - as the Greens do, the defeat was actually a victory. We heard Adam Bandt, who is clinging onto his own seat in Melbourne by the skin of his teeth. I do not know whether he will survive as leader, let alone hold his seat, but we heard the Greens saying what a wonderful result it was, when they were absolutely poleaxed. Max Chandler-Mather, who was probably the leader of the politicisation of politics, delayed a massive Housing Australia Future Fund project for two-and-a-half years and politicked harder than just about anybody, received what was coming to him and was thrown out of his seat. The Greens do not seem to have learned that lesson.

We can expect the Greens to continually move no-confidence motions every time the Liberals announce yet another way they are stuffing up the stadium project. We know the government is stuffing up the stadium project. They are continually doing it, and we are holding them to account, as we have promised.

What we will not do is throw the state into complete chaos by bringing down the government just after we have had a federal election and on the eve of a state budget, which we know will bring even more challenges to the state at a time when confidence is waning. The last thing we need is another state election which is what, in effect, this motion would do. If we go on to the further debate and it is successful, it would bring down the state government. We have said that we are going to be responsible. The state needs stability for a period. The

election was only a bit over a year ago. We do not need another one right now, which is, in effect, what this motion does. We will not be supporting the suspension of Standing Orders.

[12.42 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I will not support the suspension to debate this no-confidence motion. My position is clear on confidence and supply with government and the conditions that would need to occur for me not to have confidence in the government.

I will reflect on the Greens, though. They wax lyrical about collaborative parliaments and minority parliaments but some of their actions, including this action today, completely undermine their narrative to the community that they are willing to work with others. You know this is not going to be successful.

There is a narrow competition for who is the hardest against the stadium. There is an old saying, 'Any port in a storm', but who would have thought that the name of this port would be Brad Stansfield. You quote Brad Stansfield in a Greens motion just to find something against the Liberal government. Mr Stansfield's contributions and justifications about some of his career decisions are a matter for him and I will not be reflecting on them. I do not always agree with where he ends up. However, to bring this motion on, to quote Brad Stansfield and justify wasting parliament's time on this reflects poorly on the Greens. I plead with them to live up to the promise of a collaborative parliament and live up to the promise of a minority parliament that works for Tasmanians. Yes, you disagree with the government. Find a better way to articulate that.

[12.42 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, it is a great disappointment to be standing here at this moment to deal with the Greens' stunt motion, particularly in light of the remarks shared and the tribute to former premier Tony Rundle. The timing could not be worse. It is a political stunt, it is a time-waster and we have work on our books to get on with. We are totally united in support of our premier, Jeremy Rockliff, who has been doing an incredible job under some challenging circumstances and consistent criticism and negativity from the other side. We will not have a bar of that. The motion is clearly designed to highlight the Greens' efforts as the number one flag bearer against the stadium.

You know the position of our government. We took it to the election and were elected as a minority government. Mr Rockliff stepped up as premier. We have been consistent all the way through. Labor had different views prior to the election but have now expressed a view in terms of categorical support. We note your ongoing opposition to the stadium. However, the Premier has made it clear that, in terms of the enabling legislation, everyone in this place will get a say. You will get a vote. It is not an issue. It will happen in this Chamber and then, of course, upstairs. This is a consistent with other states and jurisdictions.

I was at Adelaide Oval. I checked it out and I know the history. There was strong opposition. They withstood that, it was built and everyone loves it. It has been working effectively and sustainably, based on all the advice I have received. In Brisbane, regarding the Olympics, you would have seen the recent announcement of enabling legislation to progress. Townsville, Melbourne, Sydney: what is consistent is that enabling legislation is required and you get a chance to vote. Greens members will get a chance to express their views accordingly.

This is a stunt motion. As the member for Braddon just said, we have a budget coming up in a few weeks' time, on 29 May. You want to upend all of that as well with this motion. This would turn this place and this government upside down. It is not appreciated. It is a political stunt to the nth degree.

We have a priority as a government to get on with the job of delivering. Today I was at the Treasury buildings with the Register of Interest. It was great to be standing together with industry and business getting on with the job of delivering and growing our economy, opportunities for business, development, growth and jobs, to get young people involved in the building construction process. It is disappointing that Labor and the Greens oppose that, and they have to stand by their convictions. With respect to that effort, we will continue a relentless pursuit of a strong economy and responsible budget management, and we will deliver on that. We are delivering on it and we will pursue that with great vigour.

We will not have a bar of this effort by the Greens today to be the champion, the big wig, leading the community on who is strongest opposition against the stadium. That is what it is all about.

Dr Woodruff - They need a voice in here.

Mr BARNETT - You will get your voice; you will have your say. You get that every day in Question Time, and you will have a vote. There was enabling legislation in other jurisdictions and we are doing the same. Everyone will get a vote. The Premier has made that clear. In all of those other jurisdictions where they have been building major infrastructure and stadiums, there has been strong criticism, strong opposition. They get it done, and look what has happened.

We are looking for a sustainable future and we are getting on with the job of growing the economy, creating more jobs and delivering on our 2030 Strong Plan. We will not have a bar of this Greens' stunt motion today.

[12.47 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I commend this motion to the House. You can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can engage in collaborative politics, Mr O'Byrne. We have demonstrated we can do that. That does not mean we will resile from our obligation to hold the government to account, to hold members and the Premier to account, and hold members to the Ministerial and Members' Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is very clear about the accuracy of statements.

> A Member must only make statements in Parliament and in public that are, to the best of their knowledge, accurate and honest.
>
> A Member must not mislead Parliament or the public in statements that they make.
>
> Whether any misleading was intentional or unintentional, a Member is obliged to correct the Parliamentary record …

Notwithstanding the fact that the Tasmanian Planning Commission's report has shown that the Macquarie Point site is toxic and the stadium presents massive issues with regard to

human health and environmental health with that toxic waste, it is clear that this stadium is actually built on a foundation of deception and deceit.

It started at the very beginning when the Premier made commitments that a stadium would not be part of Tasmania's bid. Back in August 2022 - and it is still on the AFL's website, that was the media release from the Premier, that our bid does not require a stadium. It emerged through the Public Accounts Committee and through questions that that is entirely false. While the Premier was making that statement, the secretary of the department was busy talking to the AFL. It was clear that the AFL had always had the requirement that we would have a new stadium. We at the Tasmanian government had completely rolled over to it nominating Macquarie Point site, dictating to Tasmania where it should be, and what it should look like.

That was the case in the tripartite agreement as well, where the Premier look directly in the eyes of former leader Cassy O'Connor and Dr Woodruff and said, 'Our bid is not contingent on a stadium, this will not include a stadium'. That is why we Greens signed up to support a two Tassie teams, an AFL and an AFLW team.

There has been deception of the Aboriginal community. The Truth and Reconciliation Park was fundamentally and completely and utterly abandoned.

Now, of course, the POSS assessment. That has been despicable. One of the lowest acts of this government is to attack the credibility and the integrity of the panel and the Planning Commission. Saying that it has a 'predetermined view', saying that its report is 'tainted', is a fundamental attack on the integrity of that body.

The leader of government business - yes, we did oppose the POSS process, Leader, we did vote against that POSS process and we would do it again. It is not because we do not trust the Planning Commission, it is because the POSS process abandons the basic planning rules. The POSS process abandons third party rights of appeals. It has nothing to do with the integrity of the Planning Commission.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Minister Ellis, you may seek the call next if you wish to make a contribution.

Mr BAYLEY - It is you on that side of the House who are attacking the integrity of your own planning body and your own appointments. It is an absolute low point. Not even Paul Lennon went that low when it came to Gunns Pulp Mill.

The focus of this motion is obviously the $375 million and the fact that it has been repeated in here and outside, 'not one red cent more.' It is critical because it was made on the very first day of the election.

It is clear that this stadium is a stinker. It was in March 2024 and it is still a stinker in May 2025. That much is clear. This commitment was made repeatedly from day one in the election: that not one red cent would be over and above $375 million. That was fundamentally abandoned yesterday. That is the reason we are bringing this motion forward today.

It is a blank cheque. The government has written a blank cheque for the AFL and the stadium, and Labor Party has co-signed that blank cheque. Its unconditional support is absolutely not holding the government to account. You say one thing in this place and talk about holding the government to account and then you write them a blank cheque and they get away with anything. Why on earth would the AFL want to renegotiate the deal when you have got both sides of the major parties, both sides of this House backing in the very stadium that they want? They have got nothing in it.

It is a budget week next week. We are going to see cuts, we are going to see issues when it comes to child protection and when it comes to health, and of course, Ashley Youth Detention Centre has been delayed again.

Time expired.

[12.52 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, this seeking of leave is necessary.

The SPEAKER - Sorry, if I can correct you, we are on the suspension now.

Ms BURNET - Sorry, the suspension is necessary because this is too important an issue for Tasmanians across this state. This is a continuing, grave situation that the Premier leads us into, and it goes to the heart of how the Premier is leading the government and leading this state.

There is a big question mark, not just for the Greens but for thousands of Tasmanians across the state, who tell us of their concern about where the government, and particularly the Premier, are taking this state. There is intergenerational debt in the face of plenty of economic evidence which, unfortunately, the Premier has dismissed time and time again; there is saddling of thousands of dollars per person, including children, with this intergenerational debt that the Premier is leading us into. It is something we, the Greens, are very concerned about.

When we look at this enabling legislation to which the Premier is taking this parliament to make this decision, it is an abandonment of process. Whether we like it or not, the Project of State Significance process was chosen by the government, and that is being abandoned. This parliament will be forced to make a decision on the stadium. This is a bastardization that not only undermines the faith of Tasmanians in any process, but it also makes it very difficult to think this is a process that is well-considered.

The Tasmanian public have the right to expect better of the Premier than what he is displaying with his burning desire to deliver this stadium. The sense of reason is diminished and he wants to deliver this stadium at any cost. The Greens feel that this motion is important to consider by this House, because we do not have the confidence in the Premier to deliver what he should be delivering for Tasmania.

[12.55 p.m.]

Mrs BESWICK (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, this is a case of the Greens taking far too much time, and is taken in the name of politics. The scrutiny they are applying on the stadium is healthy, but this motion of no confidence is just another stunt. Unfortunately, the more motions of stunts they move, the less meaning they have. It is starting to feel like the boy who cried wolf.

We have made our criticisms of the government's handling of the stadium and the saga crystal clear. We use Question Time, we use parliamentary debate, and we keep the pressure on. The government's flip flopping on the stadium process has been extremely frustrating, but the rightful response is not this stunt. I do not support the suspension of Standing Orders and I do not support this substantive motion.

[12.56 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise, obviously, to speak in support of this motion, because it is necessary. It is necessary because not only do we have no trust and no confidence in the Premier in the Chamber, because of his misleading so many times about the amount of money that the government will spend on the stadium and the amount of money that the government will borrow for the stadium - but I rise also to speak for all those Tasmanians who have no trust in the Premier and no confidence in him as the Premier.

We are constantly hearing from people across Tasmania, but particularly in my electorate of Bass, from people who are deeply concerned about this stadium and what it means for our state. They are deeply concerned about the amount of debt that we will go into if this stadium is progressed. They are deeply concerned that they have been told one thing and constantly something different is happening. They have been told that only $375 million will be invested into the stadium by the Tasmanian government - not one red cent more - and yet we know now that that is not true. We have actually known it the whole way through, but now we know definitely and clearly with the evidence that is coming forward that there are no private investors that consider this a good investment for them to place their money into. Yet the Premier will still choose to go ahead and invest our state's money into a project that private investors will not touch. The Premier will go ahead and put his ego project ahead of the interests of Tasmanians. The Premier will go ahead and submit to the demands of a corporation, the AFL, over the people of Tasmania.

This is not satisfactory and we cannot continue this without challenging the Premier, without calling out what he is doing and saying that we have no confidence in that. Tasmanians have no confidence in that. We need a change of course in this state and this is an opportunity for the Premier to consider what he is saying, consider what he is doing, to look at a different pathway and stop leading Tasmanians into significant debt that will hang around for generations of Tasmanians.

The Premier is constantly talking about what a wonderful project this will be for the future of Tasmanians, while willfully ignoring the fact that the children of Tasmania, the children of today, will have this debt as a burden over them into the future. I am not sure that any number of football games they can watch in a stadium is going to make up for that level of debt that they have, because it will mean that we do not have the money to invest in other things that will benefit the future of children, the children of Tasmania.

It is time to move beyond the lies. It is time to move beyond the deception and it is time to speak truth. We call on the Premier to do that and until he does, we can have no confidence in him.

The SPEAKER (Ms O'Byrne) - The question before the House is that -

> The motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 7	NOES 25
Ms Badger	Mr Abetz
Mr Bayley	Mr Barnett
Ms Burnet	Mr Behrakis
Mr Garland	Mrs Beswick
Ms Johnston	Dr Broad
Dr Woodruff	Ms Brown
Ms Rosol (Teller)	Ms Butler
	Ms Dow
	Mr Ellis
	Mr Fairs
	Mr Farrell
	Mr Ferguson
	Ms Haddad
	Mr Jaensch
	Mr Jenner
	Mr O'Byrne
	Ms Ogilvie
	Mrs Pentland
	Mrs Petrusma
	Mr Rockliff
	Mr Shelton
	Mr Street
	Mr Winter
	Mr Wood
	Ms Finlay (Teller)

Motion negatived.

Sitting suspended from 1.08 pm to 2.30 pm.

MOTION

Standing Committee on Government Administration B - Inquiry into the Assessment and Treatment of ADHD - Reporting Date

[2.30 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark)(by leave) - Honourable Deputy Speaker, I move -

> That the reporting date for the Standing Committee on Government Administration B - Inquiry into the assessment and treatment of ADHD and support services be extended until 26 August 2025.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Broken Promises

Mr WINTER (Franklin - Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House takes note of the following matter: broken promises.

Tasmanians expect that when people standing for election say they are going to do something, it actually happens. It has been the pattern of behaviour from the Liberals for 11 years now where we are now one year out from an election where the agenda and the promises they made are looking more unlikely to ever be fulfilled.

Honourable Speaker, do you remember the day that the then-minister for Health said that he was going to ban ramping? 'Ban ramping,' he said. He said there will be no more ramping under a Liberal government. I am not sure if you have been past a hospital lately, the LGH, Mersey, down in Hobart, or the North West, but if you are talking to our healthcare professionals in any of those hospitals, they will tell you that they are under more pressure than ever. If you walk past the ambulance ramp, you will see there are still ambulances ramping. This is a broken promise. He presented it as though they were going to come into this place with a bill to literally ban ramping. It was not true. They then said they were going to end ramping. That has not been true either.

This is a government that told the people of Clark that they were going to take the University of Tasmania back to the bay. They were going to stop the move of the university into the city, lock down the entire university campus so that it could not move again and it could not invest. They promised that to the people of Sandy Bay in particular, then they came to this place, amended their own bill, and broke their promise.

This government and a Premier made the biggest election promise that at that election, the number one commitment that he made - was $375 million for the stadium and 'not one red cent more' - he said it over 100 times. I support the stadium and want to see a Tasmanian AFL team, but this Premier must be held to account for that. That is a broken promise. His failure to explain this morning spoke volumes. He did not even want to try to explain it. I suspect he knew at the time it could not be done. If he did, he should have fronted up today and admitted that he got it wrong and apologised, and admitted that he is going to spend 'a red cent more' than $375 million of Tasmanian taxpayer money - in fact, a lot of red cents more.

This is a government that promised way back in 2021 that they were going to shut Ashley. They were going to shut Ashley because they saw the commission of inquiry and the report and said, 'This is not good enough and it is an urgent action. Our priority of our government is to close Ashley.' Then they have the gall only just after the election to come out and say they are going to fast-track the closure of Ashley to 2028, some four years later.

This is a government that continues to break its promises. When they break their promises, they do not admit it and say they got it wrong. They just pretend it does not exist.

This is a government that said Tasmania would be the healthiest state in Australia by 2025. It is 2025 and Tasmania is still the least healthy state. They made long-term promises and then failed to deliver. This is a government that promised they would bring our education

standards up to the national average by 2022. Here we are in 2025 and we are still at the bottom of the pile. The so-called reform agenda that they presented and attempted to execute has not worked. The promises of the most healthy state and lifting our children's education standards up to the national average have not eventuated.

These are not opinions. These are facts. They still refuse to start to say, 'We got it wrong'. After 11 years of the Liberals, Tasmanians have had enough.

Like the *Spirits of Tasmania*, these are more stuff-ups after more stuff-ups. This morning there was the question, 'How much is the new High Performance Centre in Kingston going to cost?' No answer. We know it is going to be a lot more than $70 million and $60 million worth of Tasmanian taxpayer money, but they will not admit it. At some stage over the next month, perhaps in the Budget, they will finally admit that this is going to cost a lot more.

They promised that we would have an upgraded York Park. The figure that was told to Tasmanians, particularly in the north, was that 27,000 people would be able to go to games after they upgraded that stadium. It was reported in *The Examiner* at the time but I only found it yesterday - 27,000 people at York Park will have big blockbuster games. We find out today that after spending $130 million, they will actually have less people.

Time expired.

Recognition of Visitors

DEPUTY SPEAKER - I welcome to the Speaker's Reserve the Honourable Will Alstergren, Chief Justice of the Federal Circuit and Family Court. Welcome to the Parliament of Tasmania.

I also acknowledge in the gallery the first of two groups of year 6 students from Leighland Christian School in Ulverstone. Welcome to the Parliament of Tasmania as well.

Members - Hear, hear.

[2.37 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Minister for Business, Industry and Resources) - Deputy Speaker, we on this side will not be lectured by a Leader of the Opposition who cannot tell the people of Tasmania honestly where he was born. When he wants to endear himself to the people of the west coast, he tells them unashamedly, not a problem, 'I was born on the west coast.'

Mr Winter - That is false.

Mr ABETZ - When he wants to run as mayor of the Kingborough municipality, he says, 'I was born at Kingston Beach.' Then, when he wanted to run for the Legislative Council seat of Hobart, he was born in Hobart. This man has had multiple births and we would like to know what the truth is. As my children would sometimes say when they were younger, 'Dad, do you want the truth or the real truth?'

It might be about time for the Leader of the Opposition to tell us what the real truth is. Before he seeks to cast aspersions on this side of the House, he may well seek to get his own

house in order. When he talks about the stadium and the government's position on it, let us remind ourselves that the Leader of the Opposition and the 10 people on the Labor side were re-elected opposing the stadium. Now, they are jumping on the winning bandwagon and saying they support the stadium. Welcome, good on you, you have seen the light. We congratulate you. However, if you are able to do these mammoth backflips -

Mr Winter - You opposed the stadium. You were in the paper opposing the stadium.

Mr ABETZ - No, never. That is untrue.

Mr Winter - You did not ever oppose the stadium? Is that what you are saying?

Mr ABETZ - What you have said by way of interjection is untrue.

Mr Winter - What did you do, then? You never opposed the stadium?

Mr ABETZ - What I did say in the paper was that I was a convert to the stadium and, as you would know, Mr Winter - and I am sure the children from Leighland Christian School would understand this analogy - you can be an agnostic and become a convert. As a true conservative, I examined the issue of the stadium and came to the conclusion that I should be supporting it. Unlike those on the other side who will swallow something without proper investigation, I investigated it -

Mr Winter - You were a convert but you never opposed it?

Mr ABETZ - Yes, and you can be a convert from being an agnostic, which means you do not believe in either side. That is something yet again, through disorderly interjections, highlighting his ignorance, and I welcome that.

We have always been in support of the stadium, so there has been no change in our policy whatsoever. If we are talking about change of policy, who was the gentleman that, in his desperation to get some sort of credibility, said privatisation was the way to go and now opposes privatisation? Oh, it would not be the member for Franklin who does not even know where he was born? Who would have confidence in a would-be premier who is so carefree with the facts? Unless something miraculous occurred, it is pretty difficult to hold out to the public that you were born in three places, especially when they are so geographically apart: west coast, Hobart and Kingston Beach. It must have been a terribly long birth, or something strange occurred which defies my medical knowledge.

This is a government that has been on a clear path, especially in relation to the stadium, and one thing the Leader of the Opposition does know is that we said a $375 million capital contribution. In the business case, which is in front of me, read it: page 9, page 65 says that the $375 million would be supplemented with borrowings and that is something they continually seek to deny.

Time expired.

[2.42 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise to talk on Labor's MPI about broken promises. It is a dangerous place to be sitting in this Chamber at the moment

while Labor and Liberal are slinging arrows at each other. The reality is you are both as bad as each other when it comes to broken promises and sticking to the commitments you make, whether they are before elections or during the course of parliament.

I will get onto the Liberal Party. I know my colleague, Ms Rosol, wants to talk about Ashley Youth Detention Centre, but we can talk about a whole raft of things in the Liberal space. However, I will start with Labor. Labor's stadium position is the biggest broken promise of all. Labor took itself to the election last year, to two elections, in fact, in 2024: to the general election and the upper House election. It was not until a couple of days after the Legislative Council election that they announced their position of support for the stadium, before the writs had even been issued for Mr Willie's old seat.

It is not just any old support for the stadium. It looks like it is a blank cheque. The money does not matter, the issues with the location do not matter and this now-corruption of process does not matter. That is a deep shame.

Similarly, with pokies. We saw what happened in the 2018 election. Yes, you lost that election and reviewed your policy, but you were unable to stick to that commitment.

It extends even to small things. I brought some amendments to the Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill on pets at the last sitting to give more rights for renters to make minor modifications to their property, for disabled people to have better disability access, for better security and for better safety modifications. Even though it is in the platform the Labor Party took to the last election, they found a way to oppose it in that bill. There is also the issue of mandatory minimum sentences and that is a real shame.

However, this is about the government's broken promises, so I will switch to them. While the stadium is a huge one, I am going to start with the pokies precommitment card because that is a fundamental betrayal of people doing it tough in Tasmania. We know pokies are a scourge on our society, sucking the life out of our most vulnerable communities. We all supported the notion of a precommitment card. If you are not going to take pokies out of our pubs and clubs, at least you can control the loss and damage. The precommitment card was a way of doing that. The Premier has orchestrated a mechanism by which he can abandon that, seemingly without even talking to his relevant minister, at the behest of the pokies lobby.

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is another example where the government took a position to the election that was going to constrain UTAS on what it could do with its land. The government broke that promise by doing virtually the exact opposite of what it took to the election.

Housing is another broken promise. The government said it would build 10,000 new social and affordable homes. It is written in the 2030 Strong Plan in black and white. However, as we have discovered through the process of questions in this House, it is not at all about new social and affordable housing. It includes vacant land, crisis accommodation and affordable rentals. The Liberals are cooking the books to make it look like they are meeting their commitments.

The stadium is really the cream on top. Not only did the Premier say that Tasmania's bid would not be contingent on a stadium, and a stadium was not part of the bid, he told us, as political representatives and parties, to sign on to a team subject to a stadium not being part of

the bid, and yet there it is. It was part of the negotiations being led by the department all the way through. The Project of State Significance (POSS) assessment is probably one of the greatest deceptions - it is the government's own process, the government's own assessment body, the Tasmanian Planning Commission, and it is now manufacturing an excuse and manufacturing a reason to actually attack their integrity. Then we come to the $375 million -

Time expired.

[2.47 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I was going to spend a fair bit of my contribution focused on the government side, but I cannot let the contribution from the Greens go in that regard. I thought there would be some more reflection from the Greens in the wake of the federal election result.

Last time I checked, the national Leader of the Greens was facing ejection from parliament because the Greens are extremists. They are uncompromising. They come into this place and they lecture other people on things like housing, but at a national level they block housing reforms. They stand in this place and block housing at Sandy Bay. They are a walking contradiction, and there is no greater example of that than renewable energy.

They say they support renewable energy, 'We need to transition our economy,' sounds good to me, but whenever there is a renewable energy project proposed, what do they do? Oppose, because they cannot move past the fact that every renewable energy project is going to have an environmental impact. They cannot move past the local environmental impact for the greater good because they are uncompromising.

In terms of the stadium, I remember when the Greens withdrew their support for the bid and the teams, and they conveniently forget that. They tell everyone now they still support the teams, but that is not the reality. So, it was an interesting contribution from the Greens.

I also heard the leader of government business saying that he was agnostic about the stadium, but I have had the newspaper story sent to me that was being talked about, and it said:

> Eric Abetz, the former long-serving Liberal senator and power broker, says he was dubious about the AFL stadium, but now backs the development at Macquarie Point.

There are a few people in this place rewriting history, and it does not reflect well on them. They are very quick to criticise us, but they should probably think about some of the things that they are saying too.

When it comes to this government and broken promises, there is no bigger broken promise in recent times than the Premier's commitment that the stadium would cost $375 million and 'not a red cent more'. He said that over 100 times, and we found out yesterday that it was completely untrue. He said that the private sector would pick up the difference, that he was going to work with a '3P' - a public-private partnership - to offset the difference, and we know that that was just a charade.

If we go back maybe 12 months, they were talking about Macquarie Point and selling off land. There was an $80 million contribution, I think, in the numbers. It is now suddenly

$200 million, and the Premier today in Question Time could not explain how they were going to realise that value, or what they were going to sell, or what happens if there are project cost blowouts. It is the Tasmanian taxpayer now who is not going to be up for $375 million. They are up for that and the rest and whatever happens when you start stuffing up the delivery.

We know you have form when it comes to the delivery of major projects. I remember being in this place in 2017, talking about the *Spirit*s, these great new ships, that were going to increase the capacity for Tasmania and give the economy a boost. You would have thought that if they were being proposed back in 2017, you would remember to build the port infrastructure so that when you get the new ships they can go into service, but what happened? They were supposed to be delivered in 2021. It is now 2025. There is no port infrastructure at Devonport for them to be in service. One of them is still overseas. There have been massive cost blowouts - $500 million of cost blowouts and counting.

I did a site tour at Devonport before Christmas with the member for Clark. We were told that the project was facing significant challenges and that cost blowouts were probably more likely than not, so we are not even done at the end of that saga.

I also heard from TASCORP about borrowings for TT-Line and their financial position. It is so perilous for TT-Line that they are facing a bailout from a state government that is drowning in debt. There is no greater example of a broken promise from this government and their poor performance than that.

We know when it comes to the management of the state's finances, they have been woeful - the worst in the state's history. Their projections in the budget - broken promises. Going to an election and not talking about privatisation because they know it stinks - broken promise. It is now a fire sale because they cannot manage the state's finances. Everything is for sale apart from the Hydro. Some would class that as a broken promise because it was not on your agenda when you went to the election. You did not have the courage of your convictions.

Time expired.

[2.52 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this topic. It is very important. We still do not know where the Leader of the Opposition was born. That is something we will continue to interrogate the opposition about.

Mr Willie - You are like the 'birthers'. The Trump 'birthers'.

Mr BARNETT - The honourable member for Clark, Mr Willie, where were you born? Will you disclose?

Mr Winter - Oh my God. You are a joke. You are an actual joke.

Mr BARNETT - Come forward, because it is a matter of trust. Who do you trust in terms of managing the economy, in terms of managing this state? We know the Premier is tried and true and he has a track record of delivering. You may not agree, and the Greens of course, often do not agree.

We will not have a bar of being lectured to by the opposition, including the Opposition Leader, when we do not know whether he was born on the west coast, Kingston or Hobart. Perhaps he can make some inquiries and disclose as soon as convenient to this place and to the public exactly where he was born, because if you do not know the answer to that question, how can you expect to manage the opposition, let alone a government?

We will not have a bar of the lecturing from the other side. The honourable member who has just stepped down made reference to the debt and the deficit - well, this is the honourable shadow treasurer who lauded the federal government. They had a sea of deficits of more than 10 years and a trillion dollars of debt, and he lauded the federal government's budget of just some weeks ago. The shadow Treasurer has not in any of his days in that role put forward a costed policy, let alone responded with an alternative budget. It is high time.

The budget is just a few weeks away. We have done the hard yards. Responsible economic management will be a hallmark of this budget, a pathway to surplus will be a hallmark of this budget, and there will be plenty of opportunities for the opposition to come forward and to declare their position with an alternative budget. This will be the first time in 11 years if that is the case. I put the call to the opposition to deliver that alternative budget.

They have to get their facts right, because they supported a motion just a few weeks ago which will put up taxes for Tasmanians, $2.7 billion worth of increased taxes through their support for the motion in terms of the increase in own-source revenue for the state of Tasmania. They want to increase that to some 40 per cent. We have a position that was clear in terms of promises at the election: no new or increased taxes.

However, state Labor have come forward and supported this motion, and they want to make it 40 per cent. That is $2.7 billion in increased taxes on the Tasmanian people. They want to legislate that. They are going to legislate those rates of own-source revenues well above existing rates and targets, and of course that is $1.85 million a day. That is a lot of money for Tasmanians to pay. We will not have a bar of it. This is on top of the Opposition Leader's plans to maximise the profits from government business enterprises.

We are all about Team Tasmania making a difference, and we are committed to our 2030 Strong Plan. We are not going to miss that opportunity to implement those promises and those commitments to the Tasmanian people. It is for the opposition to come forward. Why can they not say congratulations and well done on behalf of the Tasmanian people when you have the highest business confidence in all of Australia of any state or territory? Why do you not just say that is great news for small, medium and large businesses?

Business conditions are second best in Tasmania. Retail trade numbers came out in the last 24 hours. What have they said there? Record spending in retail trade, record low unemployment. The CommSec report came out saying that Tasmania had the fastest annual economic growth of 3.8 per cent. That is the CommSec report. Why do they not stop their relentless negativity, be more positive, and back the economic and development plans for Tasmania?

[2.59 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) -Deputy Speaker, I want to speak this afternoon on broken promises to the young people of Tasmania. We have heard a lot in the last few weeks about what the Premier says about the future of young people in Tasmania and how wonderful the stadium is

going to be for them. At the same time as he is talking about some supposed benefits for some young people in Tasmania, he is quite selective in thinking about the young people of Tasmania, because we also have many young people in Tasmania who are in a difficult situation. The government has made promises to them, and those promises have not been fulfilled.

Back in September 2021, after decades of calls for the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre and after a report that the government received in 2016 calling for the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre, the then-premier, Mr Gutwein, announced that the government would close Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Here we are close to halfway through 2025 and we are still no closer, it would seem, to the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

The commission of inquiry was happening at the time that the premier made his announcement in 2021. The commission of inquiry highlighted how unsafe Ashley Youth Detention Centre was for the young people of Tasmania. There were human rights breaches happening in there. There were calls and a strong recommendation from the commission of inquiry report for the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre as soon as possible. The government responded by saying that they would close Ashley Youth Detention Centre in phase two of their responses to the commission of inquiry, and so by 2026 Ashley Youth Detention Centre would be closed. We now know that that is not going to happen. We saw last year that the Department of Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) annual report revealed that it would be at least until the end of 2027 before Ashley Youth Detention Centre could possibly be closed.

The government yesterday released its master plan for the new Tasmanian youth facility. It makes it clear that the new facility cannot be completed until the end of 2027, which means that Ashley Youth Detention Centre is likely to be open until 2028.

We know that children are safer in community settings than within detention facilities. We know that we need to be closing Ashley Youth Detention Centre to ensure young people's safety. We know that we need to be moving to use more diversion practices and have more diversion opportunities available for young people. We know that we need to have alternative bail facilities available for young people in Tasmania. We know that we need to be doing more to care for young people and their families and to ensure that universal supports are in place for them.

That is how we prevent young people becoming caught up in crime. We know that if we lock young people up in youth detention centres, this contributes to recidivism. It contributes to them having an ongoing interaction with youth justice, and as adults having interactions with the justice system and ending up in prisons.

We need to be doing so much more for the young people of Tasmania. It is not enough to say that we will eventually close Ashley Youth Detention Centre. We need to get on with it and do it as quickly as possible. We have seen that the government is willing to pull out all the stops to make this stadium happen because they have promised it would happen. They have teams on their agencies all over the place working on this so that within a month or two they can turn around a piece of information that they will supply to us as MPs so that we can make the decision on a stadium. They have not done that with Ashley Youth Detention Centre. They have let this drag on and on and on. They have gone from saying they will close this centre in 2024 to now looking at most likely 2028, if it even happens then. That is not good enough.

That is a broken promise to the young people of Tasmania. The government needs to do better and pull out all the stops for young people in this state.

[3.02 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I am going to go to a similar topic to the member for Bass. That is the massive broken promise that this government has failed to close Ashley. I remember that day in 2021, the first day of Estimates. I think probably the first sentence spoken at the Estimates table by the then-premier, Peter Gutwein was that he announced the closure of Ashley within three years. You could hear a pin drop in that room that day. It was such a relief to so many people when he made that announcement.

We welcomed it as the opposition. There was universal acceptance in the parliament that it needed to happen and we were really relieved to hear former premier Gutwein make that promise. Advocates who had been fighting, former victim-survivors who had been fighting, arguing for the closure of Ashley were vindicated. They felt they finally had a Premier who was going to listen to them and I remember back as early as 2010, sitting at roundtables when I was working in the community services sector, in the alcohol and drug sector, with recommendations going to the government around the closure of Ashley then. No government was brave enough to do it.

Finally, they felt they had a Premier who was going to listen to them and he announced it was going to close within three years. We did expect all stops would be pulled out. No one pretended it would be easy, but there was such widespread acceptance and welcoming of that announcement from Peter Gutwein at that time. There were community organisations saying they were ready. They were there and ready with extra resourcing to take on those young people, particularly those who were in remand.

There was an expectation and an understanding that what premier Gutwein had announced was not what the minister, Mr Jaensch, has now been talking about more recently; two smaller Ashleys. That was not the impression that those advocates had at that time. We all understood that he did mean a therapeutic response to youth justice. He did mean two smaller facilities, one north, one south, that could implement an intervention-based model to deal with young offenders in the youth justice system, because we do have a youth justice system that is failing.

When you see nearly every young offender later spending time at Risdon, you know you have a youth justice system that is failing. A youth justice system that is working would see those young people diverted away from crime. It would see young people not going on to graduate to Risdon - for want of a better word - but that is not what we saw. We have now seen delay after delay, from premier after premier.

This announcement from the minister, Mr Jaensch, that he has introduced fast-track legislation to try to close Ashley by 2028 - well, this minister has form when it comes to fast tracking. Do not forget when he was Housing minister and he put fast-track order after fast-track order through this place to increase the supply of community and social housing. How many houses have we seen built as a result of those fast tracking orders?

Mr Winter - It was six homes.

Ms HADDAD - Six houses in eight years; that is ridiculous. That is this minister's form when it comes to fast tracking. Pardon me if I do not feel full of hope, that the minister, Mr Jaensch, is going to be able to deliver on this promise to fast track the closure to 2028, which is years after what Peter Gutwein promised back in 2021.

I listened to the minister Jaensch's interview on ABC Drive yesterday. He said:

> We believe that with the design of the site and the budget that we now have for the new Tasmanian youth justice facility, it can be completed by the end of 2027 if there are no further delays.

That is when 'as soon as possible' kicks in for closing Ashley. I am really worried about that statement. I hope that I have misunderstood the minister in that statement he made to Kylie Baxter yesterday, because is he telling us that the centre will be closed by the end of 2027, ready to open something new in 2028? or is he saying that, 'As soon as possible commences in 2027 and we will continue to work on it and there will be further delays?'

He went on to say that they cannot predict what might happen in terms of planning delays when that new facility at Pontville goes through the local council. There is a risk that there will be further delays to the closure of Ashley. Do not forget the horror stories that we heard about cases of historical and contemporary abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; psychological abuse of young people in that facility. All stops do need to be pulled out to close Ashley Youth Detention Centre as soon as possible and there are organisations ready and willing to work with government to make that happen. I do not have faith in this minister's ability to fast-track the closure of Ashley. It is a shame on this government that they have broken that massive promise to the Tasmanian people.

Matter noted.

LAND USE PLANNING AND APPROVALS AMENDMENT (SENSITIVE DISCLOSURES) BILL 2025 (No. 12)

Second Reading

[3.07 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Housing, Planning and Consumer Affairs) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

> That the bill be now read a second time.

The Land Use Planning and Approval (Sensitive Disclosures) Bill 2025 proposes an amendment to the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* to prevent the public disclosure of culturally-sensitive Aboriginal heritage matters. In 2022, parliament passed the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment Act 2022*, which introduced provisions allowing certain sensitive matters to be concealed from public display during the major projects assessment process. This includes culturally sensitive Aboriginal heritage information.

The North East Wind project was declared a major project on 12 August 2022. At that time, the North East Wind project proponents were not required to comply with the sensitive

matters provisions as they had not yet come into effect. The assessment of the North East Wind major project is now nearing its final stage. During this stage, the proposal documents will be made available to the public, including those that addressed project-specific assessment criteria.

Without legislative change, culturally-sensitive Aboriginal heritage information related to the North East Wind project area will be disclosed during the public assessment process. This could include identifying the location of culturally-significant sites, which poses a risk of potential damage. The existing major projects process in section 60BA(1) of the principal act, requires proponents to submit a sensitive matters request to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania before requesting a major project declaration.

This request must also be made before seeking to amend the declared major project area or project permit. The sensitive matters request identifies culturally-sensitive information or areas at risk of harm. Such information is only made available to participating regulators and the Independent Development Assessment Panel of the Tasmanian Planning Commission. However, because the North East Wind project was already declared before the sensitive matters provisions came into effect in 2023, the proponent was not required to make the relevant requests under section 60BA of the act. Even if the proponent voluntarily made such a request, it would have no legal effect.

As a result, the Independent Development Assessment Panel for the North East Wind major project will not be able to prevent the public disclosure of sensitive information until this bill is enacted. This bill addresses the risk by amending the principal act to apply sensitive matters provisions to any major project declared prior to 17 May 2023, regardless of when the assessment process occurs.

The North East Wind project is the only major project that will be affected by these changes; all other projects declared after 2023 have already followed the sensitive matters requirements. This bill will ensure that the assessment of the North East Wind major project is conducted in a way that respects Aboriginal cultural heritage by concealing sensitive information.

These changes have been requested by Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania and the Tasmanian Planning Commission. Consultation on the bill has been underway with those directly affected: the proponent of the North East Wind major project; Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania; and the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The Local Government Association of Tasmania was also consulted.

This bill ensures that the major projects assessment process for the North East Wind project will provide adequate information for proper assessment while protecting culturally-sensitive information from public disclosure. I commend the bill to the House.

[3.11 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give some comments on the Land Use Planning and Approval (Sensitive Disclosures) Bill 2025. I say from the outset that Labor will be supporting what we see as a sensible measure. Sometimes when legislation is passed, some projects fall through the gap or are grandfathered, and so this bill cleans up one project that was not captured by the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment Act 2022* which, as the minister said in his second reading speech, introduced provisions allowing certain sensitive

matters to be concealed from the public during the major projects assessment process. This includes culturally sensitive Aboriginal heritage information.

We have no problems with removing the location of culturally sensitive Aboriginal heritage information from planning. The Aboriginal community would not like certain things publicised. We have seen in the past, unfortunately, Aboriginal cultural heritage vandalised on the west coast. I suppose the petroglyphs on the west coast are probably one example where, shamefully, Aboriginal cultural heritage was vandalised.

I know that this is something that is also present in, for example, the Tasmanian World Heritage areas. I know that some bushwalking tracks, for example, have been diverted to avoid people stumbling upon Aboriginal heritage and that is for the protection of the Aboriginal heritage. There is nothing untoward with this, but simply there is some Aboriginal heritage that should remain hidden from view - not the exact term, but locations of certain objects should not be publicised; things like graves, things like petroglyphs, things like culturally significant sites. Unfortunately, these areas can be vandalised, and the Aboriginal community and their artefacts should be protected.

We have no problems with this bill. Without the legislative change, the proponent in this particular project - that has been missed due to the timing of the legislative change - would have to disclose, during the public assessment process, the location of culturally significant sites. That is not in the state's best interests. It is not in the Aboriginal community's best interests. This is a bit of a cleanup.

The North East Wind project was already declared before the sensitive matters provision came into effect in 2023 and this is the only project, as outlined. There are not that many major projects declared, and the North East Wind project is the only major project that will be affected by these changes. We do not have a problem with it and we will be supporting it.

This does raise some issues that are not directly relevant to the Aboriginal heritage aspects. What this actually highlights is that the North East Wind project was declared in 2022. This legislation was passed in 2022 and declared in 2023. It has taken two years for this legislative fix-up - I suppose because of the overlapping times - to actually be corrected. Three years from when the project was declared a major project, we are only now seeing legislative change required to prevent the disclosure of Aboriginal heritage issues. Three years after a declaration, two years down the track after the act was put in place, only now are we seeing the legislative change. There is a bit of a delay there.

I suppose the government has not had to bring this before, because the North East Wind project - we know that under this government, wind projects take forever to actually get into the planning process. It is an indictment on the government that - thankfully they have not had to have brought this legislation forward sooner, or thankfully there has not actually been a North East Wind project presented to a council where all that Aboriginal heritage information would have to be disclosed, because it is really hard to build wind farms in Tasmania. It takes a very long time, despite being a major project. I believe that is, in effect, not a good look for the government. This legislation, fortunately, comes in time so that these sensitive Aboriginal heritage matters are not disclosed, but the government really has to do better when it comes to getting wind farms through their planning process, even if they are a major project.

I also ask the question of the minister: who in the Aboriginal community did this government have discussions with about this particular legislation? My understanding, from my colleague Mr Willie having discussions with the Aboriginal community, is that this was not well discussed.

I want to know how much discussion and consultation happened with the Aboriginal community, and with which members of the Aboriginal community and when, because I am not aware of this being widely discussed within the Aboriginal community. Not that there is a problem, but I think the Aboriginal community would have liked to have this raised. I am just clearing that out as an issue. Who did the government consult with from the Aboriginal community? When did it happen and were they involved in the delivery of this bill?

With those comments, I say again that Labor will be supporting this bill.

Recognition of Visitors

[3.18 p.m.]

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Just as the member for Clark, Ms Burnet, is coming to the dispatch box, I welcome up in the gallery the second group of students from Leighland Christian School in Ulverstone. Welcome to the Parliament of Tasmania.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms BURNET (Clark) - I rise to speak on behalf of the Greens in relation to this rather straightforward amendment to LUPAA, the Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Sensitive Disclosures) Bill 2025. I thank the minister for bringing this to the House. I also thank the state planning office for the briefing and any such briefings on planning. I love them. Thank you very much.

We have heard that this is specific to the North East Wind project, so it is a very specific amendment relating to something that was approved as a major project before the sensitive disclosures were part and parcel of that major project thinking. The minister says that this bill ensures that the major projects assessment process for the North East Wind project will provide adequate information for proper assessment while protecting culturally sensitive information from public disclosure.

The bill is fixing a technicality for this project with any future sensitive information that must be assessed as part of the major project, and not projects already submitted during the process thus far. We are up to that point where the next tranche of information is required for assessment and the sensitive disclosure of Aboriginal heritage sites is needing to be considered. It is probably not all that surprising that it comes to us now when we are at this part of the assessment process.

I thank my colleague, Mr Bayley, for reminding me that the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* has still not been updated. It is four years since the government suggested that they would be updating the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*. There is certainly work to be done by this government to ensure that Aboriginal artefacts and Aboriginal heritage are properly protected, rather than maybe protected.

As I said, the bill is fixing a technicality for this project with any future sensitive information that must be assessed as part of this major project, and not projects already submitted. The bill, as the minister has indicated in his second reading speech, is to capture sensitive Aboriginal heritage and not to disclose the location of any objects unless the relevant Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania are consulted. The North East Wind project was declared a major project in 2022 before the sensitive disclosure was introduced in 2023. It is correcting a discrepancy; it is a matter of timing, if you like.

Good planning is very important - strategic planning and statutory planning for specific projects. We have before the House today something that specifically relates to a particular major project. Good legislation will not look at every possibility or every nuance, but it will try to take in everything it needs to from the outset, rather than having to amend through legislation or regulation along the way.

Sometimes, these things cannot be helped, as we see with this current example, but it is important that there is robust consideration when making legislation. Good lawmaking is also very important for the Tasmanian public to have faith in the rigour of what is passed by this parliament. This particular LUPAA amendment regarding sensitive disclosures is particularly important to the Aboriginal community and to that greater heritage as time goes by.

Not only is good lawmaking very important, but also good process. It is a hallmark of a government to start a process and continue through to the end of that process where it should. The government relies on how robust the law is and public servants' frank and fearless advice to government in order to undertake an assessment of, say, a major project. The public needs to have absolute confidence in the government starting a process that they can have input into - a process that is listened to and incorporated into the end product in order to legitimise the outcome in the eyes of the public. It is very important that occurs when any project is considered, particularly in a planning context, after the government carries through with the chosen process.

What have we seen most recently? We have a case in point when we look to the Macquarie Point stadium process. Last night the Greens and Ms Johnston had a briefing about the proposed enabling legislation that the government has now chosen, and it is essentially abandoning the Project of State Significance process halfway through this process. The process was chosen by the government and now it is being abandoned by the government.

I think what that does is undermine the confidence of the community, the broader Tasmanian public and the broader Tasmanian community. We have an opportunity to do things well, but when we abandon those processes to get a model that suits the government of the day, then we abandon quite a lot of hope by the community who want to see a good process and a good outcome at the end of it. How can the public have any faith in a government that changes processes midway through when they do not like the answers being exposed throughout that process?

In the case before us, the amendment to sensitive disclosures, the set way of assessment and ensuring protection of important Aboriginal heritage is clearly set out with consultation with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania. Simple, clear steps - better with updates to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*, and we have made that point but there are clear and simple steps that add to this or corrects this legislation, if you like, in this particular case with the North East Wind project.

The government would do well to remember these steps in future legislation so that faith can be restored in their approach to important planning matters, such as the development assessment panels that will come before us yet again, such as enabling legislation for matters like Stony Rise or proposed enabling legislation where there is no social licence, eroding Tasmania's legislative processes and, ultimately, the legitimacy of the government. It is important to make law with rigour, on advice from public servants.

The Greens also urge the government to ensure important updates to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*.

We will support this bill, but I made those points because those things are important in our overall understanding and how we do planning in this state.

[3.27 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Housing, Planning and Consumer Affairs) - Deputy Speaker, there were only a couple of questions I was able to identify there.

Dr Broad asked why it has taken the government years to get this correct in legislation. Our government sought appropriate solutions to this matter when it was raised with us by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, including any avenue that would not require legislative amendment, which makes sense. On advice, our government is now making the appropriate legislative amendment to correct the issue, and I am pleased it is receiving the support of this place.

Importantly, there has been zero delay to the proponent in any way, as they currently move through the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) assessment, which is a federal matter, and the broader Major Projects process.

I am pleased to hear Dr Broad's indication that those opposite will be supporting legislation like our government's automatic eligibility for large renewable energy projects going through the Major Projects pathway. I am looking forward to bringing that back to the House because we want to see large renewable energy developments get out of the ground faster. Our reform in this space will help future-proof our economy for years to come.

I was also asked about what consultation was undertaken. As I mentioned during my second reading speech, consultation on this bill was undertaken with those directly affected: the proponent of the North East Wind major project, Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The Local Government Association of Tasmania was also consulted.

The 2022 amendment bill for major projects included full public consultation to introduce the sensitive matters aspect of the assessment process at the request of Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, which represented broader views of the Aboriginal community, calling for greater protection of Aboriginal relics and greater respect for culture. The Aboriginal community did not voice any concern with the bill at the time, as far as we have seen through the representations. The bill simply brings the intent of the 2022 bill into the operation for one additional major project that has not yet been determined, but was declared prior to the 2022 bill coming into effect. As the broader Aboriginal community did not object to the 2022 bill, it is considered that they would be comfortable with the terms of the bill, which has been reinforced by the request from Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania to prepare this bill.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

TASMANIAN COMMUNITY FUND AMENDMENT BILL 2024 (No. 54)

Second Reading

Recommenced from 13 March 2025 (page 94)

[3.31 p.m.]

Mr BEHRAKIS - Deputy Speaker, I am not sure how much time I had left from last time, but I will be brief in summarising what was said when we previously debated this.

At the end of the day, we all support the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF). It does fantastic work. This bill is intended to ensure it continues to do that work, prioritising and focusing on delivering initiatives for community groups that rely on and benefit from the funding the TCF provides, rather than what I believe many people in the community agree might not be an appropriate use of that sort of money for political purposes.

I will not say too much more on that. This is more about correcting governance issues than being punitive. As was suggested when this was last debated, we all support the TCF. We want to make sure it can do its work as best as possible and make sure it is contributing to initiatives that benefit the community and the community interests, as I believe it mainly does.

I understand some amendments have been foreshadowed that might, hopefully, address some of the issues raised in the Chamber. Other than that, I commend the bill.

[3.32 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Community Services) - Deputy Speaker, as Mr Behrakis mentioned, I have a suite of amendments to the bill that was put forward, which I will seek the House's agreement to consider in the Committee stage. I will circulate those amendments now. I will not speak about the amendments directly, but I would like them to be in hand as I make my summing up.

I thank all of those who have taken the time to speak about this bill. We have heard from members about the importance of the Tasmanian Community Fund and the value of its support for projects that benefit our Tasmanian community.

Members recalled that the intent of establishing the TCF in the first place was to benefit the people of Tasmania and be independent from government. This amendment bill aims to strengthen the independence of the TCF by preventing the fund from providing grants for political purposes, amongst other matters which strengthen its governance and accountability, and its ability to be scrutinised by this parliament and by the community it serves and whose funds it distributes.

It was raised in the contributions that by including the terms 'for any other political purpose', the Tasmanian Community Fund may be prevented from funding projects where governments and political parties have previously made commitments. Neighbourhood

Houses, of which there is no greater supporter than the Tasmanian Liberal government, was raised as an example. The word 'political' has its ordinary meaning as defined in the dictionary:

> Relating to or connected with a political party or its principles, aims, activities, et cetera.

Conversely, 'apolitical' is defined in the Macquarie Dictionary as:

> Having no interest in political issues and not involving obligations to a particular political party.

The intention of the bill is to prevent the Tasmanian Community Fund from funding anything that is not apolitical. The term 'apolitical' is used in the *State Service Act 2000* in the first State Service principle, which states that:

> The State Service is apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial, ethical and professional manner.

We want the Tasmanian Community Fund to act apolitically and to fund apolitically. In recognition of the definitional concerns that were raised during the debate regarding what a political purpose is and who decides that, I will be proposing a particular amendment addressing this in the Committee process, and I have circulated that.

The proposed amendments will also address the inclusion of the words, 'such matters as prescribed'. The *Tasmanian Community Fund Act 2005* already provides for the making of regulations under section 12. 'The use of such matters as are prescribed' is a very common legislative drafting technique that would enable regulations to be made with respect to the grants management framework and the strategic plan - the new sections that are being added to the act.

There has been a regulation-making power under section 12 for the last 20 years without any regulations being made. However, I have heard the concerns raised regarding these inclusions and what they could mean, and we will address those concerns with proposed amendments that have already been circulated.

Regarding the assertion from at least one speaker that the Department of Premier and Cabinet would be the arbiter of what is or is not a political purpose, I note that under the existing act, the TCF act, the board has made arrangements with the secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet for persons employed in the department to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the fund.

Under section 7(7) of the TCF act, the board has the power to do anything necessary or convenient to perform its functions. This includes the seeking of legal advice in respect of whether a grant directly relates to a political position or political campaign, or is for any other political purpose. The board also has the power to seek clarification from the minister or any other person the board considers appropriate as to whether a grant directly relates to a political position or political campaign.

The board has the power to satisfy itself on the purpose of a grant in any way it sees fit and is not bound to follow any advice or clarification sought. The only thing that limits what

the board can do is that under section 7(5) of the act, the board must act honestly, independently and in the interests of the community. If the board is uncertain about the purpose of a grant, section 7(7) enables the board to make a request to the minister and ask that the minister seek clarification from Crown law in respect of whether a grant would fall under proposed new section 7(2A).

Regarding strategic planning - another new insertion into the act in the bill - the TCF operates as a service for the Tasmanian community, providing community funds in accordance with community needs. Therefore, the community should be consulted on how the TCF plans to do this through the development of its strategic plan.

I think that the issue raised was that it was an unusual requirement for us to require the TCF board to provide public exposure of its draft plan before finalising it and adopting it. This consultation enables the TCF to further understand what is important to the community they are serving, and enables them to consider more and varied options, particularly in relation to funding of community-focused organisations.

Equally, exposure of a draft strategic plan also enables the community whose funds these are to see what the TCF intends to do with them. This is an important part of public scrutiny and also the scrutiny from the parliament, if it were to take an interest in a matter or the performance of the TCF, to be able to look at the delivery of grants by way of comparison with the strategic plan that was provided and that was taken through a community process.

The TCF act requires the board to ensure that its functions and powers are performed and exercised in the best interests of the Tasmanian community. Consulting on its strategic plan ensures that the TCF is aware of what the community believes is in its best interests.

I can advise the member who raised this matter that under section 66 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, each council is to consult with the community of its municipal area when preparing a proposed strategic plan. Under section 10 of the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Act 2002*, the board is to release its draft strategic master plan for public consultation.

TMAG, Stadiums Tasmania and Brand Tasmania all have the option of consulting on their draft strategic plans. Under the new *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024*, the minister has to consult with the public on the draft Tasmanian disability inclusion plan. Public exposure of draft strategic plans is a commonplace process in good governance for public matters of this kind.

As members have pointed out, the TCF is a unique organisation with a purpose to provide funding for community organisations and projects that support the community.

The provision regarding the grants management framework relates to ensuring that the TCF has a recognised administrative process and policy in relation to grants. The Auditor-General's report concluded that the assessment of the Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition (AICR) grant was not conducted in accordance with an established and documented grants management framework. The requirement to audit the framework ensures that the TCF continues to apply sound administrative practices to the management of its grants and identifies any areas that could be improved or addressed.

I commend the Tasmanian Community Fund board for acting in response to the recommendations within the Tasmanian Audit Office report. I have been advised by the TCF board that it considers actions against the Tasmanian Audit Office report recommendations as being completed. However, without legislative change there is no requirement for the TCF to accept and act upon the recommendations. The amendment bill ensures that the TCF board must act.

Although legislative change was not specifically recommended in the Tasmanian Audit Office report, in my briefings with the Auditor-General, I was advised that the only way to ensure that the TCF board acted upon the Auditor-General's findings would be to change the act. As the Auditor-General's report states, a 2020 internal audit report made recommendations to develop and implement a process to ensure compliance with section 7 of the TCF act which sets out the purposes for which grants can be made, to record rationales for its final determinations of grant applications and to implement a structured risk assessment and management process.

These recommendations were accepted by the TCF board at the time, but they were not applied to the Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition (AICR) grant. Amending the act is the only way that we have as a parliament to ensure that the TCF board meets its obligations to develop, document and audit its grants management framework.

As I foreshadowed earlier, I am proposing some amendments to address particular concerns raised by members. I have circulated those amendments, and I have a copy for you, Mr O'Byrne, now that you have joined us. I have consulted also with the TCF board chair, who has advised that the proposed amendments are supported by the TCF board.

I recognise that this has been a difficult period for the Tasmanian Community Fund and its board members, and my intention is to bring these amendments to conclude matters in relation to the Auditor-General's report into the TCF grant of funds to the Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition to enable the TCF board and its renewed membership to move forward in clear air, to engage with the community and ensure that it develops a relationship with the community of Tasmania that informs its future direction, so that everyone can be confident, as I am, in the members of the board and in the governing documents and guidance provided by the parliament on behalf of Tasmanians, which is what this act does.

I seek the Chamber's support for this bill to proceed into the committee stage, at which point I will bring the amendments.

On that basis I commend the bill.

Bill read the second time.

TASMANIAN COMMUNITY FUND AMENDMENT BILL 2024 (No. 54)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 -
Section 7 amended (Functions of Board)

Mr JAENSCH - Chair, I have circulated the amendments. At clause 5, I propose the following amendments in response to matters raised in the earlier stages of the debate. I move -

Page 4, paragraph (a), proposed new subsection 2A.

Leave out that subsection

Insert instead the following subsection:

(2A) The board may not provide a grant under subsection (1A) if the board believes, on reasonable grounds, that the grant is or may be for a political purpose.

I am speaking to the amendment now. The amendment is designed to require the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) board itself to determine if the grant would be considered to be for a political purpose. You recall in the debate that the question was who decides that, how is it defined, what could it be, was it open-ended, could it reply to neighbourhood houses, et cetera, and who was going to be the arbiter of that?

The nature of the amendment I am making is to ensure that it is something that the board itself must give consideration to and satisfy itself on, and that the board must ensure that it has reasonable grounds for determining that a grant is not for a political purpose. If the board ensures it has reasonable grounds, it does not need to be concerned about breaching the act if someone else believes that the grant has been made for political purposes. If the board was to make a decision without reasonable grounds, the decision could be challenged in law.

In this situation, the person challenging the decision would have to prove that there were reasonable grounds and that the board knew of those grounds. Additionally, this would prevent the board from ignoring any obvious evidence that a grant is being made for a political purpose. The change aligns with the intention of the Auditor-General's recommendations, which stipulate that the Tasmanian Community Fund should conduct and document due diligence, including recording the legislative basis, key considerations, conflicts of interest, assessment of risks and any advice relied upon in reaching its decisions, and to adopt better practice grants management to objectively assess the relative merit of grants, with clear reasons why applications are approved or denied.

I am satisfied that this amendment will address concerns raised about the term 'political purpose' while providing some additional rigour to ensure careful consideration of whether a grant is for a political purpose, and while still creating a mandatory legislative requirement that prevents the board from making a grant for political purpose. I reiterate that this amendment was developed in consultation with the TCF board and the chair. The chair discussed this matter with the full board of the TCF at one of their meetings, and I am advised that they are comfortable with this, that it satisfies their requirement for clarity, and that they are supportive of this amendment to the bill.

This issue of political purpose, which the act itself is silent on at the moment, is quite central to the entire matter that we are here to deal with. These are the community's funds that

we are talking about. We have an unelected group of people whose job it is to distribute those funds in the community's best interests, but they are still the community's funds. The community has an expectation about how they will be distributed fairly, for purpose, where there is need, where there is good purpose. This is not something that the government is seeking to overreach or influence or politicise in any way, regardless of the subject matter that led the TCF board's decision-making to be brought before the Audit Office, and regardless of the people who were involved on the TCF board at the time or who are now, most of whom I know personally and have great respect for.

The issue that we have is that there was a decision made by that board created under this act to use half a million dollars of the community's money to influence the outcome of a referendum that every member of that community had the opportunity to vote on. We believe that this is not what the community would expect. Nearly every elected person who I have spoken to considers that this is something that would send off alarm bells in their minds as a person responsible for and accountable to the community, for the proper use of its resources and funds.

The issue we have is that it is an independent body. This act is the only instrument through which this parliament can convey the community's expectations about how the board should act and for what purposes its funds should be used. That is why we think this is central to the amendments we are making. There is a range of other amendments in the bill that have not been commented on broadly, but which add rigour, structure and good governance.

This is the point at which we can give voice to the requirement for our board to be mindful that it is the public's money that it is distributing, and that the public has a right to know and an interest in how the funds are distributed. In their best interests, we need to ensure that the question marks that were raised in the Auditor-General's report are matters that the current board and future boards need to give consideration to. We are not telling them what they must do. We are saying that like us, as decision-makers influencing the use of public resources, you have to think about this, you have to be mindful, you have to make reasoned decisions, and you need to be able to be scrutinised and account for your decisions, particularly when it comes to the use of these funds on behalf of the community.

With that, I will put this amendment and invite other speakers on it. I believe it is simple and I believe it addresses some of those issues of ambiguity, definitions, and potential overreach by making it a matter that the board is required to give consideration to when there is a question. Thank you.

Ms ROSOL - Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the minister for his explanation of this amendment. The Greens remain of the opinion that this bill is unnecessary. I think that the debate that we saw in the second reading debate highlighted the political nature of this bill and the sense of punishment that was part of it.

Having said that, I have spoken with the chair of the TCF board and I understand that the board have reached a decision that they are comfortable with this amendment. We do not think it is necessary to have this section in the bill at all, but as the board are comfortable with it, we will support this amendment. It certainly makes it better than what was there before. It is clearer and it helps maintain some of the independence for the board with the words 'if the board believes on reasonable grounds that the grant is or may be for a political purpose'. It gives the

decision-making back to the board, which we think is important. Should this bill pass, we think that this is an important change to the language in this amendment.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you, I will be brief. I indicate that I will be supporting the amendment. I will not speak on every amendment, I will just make substantive contribution on this amendment and reflect on my second reading speech, which outlined what I believed were legitimate concerns that were being raised by a broad range of groups, including the chair of the Tasmanian Community Fund, in relation to some of the original bill and what it meant for its operation and independence. I did reflect on the origins of this fund and the origins of the important work that this organisation has done over many years and its guiding purpose. I asked the minister to reflect and to consult, and it is very clear from this series of amendments that he has done that. I want to acknowledge the work that he has done historically in these sorts of cases. Sometimes a minister wants to bring legislation through; you want to stick it through. I believe this was a sensible approach by the minister and I want to acknowledge that.

In my discussions with the chair of the Tasmanian Community Fund, they have considered the amendments, they have had long discussions about it and they believe that it is workable and acceptable to them. It also enables them to do the very important work that they are doing, not only in the short term, but the broader piece of work that was flagged to me and I flagged in my second reading contribution, regarding their community consultation. They are not revisioning or reimagining, but they are reaffirming a community consultation for their future purpose. Understanding the role between the TCF, the minister's office, the public sector and the parliament and bringing that back to having a really good discussion, I believe, has been worthwhile.

We can move beyond the controversy that we have seen over the last 12 to 18 months. I believe it is important that we do that, and the work of the TCF is above politics and not questioned. I want to acknowledge that the minister has listened, has taken on board the second reading contributions, has consulted with the TCF and through this amendment has given effect to their wishes. I know he is passionate about the work of the TCF and he wants to ensure that he is working with them, not against them, and I believe this amendment allows you to do that.

I will be personally supporting this contribution, the amendments as outlined and the amendments that will be outlined, and I want to thank the minister for his work.

Ms BROWN - Reflecting on the minister's comments on his summing up, the minister is indeed very wrong. The Tasmanian Labor Party is the greatest supporter of Neighbourhood Houses and I remember -

Mr O'Byrne - Point of order, the independent member for Franklin has dibs on that one.

Ms BROWN - With that, I look forward to the Budget and that comment. Reflecting on our last debate, we saw a number of speakers get up and not even touch on any of the clauses that were in this bill. They instead attacked the fund directly and made personal attacks on some of the people in this room. However, I have also spoken with the chair and the board, and they seem very comfortable and confident with this amendment. I am too. Labor will be supporting that amendment.

Mrs BESWICK - Thank you, minister, for bringing this debate on and for being bold enough to do what is necessary for the legitimacy of this fund and its organisation. To be

honest, I was shocked and confounded by the strong response in this Chamber to the proposed changes aimed at greater transparency and accountability in the second reading contributions.

On the 13 March, I listened in confusion to the debate over the use of the words, 'political purpose'. Many in this Chamber claimed it unnecessary, but the truth is the error was made. The decision to spend public money supporting one side of a political debate did not pass what I prefer to call the 'kitchen table test' because I do not spend a lot of time in a pub. I suspect the changes in the membership of the board have given the organisation a reset.

We may have the most straight and professional board members upholding the traditions and making sure they meet the expectations of the community now, today, but what about in 10 years' time? What about in 20 years' time, when this event has fallen from memory and the history of why the policy was written the way it is today, what boundaries the wording was there to create or why the process was implemented, have been forgotten?

The current board is implementing changes to their policies and procedures which had obviously become a little lax and not kept pace with good governance and best practice. Policies and procedures are supposed to go through a rigorous and regular review. Usually every couple of years operations staff give them a once-over and refresh and resubmit them for consideration with the board. Once the current board today has been turned over, the current staff have turned over, what will be in place to make sure the wording in the policy does not shift to something less defined?

Many in this place often talk about the need for transparency and accountability standards, yet when we do try to improve procedures, it gets criticised. When the legislation is enacted, the resulting effect on the TCF board will be to develop a procedure and a policy which reflect the intention of what the minister is expressing. Is that not why we have second reading speeches: to be used in the steering mechanism in these cases?

In this debate, the minister has stated:

> As advised in drafting the bill, the amendments do not define 'political', as it was not deemed appropriate to attempt to provide an exhaustive definition of all matters that may be considered political.

And:

> The proposed amendments do not seek to limit the independence of the TCF board. They are intended to explicitly articulate the parliament's expectations in relation to the prudent and appropriate management of public funds the TCF administers on behalf of the Tasmanian community. The amendments bring the TCF board's accountability and governance obligations into line with those of the statutory boards with similar responsibility for public funds.

We must remember we are here, and specifically on this amendment, because the Auditor-General made the following recommendations that the TCF:

(1) Conducts and documents due diligence, including recording the legislative basis, key considerations, conflicts of interest, assessment of risks and any advice relied upon in reaching its decisions.

(2) Adopts better practice grant management to objectively assess the relative merits of grants with clear reasons why applications are approved or denied.

(3) Provides regular guidance, training and clear directions to staff to ensure they are able to comply with Tasmanian State Service principles of remaining impartial and apolitical while following the board's directions.

(4) Adopts better practice record management in accordance with the archives act and associated guidance.

The fact that the Auditor-General recommended these actions is substantial. These are quite scathing and not the usual recommendations after an audit.

I have applied for funding with the TCF on behalf of organisations and I have been successful, so I know the application process is robust. The forms make sense for a competitive grant application and assessment rounds and this gives me confidence that there is a robust decision-making framework sitting behind the grants delivery.

We know this organisation can do things well and we know that they contribute an enormous amount to the Tasmanian community. I do commend them for their diligence and I commend the parliament of the day for the foresight in setting it up, but it is an expectation of the Tasmanian community that the system of funding stands up to proper financial practices and the decisions made meet the community need.

Funding on one side of a referendum debate has not stood up to the kitchen or the pub test by any stretch of the imagination. The public were in absolute uproar and totally confused as to how this could occur. I am confused as to how the board thought it was okay, at least in the form and intention of the funding arrangement which brings me back to the argument: if it has happened before, it can happen again.

The clause as originally written was quite clunky and very awkward, and we were uncomfortable with that. The amendment we have today is a lot better. With the original, everyone seemed to think that it was okay to vote against it altogether. We seemed to decide that we should, if we had a similar occurrence occur in 10 years' time - I do not know what that might look like, but if we had a repeat, the story that would be in the paper the next day would be, 'I told you so.' Why did the government not fix it? Why did we not take the opportunity to fix it here today? Why did we allow the public funds to get wasted? Where was the risk-mitigation strategy that we should have put in place - because this is what we are talking about: dealing with an issue and mitigating a risk. The TCF was never intentioned to support political flights of fancy and to engage in a political debate.

Perhaps we could have found wording we were looking for; something about activities which would give one side of a debate an advantage. I think the minister has found it in the updated wording which we are talking about today, but I certainly would not want this clause to mean that the organisation could not fund an accessibility platform which would enable people in Tasmania to engage in the political sphere.

The TCF board has been content with this amendment and it is much better wording, so I am very supportive of the concept, and I am supportive of the bill in general. I thank the minister for bringing it forward.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr JAENSCH - Thank you, colleagues, for your support of the first amendment. The second amendment is:

> Page 5, paragraph B, proposed new paragraph AB.
>
> After the words 'act independently,'
>
> *Insert* the word 'apolitically'

so that the amended sentence would read:

> … act independently, apolitically, professionally, impartially and in the public interest when performing its functions and exercising its powers.

This amendment inserts the word 'apolitically', with the meaning that any action taken by the Tasmanian Community Fund under the act would need to be apolitical. The term 'apolitical' is in use in the *State Service Act 2000* within State Service principle (1)(a), which states 'the State Service is apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial, ethical and professional manner'.

This amendment draws the distinction between the purpose of the grant and the way the decisions are made by the board. This is a bookend to the issue of the board's determination of whether the proposal they have before them could be construed as being of a political nature, and whether their own funding decision-making could be construed as exercising a political bias or intention of some kind.

I believe it is not without precedent, given the *State Service Act*. It is a familiar concept and it is a reasonable expectation that members act in this way. I do not have anything further to say about that amendment, but I put the amendment to the House.

Ms ROSOL - I would like to say and have on the record that we do not believe 'apolitically' is needed in this case. If the board is acting independently, professionally, impartially and in the public interest when performing its functions and exercising its powers, it will be apolitical.

I want to comment here that the grant that was made that sparked this whole bill was apolitical, because at the time every single political party supported the one stance on the referendum. They were not siding with one side of politics. Labor, Liberal and the Greens were all united in their position on that.

For the record, I do not believe 'apolitically' needs to be in this part of the bill. Having spoken with the board, I understand that they are comfortable with it and so we will, in respect to them, support this amendment despite thinking it is unnecessary.

Ms BROWN - I will be very brief in my comment. I think the term 'apolitically' is quite necessary for the amendment. It brings some rounding out to that part of the bill. As the board is very comfortable with it, Labor is as well.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 6 -
Section 7a and 7b inserted

Mr JAENSCH - This and the following amendment deal with the same issue, which is the inclusion of the words 'such other matters as are prescribed', the first one being on page 6, proposed new section 7A, subsection (2), paragraph (d) - to leave out this paragraph. This was a matter that was raised by a number of speakers. I advised at the time, and am again now, that this is a fairly standard inclusion where a new section is being added to an act to ensure that there is provision for the making of regulations if so needed.

It is noted that the act itself, under section 12, currently has the capacity for regulations to be made in relation to the act. There were concerns expressed by various members here - the current provision to make amendments, as I understand it, has never been used. Therefore, if we were to omit this reference from the bill, it does not alter the purpose of the bill. It would just make it a more arduous process through legislation, potentially coming back here to the parliament to add a minor or administrative matter that could otherwise be dealt with in regulation. It is neither here nor there.

For the sake of a clean sweep here, my proposal would be that both references in the bill, in sections 7A and 7B, the words 'such other matters as are prescribed' are removed. These are two amendments that are the same argument, at two points:

Page 6, proposed new section 7A, subsection (2), paragraph (d)

leave out '(d) is to include such matters as are prescribed'

and

Page 8, proposed new section 7B, subsection (2), paragraph (a), subparagraph (iv)

leave out '(d) is to include such matters as are prescribed'

Ms BROWN - I think it is quite necessary to remove those from the bill, understanding that there are other mechanisms that regulations can be made. However, it might come as a surprise to the minister or indeed the member who made the comment in his contribution about that committee, but I am on the committee, so I have seen the type of regulations that this government tries to put through. It has ended up back in the in-tray of some of those ministers because we have seen some quite rubbish regulations come through, so any -

Mr Jaensch - Is that their subordinate legislation?

Ms BROWN - It is indeed. Why would we provide this government any mechanisms to go through regulation rather than legislation so then we can all have our voice on it? That is why I found it quite unnecessary to have those mechanisms and I am glad to see that you have taken them out of this bill. I will be supporting the amendment.

Ms ROSOL - I will just stay here very briefly to say the Greens support this amendment because we believe that it is important to remove the mechanism for regulations to be applied to this part of the principal act. Anything that increases, supports and ensures the independence of the TCF board is essential and good, so we support this amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 to 9 agreed to.

Title agreed to

Bill reported with amendment.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Third Reading Forthwith

Mr JAENSCH - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the bill from being read the third time forthwith.

The SPEAKER (Ms O'Byrne) - The question is -

> That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the bill being now read the third time.

The House divided -

AYES 28	NOES 5
Mr Abetz	Ms Badger
Mr Barnett	Mr Bayley
Mr Behrakis	Ms Rosol
Mrs Beswick	Dr Woodruff
Dr Broad	Ms Burnet (Teller)
Ms Brown	
Ms Butler	
Ms Dow	
Mr Ellis	
Mr Fairs	
Mr Farrell	
Mr Ferguson	
Ms Finlay	
Mr Garland	
Ms Haddad	
Mr Jaensch	

Mr Jenner
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Pentland
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Street
Mr Willie
Mr Winter
Mr Wood
Ms Johnston (Teller)

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER - The question is -

That the bill be read a third time.

Mrs BESWICK - Point of order, honourable Speaker.

The SPEAKER - I beg your pardon?

Mrs BESWICK - I have just read that a division frivolously claimed, if in the opinion of the Speaker -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Can I just say, before anybody says anything else, this person read her Standing Orders and I want to hear it.

Mrs BESWICK - Division frivolously claimed:

> If in the opinion of the Speaker, the division is frivolously or vexatiously claimed, the Speaker may take the vote of the House by calling the members who support and who challenge the decision successfully to rise in their places and -

Blah, blah, blah.

It also says in one of the other ones that:

> If a second division is demanded following an earlier division and limited or non-intervening debate has taken place, the Speaker may, if there is unanimous agreement, order the doors to be locked and the vote taken.

The SPEAKER (Ms O'Byrne) - Thank you. Your first point of order is not right. It is not vexatious. Your second is correct. Therefore, I am happy to order the doors be locked and the vote be taken. The question before the House is -

That the bill be read a third time.

The House divided -

AYES 28	NOES 5
Mr Abetz	Mr Bayley
Mr Barnett	Ms Burnet
Mr Behrakis	Ms Rosol
Mrs Beswick	Dr Woodruff
Dr Broad	Ms Badger (Teller)
Ms Brown	
Ms Butler	
Ms Dow	
Mr Ellis	
Mr Fairs	
Mr Farrell	
Mr Ferguson	
Ms Finlay	
Mr Garland	
Ms Haddad	
Mr Jaensch	
Mr Jenner	
Ms Johnston	
Ms Ogilvie	
Mrs Pentland	
Mrs Petrusma	
Mr Rockliff	
Mr Shelton	
Mr Street	
Mr Willie	
Mr Winter	
Mr Wood	
Mr O'Byrne (Teller)	

Bill read the third time.

JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (No. 14)

Second Reading

[4.31 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read a second time.

This bill contains amendments that update, clarify and improve four different acts, three of which are within my Justice portfolio and one that falls under the responsibility of the Minister for Housing, Planning and Consumer Affairs.

In September last year, I informed the House that I was obtaining advice on the avenues available to family members to access coronial records. One of the amendments in this bill is made in response to that advice.

I take this opportunity to again acknowledge the Westbrook family and their continued efforts to advocate for an improved coronial system in Tasmania. Their advocacy was born out of the tragic loss of Eden Westbrook. It is recognised that they provide a unique perspective on coronial processes in Tasmania. My heartfelt condolences remain with the Westbrooks.

The Coronial Division of the Magistrates Court has an important role to play in Tasmania's justice system. The remaining amendments in the bill arise from requests from the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the Director of Public Prosecutions and WorkSafe Tasmania within the Department of Justice.

I will now outline the reasons for each of the proposed amendments in turn. This bill amends the *Coroners Act* to insert section 58C that requires coronial records to be provided to the senior next of kin in certain circumstances. The *Coroners Act* specifies that the senior next of kin is the first available person in a list contained in section 3A of the act, commencing with the deceased's current spouse. Section 3 of the act defines 'spouse' as:

> *spouse* includes the other party to a significant relationship, within the meaning of the *Relationships Act* 2003

The act sets out the procedures for investigations and inquests by coroners and, in doing so, allocates various rights to the senior next of kin. It is, therefore, appropriate to extend the amendment to this person. Other persons may still apply for access to coronial records under rule 26 of the *Coroners Rules 2006*.

Under section 58C, the senior next of kin may apply in writing for a coronial record. The definition of a coronial record includes any record held by the court in relation to an investigation of a death under the *Coroners Act* and includes a post-mortem report, a document on the court's file and a transcript of recording of oral evidence given to the court. This definition includes all evidentiary material held by the court in relation to a coronial investigation of a death, including documents, photographs and other material of evidentiary value.

The definition also includes such records that can be lawfully provided to the court under this or any other act. That ensures that the court can obtain relevant information that it may not currently hold on the file to disclose to the senior next of kin. For example, this might include autopsy photographs held by the pathologist which informed the written report, but are not on the court file.

A coronial authority may not refuse a request unless satisfied on reasonable grounds that release of the coronial record is prohibited by the act or another act, such as 57 of the act, which, when appropriate, restricts publication of reports of proceedings or would be contrary to national security or personal security, or would prejudice the investigation of breaches of the

law, the administration of the law or a fair trial of a person. For example, it may be that certain information cannot be disclosed until related criminal proceedings are concluded.

In the event that release of the record would be refused on these grounds, the coronial authority may redact the record to the extent necessary to enable the record to be released.

The draft bill released for public consultation proposed an additional ground based on the impact to the health and wellbeing of the senior next of kin in receiving a coronial record. The draft proposed to refer a copy of the coronial record to a medical practitioner nominated by the senior next of kin. The intended purposes of this was to facilitate a discussion between the senior next of kin and medical practitioner about the record and provide an opportunity to discuss any medical terminology used. After the discussion, if the senior next of kin still wished to have a copy of the record, the medical practitioner could release it to them.

The bill before the parliament has been amended to remove this ground based on the feedback from Mr and Mrs Westbrook and consideration of submissions and approaches in other jurisdictions. This recognises that the question of whether to seek medical advice or counselling before viewing the records provided is ultimately a matter for the senior next of kin and not appropriate to mandate in the bill.

The bill was also amended, based on their feedback and with consideration of submissions and other jurisdictions, to require the coronial authority to apply to all coronial records, not just post-mortem records and reports.

I have personally met with Jason and Amanda Westbrook and I am grateful for the information they have shared with me and for the time they have taken to provide feedback on these amendments.

Since the bill was tabled, I have continued to consider these issues and now flag my intention to propose further amendments in the committee stage to ensure the rights of senior next of kin to appropriate records are promoted. These amendments will:

- replace the power to impose conditions on the use or release of the record with the power only to order that the record not be published, ensuring that use of records by senior next of kin is not subject to other kinds of restriction; and

- insert a ground to refuse a request for a record if the coroner is satisfied on reasonable grounds that it would be contrary to the public interest to release the record due to the release having an unreasonable intrusion on the privacy of another person other than the deceased person to which the request relates. The record can still be released in redacted form and in certain appeal provision to either the Chief Magistrate or the Supreme Court so a senior next of kin has a clearer process for review of a coroner's decision.

The amendments to the *Coroners Act* provide for a clear and direct right of access by senior next of kin to coronial records. This is essential in the spirit of open justice to ensure transparency, accountability and public confidence in our justice system.

I also hope that the provision of this material can provide some amount of closure to families following an investigation into a death.

I would like to express my appreciation for the hard work of the Chief Coroner, the coroners, the Coronial Division and many others involved in this jurisdiction. They do a great service to the community, with over 1000 reportable deaths investigated in 2023-24 and 31 inquests that year. They have worked to facilitate access to records under their current practices and rules and provide support to family members every day. I particularly note the great initiative of a dedicated coronial liaison officer who assists family members understand the coronial process and comes to terms with the grief and trauma of losing loved ones.

There have been understandable concerns in the community that the right balance of access to records has not been clearly provided for in the legislation to date. This bill gets the balance right to ensure access to these records by senior next of kin, acknowledging the sensitive and private nature of these records. I am pleased that this bill provides certainty and clarity to the law for the community and the court.

Amendments to the *Corrections Act 1995*: Part 3 of the bill makes minor technical amendments to update Sections 68 and 69 of the *Corrections Act*. These amendments reflect the repeal of Section 19 of the *Sentencing Act 1997* and commencement of its replacement Section 7 of the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021*.

Amendments to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020. Amendments to the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020* (TASCAT Act) - section 98 of the TASCAT Act is about representations of a party to proceedings. It says: a party to proceedings before TASCAT is entitled to appear personally, be represented by a lawyer or, with leave of TASCAT, be represented by another representative.

The bill amends section 98(3)(c) to allow a lawyer subject to disciplinary proceedings under the *Legal Profession Act 2007,* or corresponding law in another state or territory, to appear as a representative. This prohibition is proposed to be removed on the basis that disciplinary proceedings are not necessarily an indicator of wrongdoing, and it presupposes a finding of guilt before proceedings are resolved. Frivolous or vexatious disciplinary proceedings brought by third parties may unfairly impact upon lawyers, preventing them from appearing before TASCAT.

Under the *Legal Profession Act*, the Legal Profession Board of Tasmania may suspend a lawyer's practising certificate if they are subject to disciplinary proceedings. In those circumstances, a lawyer will not be eligible to appear under section 98(3)(a) of the TASCAT Act and this remains unchanged.

Amendments to the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*: Currently, under the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, a workers compensation certificate must be signed by a medical practitioner. The amendment to this act inserts section 77I, which provides that in certain circumstances a nurse practitioner may also sign a workers compensation certificate: a nurse practitioner may issue a certificate if they are employed in an emergency department of a hospital or other prescribed circumstance or for a prescribed purpose, and in issuing the certificate they are acting in accordance with that employment.

The bill also requires that the issue of any certificate be in accordance with a certificate protocol. A certificate protocol must be prepared by the Department of Health and approved by the Secretary of the Department of Health and the WorkCover Board. It will outline the circumstances or conditions under which a nurse practitioner may issue a certificate, for example: that a certificate be time limited or relate to new injuries that have not been previously treated. A certificate protocol will come into force seven days after it has been approved and must be published on the Department of Health's website. This provides time for nurse practitioners to be notified.

Nurse practitioners are advanced practice nurses educated to a Masters level in their specific specialty of practice. Nurse practitioners can access and treat patients, order diagnostic tests and write prescriptions.

This amendment will reduce duplication and service costs and result in a more efficient health system as patients will no longer require reassessment by a medical practitioner for the purposes of a workers compensation certificate. It will also improve the patient experience, as an injured worker will no longer have to wait to see a doctor for that important piece of paper.

I thank the members of the public who provided comments on this bill, as well as other justice stakeholders who were consulted during the drafting of this bill. Your feedback was carefully considered and is valued. It ensures that Tasmania's legislation is fit for purpose.

I commend the bill to the House. Thank you, Speaker.

[4.46 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Thank you, honourable Speaker, and I welcome the opportunity to speak on this bill today.

Before I do, I would like to acknowledge that the Attorney-General's office did get in touch with me and offer me a briefing on this bill. I thank them for that contact, and I apologise that there was not the opportunity in my diary to set up a briefing between the tabling and the debate on this bill, which means that I will probably ask a few more questions on the record than I otherwise may have done, so please forgive me for that level of detail.

As we heard the Attorney-General say, this bill amends four acts of parliament, and I will go through them one by one and put my questions on the record as I do so.

First, it amends the *Coroners Act* to provide for a clear and direct right of access by a senior next of kin to coronial records. As we heard the Attorney-General say, this has very much come out of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Jason and Amanda's daughter Eden Westbrook some years ago now.

I want to add my condolences and the condolences of the Labor opposition to the Westbrook family, and to recognise the terrible, tragic circumstances of their daughter's death and how devastating that has been for Eden's family, her loved ones, and for the broader community on the east coast of Tasmania and to commend them for the work that they have done in advocating for these changes. I know that there are other families as well who will benefit from these changes, or who have advocated to government about the deficiencies in the *Coroners Act* in terms of families and next of kin of deceased people being able to access coronial information.

I wanted to highlight that, partly through sharing some of what community organisations and members of the public have shared with the government on the draft bill. First, the Westbrook family - while I acknowledge that the Attorney-General has worked with them and met with them, they did say that they felt that they had not been appropriately consulted on the final wording of this bill.

They wrote to the government in March this year, so it could be that there have been subsequent meetings that have led to further amendments to the bill before tabling, but in March they said that they had only just become aware of the consultation and felt that they only had a day or two to consider this important issue as a significantly affected stakeholder, and they were disappointed in that.

They understood that the amendments were being put forward due to concerns that they had raised in obtaining critical autopsy photos in particular, and they went on to explain that they had problems with the drafting of the bill that had gone out for consultation. As far as I can see, the concern that they raised there has not been changed in the bill. As I said, I was not able to accommodate a briefing, although I appreciate the offer of the briefing.

It goes specifically to clause 4 on page 8 of the bill, which says that a coronial authority may not refuse a request. They questioned the use of the word 'may' and asked whether the word 'must' should instead be used to make it clear that it would not be within the scope of a coroner to decide to not release that information: albeit there are then some protections about possible reductions or refusals to release based on the things that go on to be explained in clause 4, such as if the release of that information would breach a law or possibly breach a law, or prejudice the enforcement of proper administration of the law or the fair trial of a person, or would breach national security or personal security.

Those things are understood, but I wondered if the Attorney-General could speak to those concerns that were raised by the Westbrook family in their submission on the consultation, specifically about the use of the word 'may' versus 'must', and also specifically about photos, because I understand that part of the trauma that was caused to the family was about the release of photos as well as other coronial documents.

I want to ask the Minister where the coroner may not concede to a request to release information to a senior next of kin. Your second reading speech, minister, goes to the fact that they would be able to make redactions to the extent necessary to not fall foul of those exceptions in the act about national security or breaches of the law or administration of the law or a fair trial for a person. I understand family or a senior next of kin might receive documents with redactions, and most people understand what that means and how to deal with the document that has redactions. It is clear that there has been information that, for one reason or another, is deemed not to be releasable, but I wondered what information a senior next of kin might be given when they receive information released under these changes if there are whole documents that have not been released.

In other words, they might receive some documents and some photographs but it might be that the coroner has had to make a determination not to release some information at all rather than releasing information with redactions. I am wondering whether or not the senior next of kin, in that kind of scenario, would receive information about the fact that other documents exist that have not been able to be released, and the grounds upon which that decision was made. Further, I wanted to ask whether or not there are appeal rights for people in those

circumstances. If a coroner has had to either reject information or not release information, what steps might an aggrieved party be able to take to challenge that decision if, indeed, those exist at all?

I note in the second reading and in the bill that the coronial authority will be able to impose conditions upon the release of the record that they consider to be reasonable in the circumstances, and that might include things like restrictions on the publication or use of the record. I wondered if the Attorney-General could speak to any work that has been done on what that might look like, and whether or not somebody would be prevented from disclosing information to other members of the family or loved ones.

I think it might be relevant, on that question, to share some of what the joint submission from Community Legal Centres Tasmania and Equality Tasmania said. They spoke specifically about the changes to the *Coroners Act*, and I share with the Chamber some of what they said:

> Family members and other senior next of kin want access to coronial records for a number of reasons. In the Eden Westbrook case, the family of the deceased have called for an inquest into her death for more than a decade. Evidence that the family believes would assist with the inquest has been withheld from them. Clarifying the circumstances in which a senior next of kin can access coronial records will provide transparency and accountability of decision-making and may assist in providing closure.
>
> Another reason why senior next of kin want to access coronial records, particularly the post-mortem report, is for medical reasons. Certainly there is no legislative requirement that the coroner provide the post-mortem report to a senior next of kin; however, in practice, it appears that if a senior next of kin requests a copy, the coroner will provide the copy to a general practitioner who will summarise the report for the senior next of kin.

They go on to explain the case of the death of Penny Whetton, who died in Tasmania. She was the wife of former senator, Janet Rice, who has spoken very generously and very publicly about the trauma that she experienced in having to access medical records concerning the death of her beloved wife, Penny Whetton - simply in trying to find out information that might be medically relevant to their children.

I understand that the Attorney-General will probably go to the explanation of the change that was made between the consultation draft and the final tabled bill regarding not having to provide that information to a doctor. I understand and support that change having been made, but I wondered if we can come back - in my very winding question - to where I began. That is, if a coroner releases information with restrictions on use, and those restrictions on use might be, for example, not sharing that information with other people, that could in effect lead to the same kind of problem arising, in that a senior next of kin, and in the hierarchy of the senior next of kin - a spouse is the most senior - might have information that is relevant to other people, children, or other people involved in the life of that deceased person, and might be prevented from sharing that information with that person.

I anticipate that that is not the intention of the bill, but I just wanted to put those concerns on the record, and to ask the Attorney-General what kind of conditions he anticipates might be put on the use of released information.

Further, as I am sure anybody who has lost a loved one has gone through, generally when somebody gets married, has a child or dies in a family, we tend to see the best and the worst in our loved ones. Unfortunately, when someone dies, sometimes it inflicts such an extraordinary tragedy on families and dealing with the affairs of a deceased loved one can really be so devastating for families.

I am sure the Chamber remembers making changes to the *Coroners Act* previously. There is a hierarchy of next of kin. A spouse is the most senior next of kin. If that person does not have a spouse - and there is some other wording about competing spouses - then it is a child who has reached the age of 18, followed by someone in a registered caring relationship with the deceased person, followed by a parent, then a sibling, and then the executor.

Sometimes those people may all exist, but only one of them can be deemed the senior next of kin. There may be conflicts between those people. I wondered what thought has been given to and what barriers there might be to releasing information to more than one person. For example, there might be estranged children of a deceased person, estranged from the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse is going to be the senior next of kin and may be able to apply for and receive information from the coronial authority, but may choose not to share that information with other people for whom it might be very pertinent and relevant, specifically a child, parent, or sibling.

I hope those questions make sense, and I do apologise. I would have asked many of them in the briefing had I been able to accommodate that, but I was not.

I also want to share some of what was said by Community Legal Centres Tasmania and Equality Tasmania in their submission. Members would know that there is also the ability for the coroner to recognise as a senior next of kin an Aboriginal person - and that is part (i) of section 3A which defines senior next of kin in the *Coroners Act*. That subsection reads:

> If the deceased person is an Aboriginal person, a person who, according to the customs and tradition of the community or group to which the person belongs, is an appropriate person.

It does have some provision for the recognition of cultural practice for Aboriginal people, but the submission from Committee Legal Centres Tasmania does call for further strengthening of the *Coroners Act* when it comes to cultural sensitivity and support for Aboriginal families. It specifically calls on the government to more explicitly recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship structures in identifying and communicating with a senior next of kin.

I wondered what further thought has been given to those requests and what consultation may have occurred with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre with other representatives of Aboriginal Tasmanians in drafting changes to these changes to the *Coroners Act*.

That is all I needed to say on the changes to that act. In the time remaining I will deal with the other changes. I do not think the changes to the *Corrections Act* received any public comment. They are largely administrative. What they do is amend the *Corrections Act* by updating sections 68 and 69 to reflect the repeal of section 19 of the *Sentencing Act*, and the commencement of its replacement, section 7 of the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act*, which is a change I think we made in a recent Justice Miscellaneous Bill.

The bill then goes on to amend the TASCAT Act, section 98, which deals with representation of people appearing before TASCAT. It amends that section to allow lawyers who are subject to disciplinary proceedings to appear as a representative before the tribunal. That is an acceptable change. It goes to the fact that because somebody is subject to disciplinary proceedings does not mean that they can be presumed to be at fault or have been guilty of any wrongdoing if those investigations are still going on. Indeed, it presupposes a finding of guilt before disciplinary proceedings are at an end.

With respect to that change, I have some general questions about representation of people at TASCAT. I am happy for the minister to take these questions on notice and answer them later if it is not something to hand. I believe the Chamber would be interested in how people are generally represented; for example, how many people for the last 12-month period were self-represented or represented by a lawyer or another support person.

Finally, the bill makes changes to the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* to allow nurse practitioners to issue workers compensation certificates in emergency departments of hospitals and other prescribed health settings, and for prescribed purposes. I am a big fan of the work of nurse practitioners and have seen first-hand in my community the impactful work that they have been able to do, particularly in working with people in the homeless community. I have sought some advice on this change and it has been widely welcomed because of some of the difficulties in the workers rehabilitation space. Specifically, Unions Tasmania have welcomed this change, and I will quote from its letter:

> Unions Tasmania welcomes sensible reform that allows nurse practitioners to issue medical certificates, recognising they are appropriately skilled to do so and that there are clear benefits to injured workers in not having additional time delays or expenses in obtaining medical certificates from a doctor. It is Unions Tasmania's position which aligns with our affiliate, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) Tasmanian branch, that nurse practitioners should not be confined to issuing medical certificates in emergency departments, but should be able to practise autonomously as part of their scope of clinical practice and as recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

I recognise that the bill does not go that far, or that is my understanding. It may have been amended and I have missed it between the consultation draft and this bill. Can the Attorney-General speak to that change? I understand this is the bill outside of the Attorney-General's legislative administrative arrangements, but Unions Tasmania has raised a reasonable point and I know there is an increasing number of nurse practitioners working as part of GP practices, for example. There are a lot of multidisciplinary practices emerging across Tasmania, which is a fantastic addition to access to health care for Tasmanians. It would be a shame if somebody who needs a workers rehabilitation compensation certificate is unable to get that.

Say, they go to a local GP and they cannot get in to see that GP - and we all know how many Tasmanians are struggling to get into a GP clinic. There is a nurse practitioner available but that nurse practitioner cannot issue a certificate because they are not working in an emergency department.

There are also pharmacies that have nurse practitioners available and sometimes nurse practitioners are available through other community settings as well. I know the Salvation

Army in Glenorchy for a short time had funding for a nurse practitioner to be available to provide services to people in Glenorchy. There may be others in the community as well.

The bill says:

> emergency departments of hospitals or other prescribed settings for a prescribed purpose.

Can the Attorney-General elaborate on that and explain to the House whether or not that second part, 'prescribed settings for prescribed purposes', might include nurse practitioners practising in places other than emergency departments, such as in GPs' rooms, pharmacies or elsewhere in the community?

I believe that is everything I need to put on the record. I look forward to hearing the minister's summing-up comments, particularly about changes to the *Coroners Act*. While all of the changes in the bill are supported and warranted, I think the changes to the *Coroners Act* are going to give a lot of comfort to Tasmanian families who have gone through the process of trying to access information from the Coroner's office. Making that process more streamlined and accessible for Tasmanian families who are already dealing with something tragic in their life is going to be very impactful.

I did put some concerns on the record about what happens when information cannot be released, what information families will receive about documents that have not been released and what happens if there are strained family relationships, which we know can be the case, particularly at the time of the death of a loved one. What happens if there are others who might otherwise be considered as senior next of kin down that hierarchical list that exists in the *Coroners Act* who might need or benefit from information, particularly medical information? I look forward to the minister being able to address those comments and concerns.

Overall, it is a very positive thing that these changes are being made. It is an issue of access to justice and access to information for Tasmanian families going through the coronial system. I offer the condolences of the Tasmanian Labor opposition to Eden Westbrook's parents, family and loved ones, and to the many others who are in similar tragic circumstances, trying to gain information from the justice process. That is not a criticism of coroners. They are acting within the confines of the act as it is currently drafted. I believe this is likely to make their lives and work a lot more straightforward in terms of providing guidance from the parliament on the release of information that will be of benefit to families.

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, the Greens support this Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill. There are important amendments in it, particularly in relation to the *Coroners Act*.

The cases that have been noted by the Attorney-General are two matters I have been personally connected with and have had some role in advocating on behalf of the people concerned. I want to speak to Jason and Amanda Westbrook. If they are not watching today, they will be reading the *Hansard* closely. I have not met Jason and Amanda myself but I am familiar with the story of their daughter Eden, and cognisant of their fight to have access to information so that they can understand exactly what happened around her death. They have been stymied to date by the rules, which have prevented them gaining access to critical information they feel is required to help advance a case of having an inquest into Eden's death.

It is important that families are given every opportunity to have questions answered and thorough investigations done when they do not believe questions have been sufficiently answered, and, in certain circumstances, justice for things that have been done advertently or inadvertently, and where criminal matters have occurred and there is an argument for having a proper investigation.

The coroner has an incredibly important job. As well as speaking to the Westbrooks, I also speak to the people who hold the roles of coroners in Tasmania. It is such an important role. People who are touched by a death in circumstances that require an investigation - it is a very precious and special role that the Coroners Office holds. Those people work very hard and very well.

It is also true to say that the *Coroners Act* 1995 contains sections which are, by any measure, now considered very outdated and paternalistic. That is why we are here today, because what is in the act has prevented families - senior next of kin, as defined within the legislation - from getting access to the actual detail of the actual records that have been held or collected by the coroner's office or used by the coroner's office in their investigations. In the case of the Westbrooks and also in the case of Janet Rice and her wife, Penny, who died, it has been incredibly painful for her to get access to the record and to see it herself.

Greens MLC Cassy O'Connor and I both separately advocated in parts of the journey of former Greens senator Janet Rice when she was trying to get access to records of her beautiful, loved partner Penny Whetton, who died suddenly. Janet Rice is a woman who is a highly intelligent, highly capable person, and a former senator in the Australian government. She simply wanted to have access herself to the records that the coroner had so that she could understand whether the condition the coroner found was the cause of death was in fact something that might have a genetic component that could have been passed down to Penny's children.

You would think that would just be an automatic trigger for the Coroners Office to immediately release the information so that Janet could have a look at it, have a discussion with her GP and make a decision herself about whether there was something that, in terms of a medical condition, needed to be discussed with other people in the family.

Instead, what she found was that it took four months for the coroner to release the records to her GP. Then when she visited the GP, she was told by the GP that she could still not see the records, that the GP had had to destroy them - receive them from the Coroners Office, read them, interpret them, summarise them and then destroy them so that the wife, Janet, was not able to see the documents relating to her former wife, Penny. That was just unbelievable.

In the 2020s, to say that to a person with her capabilities, to have something inserted through legislation and have that determination of the coroner, who was doing it under what was to them a sort of a standard operating procedure, but also what was required under the law at the time, was, in her words, 'completely baffling.' She could not understand it and neither could the GP. They could not believe the sort of nonsense that an external administrative body would make a decision about what the GP's patient was capable of viewing and interpreting and dealing with, and it was a source of great sadness and grief for Janet. She was very open in making her story available to the ABC so that other people would not have to experience what she had, and she has been a great and quiet advocate in the background. I am sure it is one of the reasons that we are here today.

The Greens did attempt to work to get changes from the former attorney-general, Elise Archer, and unfortunately met some resistance in that area because there was an initial rejection from the state government of our attempt to include rights for the next of kin. Ms Archer did commit to continuing to discuss the matter, and here we are today.

I do not know the backstory about how the current Attorney-General has got it to this point, but I am guessing it is probably an accumulation of public pressure and I suspect that the Westbrooks may well, in their concern to have a proper investigation, have added some extra weight to the view of the community that it is no longer, at this time in history, appropriate to have matters of what will affect a next of kin decided for you - about whether a matter is too serious for you to look at, too devastating for you to read, or too difficult for you to comprehend.

These are the sorts of things that, in the 1980s, people with AIDS were so active in overturning, and that was the tight hold of the medical professional in not providing people with HIV and AIDs their own records and in making decisions about treatment on their behalf without consulting them. So much work went into changing the relationship between the doctor and the patients, about openness and removing that barrier of withholding information that medical practitioners previously had, and we are finally seeing this flowing through to the Coroners Office, which is a very welcome day.

It is obvious that if a medical condition might have been potentially inherited by the descendants of a person who has died, the relatives should know that information and they should be able to read it and understand it and have a GP make a decision about how they guide them through that process. Can we have some clarification? I want to understand, along with Ms Haddad, the opposition shadow, who has already asked the question, about senior next of kin and how far that stretches.

I think we understand family members, but it is reasonable to ask how far beyond that it goes. Also, I would like to understand why we would withhold the information from going out more broadly. Why would that be? I could understand in certain circumstances, particularly with the potential of a trial, information should be conditioned. Obviously, the amendment still provides for the fact that if there is any possibility of a case being prejudiced, if it was going to prejudice the fair trial of a person or if it would be contrary to the administration of justice, national security or personal security, that matters could be redacted or withheld but I would still like to understand just how far that extends. Then it comes to the matter of an appeal. One of the most maddening things about the work that I did on behalf of Janet Rice with the Coroners Office was going around in circles and hitting walls. It was difficult going around that process, hitting walls and the time spans in between.

It was difficult because I suppose most of us do not understand: this is after a death when the family is grieving. People want pretty simple answers, and it was certainly the feeling that it was the rules that were standing in the way of this person being able to easily get access to records that should be their right.

When it comes to the *Workers' Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* amendments that allow for nurse practitioners to issue workers compensation certificates in accordance with a certificate protocol that has been approved by the secretary of the department of Health and the WorkCover Board, the Greens strongly welcome the removal of any barriers to nurse practitioners being able to fully work within their capabilities.

They are such an important plank in the community, and the role they play in general practice in the community and with emergency responders is so important. We are seeing the power of that. I can mention what we see at the Cygnet Family Practice and the expansion thanks to the nurse practitioner role there, Kerrie Duggan and her excellent work. The expansion of an after-hours emergency response available service in a rural area that is otherwise totally cut off, essentially, for most people is truly life changing for many people in the community.

We support and welcome anything that can be done to remove administrative roadblocks to allow nurse practitioners and emergency responders, paramedics, being able to expand their scope of practice, expand their capabilities and harmonise our legislation with other states so that we are all working to best practice.

Other states have better models in that regard in respect to enabling paramedics and other emergency responders to expand their scope of practice. Given the health situation in Tasmania, given the incredible burden of need relative to the services that are provided, it is so important that we work with those unions and professional bodies that represent health professionals such as nurse practitioners, paramedics, emergency responders and look to quickly remove any administrative barriers that still remain in legislation, and I believe that some still do.

We do support the changes to the TASCAT Act which allows lawyers who themselves are the subject of disciplinary proceedings to continue to appear before TASCAT as a legal representative. That is an obvious and sensible situation to correct; so far it has not provided justice for that person to be able to represent themselves in that situation.

In relation to the greater recognition of Aboriginal people in the *Coroners Act*, we are all familiar with the terrible situation that happened where remains of a member of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community were delivered from the Coroners Office to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in a paper bag. That is such a terrible and shameful thing that caused all Tasmanians who heard about it to be truly shocked at how things could have become so wrong. The lack of understanding and sensitivity in that situation was appalling. I know that a lot of work was discussed by the Attorney-General in relation to work with the Coroners Office to assure that Aboriginal community and indeed wider Tasmanians that something like that would never happen again.

There is work that needs to be done, in terms of training to support people in the Coroners Office to understand their obligations and the cultural sensitivity about carrying out an investigation and preparing a report. I note that the Community Legal Centre in their submission made the obvious point that there needs to be more resourcing for Aboriginal coronial investigations within the Coroners Office, and also more support for the relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and other Aboriginal organisations, to make sure that the communication and the information flow is excellent.

The coroner is required to notify an Aboriginal organisation when human remains are Aboriginal remains but, there is that delay that has caused concern and been a problem in other situations, where there is a question mark about whether it has been established that a particular remain or body part is Aboriginal or not.

I certainly heard people from the Aboriginal community say, 'Given the age of the bone, how could it be anything other than that an Aboriginal person? Tasmania was colonised just 240 years ago, 230 years ago. How could it have been anything other than an Aboriginal person?' There needs to be a conversation about the level of evidence required to determine whether it is plausible that it is an Aboriginal person, so that in the very first instance, wherever possible, Aboriginal community organisations and appropriate bodies are involved in the coronial investigation, or at least kept abreast of how an investigation is occurring.

That is all I wanted to say on this bill. I believe I have asked the questions. I look forward to hearing your answers, Attorney-General. We are happy to support the bill.

[5.30 p.m.]

Mr JENNER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, Jacqui has been working with the Westbrooks and the Attorney-General knows this, and this is a big issue for her and obviously for myself. I have brought questions up to the Attorney-General and the minister.

Can I first thank the minister and his staff and the coroner. I do think it is important that these changes are made. The amendments to the *Coroners Act* provide a clear - your words - and direct right of access by senior next of kin to the coroner's report, and it is essential in the spirit of open justice to ensure transparency, accountability and public confidence in our justice system. I do totally agree with that.

It says here the provision of this material can be provided for some amount of closure to the families following an investigation into the death. Unfortunately, the Westbrook family could not be here today as the bill was brought on early. They would have liked to have been here, but that obviously could not happen.

It is also very important, and I just wanted to clarify with the minister, that although these reports and records are passed on to a senior part of the family, for those who seek the closure, that they can and must be able to appoint, if need be, another forensic pathologist for these records. I wanted to check with the minister that they will be able to do that for themselves to seek that closure; otherwise, I will not take up any more of your time.

I believe it is great that these amendments are in here. I thank the minister for working with the Westbrooks. I know there are other parts in this amendment, but they are the ones that, obviously, I have been following through with Jacqui, so it would be just that clarification that if a senior member has access to those reports and records, that they can share them with another professional. Thank you.

The SPEAKER - I want to clarify, when you say 'Jacquie', do you mean minister Petrusma?

Mr JENNER - I beg your pardon. My boss, Jacqui Lambie. Well, I think she is still my boss. I guess I am the boss.

The SPEAKER - Before you start the time, I refer members to a book called, *I Had 50,000 Bosses* by Mr Gil Duthie, pointing out that your actual boss is the people of Tasmania.

Mr JENNER - I am sorry, Speaker, I could not hear you.

The SPEAKER - It is a great book. You should read it.

[5.33 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin - Minister for Health) - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I rise to support the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2025 and I thank my colleague, the Deputy Premier, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the honourable Guy Barnett MP and his department for bringing this bill before the House.

In support of the Deputy Premier's second reading speech, I want to highlight further the significance of the amendments to the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* for injured workers and hospital emergency departments, and to gratefully thank the Deputy Premier and his department for being willing to insert these amendments into this bill.

These amendments to the act insert proposed section 77I, which provides: 'In certain circumstances, a nurse practitioner may sign a workers compensation certificate'. Currently, a workers compensation certificate is required to be signed by a medical practitioner.

As the Deputy Premier has noted, nurse practitioners are advanced practice nurses. They are regulated by the Nursing Midwifery Board of Australia through endorsement that enables autonomous practice within a clinical governance framework.

I would like to take this opportunity to also endorse nurse practitioners' autonomous practice and to recognise the outstanding contributions and dedication of nurse practitioners in delivering high-quality health care right across Tasmania, and for their strong and outstanding advocacy for this amendment today. I am in awe of nurse practitioners for their sheer guts and determination to keep on advocating for how much value they can contribute and provide to our healthcare system, which will increase further through this amendment.

Every day, nurse practitioners assess and treat workplace injuries, commonly in the emergency departments of our public and private hospitals. While autonomous in their practice, nurse practitioners work as part of their healthcare team to assess, treat and refer clients. They order diagnostic tests, prescribe medications and issue medical certificates within their scope of practice.

To date, nurse practitioners have had to rely on a medical officer to issue workers compensation medical certificates for their patients, even for the simplest of injuries. This frequently results in duplication of the clinical care provided for injured workers treated by nurse practitioners. This process is not only confusing for injured workers, it is also inefficient and creates unintended consequences for our health system.

Enabling nurse practitioners within our emergency departments to issue workers compensation medical certificates will reduce duplication, alleviate inefficiencies and create a clearer, more streamlined care pathway for injured workers. By allowing nurse practitioners to independently handle cases within their scope of practice, we are freeing up medical officers to focus on patients in emergency departments who require their specific expertise.

I also commend the Department of Health, which has worked closely with the WorkCover Tasmania board and stakeholders to achieve these amendments. This included consultation with the Australian Medical Association, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Chief Medical Officer and hospital emergency departments.

To support nurse practitioners and their workplaces through this transition, the Department of Health is creating protocols, a clinical governance framework and educational resources based on current evidence and feedback from the consultation process. The Department of Health will also work closely with the WorkCover Tasmania Board to ensure the resources appropriately support the public and private sector to safely implement this practice into their established clinical governance frameworks. Initially this will be in the emergency department setting, with the legislation allowing for this to be expanded further across the nurse practitioner workforce.

Nurse practitioners and health department staff worked hard to make this happen. I thank them for helping us to bring this to fruition. It is a fantastic outcome. As well, to ensure that this new process does positively support practice and patient outcomes, an evaluation will be conducted six months after the changes are implemented, with the findings from this evaluation guiding any decisions regarding further expansion into other practice areas.

This is a noteworthy step towards enabling nurse practitioners to work to their full scope of practice. It will maximise the advanced clinical skill and expertise of nurse practitioners, as well as support greater productivity for our healthcare system, and improve care for patients.

I recently had the privilege to attend the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners' Tasmanian chapter, where our inspirational nurse practitioners gave me some great ideas, initiatives and projects that will help them to work to their full scope of practice, and enable nurse practitioners to provide better care for their patients. I would like to thank the Chair of the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners' Tasmanian chapter, Alison Spicer, and the Secretary, Stefanie Edson, for hosting me. It was a fantastic event and very informative.

Being a nurse myself, I have seen just how hard over so many long years nurse practitioners have been fighting for increased recognition and scope of practice. If we could just remove the barriers, they would be able to provide much more innovative and much-needed healthcare solutions to ensure Tasmanians receive the right care in the right place at the right time. Despite the fact that Tasmanian nurse practitioners are a highly skilled segment of our healthcare workforce, they are still largely underutilised, mainly due to legislative, organisational and cultural challenges.

I believe that the importance of nurse practitioners in Tasmania's healthcare system is substantial, particularly because they often provide care, both in person and via telehealth, for our most vulnerable and under-served populations, people who live in our most remote and rural areas. This results in far greater healthcare outcomes and overall improved health for our community. Nurse practitioners bring high-quality skills, qualifications, knowledge and experience to the role, that allows them to approach each patient individually and look at far more than just their physical health in providing care. Especially with Tasmania's current GP shortage, our ageing population, and our ability to care for patients with more complex medical needs becoming more of a challenge, the need for nurse practitioners with an expanded scope of practice, appropriately supported by Medicare, has never been greater.

I am very pleased that the 'Unleashing the Potential of the Health Workforce - Scope of Practice' review, the final report by Professor Mark Cormack, which was released last year, recommends reforms to remove the barriers that impede health practitioners, including nurse practitioners, from working to their full scope of practice.

I have read this report and can assure the House that I and the Tasmanian government strongly support both increasing the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and the subsequent expansion of Medicare so that they can deliver far more medical services to the community. I have both written and spoken to the current federal Health minister, Mark Butler, about our support for this expansion of scope. I will continue to strongly advocate for the necessary changes so that Tasmanian nurse practitioners can provide the care that they have trained so hard for. This includes support for the Australian Government's Nurse Practitioner Workforce Plan, alongside work which is ongoing in the Department of Health for policies and strategies that empower nurse practitioners to deliver care more effectively.

We are exploring and we will continue to explore new models of care that improve access, early intervention and priority areas of service delivery, where nurse practitioners can make a difference. The growth of nurse practitioner roles through workforce succession planning can only happen if registered nurses working in advanced practice roles can undertake further study. I am pleased to advise that nurse practitioner candidates are being supported through the Tasmanian Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship program to undertake post-registration study.

I think it is also important that we raise awareness of the nurse practitioner's scope of practice not only amongst health professionals but also in our wider community. One way is through legislative changes, which is what we are doing here today. There is still also a lot more to do, which is why the Department of Health is revising the nurse practitioner authorisation to prescribe scheduled substances. This revision will remove the need for ongoing authorisation from the chief pharmacist.

This has been a major concern for many nurse practitioners and this revision is desperately needed. We are also currently finalising a nurse practitioner workforce strategy and supporting documentation to assist nurse practitioners to work to their full scope of practice through identifying the barriers, enabling managers to plan for expanding the nurse practitioner workforce and to support service delivery. This strategy will align with the National Workforce Plan and Tasmania's Long-Term Plan for Healthcare 2040, and will provide a clear path forward to strengthen and expand the nurse practitioner workforce across Tasmania.

The framework will be supported by a nurse practitioner and nurse practitioner candidate implementation toolkit, which will be a practical guide for managers to implement a nurse practitioner and nurse practitioner candidate role in Tasmania.

I believe all of us in this House share the same goal: to deliver the best possible health care for Tasmanians while providing a safe, caring, inclusive and supportive environment for all healthcare workers. I believe that this bill will create efficiencies in care by allowing greater access and choice for injured workers needing initial assessment and treatment when they attend emergency departments. It supports patients, reduces pressure on our doctors and emergency units, and it will help with patient flow through our hospitals.

I know from extensive engagement that this amendment is very well supported by our nurse practitioners, and it aligns perfectly with the government's commitment to provide better health care when and where it is needed. It also sends a clear message that our nurse practitioners are valued members of the Tasmanian healthcare team, and I cannot thank them enough for the outstanding work that they do each and every day.

I commend the Deputy Premier and his department for his willingness to insert this amendment into this bill, and I acknowledge the support of this bill by key stakeholders. I thank all for bringing this bill and this amendment to the House.

[5.44 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice) - Honourable Speaker, I thank all members for their contributions to this, and for their indications of support for the bill and the foreshadowed amendment that will be moved in Committee.

At this juncture of the debate and in summing up, I acknowledge Jason and Amanda Westbrook and their family again. I put that on the record, as I did earlier in my second reading speech, and to indicate that it has been a very difficult time for them and their family. I first got to know them more than two years ago. I have met with them in St Helens. I have met with them in my office. I acknowledge that my office has had ongoing engagement with them. I will respond to various questions and queries as I go through today, but I just want to acknowledge the family and share a few remarks about them shortly.

I thank the Minister for Health, Jacquie Petrusma, who has just shared so fervently as a former nurse practitioner and as someone who is so fervent and such a wonderful advocate for those in the health profession. This amendment will deliver for those nurse practitioners and for the public accordingly. This is about getting really good outcomes for Tasmanians in the health space, and frankly Jacquie Petrusma is doing a wonderful job. She is someone with hands-on experience in delivering, so I thank Jacquie Petrusma for her support for this bill and her remarks accordingly.

I acknowledge Andrew Jenner, who has advocated for the Westbrook family over a long period of time. In this place he has asked me a number of questions to keep me accountable and to ensure that this matter remains to be considered positively by the government. I think that is a credit to Andrew Jenner from the Jacqui Lambie Network.

I also acknowledge Senator Jacqui Lambie. We have had a number of conversations and meetings with respect to this matter. There is certainly a heartfelt intention and objective to support the Westbrook family, and I want to acknowledge that. I often talk about collaboration and goodwill, and I think that is being demonstrated. This bill and certainly this amendment brings that to the fore.

For members, what has not been mentioned here is my announcement on 2 May of the review of the *Coroners Act 1995* to be conducted by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, following a referral from me as the Attorney-General on behalf of the Tasmanian government. I wanted to note that the *Coroners Act* was developed in 1995, and during this time there have been considerable changes in the community's expectations of the coronial process, as well as a significant increase in both the number and complexity of reportable deaths referred to the Coronial Division of the Magistrates Court.

I have discussed this with the Chief Magistrate and the Chief Coroner directly, as well as the secretary of my department, and this is absolutely supported. I acknowledge the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute for accepting the referral and being willing to undertake this important work to review the legislation. It was 1995 when the act was first passed. The terms of reference - and I will not go through all the dot points, because it is all on the public record - are consistent with our 2030 Strong Plan to deliver a better, fairer and more accessible justice

system that streamlines and produces the best results for Tasmanians. That is what we are on about.

The review will be looking at potential reforms to the *Coroners Act* and *Coroners Rules* to enhance the role of a coroner in death prevention and in making recommendations, including in relation to public health, safety, administration of justice; any desirable changes to jurisdiction, powers, practices or procedures of the coroner and its division that would better serve the needs of people interacting with the coronial division and the need of the community; any improvements to be made in the provision of information to and support for the families, friends and others associated with the deceased person who is the subject of a coronial inquiry, including, but not limited to, issues regarding autopsies, cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices, and counselling; the provisions of investigative, forensic and other services in support of the coronial function; and other relevant matters.

I think that will pick up anything that we have perhaps not covered off here today in those discussions. I note the reference from Dr Woodruff with respect to Aboriginal remains and, of course, that would be one of those matters, but there will be many and a multitude of concerns that can be picked up with that review by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute as they undertake that important work. I wanted to put that on the record.

I think we have had a very collaborative and good discussion today - lots of questions and queries which I will start responding to very shortly. Before I do so, I also acknowledge my colleague and friend, minister Felix Ellis, for his role as well in terms of the amendments here, in terms of workers compensation certificates and as minister for consumer affairs, and a range of important work.

Before I respond directly to some of those queries, I place a short summary on the public record of the Westbrook matter so colleagues in this place and listening will understand that Eden Westbrook was a teenage girl who died by suicide at Fishermens Memorial Park, St Helens, on 17 February 2015. Eden's death was the subject of an investigation by Coroner McTaggart. Findings were made and handed down on 30 September 2016 but not published following the completion of that investigation. Findings were subsequently published on the court's website on or around 16 June 2021. Mr and Mrs Westbrook viewed the full coronial file in 2019 with the support of the Coronial Division. I am advised the photographs were part of the pathologist file and not on the coronial file.

Since viewing the file, the Westbrooks and others on their behalf, including a forensic pathologist and Senator Jacqui Lambie, have made several requests for access to other coronial records, including a copy of the autopsy photographs, which have been refused in accordance with coronial procedures. I am also advised that there are no outstanding requests or applications to the Coronial Division for consideration in relation to this matter. No application to date has been filed in the Supreme Court to appeal the decision of the Chief Magistrate under section 58 of the legislation. I have summarised that matter for colleagues. There is a much longer version, but that is the short version and I draw that to your attention.

With regard to a quick summary of the *Coroners Act* amendment, again, there has been a lot of interest in the bill and in the community. There has been consultation, and there were several changes made as a result of consultation. That was one of the questions. The *Coroners Act* amendment applies the amendment to coronial records, including post-mortem reports and

other documents containing evidentiary material, or made as part of an autopsy performed and transcripts or recordings of oral evidence.

This expansion responds to concerns that the amendment should apply to any evidence sought by the family, including autopsy photos, regardless of whether they are in the physical possession of the Coronial Division or Statewide Forensic Medical Services. It inserts a power for the coronial authority to redact the coronial record to the extent necessary to enable the record to be released, similar to the South Australian legislation.

It clarifies that the amendment is not discretionary and the coronial authority must release the record, except when one of the limited grounds of refusal is met. It strengthens the limited grounds of refusal by replacing the ground that release would be contrary to the administration of justice, and this is replaced with the ground that the release of the coronial record would be likely to prejudice the investigation of a breach, or a possible breach of the law, or the enforcement or proper administration of the law, or the fair trial of a person. It removes the requirement to provide the record to a medical practitioner on the basis that any concerns about impacts on the health of the senior next of kin will be dealt with administratively.

I have indicated that I will also make the following further changes to the amendment and inserting the new ground to refuse a request based on the privacy of individuals other than the deceased person to whom the request relates, and replace the power to impose conditions on the release of the record, including relating to general use, with the power to order non-publication of the record. This recognises that it may not be appropriate for sensitive records to be made available to the public generally, but acknowledges that the senior next of kin should not be prohibited from seeking independent advice from an expert should they wish to do so, and insert an appeal provision modelled on other appeal provisions in the *Coroners Act* to clarify a senior next of kin's right to appeal a decision made under the amendment.

I have summarised, certainly in the in the second reading, the TASCAT amendment and that is absolutely worthy, but with regard to the consultation and following that, it removes the costs amendment from the bill. This is because TASCAT identified a second basis for the amendment, which was not specifically consulted on, and would result in a change to current processes in the mental health and guardianship streams or the protective division as they call it.

The amendment was initially sought to enable TASCAT to issue interstate summons, and it was subsequently identified as required to issue local summonses as well. This would empower TASCAT to order costs in the protective division regarding the issue of summons in accordance with Rule 20A of the TASCAT Rules 2021, including against a party when TASCAT issues a summons on its own motion. As the policy of the TASCAT costs provision is to recognise the vulnerability and financial hardship frequently experienced by people appearing in its protective division, this amendment requires further targeted consultation prior to being progressed.

The *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act* amendment includes a certificate protocol that specifies the circumstances in which all the conditions under which a nurse practitioner may issue a certificate under the act, and it clarifies that a certificate protocol must be prepared by the Secretary of the department of Health and approved by the Secretary of the WorkCover Board Tasmania and comes into force seven days after it is approved, or such later

date as specified, and provides that a certificate protocol is to be published on the Department of Health's website while it is in force.

I will respond to the various questions that have been asked, but firstly to Mr Jenner from the JLN: why senior next of kin cannot nominate someone to receive the records? Under general principles of law, the right of a senior next of kin can also be exercised by their nominated person or agent. The advice I have is that a senior next of kin does not personally have to receive the records, if they prefer another person, such as a trusted friend or adviser, to make the request and receive the record on their behalf.

The senior next of kin can also receive the records and provide them to a person of their choice. Matters such as how coronial records are released to ensure the senior next of kin does not view a record inadvertently can be dealt with administratively, for example, by sealed envelope or an electronic storage device. Hopefully that will respond to Mr Jenner's queries.

I will respond to Ms Haddad and Dr Woodruff, and I hope it is in some sort of order but first in terms of Ms Haddad and the engagement with the Westbrooks and concerns. As I say, I have had contact with them for more than two years and this has been something that I have been very committed to as Attorney-General, and prior to that, actually, as Minister for Health, and, frankly, as a local member of parliament. As you know, they are constituents of mine in the Lyons electorate.

In terms of the consultation process, yes, I spoke to Jason and Amanda on 9 April 2025 just in that regard, to discuss the tabling of the bill and outline the changes made to the consultation draft of the bill based on the feedback they provided. I also wrote to them on the same date to apologise for the failure to notify them of the consultation period and since tabling of the bill. Certainly, I have, and my office in particular has been in contact with them, including today, to discuss further amendments to the bill, including a conversation that has been had with them today, to outline the amendments that I will be moving in committee, for which I have been advised by my chief that they support.

I am very disappointed that they cannot be here today. I am very sorry that that is not possible. Nevertheless, that contact has been made with them today and in recent times. We do not always get it right, but we certainly have done everything we can to support the Westbrook family.

Dr Woodruff - Have you circulated those amendments yet?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I checked with the Clerk that they have been circulated and I was advised that they have been circulated by email and directly, but we will make sure that hard copies are also circulated because I did check at the beginning of the debate that they have been circulated. If they could be passed to both relevant members, that would be much appreciated. With respect to those amendments, of course, briefings were offered to all relevant MPs, but I will go through that and I am happy to discuss that with you.

In terms of the Westbrooks' query about 'must not refuse', the wording was updated by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) to clarify this concern and it now reads, 'may not refuse a request unless satisfied an exception applies.' This means refusal cannot be made in any other scenario.

I also want to indicate in response to Ms Haddad queries about conditions about use of records and appeals. Both these queries are being addressed by my proposed amendments that I will speak to in committee, and these remove the power to restrict use, such as sharing documents. They also insert an appeal right but as I say, I will speak to that in more detail shortly.

In terms of appeal rights, is there a mechanism to review or appeal a decision of the coronial authority under the amendment? A question arose regarding whether the amendment includes a mechanism for appeal. I have certainly proposed to amend the bill during the committee phase to clarify that a senior next of kin aggrieved by a decision under the amendment, may appeal the decision to the Chief Magistrate or Supreme Court to affirm the decision or quash the decision, and make any further orders the Supreme Court thinks are fit in the circumstances. This will be modelled on appeal provisions in the *Coroners Act* to clarify the right of appeal. In the absence of a special specific appeal provision, the only relief available to a senior next of kin is relief similar to the prerogative writs, the procedure for which is outlined in part 26 of the *Supreme Court Rules 2000*. This is a form of judicial review at common law similar to certiorari, mandamus and prohibition.

The *Judicial Review Act* does not apply to decisions made under the *Coroners Act*. The appeal provision will confirm that a senior next of kin may appeal the following decisions under the amendment. They are in three parts: whether a record is a coronial record; secondly, a decision that one of the grounds to refuse a request under section 4 applies to a record or the making of a non-publication under subsection (6).

Regarding whether family will understand what has been redacted, I am advised that when a coroner makes decisions under the act, the coroner gives reasons. The coroner is expected, under this principle, to explain what is refused or redacted. The House amendments include a right to appeal to the Chief Magistrate or Supreme Court, as I have indicated. Applicants are also notified where a whole document is not provided.

Ms Haddad also raised concerns about the photographs. Yes, photographs were taken during the autopsy of Eden Westbrook in 2015. At that time, I am advised they were stored locally in the Launceston General Hospital (LGH). They have since been transferred to the Tasmanian Statewide Forensic Medical Services. I am advised that they are stored digitally and only authorised staff have access.

An autopsy is directed by the coroner under section 36 of the *Coroners Act* and rule 7 of the *Coroners Rules*. Any photographs taken are a visual record of autopsy examination findings. Therefore, under rule 8 of the *Coroners Rules*, autopsy findings must not be disclosed without the authority and consent of the coroner. The Coronial Division, therefore, retains control over the photographs despite not always taking physical possession of the photographs.

The amendment applies to autopsy photographs regardless of whether they are held by the court or Statewide Forensic Medical Services under [inaudible 6.04.15 p.m.] of the definition of coronial record.

I believe both Ms Haddad and Dr Woodruff asked about who the senior next of kin is and why it is limited to them. I have touched on that, but just to confirm, the *Coroners Act* specifies that the senior next of kin is the first available person in a list contained in section 3A of the act, commencing with the deceased's current spouse. The act sets out the procedures for

investigations and inquest by coroners and, in doing so, allocates various rights to the senior next of kin. It is therefore appropriate to extend the amendment to this person.

Other persons may still apply for access to coronial records under rule 26 of the *Coroners Rules 2006*.

The amendment is also limited to the senior next of kin because of the personal and sensitive nature of coronial records, and the limited grounds to refuse access under this amendment. Coronial records may contain distressing or graphic content that could cause trauma to the observer. To protect the privacy of the deceased person but honour the wishes of their closest family member, it was appropriate to limit the amendment in this way. It reduces the risk of sensitive records being released to persons who should not have access and the administrative burden on the Coronial Division of the Magistrates Court in determining applications.

In developing this amendment, South Australia's legislation was considered. South Australia is the only other jurisdiction in Australia which requires the provision of coronial records upon application, except in the interest of justice. The amendment does not prohibit the senior next of kin sharing the record with other people, for example other family members, an independent expert or legal representative, as I indicated a few moments ago.

As the member notes, the senior next of kin includes provision where the deceased is an Aboriginal person. We have noted the consultation feedback and I have referred the act, as I say, to the Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) for a full review of the needs of our communities, which can include this issue.

Ms Haddad asked why the requirement to provide a record to a medical practitioner was removed from the bill. The consultation draft of the bill provided that a record must be given to a medical practitioner nominated by the senior next of kin when the coronial authority is concerned about the impact on the senior next of kin's health and wellbeing. This is similar to section 18(5) in the *Right to Information Act 2009*. It is included as a safeguard to manage risk of harm to the senior next of kin's health and wellbeing. This was removed following consultation with Mr and Mrs Westbrook. It is a good result. It recognises that the question of whether to seek medical advice or counselling before viewing the records provided is ultimately a matter for the senior next of kin and not appropriate to mandate in the bill. Any impacts on the health and wellbeing of the senior next of kin can be dealt with administratively. For example, a coroner can provide the record with a recommendation that the senior next of kin consult with a social worker or others at the court or the GP before viewing.

On other related matters, with respect to TASCAT, Ms Haddad asked about self-representation. I have a few facts and figures to assist. Representation before the tribunal varies from stream to stream. The TASCAT Act establishes an automatic right to legal representation as the default statutory position. However, some streams require leave for parties to be represented. The tribunal must ensure accessibility and efficiency in the resolving of disputes, having regard to statutory controls to limit unnecessarily adversarial proceedings. Consequently, many persons who appear before the tribunal are self-represented.

In the protective division, self-represented in 2023-24, 1232 or 84 per cent; mental health stream, self-represented in the same year, 1353 or 75.3 per cent; general division, self-

represented, 15 in the same year, or 17 per cent; forestry practices stream, none self-represented; anti-discrimination stream was 10, or 62.5 per cent. I hope that assists the member.

Ms Haddad - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the workers compensation amendments, Ms Haddad asked why the amendment only applies to emergency departments. The Department of Health and the WorkCover Board Tasmania recommended the amendment be applied to emergency departments being the places where it would have the biggest impact, alleviating duplication of work and inefficiencies which may adversely impact patient flow and create unnecessary service costs. It was recognised that although it should apply to emergency departments initially, it may be preferable to apply the amendment more broadly across other locations or settings if appropriate policies could be developed to support that process, and if there was a broad support from stakeholders. As such, the bill allows for other settings to be prescribed.

In terms of part 2 of that, about what other prescribed circumstances or prescribed purposes may be there in the future, it may be desirable to prescribe circumstances to allow nurse practitioners to issue certificates at urgent care clinics, day procedure centres or general practices in the future. Recognising the potential for the nurse practitioner profession to grow, as well as the increasing number of different care options available to injured workers in Tasmania, it is important to include this regulations-making power. As you are aware, the regulations-making process in Tasmania is comprehensive. It requires stakeholder consultation, assessment of any burden, cost or disadvantage to any sector of the public.

Dr Woodruff asked about how the next of kin is determined. I think I answered that earlier, so I probably do not need to go through that again. I hope that is all right. I think you asked about the deceased person potentially being an Aboriginal person. A person who, according to the custom or tradition of the community or group to which the person belongs, is an appropriate person, and that is certainly considered as part of the *Coroners Act* review, which I mentioned earlier, and the Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) review which will take place in the year ahead.

Dr Woodruff - By interjection, if you would not mind, you said before that the senior next of kin is the first available person on the list in the act and then you said other people can still apply. However, I thought you then said that records are only available to the senior next of kin because of privacy and dignity reasons. What can the other people apply for?

Mr BARNETT - Can we just hold that thought? We are going into committee shortly and I will, perhaps, give a more comprehensive response, if that is okay, because I want to cover who else can access the records. I could go through this now.

A coronial authority may, in accordance with the rules of the court, do any or all of the following as the coronial authority thinks fit: give a person access to the coronial record, provide a person with a copy of the record, deny a person access to a coronial record, restrict a person's access to a coronial record, or prohibit a person from being provided with a copy of the coronial record. A coronial authority's power under subrule (1) may be exercised, and that goes on. I have covered off pretty much all of that.

The other one for Dr Woodruff is why this information is withheld from senior next of kin. I acknowledge, as I did in my second reading speech, that the Coronial Division does seek

to respond to family's needs with the current act and practice. For example, the Westbrooks viewed the full coronial file, I am advised, in 2019 with the support of the division. However, the Chief Magistrate did feel release of the photos was not appropriate under the current regime and circumstances. While I respect the coroner's and the Chief Magistrate's decisions under the current law, I am also pleased to reform the law in this important area to provide a right of access to records including photos in the future.

I have met with both the Chief Coroner and the Chief Magistrate. We have had those discussions over the last year or more, and with the Westbrooks, and we have gone through the whole process. I have been on this journey for more than two years. I am absolutely committed to getting this to conclusion for and on behalf of the Westbrook family, but indeed others who may wish to avail themselves of this law reform in the future. It is a good reform and I am very committed to it.

In the closing moments, I hope I have answered pretty much all of the queries around the table and Chamber today. I look forward to going into committee and explaining these two amendments that will further progress our objectives. I thank the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2025 (No. 14)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 -
Principal Act

[6.14 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD - Deputy Chair, I have quickly read the amendments now, so forgive me if this is a redundant question, but in my second reading contribution I asked a question on clause 4 about the use of the word 'may.' Clause 4 reads:

> The coronial authority may not refuse a request under subsection (2) in respect of a coronial record unless the coronial authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that -

A number of things are then listed. One of the concerns of the Westbrooks was the use of the word 'may' rather than the word 'must.' I wonder whether you intend to amend that clause so that it would read that -

> A coronial authority must not refuse a request to release information unless one of those elements listed in section 4 are satisfied.

DEPUTY CHAIR - May I seek clarification? Are you in fact speaking to clause 5?

Ms HADDAD - I do not think so. It is clause 4 on page 8 of the bill.

Mr Barnett - Maybe a different version?

Ms HADDAD - Oh dear, really? Okay.

DEPUTY CHAIR - I think you might be reading from subsection (4) of clause 5.

Ms HADDAD - I am. Sorry.

DEPUTY CHAIR - That is okay. We will just read in clause 4 and then we will move to clause 5.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you. I am really sorry.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5 -
Section 58C inserted

Mr BARNETT - I would like to address the proposed amendments to the bill. There are two amendments in clause 5. I will read those in very shortly. As a general comment, my office and I have been very pleased to work through the specific concerns raised by Jason and Amanda Westbrook and others. Following that consultation period, a range of amendments were made to the bill before tabling to address these amendments.

After I tabled the bill on 9 April 2025, I received further correspondence from the Westbrooks about the amendment, and they have been kind enough to have several discussions with me and my office about their concerns with the provision of the coronial records. This led me to propose the amendments that are before the House today to ensure the bill meets the policy objective of the right of access of senior next of kin to coronial records, subject to very limited exceptions.

I move -

Page 9, proposed new section 58C, subsection (4), paragraph (a).

Insert the following paragraph -

The release of the coronial record to the senior next of kin would be:

(i) An unreasonable intrusion on the privacy of a person referred to in the record other than the deceased person to whom the request relates, and

(ii) Contrary to the public interest due to that intrusion on the privacy of the person, or

That is the first amendment. I might deal with that, and then, subject to that being supported, deal with the second amendment.

The first amendment inserts a new ground in subsection (4) to refuse a request if the coroner is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the release of the record would be contrary to the public interest due to an unreasonable intrusion on the privacy of persons other than the deceased person to which the request relates. This expands the existing ground in the bill of refusing a record that would be contrary to personal security 'such as where disclosure of information about a person, such as a witness, might leave that person unsafe.'

This further ground recognises that there may be highly sensitive personal information about other people living or deceased in a coronial file, and it will not always be appropriate to release that information to a senior next of kin. Under this amendment to subsection (4), such information would be refused, but can also be redacted from a record under existing subsection (5), so other information in the record can still be provided.

An example, if I can give one, is when a deceased person may have committed suicide after being charged with criminal offences. There may be statements on the file from victims of alleged offending by the deceased which describes the impacts those victims have suffered from the offending. Another scenario might be that a coronial investigation relates to more than one deceased persons, and content in the records relating to the second person is not appropriate to disclose.

These kind of scenarios represent the need for a very limited exception to the senior next of kin's right of access. It would apply where the intrusion on privacy or another person was unreasonable to a degree that this outweighs the general public interest in seeing the next of kin having access to the records.

The amendment draws on protections for privacy and legislation in the *Health Complaints Act* and other legislation, and I certainly very much support this amendment.

I might leave it there on that amendment before moving to the second one. Thank you, Chair. I move the amendment.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Does anyone else wish to speak to the amendment?

Dr WOODRUFF - Yes please. Are we at clause 5 of the first amendment?

Deputy CHAIR - Correct.

Dr WOODRUFF - These are the circumstances where the coronial record would not be released. The coronial authority may not refuse a request in the circumstances that you have just outlined. Where does it say that they could release part of it or it could be redacted? They could still release a redacted version, could they not? because I am thinking the coroner can often do investigations into a death that includes, as you have just said, information about a whole range of people, or multiple deaths that have occurred at the same time, or a kind of cluster?

Are you saying in those situations what would probably happen is that the coroner's report and the details of the person related to the senior next of kin would be released, but any other parts of the investigation, just the names in the paragraphs relating to other people, would be redacted?

Mr Barnett - Yes.

Ms HADDAD - I want to repeat my question in the right spot now because I was speaking to subclause (4) of clause 5, not clause 4. My question is about the beginning of subclause (4), which this amendment does add to, and that is that a coronial authority may not refuse a request to release under subsection (2) unless one or more of several conditions are met, including this new one that we are inserting now.

I again ask, based on the information provided by the Westbrooks on whether the word 'must' was considered rather than the word 'may' in the beginning of subclause (4).

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Ms Haddad, for the question. You did ask it earlier and I believe I did answer it earlier, but I will -

Ms Haddad - I believe you went to it in your summing up.

Mr BARNETT - That is okay, because it moves pretty quickly and I fully understand that. It is a very good question, but it is based on advice from the OPC and OPC have advised that 'may not refuse' was the appropriate wording. That is their wording and recommendation, and a refusal is only possible if one of the listed exceptions that we talked about applies. This was considered the appropriate drafting convention by OPC. I note in practice that this does mean 'must', which is to your point.

I should also add that I have communicated with the Westbrooks this very matter to satisfy them of that point, which has been noted, so I just thought I would pass that on as well.

Amendment agreed to.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Where would the Committee like to go next?

Mr BARNETT - In continuation of clause 5, I have a second amendment which I would like to read into the *Hansard.*

The second amendment is to the same page, same proposed new section.

Leave out everything after subsection (5).

Insert instead the following subsections:

(6) A coronial authority may order that a coronial record released to a senior next of kin under this section not be published.

(7) A coronial authority may only make an order under subsection (6) if the coronial authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the publication of the coronial record is contrary to the public interest.

(8) A person must not publish a coronial record contrary to an order under subsection (6). Penalty fine not exceeding 50 penalty units.

(9) If a senior next of kin who has made a request under the section is aggrieved by one or more of the following decisions under this section in respect to the request, the senior next of kin may appeal the decision:

(a) A decision that a record is not a coronial record for the purposes of the request, or

(b) A decision that subsection (4) applies in respect of a coronial record to which the request relates, including but not limited to whether an intrusion on privacy of a person is unreasonable, or

(c) The making of an order under subsection (6) in respect of a coronial record released under the request.

(10) An appeal under subsection (9) is to be determined by:

(a) If the appeal relates to a decision of a coronial authority other than the chief magistrate, the Chief Magistrate, and

(b) if the appeal relates to a decision of the Chief Magistrate as a coronial authority, the Supreme Court.

(11) A person aggrieved by decision of the Chief Magistrate under subsection (10), paragraph (a) may appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

(12) On the hearing of an appeal under subsection (9) or (11), the person determining the appeal may:

(a) affirm the decision specified in subsection (9) to which the appeal relates, or

(b) quash that decision and make any further orders as the person thinks fit in the circumstances.

In speaking to that amendment, it further refines the bill in relation to restrictions on publication of records and adds specific appeal provisions.

First, the amendment leaves out subsection (6) and (7) of the bill, which currently provide that the coroner can place conditions on the release of a record, including, but not limited to, publication or use of the record, and includes a penalty for non-compliance.

The amendment inserts new subsections (6) through (8) in relation to orders for restriction on publication only, creating a high public interest test for making a non-publication order and inserting the penalty for non-compliance with the order. The penalty level is the same as the bill and based on section 57 of the act.

These amendments clarify that the bill was never intended to prohibit the senior next of kin using the record by sharing it with individuals they choose to, such as other family members or experts such as a forensic pathologist or a legal representative.

It is important for an open, transparent and accountable justice system that senior next of kin can provide the records to other persons and obtain advice if they so wish. That is something that is very important, in my view.

The proposed amendments therefore only provide for an order that a record not be published. This recognises that some coronial records may be highly personal and not appropriate to be published on social media or in newspapers. A non-publication order cannot be made unless the coroner is satisfied on reasonable grounds that it would be contrary to the public interest if a record was published.

The second amendment also inserts new subsections (9) through (12) in relation to providing specific appeal provisions. These are based on other appeal provisions in the *Coroners Act* to clarify and confirm a right to appeal decisions made under the bill to either the Chief Magistrate or the Supreme Court, including whether a record is a coronial record, a decision that one of the grounds to refuse a request applies to the record, and a decision to order non-publication.

Without this specific provision, the only relief available to a senior next of kin aggrieved by a decision under the amendment would be by the Supreme Court's jurisdiction for what is known as a prerogative relief. The *Judicial Review Act* does not apply to decisions made under the *Coroners Act*. While not all coronial decisions under the act have a specific appeal right, it was considered on review appropriate to clarify that appeal rights apply for this important issue.

I look forward again, all being well, to support for these amendments. These were identified as further improvements to the bill after tabling, after further liaison with the Westbrooks, in particular, who I thank again for their assistance in this important law reform.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you for going through that amendment in detail, Attorney-General. I particularly welcome the appeal provisions included in this amendment. Not having seen the amendment before my second reading contribution, I did raise concern about the lack of appeal rights. It will be very much welcomed that there is an avenue of appeal for senior next to kin aggrieved by a decision made to release or redact, or not release or redact information.

The removal of subclause (6) is also sensible, instead of allowing conditions to be applied to the release of the record, which could be confusing and difficult to interpret, which is what I went to in my second reading contribution. There will simply be the ability to prevent publication.

You mentioned publication in mainstream media or social media when you moved the amendment. I seek clarification about what definition of publication will be used in making these orders, noting that in some legislation there is a very narrow definition of publications that might specifically say social media, mainstream media, television, newspaper, et cetera, but in the *Defamation Act*, for example, or in defamation law generally, there is a very broad definition of publication that includes sharing information with another person privately. I anticipate that is not your intention. The reason I raise it is because of that question I had about, for example, a senior next of kin in the hierarchy, if it is a spouse. They could have the information released but be prevented from publishing that. If there is a very broad definition of publication, as applies in the defamation legislation, they would not be able to share that information, for example, with a child who might need that information for medical purposes,

as was the case with Janet Rice's wife. I anticipate that you are expecting a fairly narrow definition of publication to be used, but I thought it was worth putting that concern on the record.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the query. First of all, the bill does not define publication, but I am advised that it is similar to the current power in section 57 to order reports not to be published. It is taken to mean publication to the public at large. Sharing with individuals, for example, is not publishing. That is the advice I have received.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you for that clarification.

Mr BARNETT - I will take this opportunity to complete my response to Dr Woodruff. I started answering that when I was giving a comprehensive response at the end of my summing up, with only a limited time to share. I made reference to how people who are not senior next of kin can get access to the records. I mentioned it was answered by rule 26, which was partially read out before. Rule 26 outlines the circumstances in which a coronial authority may give access to a coronial record or provide any person with a copy of a coronial record, deny any person access to a coronial record or prohibit a person from being provided with the coronial record.

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, the Greens are pleased to support these amendments from the government. We really support the addition of an appeal mechanism. It was one of the things that was very frustrating for Janet Rice, I understand, not being able to go anywhere else to get another way forward. It seemed as though the administrative process was going around in circles and it was hard to get a sensible outcome. That has been clarified by the changes in this amendment bill so far. Where there are still problems, it gives a pathway to having a second opinion and for people to plead their case.

The coroner can restrain publication, and there are circumstances where it is manifestly reasonable for the coroner to want to restrain publication. The Attorney-General has talked about some of them. However, inevitably, it depends on the matter at hand. It might be that the family wants publication, they want to have broad community input into a conversation, something they are trying to pursue or a matter of justice. Therefore, it is welcome to have another pathway for a higher look at the situation. It is great.

Mr BARNETT - In response - and perhaps summing up where we are up to, thank you very much for raising that because what this bill will do and these amendments will allow is for the Janet Rice matter, the Westbrook family matter, senior next of kin to get access to that information. It is very important and personal to the senior next of kin and the family.

The point I will add for those who might be reading this or listening is that if this bill progresses through this Chamber and the other place and is passed into law, that will then apply and you will be allowed to go back to that time when you were wanting to get access to that information or those records and, for whatever reason, you were not able to. There will be a sense of completeness if we can pass this law through the House of Assembly today, because that will allow for looking into some months or lengthy time ago when you were seeking that information. We are all aware of some of that. The Westbrooks are definitely a driving focus for me, but I know for many other families as well. Going forward it will be good, but also looking back, it will allow that opportunity to access that information.

In conclusion, I thank Bruce Paterson and my department, Alice Lynch and Kate Woodward at the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, who does such a great job on a consistent basis. At my office, Kat, and the team, the amazing Amber Mignot. Thank you for that support. I am putting that on the record as well, I do not mind doing that, to say thank you for that support.

In conclusion, this is a tribute to Jason and Amanda Westbrook and their family. I salute you. It has been a long journey, more than two years for me, but I know others as well. I acknowledge everybody who has been involved in that process. I hope and pray that this will deliver comfort, peace and support for those families affected.

Dr WOODRUFF - On that matter, in terms of comfort and peace and perhaps with your indulgence, you might consider - you have spoken with the Westbrooks, but the other party who was a big part of this amendment coming here today was also Janet Rice. I wonder whether you might consider your office reaching out after this bill, making connection with her and letting her know that this matter is closed. She was a very kind of honest and open person who tried to look into this matter not only for herself but other people. If you wanted to, I would be happy to furnish you with the details.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for those remarks, and you have my absolute commitment to follow up and I am happy to be furnished with relevant details and make that information available. I am happy to reach out and do that.

This is going to benefit a whole range of families and Tasmanians who in a time of grief and suffering potentially could receive great joy, and I hope closure as well, peace and closure, with respect to some very difficult situations that they have had to deal with.

I certainly commend the bill to the House. I really appreciate the collaboration around the Chamber. I said before, Andrew Jenner and his ongoing interest, Senator Jacqui Lambie, but many others as well. I pay tribute and thank you all.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 5, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 13 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported to the House with amendment.

JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2025 (No. 14)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

EVIDENCE (CHILDREN AND SPECIAL WITNESSES) AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 15)

Second Reading

[6.45 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read the second time.

The bill proposes an amendment to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001* to ensure there is an efficient process for managing recorded evidence.

The act provides protections which apply to the giving of evidence by affected persons, including children, victims of child sexual offences and any adult the court declares to be a special witness. For example, a declaration of an adult as a special witness may be because they are not able to give evidence in the usual manner due to an intellectual disability, or giving evidence may cause severe emotional trauma or intimidation or distress.

Many protections apply under the act to children and special witnesses for a range of proceedings, such as sexual or family violence offences. These protections may include giving evidence remotely, or behind a screen, or through prerecorded evidence under section 6 (1) so the child or special witness does not have to be present at trial.

It is common for these audiovisual recordings to be edited to remove material that is irrelevant, unduly prejudicial or otherwise inadmissible. The edits are generally agreed to between counsel for both sides and decided upon by a judge, if required. The court does not have the capacity to edit the recordings itself so it has engaged a video post-production company for this purpose.

This requires an authorisation to be given under section 7C(3)(b) of the act by a Crown law officer. As defined by the act:

> A Crown law officer is the Attorney-General or Solicitor-General or any person appointed by the Governor to institute or prosecute criminal proceedings in the Supreme Court.

That last aspect relates to crown law officers in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Authorisations can only be given on a case by case basis. This means that every time the court wants to send a recording to be edited, it must refer the matter to a Crown Law officer in the Office of the DPP.

To streamline the process, the former Chief Justice requested that section 7C(3)(b) be amended to allow the necessary authorisation to be given by a judge, the associate judge or the registrar. It is appropriate for the court to be able to give these authorisations, given that they have oversight of the proceedings. The proposed amendment to Section 7C of the act has been drafted in accordance with the former Chief Justice's request.

In conclusion, the bill makes an amendment to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act* to improve and streamline the operation of the act, which is a small but

important contribution to the operation of this act in facilitating participation in the criminal justice process for vulnerable witnesses. I commend the bill to the House.

[6.49 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker. I am glad to be able to rise to make a contribution on behalf of the Labor opposition to this bill, the Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Bill 2025.

I note that this bill makes changes to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001* that sets up protections that apply to the conditions for children and other people who are deemed to be special witnesses giving evidence to Tasmanian courts. It makes provision for audiovisual recordings of evidence by people who are deemed special witnesses and children to be taken, and prerecorded evidence of that kind later played during special hearings.

The Attorney-General said that audio and video footage can be edited to remove material that is irrelevant or unduly prejudicial or otherwise inadmissible. Currently, under section 7C of the act, it is prohibited for a person other than a public official or police officer to possess, play, copy or erase an audio-visual recording unless authorised to do so by a Crown Law officer. At the moment, a Crown Law officer is defined as the Attorney-General or Solicitor-General or any person appointed by the Governor to institute criminal proceedings in the Supreme Court. This bill amends section 7C to allow a Supreme Court judge, the Associate Judge or the Registrar of the Supreme Court to authorise the possession of a recording. That will allow the court officers to provide the necessary authorisation for an audiovisual recording to be edited where necessary, rather than having to seek that authorisation on a case-by-case basis from a Crown Law officer.

The only question I have in regard to this fairly straightforward change is whether or not that request will still need to be made on a case-by-case basis. Can it be made by a broader group of people, including a judge, associate judge or the registrar or will this be a blanket approval that can be made at one time? If it is on a case-by-case basis going forward, will it need to be the person who had carriage of the matter who makes that decision about the authorisation of the audiovisual recording to be edited? In other words, if the case has begun before a particular judge or associate judge, is it that judge or associate judge who needs to make a decision under these new provisions?

That is my only question. I also note that some of the changes this parliament has made previously to how special witnesses can be supported through Tasmanian courts have been important and useful in terms of the administration of justice and access to justice, particularly for people gravely affected by criminal activity who need to give evidence in a courtroom setting. There is the witness intermediary scheme, which I believe is operating in both the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court. That scheme provides significant assistance to witnesses who might otherwise not be able to give evidence, or might not be able to do so in a safe way. That is a positive thing.

[6.54 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on behalf of the Greens on this Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Amendment Bill 2025. We will be supporting this bill. We recognise that for many people, including special witnesses, the court process can be difficult and the process of providing evidence is difficult. While the current processes have allowed for evidence to be provided in different ways, we appreciate that this amendment will

facilitate a smoother process and make things easier for the behind-the-scenes action that needs to be taken. We support this because, hopefully, it will help in the process that people have to go through when they bring cases to court, to enable it to happen in a timely manner and in a safe and appropriate way that allows their evidence to be heard.

[6.55 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the members for their contributions. I will get back to Ms Haddad shortly on her query. I also thank the member for Bass from the Greens for her longstanding interest in this space in support of vulnerable Tasmanians and acknowledge that long history and experience.

I also acknowledge member for Clark's, Kristie Johnston, query during briefings and arising from those briefings. Ms Johnston is not present at the moment but she asked whether the same checks and balances apply in terms of this bill. The answer is yes. The edits to audiovisual recordings are made by agreement between the parties or determination by the presiding judge. This will still occur. Under the current system, the court sends the files, the recording and marked-up transcript to the editor via a secure SharePoint link. This will not change.

I believe I made reference to the former chief justice of the Supreme Court. The former chief justice wrote to me last year to request an amendment to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001* to allow a judge, associate judge or registrar to authorise the editing of audiovisual recordings made under the act. It was consulted on in terms of this bill because I know there are often questions about that either here or upstairs. This amendment was originally included in the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2024, which was released for public and targeted consultation on 1 November 2024. Consultation closed on 17 November 2024. Both the Chief Justice and the Chief Magistrate were contacted directly and invited to provide feedback on the bill. There was no specific feedback received in relation to the proposed amendment to the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001*.

I believe I have covered what the *Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act* does, but I will mention the background to the bill. The act makes provisions for special measures for children and other special witnesses when giving evidence in court, including evidence via audiovisual link, the use of screens, one-way glass, the presence of support persons, out-of-court statements and the closure of courts.

In 2019, the act was amended as a result of recommendations of the Royal Commission into the institutional responses to child sexual abuse. The reforms included amendments to extend the pre-recording of audiovisual evidence to all victims in child sexual abuse prosecutions and allow the use of earlier audiovisual recordings of evidence to be tendered as the relevant witnesses' evidence where relevant to any subsequent proceedings and not contrary to the interests of justice. This was intended to reduce the number of times a witness has to give evidence in criminal proceedings and reduce the risk of retraumatising by multiple trials and appeals.

The act was also amended in 2024 in response to recommendation 16.11 of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings to expand supports provided to victim-survivors of child sexual offences and other witnesses. As I have indicated earlier in other settings, the commission of inquiry

work was very important. We have committed totally to that and I am pleased to see that this is a further piece of evidence in support.

It absolutely fits with the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse recommendations and is entirely consistent with the commission of inquiry work as well.

I mentioned recommendation 16.11 of the commission of inquiry final report and the 2024 amendments which expanded the use of support to adult complainants in proceedings related to child sexual abuse by inserting 'affected person' in section 4 of the act. It provided that consent from the accused is no longer required when a judge is making an order that a special hearing is to occur via an amendment to section 6A. It explicitly recognises the use of screens, petitions or other devices to obscure a witness who is an affected person from the defendant if the affected person chooses to give evidence in court by inserting new section 7AA in the act. It also provides that a judge who has declared someone a special witness may order the use of screens, petitions and other devices where the person is giving evidence in a proceeding via an amendment to section 8. Those amendments commenced on 31 January 2025.

I am pleased to provide that little bit of background. As an Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, I have had the ability and opportunity to visit a number of these spaces where children and special witnesses provide that evidence. I commend the staff and administration of those areas and the service that is provided. This is all about providing support to vulnerable Tasmanians, younger Tasmanians and providing it in a trauma-informed way.

We have learned a lot of lessons from the commission of inquiry and, I must say, there has been a very significant investment from the taxpayer for that good purpose, providing further and better support to those children and special witnesses. I have been there, hands on, and I can assure you that that support is well appreciated, and support dogs, in some cases, have been well appreciated as well.

I could go through details in terms of who is a special witness, but I think I have covered that off in my earlier remarks. I will just see if I can respond to the member in terms of one of those particular questions.

To address the particular question from Ms Haddad in terms of which judge, I am advised this will be a case-by-case decision by the appropriate officer. The presiding officer may change, so it is not limited in that way. For example, the associate judge or the registrar can make the decision to facilitate a case management, so it will be decided on a case-by-case basis. That is the advice I have received.

Ms Haddad - Thank you.

Mr BARNETT - In conclusion, I certainly commend the bill to the House. I think this is part of a very comprehensive effort for and on behalf of our government to ensure improved and better access to care and support, not just flowing from the commission of inquiry, but flowing from the royal commission that was held earlier. We have put a lot of time and effort into that commission of inquiry.

I take this opportunity to commend minister Roger Jaensch for his efforts with respect to his announcement on Monday about the Youth Justice Facility at Pontville. Again, that

involves considerable taxpayer money, but it is well used and for good purposes. Minister Jaensch is incredibly dedicated and devoted in that role and, frankly, I pay tribute to him.

It is not an easy portfolio. There are a lot of challenges, lots of criticism, but as I say, the Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Amendment Bill 2025 is just one part of 191 recommendations from the commission of inquiry which we are totally committed to continuing to implement. That will take not just months, but years, and of course it requires a change of culture as well. We want the best for our children and we want to keep them safe, and we want them to achieve their full potential.

I think this is really good legislative reform to support children and special witnesses, and to support vulnerable Tasmanians wherever they are across this great state. Having said that, I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

EVIDENCE (CHILDREN AND SPECIAL WITNESSES) AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 15)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

ADJOURNMENT

[7.06 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I move-

That the House do now adjourn.

Project Managers Institute of Tasmania

[7.06 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to speak of a really important, interesting and global function that I attended with the Project Management Institute of Tasmania. This is a relatively new part of the organisation. The Project Management Institute is a global institution which has such great courses and information and knowledge at its disposal.

I was quite taken with being invited to speak at this function as minister for Innovation and the Environment. I was able to lean into some of the projects that we do here. As I have said many times in this Chamber, I have been very fortunate to have an international career based around a lot of major infrastructure projects, and I have come to know the engineering community and the project management cohort pretty well.

One of the things I reflected on when I was making the opening address was what it was like to work and live back in the Suharto days in Indonesia when we were delivering a telecommunications project. This was a joint initiative between Telstra and Aria West, which was a United States company at the time. We were based in Central Java in Yogyakarta, which needed a basic copper network put into place. Yogyakarta is the international centre for Indonesia in that region in relation to universities and education, so it is important not only that they have access to communications technology, but that they have opportunities to work on these projects.

I was drawing an analogy between that experience and what we are doing in Tasmania, and I was able to reflect very positively on the Bridgewater bridge in particular. I know many of the people had travelled from the north of the state to come to the event and had been able to continue to see the amazing project of that magnificent piece of infrastructure that we have been building over many years and many ministers. Its growth and how it has emerged out of the river is a deep source of pride, not only for project management and engineering communities, but also for the local communities, particularly Austins Ferry and Granton. I was with some of those people recently, and they spoke of it in glowing terms.

I know just enough about project management to get myself into trouble with language, but there is good language around it that makes sense. As a lawyer, it is good to project where you want to be and to work out your pathway towards that. In engineering land they call this the 'critical path'. With some levity, I was able to talk about the critical paths that I have at my house living with an engineer who is a telecommunications engineer, and some of the critical paths that are not in his frame of reference, including doing the dish washing and making sure the dishwasher gets turned on.

I raise that as well by way of a bit of levity to underscore that everything in life has a process. The process engineering, and process re-engineering, and how we improve productivity, particularly digitisation, all starts with that process; it all starts with the critical path.

One of the things this group was particularly interested in, with the general manager of south-east Asia down from Singapore - she was fantastic - was talking about the environment and climate change and what we can do to improve our scenarios in relation to that. We have made a commitment to stay in touch; we will talk together about those things. I did leave them with an anecdote about being from an old Tasmanian family, about my grandfather and great uncle who back in the 1930s travelled by steamer to the United Kingdom to go to the coronation of George V and then travelled by train across Europe before the war. They saw the terrible things that were happening - met Mussolini, did not like him - and then travelled through Russia and through Canada and brought back ideas. They brought back tourism ideas, brought back knowledge about hydro industrialisation, particularly from the Russian experience, and also from Canada; ideas about national parks from the movement that was starting back then.

They brought all these things back and applied them in a really interesting way in Tasmania. They supercharged the Hydro, built the road up the mountain and improved health processes and systems. These are the sorts of things we get through these international engagements, and I was very proud to be invited that evening.

Time expired.

Mental Health Services

[7.12 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to speak about mental health services in Tasmania. I am constantly being contacted by people about mental health services here; they are often not able to access the support they need. I have heard from people who have been bounced back and forth between mental health services and alcohol and drug services. I have heard from people who were discharged from mental health facilities and there was no communication with their GP afterwards on discharge. I have heard from people who are finding it difficult to find the right service. There seems to be a general lack of services in Tasmania.

My understanding, after having been in my position for over 12 months now, is that the mental health space is quite complicated. Funding is from both federal sources and state sources, and I would describe services as fragmented. As a result, people are finding that difficult to navigate, and are not always able to access the support that they need. In that context, there are concerning things happening in our state. The first concern that I would like to speak about is the announced closure of the Tolosa Street Adult Mental Health Service.

The Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) has been strongly representing their members and a stop-work meeting was held last week that was well attended as a large number of workers protested the planned closure.

The Tolosa Street facility provides mental health care to people who need longer-term support, as well as providing respite. Oftentimes there are people who come for those respite beds from the Royal Hobart Hospital, helping to reduce bed block in the Royal Hobart Hospital. They are able to go to the Tolosa Street facility and receive acute care from the registered nurses who are working there.

With the closure of the Tolosa Street facility that has been announced, these services will move to the Richmond Futures facility. This is of concern for a number of reasons. It will result in reduced services. We know that the number of beds available will be less than those available in Tolosa Street. There are no registered nurses who work at the Richmond Futures facility, meaning that the acuity of care that is able to be provided will be reduced. They will not be able to accept patients from the Royal, as has been happening, which could contribute to increases in bed block. There was no tender process for the selection of Richmond Futures. Richmond Futures have the right to refuse patients, again meaning that some patients may miss out. Ultimately this is a privatisation of mental health services in Tasmania - something that the Greens strongly oppose.

In other parts of the mental health service, I have become aware of significant changes that are taking place. I understand that the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate was disbanded two months ago and in the middle of these changes, I quote: 'No one seems to know what's happening'.

I have some questions for the Minister for Mental Health, that I am hoping he can answer for us:

(1) Can the minister confirm the disbandment of the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate?

(2) If the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Director Directorate has been disbanded, what has been put in place to replace the directorate?

(3) How will the new structure facilitate ongoing collaboration, which I understand was a positive feature of the directorate?

(4) How many jobs have been lost in the restructure?

(5) Is the closure of the Tolosa Street facility part of this restructure?

(6) What other facilities or services are planned for privatisation as part of restructures within the mental health service?

Given the number of concerns that are constantly being raised with me about mental health services in Tasmania, the closure and effective privatisation of a mental health facility is deeply concerning. The reported changes to the structure of mental health services are also concerning. The Greens call on the minister to provide us with answers to these questions and ultimately to ensure that public mental health services are maintained in Tasmania so that the many Tasmanians who need support are able to access it.

The SPEAKER - I will take the very injured member for Lyons because I do not want to have to make him jump too many times tonight.

Agfest 2025

[7.16 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I rise this evening to pay tribute again to the wonderful agricultural event held in the beautiful electorate of Lyons; Agfest, a rural youth event that was absolutely fantastic this year, along with the weather that went with it, which assisted in the numbers. It is held annually in May on the grounds of Quercus Rural Youth Park at Carrick. Over 50,000 patrons flocked through the gates over the three days of the event last week.

The event was open for attendance from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with lines of cars filled with excited patrons who were waiting patiently to get their spot, ready to have a big day out. Agfest has been running since 1983, when the inaugural event attracted 111 exhibitors and 9000 patrons - and I was one of those. It has grown since then, of course, with the committee hosting over 700 exhibitors this year and more than 50,000 patrons through the gate. Months of hard work goes into the planning from the rural youth volunteers and the committee, culminating in the running of this world renowned three-day event in May, which is recorded as the biggest agricultural field event in the Southern Hemisphere.

Exhibitors are spread widely throughout the site; volunteers man the site, attending the car parking directions and directing cars from early hours in the morning. In fact, they get out at about 6 a.m. in the dark. Again, I might declare that my granddaughter was one of those in the frosts this year, ready for a busy day and when the gates opened, first of all the exhibitors come in, ready for the patrons to come in at 8 a.m.

This year, the three-day program featured over 200 livestock competitions, highlighting the finest breeds and showcasing traditional farming practices. The competitions featured dog handling which was very popular with the crowds, with two of my grandsons, Chase and Ryder, making their debut on the competition circuit with their participation in the junior dog handling trials.

Mr Fairs - Fantastic.

Ms Ogilvie - Dogs' names? What were they?

Mr SHELTON - I could talk more about them, but the equestrian displays, such as show jumping and dressage, were also there, highlighting the tremendous horse skill. This year there was added excitement, with displays from the Northern Tasmanian Light Horse Troop, adding a historical and educational perspective to the event.

Hundreds of displays, featuring everything from steam-powered machines to modern day vehicles and tractors, food courts with culinary selections from cultures all around the world, craft stalls with homemade produce and products, and education opportunities and the like, were all neatly set up on the sides. The exhibitors are able to speak to patrons about every facet of farming life: production and manufacturing, technology and new innovations, even animal nurseries where children could play with the pets. Of course, it is a great opportunity for the mainstream city people to get out and have a look at country lifestyle.

It was great to see thousands of excited children with their parents and grandparents making wonderful lifelong memories together. Many students from schools from around the state were running between displays, seeing what information they could learn, what displays they could view, excitedly talking about what their favourite thing at Agfest was to anybody who would listen.

The field day and events such as Agfest are a huge role in our local economy. Local businesses can actually go into months of work and, of course, need to be there to facilitate the opportunity for patrons to have a look at their venues.

I am running out of time, so I would like to congratulate the rural youth, the organisation committee, and all the volunteers and exhibitors for another fantastic Agfest.

Time expired.

Salmon Industry - Mass Mortality Event - Environmental Impact

[7.22 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the stark and confronting truth of a salmon industry that has gone rogue and is having profoundly negative effects on our communities and the marine environment that we all treasure.

Some horrifying figures were released by our Environment Protection Authority (EPA) yesterday. They confirm what many of us have feared. In just two months, 10 million kilograms of industrial farmed salmon have died from an insidious disease in southern Tasmanian waters;

10 million kilograms of dead fish equates to about 2.5 million mature Atlantic salmon that have suffered a cruel death at the hands of Huon Aquaculture and Tassal. It is an animal welfare disaster of unrivalled proportions. At least 13 per cent of the entire annual statewide production of the Atlantic salmon industry has suffocated and starved in sea cages in our once pristine bays and estuaries in just two months. That figure does not include the fatty and fleshy remains of fish that washed up on our beaches, ruining the summer for southern Tasmanians.

Despite those very alarming figures, the EPA cannot or will not provide an accurate breakdown of which fish farming leases these deaths occurred within, or even which region in Tasmania. That is a great shame, and it is an indictment on this government and its environmental laws that the EPA cannot give us that information - or will not. They do not collect the information, and it shows how shockingly weak our environmental laws are and how impoverished, because salmon industries self-regulate.

If this was not bad enough, Salmon Tasmania CEO, Luke Martin, has now confirmed in a *Saturday Paper* article that an unknown and undisclosed number of diseased fish have also been processed for human consumption under so-called standard procedure.

The unchecked outbreak of disease throughout our coastal waters is a biosecurity disaster of unprecedented scale in modern Tasmanian history. The Liberal government has failed to explain how the disease *Piscirickettsia salmonis* has become endemic through our waterways, and the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the salmon industry biosecurity plan has failed. Weak biosecurity conditions have allowed the movement of fish and equipment between biosecurity zones. The self-regulation of multinational companies has been a significant reason that we are now in what can only be described as an obscene marine disaster.

Despite this, the Rockliff government continues to back an industry that has gone rogue and is clearly devastating parts of our marine environment. The EPA has also published results from sampling to test antibiotic levels in wild fish following the dumping of oxytetracycline on the Zuidpool south lease in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. However, the sampling was done over two kilometres from the lease, and no testing of wild fish within the lease has ever been made public. Tasmanian anglers and the public have no faith in those results.

It is clear the EPA is hindered from doing robust and independent monitoring and desperately needs reform and additional resourcing. The Greens continue to stand with the community and demand for reform of the EPA and for the industrial salmon industry to be reined in and made accountable through a comprehensive parliamentary inquiry into this disaster.

What has happened this summer is just the start of what we know will happen in summers to come. This is just a fact of life; the climate is warming, our waters are warming. This year, our waters off the east coast of Tasmania were some 3 degrees higher than the annual average. The east coast of Tasmania is one of the fastest warming places on the planet.

What we are looking at is a salmon industry that is not regulated, that is jamming enormous increases of fish biomass into pens, is reducing the amount of oxygen in our waterways, and is increasing massive amounts of pollution - and it will only get worse and more frequent.

We have the Liberal and Labor Parties lockstep together. The Greens stand with the community and we will demand that we get strong state and federal environment laws, so that we can keep those beautiful creatures in the oceans and waterways with us into the future.

Time expired.

Wynyard Wildcatz - Cheerleading Championships

[7.26 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Children and Youth) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to tell you all about an amazing group of young people and families from my hometown Wynyard, who have not only represented our state with distinction on a global stage, but shown us all what can be achieved through sheer hard work and self-belief.

The Wynyard Wildcatz youth team, who are aged between 7 and 12 years old, won their division in the Tasmanian Cheerleading Championships held in Kingston in August 2024. They were thrilled with their success, which brought with it the right to participate in one of the world's largest cheerleading competitions, known as The Finals, in Orlando, Florida in 2025.

It was a somewhat bittersweet result, however, as it was explained to team members that attending the finals was such an expensive undertaking that it would likely be beyond the reach of their families and their club. Later that day, one of the parents asked: why should they not go to Orlando? Why should kids from remote areas miss out on opportunities like this because of distance?

Soon after, the Wildcatz team, families and supporters embarked on an ambitious but life-changing adventure. The cheerleaders increased the number of training sessions to three per week and helped out with fundraising as much as they could. Most of the team members are quite young, only 7 or 8 years old, so it was necessary for a parent or guardian to accompany each child. This meant $60,000 was needed to fund their trip.

Breakfast with Santa, a Taylor Swift party night, bingo evenings and a stall at the Wynyard show selling show bags and braiding hair were some of their many fundraising events. The target was a significant mountain to climb, but the Wildcatz conquered it with a few weeks to spare, and competed last weekend on 3 May in the Crystal Ballroom of the Orlando World Centre Marriott.

I am thoroughly proud to tell you that, yet again, these outstanding performers won the championship in their division. What a fitting finale to more than six months of hard work and commitment. This opportunity was the experience of a lifetime for these young Tasmanians and will no doubt become a cherished memory for the rest of their lives.

In a phone call from Florida yesterday, one parent said that the girls took as much pleasure in the new friendships they have made as with the exhilaration of winning. To Isla and Isla - yes, there are two Islas in the Wildcatz - Ivy, Piper, Imogen, Abbie, Malia, Evie, Matilda, Tiana, Hazel and Daisy: please accept my congratulations, our congratulations on your achievement as performers and also as ambassadors for Tasmania.

Congratulations also to head coach Bell and senior coaches Emily and Ella, and I would like to applaud and thank Megan McGinty and all of the Wynyard Wildcatz family members and supporters for demonstrating that no matter where you start your journey, the seemingly impossible can become possible with perseverance, self-belief, and sheer hard work. Well done Wildcatz. They are going to make a movie about you one day.

Weindorfer Day

[7.30 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, on Sunday I attended the annual Weindorfer Day, as I do each year up in Wilmot. Weindorfer Day is a commemoration of pioneering couple Kate and Gustav and it is a celebration of Cradle Mountain and Tasmania's natural places and wild elements. Gustav and Kate were trailblazers of tourism in the Cradle Valley by constructing the Waldheim Chalet. Nestled amongst magnificent King Billy forest, charismatic pandani and the turning fagus, Waldheim provided welcoming hospitality to the adventurous and those with an interest in Tasmania's mountain environment.

Allured by Cradle after seeing a photograph by Stephen Spurling, the Weindorfer couple caught their first glimpses of the definitive peak from Mt Roland on their 1906 honeymoon. In 1910 they stood atop the summit of Cradle Mountain and with great euphoria, Gustav made his famous declaration that this must be a national park for all people for all time. After 12 years of championing by the Weindorfers and other great Tasmanians - such as Fred Smithies, Frank Hayward, Florence and George Perrin, Stephen Spurling, Charles Mons, and Carl Stackhouse, to name a few - by 1922 Cradle was gazetted as a scenic reserve. Today, it has the highest degree of protection as a National Park and part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Weindorfer day, while being a day of reflection, also challenges us and our position today in how we facilitate visitation and tourist experiences at Cradle and through all of our national parks. As was stated at the Weindorfer ceremony, that is ensuring tourism does not come at the cost of the wilderness that it celebrates and that there is access with preservation and that the Weindorfers' and their friends' vision is not diluted by convenience and commercial interests.

This was a consideration of the Weindorfers when opening Waldheim. They had notable foresight into the possible tourism growth and the subsequent risk. A draft of Waldheim's first brochure, called Wilderness Untouched by Human Hands and designed by Kate and Stephen Spurling, showed notes of caution, that making the delicate Cradle Valley more readily accessible might entice inappropriate development and unsustainable levels of visitation to the region, spoiling the very things that made it special.

When Gustav Weindorfer died on 5 May 1932, despite his fastidious daily administration, noting all the maintenance that he did on the chalet and taking naturalist observations, he had neglected to leave a will. A business syndicate of his friend Smithies, Perrin, Mons and Stackhouse, managed to purchase Waldheim to ensure it retained its famous hospitality. They went on to employ the first ranger at Cradle and they set out to improve the road access conditions.

One of the businessmen, bushwalker and photographer, Fred Smithies, reflected on tourism at Cradle in the 1970s compared to his first visits in the early 1900s. Smithies said:

> They are feeling the pinch in the Cradle Mountain area and others, too. I should say that the greatly increased number of visitors brings more destruction than is advisable. The brains of our community will have to get together and devise something or we will lose a lot of beauty in our parks. It (Cradle) hasn't got the same atmosphere. It is like everything else. Progress comes along and the old-world nature of the place, the solitude and the peace of the surroundings seem to disappear, but it is still a place of absolute beauty, and nothing can destroy the mountains.

If people like Smithies thought the region was losing its defining wild character by the 1970s, imagine how they would feel visiting it today. How would they feel, in the future, if they saw a theme park-esque, gimmicky cableway, a cableway that has escalated from $60 million to $190 million to $225 million and the planning is not even complete; a cableway which will not ensure the conservation of public land and the Wilderness World Heritage Area for future generations? Properly investing in our parks and wildlife will prove advantageous.

Investing in restorative tourism options and declaring dark sky protected areas will simultaneously amplify environmental protection and grow our tourism offerings. Such equitably-accessible offerings will do far more good for our wild places than spending limited resources, facilitating the EOI process and propping up private luxury lodges. In a noisy and busy world where wilderness is ever diminishing, we in Tasmania have an extraordinary responsibility to protect and to enhance our wild places, to encompass and restore their defining values: the forgotten virtues of solitude and silence.

Flight Lieutenant (Retd.) Roger (Brian) Winspear AM - Tribute

[7.35 p.m.]

Mrs PETRUSMA (Franklin - Minister for Veterans' Affairs) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to honour the extraordinary life and service of Flight Lieutenant (Retd) Roger Brian Winspear AM, a man whose courage, vision and lifelong commitment to community has left an indelible mark on Tasmania and on Australia's history.

The Tasmanian government and, indeed, the people of our state, offer our deepest condolences to Mr Winspear's family, friends and loved ones following Brian's passing. Brian was a distinguished veteran, a pioneer in Tasmania's tourism industry and, above all, a steadfast advocate for those who served alongside him. Brian Winspear's life was one of bravery, resilience and purpose.

At just 19 years of age, Brian answered his country's call, enlisting in the Royal Australian Air Force in 1940. Brian's wartime service saw him stationed in Darwin and later in the fierce theatres of Timor and Borneo. Amidst the chaos of the first bombings of Darwin, Brian sustained injuries from shell splinters to his eye and hand, but true to his character, he continued to serve with remarkable courage and determination.

The squadron Brian served with was later honoured with a Presidential Citation Medal from the United States of America, a rare and distinguished acknowledgement of their bravery. However, Brian's commitment to service did not end when the guns fell silent. In later years, Brian worked tirelessly to ensure that the sacrifices of his fellow servicemen and women would never be forgotten. Brian's advocacy led to the establishment of a permanent bronze plaque on

Darwin's cenotaph, a lasting symbol of remembrance and gratitude. Thanks to Brian's efforts, the stories of courage and sacrifice from those dark days will be carried forward for generations to come.

Brian was also not content to rest on past achievements, with his vision and energy finding new expression on Tasmania's east coast, where he became a driving force in the development of the Bicheno area. Brian saw what Bicheno could become. He opened a small service station and shop and later founded the Silver Sands Hotel Motel, helping to grow Bicheno into the much-loved tourist destination it is today.

Brian's belief in the potential of Bicheno also led to him playing a key role in establishing the Bicheno Golf Club, rallying volunteers and helping to secure funding for a course that remains now a community treasure. Through Brian's outstanding leadership, he helped build a vibrant tourism and hospitality industry that has enriched our economy and our communities. Brian's efforts created jobs, brought visitors to the region and helped countless families to build their livelihoods. Brian's tourism ventures were ahead of their time, driven by his vision, hard work and genuine love of Tasmania.

Throughout his life, Brian never forgot his fellow servicemen and women. He was a passionate advocate for veterans, always making sure that their sacrifices were remembered and honoured. His commitment was recognised in 1982, when Brian was awarded the Advance Australia Award, and again in 1993, when he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to the tourism industry and the veteran community.

Brian's life reminds us that true service does not end with the uniform. It endures, it evolves and it continues to shape the world around us for the better. Brian Winspear's journey inspires all of us to honour the sacrifices of the past, to invest in the opportunities of the present and to build with hope towards the future.

All of us are a richer, stronger community because of Brian's efforts. Today, on behalf of the government of Tasmania and indeed this House, I extend our deepest sympathies to Mr Winspear's family, friends and to all who knew and loved him. We honour Brian's service, we celebrate his legacy, and we commit to carrying forward the spirit of dedication Brian so profoundly embodied.

Vale Flight Lieutenant (Retired) Brian Winspear AM. We will remember you.

Members - Hear, hear.

Container Refund Scheme

[7.39 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, last week on May Day, 1 May, Tasmania's container refund scheme finally got off the ground, and it appears to be off to a flying start, with more than a million containers returned in the first four days. Australia now has a container refund scheme in every state and territory, Tasmania being the last state to join the party.

The Greens have been calling for a program in Tasmania for many years. I was looking through the history books today, and the Greens leader, Nick McKim, said in 2012 as he was

summing up what was going to happen that year that parliament was working towards the container deposit levy, so it has taken a long time for this parliament to make it to getting that actually up and away.

I should also point out that Senator Peter Whish-Wilson has been a real advocate at the Senate level. He has been working really hard to do what he can to reduce the amount of plastic pollution and any sort of pollution ending up in his beloved oceans.

There have been so many community members who have really championed this over the years. I acknowledge their work to help the government get to the point where we can have this introduced.

Last week I visited the Resource Work Cooperative, which is otherwise known as the South Hobart Tip Shop, which hosts a reverse vending machine. The Resource Work Cooperative coordinator, Tom Crawford, said:

> Our focus is on reuse, so this recycling venture may be the introduction for many who haven't been to the Tip Shop before.

There is a likely win-win for people who come to return their beverage containers to get that refund or to put it into to some sort of charity or sporting club. They too may be exposed to reuse and looking at those other values and try to reduce waste more generally. Tom went on to say:

> We also hope that people will also come into the shop and support the reuse economy as well as donate materials, so there's an opportunity and an invitation for people to do so.

That was one of 49 facilities across Tasmania, so the added benefits are felt there. There are charities and sporting clubs that have jumped on board, and it will be important to hear if it is worthwhile for them in the months to come.

The Recycle Rewards app is user-friendly and it would be of value if the government promoted the scheme for all users. The Greens want to see a reasonable distribution of drop-off points for isolated communities, which should not be disadvantaged. Tourist destinations that might be small but busy during the warmer months, such as Bridport, Dover or Bicheno, should not be disadvantaged in their recycling and redeeming options.

I might add that the member for McIntyre, Tanya Rattray MLC, has raised her concerns with the department about Bridport not having its own reverse vending machine, despite this being a very popular destination for tourists, campers and shack owners, particularly over the summer months. Perhaps there might be a flexible model that would work well for this, perhaps with a mobile vending machine, just as it would benefit festivals and other events where people gather.

We hope to see a lot of Tasmanians getting on board with the Recycle Rewards program. I thank the minister for her work on this, and I look forward to seeing the minister working with counterparts to looking at increasing that 10 cent return. That may be with a national approach to increasing the value that we put on waste to reduce the amount that goes into our waterways, into the environment and reduces the amount going to landfill.

Commercial and Recreational Fishers

[7.44 p.m.]

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to begin a story about my journey in life to become a full-time fisherman. I find it ironic that it has led me to this place here today. Basically, from an early age I was catching trout and selling them in the Top Pub in Wynyard on a Friday night when everyone had had too many beers and they would outbid each other for my fish. I realised that I would get a lot more money that way so I waited until about 8 o'clock. After that, I started fishing in the salt water and I was very good at it.

I put a 50-metre net out one day. All the commercial fishermen were out there; they were not catching anything, but I filled the net up. I took it into the Burnie Octopus Fish Shop and sold it to them and I did that again the next week, and on the second time he told me, 'Do you realise you need a fishing licence to sell fish?' I said, 'No, I did not.'

My journey then was to buy a fishing licence, and I outlined in a letter to the Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council my intentions of becoming a full-time fisherman. I explained to them that I was from a poor family and I needed to raise money through the job that I was in on the waterfront, and then I would enter the fishery full time.

I then got an interesting letter back from the Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council representative, Dale Bryan. He said:

> Thank you for your interesting letter. I think the most appropriate response would be to try to explain the attitude of a fully committed commercial fisherman. A suggested way to do that is to create a hypothetical situation in time. You are now a professional fisherman with no other source of income, totally reliant upon the returns you enjoy from catching and selling fish to support your family, et cetera.
>
> I now pose some pertinent questions to you. What is your attitude when you find yourself unable to put your gill net in the right place at the right time because it is a public holiday and someone is in your spot? That someone has collected his wages, including his holiday pay, and is supplementing his income by commercially fishing in competition with you.
>
> At the end of a long weekend, every part-time fisherman in your area is disposing of his catch before he goes back to work and you find yourself in the situation that you have to accept a lower price to successfully dispose of your catch or you cannot find a market at all and have to give it away. This is a situation created because your competition in the marketplace is not reliant on his returns from fish sales for a living and the standard of product and price realised is not as important to him as it is to you.
>
> How do you feel when the government restricts and regulates fishermen's activities because of increased pressure and competition for the limited fish resources due to escalating use of very efficient apparatus? I find it very ironic at this point in time that I have been basically pushed out of the calamari fishery; it has been shut for two months. The long-term dependent fisherman that averaged 45 to 50 days fishing in my area now have 12 to 14 days to realise - they have given up, basically.

So here we are, what is it, 40-odd years later? Is it not ironic. This letter is just off the show. Pressure is created because more and more enterprising people use their nine-to-five jobs to establish themselves as commercial fishermen. I suggest that you answer these questions honestly from the hypothetical position I have created - then you will better understand why some commercial fishermen feel that part-timers are hangers-on, rorters, or parasites. For every one genuine case, there are probably 50 who are not. In fact, they have no intention of becoming full-time commercial fishermen. They do not do fish returns and they do not pay tax, et cetera.

Another question you may ask yourself: if you and people like you are allowed to continue this activity indefinitely, why can not 100 others in your area do the same thing? If they did, what chance would you have in the future of staying a commercial fisherman against that type of competition? Would you find yourself regulated out of business by government protecting the fish? Here we have the absurd situation where there are 160-odd latent effort licences that can still come into the calamari fishery on the north-west coast. They are still not restricting that access. There are another five gearing up to come into that fishery now. They have taken a three-month fishery that we and the recreationals could access for three months, and turned it into a 15-day fishery, now for the part timers, hangers-on and rorters. It is totally unfair and it is about time they restricted this fishery.

The House adjourned at 7.49 p.m.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PETITION
Petition No. 8 of 2024

House of Assembly

We, the undersigned Residents of Tasmania, draw to the attention of the House that climate change and the demand on water catchment uses is growing. Safe water means water free from toxic substances including pesticides and other harmful chemicals that may end up in our food or in our water. TasWater and Public Health must ensure they are aware of all the issues in the Derwent catchment and take appropriate action to address known and potential harmful effects.

Your petitioners request that the House call on the Government to:

1. Recognise that access to clean, safe drinking water is a fundamental human right and ensure the water Tasmanians drink is clean and safe, and that harmful substances are unable to enter our food chains through irrigation water or residues in food from contaminated water.

2. Take steps to ensure community faith that water from the timtumili minanya/Derwent catchment is safe to drink and applies the precautionary principle and:

   a. Establish a dedicated, coordinated Derwent catchment authority, to reduce pollutants and run-off from industries and activities

   b. Develop strong water quality standards

   c. Ensure the Derwent catchment water is regularly tested for harmful elements such as toxins and pollutants.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

RESPONSE:

1. Tasmania's drinking water is regulated under the *Public Health Act 1997* (the Act), which ensures water safety. Safe public drinking water supplies are managed by TasWater which is responsible for undertaking testing and monitoring in Tasmania.

   TasWater agrees that safe drinking water is a fundamental human right and has treatment in place to "ensure the water Tasmanians drink is clean and safe" in line with the Tasmanian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG).

This ensures TasWater follows follow a risked based monitoring approach and align its treatment processes to ensure safe water is provided,

TasWater routinely monitors catchments and supports the process of the National Health and Medical Council reviews to incorporate the latest science to maintain the supply of high-quality drinking water to Tasmanians.

With investment across the state in drinking water treatment TasWater has seen all permanent boil water alerts lifted, and for six consecutive years has reported 100 per cent microbiological compliance.

All recycled water supplied for irrigation purposes by TasWater follows the Tasmanian EPA Recycled Water Guideline.

2. a. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA Tasmania), the City of Hobart, the Department of Health, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas), Hydro Tasmania, Tasmanian Irrigation and TasWater collectively exercise a range of statutory powers in relation to the River Derwent and/or relevant planning schemes.

Given this, the Government does not consider it necessary to create stand-alone catchment authority at this time. It is important to ensure that any new governance body does not seek to duplicate existing statutory powers, increase regulatory red tape or provide for inconsistent and ad hoc approaches in different parts of the state.

The Government supports and invests in a number of successful partnership models including the Derwent Estuary Program, the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program and the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Management Taskforce, which deliver catchment and estuary monitoring programs and provide a vehicle for collaboration and coordination of effort related to improving water quality and river health.

b. The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the Tasmanian Drinking Water Guidelines outlined above provide standards for drinking water.

c. NRE Tas is progressing implementation of the Rural Water Use Strategy which is the Government's blueprint for water management in Tasmania. The Strategy ensures sustainable outcomes and builds resilience for our rural water users, for our communities and for our environment in a changing climate.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
Treasurer

Date: 5/5/25

Appendix 2

2025 (No. 13)

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

REPORT OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE ON

Operation of Sessional Orders

Brought up by the Leader of the House and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MP (Chair)
Hon. *Nic Street* MP
Hon. *Eric Abetz* MP
Mr *Vica Bayley* MP
Mr *Simon Behrakis* MP
Dr *Shane Broad* MP
Ms *Anita Dow* MP

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 17 September 2024 the Committee resolved to conduct a review of the operation of the current Sessional Orders at the conclusion of the 2024 sitting year.

1.2 The Committee initiated this review of the Sessional Orders on the basis that significant changes were agreed to by the House at the commencement of the 51st Parliament, which coincided with the increase in the size of the House to 35 Members. As these changes were agreed to by the House prior to the Committee being appointed, the Committee did not have an opportunity to review these changes.

1.3 On 23 October 2024 the Speaker wrote to all Members seeking feedback on the operation of the Standing and Sessional Orders. A further invitation to provide feedback was sent on 4 March 2025.

1.4 At its meeting on Tuesday 11 March 2025 the Committee took into consideration:

- a summary of the Sessional Orders adopted at the commencement of the 51st Parliament, including feedback received and potential issues for consideration, and
- a research report on procedures for consideration of Private Members' business including a review of practice in jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand.

1.5 The Committee reviewed each Sessional Order alongside these documents.

1.6 Each of the relevant Sessional Orders and any issues or potential issues identified are set out below.

2. REDUCTION OF TIME LIMITS FOR DEBATE

2.1 To account for the increased number of Members of the House, time limits under Standing Order 115 for substantive items of business were reduced from 40/30 minutes (Premier and party leaders and Member in charge of Bill or motion/all other Members) to 30/20 minutes. Time limits for Members to contribute to procedural debates was reduced from 7 minutes to 5 minutes per Member.

2.2 The Committee received no feedback in relation to this change. The Committee has observed no negative impacts of this change.

3. INCREASE OF DAYS REQUIRED FOR A BILL TO MATURE

3.1 Standing Order 192 now provides that a Bill cannot be called on for second reading until three days after tabling (increased from two days).

3.2 This has positively impacted the House's ability to scrutinise legislation by allowing for increased time for consideration before debate.

3.3 The Committee received no feedback in relation to this change. The Committee has observed no negative impacts of this change.

4. CHANGES IN SITTING TIMES

4.1 The automatic adjournment time pursuant to Standing Order 18 was changed from 6.00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to 7.30 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday and 5.00 pm on Thursday.

4.2 The Committee received no feedback in relation to this change. The Committee has observed no negative impacts of this change.

5. CHANGES TO THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE PROCEDURE

5.1 Standing Order 18 now provides that the motion for the adjournment of the House requires a vote of the House which can be resolved in the Affirmative or Negative. Previously the adjournment of the House was automatic at the automatic adjournment time or when moved by a Minister.

5.2 This constitutes a significant change to previous practice, however is in line with Standing Orders that were in place prior to 1998.

5.3 There have been no instances of the House voting against the motion for the adjournment in this parliament to date.

5.4 The Committee has received no feedback in relation to this change. The Committee has observed no negative impacts of this change.

5.5 However, the Committee did note the desirability of providing, where possible, some predictability in the parliamentary schedule and in particular the proposed adjournment time, and the potential for this sessional order to impact on this.

5.6 The Committee resolved to continue to monitor the application of this Sessional Order.

6. CHANGES TO QUESTION TIME

6.1 The Committee considered the changes which included:

- allocation of Questions - Removal of the ability for government backbenchers to ask questions
- reinstatement of supplementary questions
- introduction of constituency questions.

Allocation of Questions

6.2 The ratio of questions between the parties and any independents is established by way of sessional order at the commencement of each session, having regard to the composition in the House.

6.3 The Sessional Orders adopted at the commencement of this Parliament represented a change in past practice as no questions were allocated to Government backbenchers.

6.4 The Committee has received no feedback in relation to this change.

Supplementary questions

6.5 Supplementary questions were a feature of the Standing Orders from 1983. However, the introduction of minimum allocations of Questions to each party and any independent Members in 2010 (Sessional Order 48A) changed the way that supplementary questions were dealt with.

6.6 As noted in a Speaker's ruling on 8 May 2014, the introduction of minimum number of questions Sessional Order resulted in a purported supplementary question usually being counted as a new question as part of that party or Member's allocation.

6.7 Given the above practice, supplementary questions fell into disuse and eventually, the Standing Order allowing for Supplementary Questions was

suspended until the commencement of this Parliament, where the current Sessional Order was introduced:

46 Supplementary Questions

At the discretion of the Speaker, once supplementary Question may be asked immediately by the Member who asked the original question to elucidate an answer.

6.8 Given that the clear intention of the House was to allow for supplementary questions over and above the minimum allocation to Members under Sessional Order 48A, this new Sessional Order has been interpreted in this way.

6.9 As supplementary questions constitute a change in practice, the Speaker made the following statement on 15 May 2024 as to how supplementary questions would be treated:

"Before I call on questions, and given this is our first session, I will take a little latitude and make a statement about the new Sessional Orders regarding supplementary questions and how I intend to rule in relation to them. Bear in mind that members have the capacity to raise issues with the Standing Orders Committee if they believe this needs to be adapted at any stage. Supplementary questions must be actually and accurately related to the original question and must relate to or arise from the answer. It is not orderly to ask a supplementary question of another minister. Any supplementary question must be directed to the minister initially answering the question. When a minister has asked that a question be put on notice or said that they will seek further information to inform the House, a supplementary question will not be asked. "

6.10 No feedback has been received by the Committee in relation to Sessional Order.

6.11 The Speaker is regularly required to rule on the admissibility of supplementary questions. There have been no instances of such rulings being challenged in the House.

6.12 The Committee noted the following:

- The positive impact for Members asking a question that they are able to be given an opportunity to clarify matters or press for a further response.
- The potential difficulty in interpretation for a Speaker in considering whether a question constitutes a new question or a supplementary question.

6.13 The Committee resolved to continue to monitor the operation of this Sessional Order.

Constituency questions

6.14 The new Sessional Orders introduced Constituency Questions for the first time, enabling Members to raise matters relating to their local communities and requiring a written response by the Minister within 30 days.

6.15 The Committee received feedback noting that Independent Members infrequently use their allocation of questions. The feedback included a proposal that the order be amended to allow other Members to seek the call to ask constituency questions where their allocation has been forfeited.

6.16 Under the first iteration of this Sessional Order adopted at the commencement of the 51st Parliament, the allocation was as follows:

Two Government Members;

Two Opposition Members;

One Green Member;

One JLN Member; and

Two for **any other Member**.

6.17 When the Sessional Order was reviewed with the changed composition of the House following two Members leaving the JLN party to become Independent Members, the allocation of two for any other Member was removed and replaced with: **Three to be allocated at the Speaker's discretion between the JLN Member and Independent Members.**

6.18 The Committee noted the feedback received and was supportive of the ability of Members to utlise any unused Constituency Questions from the Independent allocation.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that Sessional Order 48C be amended to allow other Members to seek the call where nominated crossbench Members have waived the opportunity to ask constituency questions. (See Appendix 1)

7. SCHEDULING OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

7.1 The Committee received feedback from Independent Members noting that their time is consistently scheduled near the end of the sitting day, an arrangement they view as inequitable and a negative impact on their ability to fulfil other parliamentary and community responsibilities outside of the Chamber.

7.2 The Members requested that the schedule be adjusted to share the later time slots across the House regardless of party affiliation.

7.3 The Committee resolved to accommodate this request.

Recommendation 2

That Standing Order 42(b) be amended to ensure equitable rotation of times allocated to Independent Members' business (see Appendix 1).

8. PRIVATE MEMBER'S BUSINESS - BILLS

8.1 The ability for a Member to call for a vote on an item of Private Members' Business was introduced in 1994. Under Standing Order 42, a Member can indicate at the commencement of the debate that a vote will be required on a Bill at the conclusion of their Private Members' Business time that day.

8.2 Previous Speaker's rulings provide that an indication that a vote is required that day is only able to be withdrawn by the Member in charge of the item of business with unanimous leave of the House.

8.3 Prior to the introduction of the current Sessional Orders, an indication that a vote is required on a Bill was interpreted as only a vote up to the second reading.

8.4 As noted by a Speaker's ruling on 11 December 1997 by Speaker Madill:

"All through this session the Chair has been consistent in applying the sessional orders for Private Members' Business by allowing motions to be put at the end of the time for debate and bills up to the second reading

... The House has supported this approach and no member has raised any objection. If I am expected now to depart from this approach I urge the House to consider very carefully the terms of any sessional order to be proposed next year. For an important bill to be forced through in half an hour is in my view most undesirable."

8.5 As noted in the Companion to the House of Assembly Standing Orders & Rules, at page 72, the Speaker's ruling highlights the risk "that in some circumstances, the basic principle that all members be afforded an opportunity to contribute to debate on a Question may be put at risk by the precipitous use of what are effectively guillotine provisions of the Standing Order."

8.6 The Sessional Order adopted at the commencement of the 51st Parliament provide for a process whereby if a Committee stage of a Bill is required following a Member's Private Member's Time where their Bill has successfully passed the second reading, the Committee stage must occur at the end of that day, with a maximum further 1.5 hours allocated to it.

8.7 This effectively means that a Bill can be agreed to by the House in one sitting day and in as little as 2.5 hours total debate time, regardless of complexity or whether there are multiple amendments to be proposed.

8.8 This is less than the minimum time that would be required under the guillotine procedure for a Government Bill (SO116 requires a minimum of 3 hours to be allocated to a Bill where it is declared urgent, and a positive decision of the House is required in respect of the declaration of urgency and allocation of time). The guillotine for Government Bills is very rarely used and where it is it is usually after a protracted debate.

8.9 It is fundamental to the legislative process that the House have appropriate time to scrutinise and debate Bills, and the opportunity for Members to move amendments in the Committee stage.

8.10 As noted above, the risks to ensuring sufficient legislative debate on Private Members Business has existed since the ability to call for a vote on an item of business was introduced in 1994 however the issue has been further highlighted by the current sessional orders.

8.11 In the current parliament to date, five Private Members' Bills have already passed the House.

8.12 A jurisdictional comparison indicates that most other jurisdictions do not make a distinction between private members bills and government bills and there is not the ability to truncate debate on a Bill in the same way.

8.13 The Committee considered several options to resolve the issue.

Option 1 – Removal ability to call for a vote on a Bill

8.14 The Committee considered removing the ability for Members to call for a vote on Private Members' Bills, thereby removing the guillotine and the risks to parliamentary scrutiny described above.

8.15 Such a change would remove the distinction between private member's bills and government bills and a bill would proceed through the normal debate until concluded – i.e. where necessary across multiple weeks of private members time allocations, or alternatively for other time in the parliamentary schedule to be put aside for the debate of such Bills.

Option 2 – Mechanism to extend time for Committee of the whole House

8.16 The Committee considered a mechanism whereby the House can extend the time available for the Committee stage where it becomes apparent that

there are amendments to be moved that cannot be adequately dealt with during the time allocated.

Option 3 – Adjournment of debate on Private Members' Bills

8.17 The Committee considered a process whereby the House can adjourn debate on a Bill rather than requiring unanimous leave for the mover to withdraw the indication that a vote is required.

8.18 While this would allow a mechanism for further debate where a majority of the House considers that the Bill requires further debate, this does go against the purpose of the ability to call for a vote.

8.19 Having deliberated upon the options presented, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 3

That the Committee continue to monitor the application of the Sessional Order and consider making a recommendation as part of the ongoing review of Standing and Sessional Orders.

9. PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS - MOTIONS

9.1 In 2024, the Committee discussed concerns raised by the Speaker and then Deputy Speaker in respect of the impact of the expanded number of Members in the House on debates on Motions during Private Members' Time. The Committee agreed that this should be considered as part of this review.

9.2 The concerns raised were that despite the reduction in speaking time allocated to each Member, in the shorter debates (e.g. with a one-hour overall time limit) it was considered difficult to allocate the call equitably due to expiry of time.

9.3 This is particularly the case where multiple amendments are moved, including where Members move amendments to their own motions, each of which initiates a new debate.

9.4 The Committee considered a jurisdictional comparison summarising relevant provisions in other jurisdictions. Relevant provisions that could address this issue included:

- removing the ability of Members to move amendments to their own motions (except by leave),
- providing that any amendments do not result in additional speaking time, and
- 'short form' debates with shorter speaking times than other debates.

9.5 The Committee considered several options in relation to this issue.

Option 1 – Further reduction in speaking time

9.6 The Committee considered further reducing Members' speaking time to align with the overall time limits allocated to Private Members' motions.

Option 2 -Restricting members' ability to amend their own motions

9.7 The Committee considered adopting a process whereby Members could table an amended Notice of Motion with the leave of the House rather than moving an amendment during debate.

Option 3 -Removing additional speaking time allocated to amendments

9.8 The Committee considered removing the additional speaking time allocated to amendments. Members would be required to address the substantive motion as well as the amendment within their allocated time.

9.9 Having deliberated upon the options presented, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 4

That the Committee continue to monitor the application of the Sessional Order and consider making a recommendation as part of the ongoing review of Standing and Sessional Orders.

10. PROCEDURE FOR COGNATE BILLS

10.1 The House of Assembly had not previously had a procedure to deal with cognate bills. This was introduced as Sessional Order 183A at the commencement of the 51st Parliament.

10.2 The procedure for cognate bills is designed for convenience to enable two related bills to proceed through the stages as one debate.

10.3 The Sessional Order has been used once since its introduction.

10.4 The Committee has received no feedback in relation to this Sessional Order and has observed no negative impacts as a result of this Sessional Order.

11. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS WITHOUT NOTICE – REMOVAL OF REQUIREMENT FOR TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY

11.1 Under previous Standing Orders, the suspension of standing orders without notice required a two-third majority to be successful. The purpose of this principle is to protect the minority from sudden setting aside of the House's procedures without such action having broad support of the House.

11.2 The current Sessional Order provides that such motion can be agreed to by simple majority.

11.3 While no negative effects were reported or observed with the operation of this Sessional Order, it remains the case that the usual processes of the House can be set aside with relative ease.

11.4 The Committee resolved to continue to monitor the operation of this Sessional Order.

12. REPEAL OF THE SAME QUESTION RULE

12.1 Former Standing Order 93 was repealed at the commencement of the 51st Parliament.

12.2 This Standing Order detailed the "same question" rule which is that no Motion or Amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any Question or Amendment which, within the preceding twelve months, has been resolved in the Affirmative or Negative.

12.3 This is a basic and common rule of parliamentary procedure, the purpose of which is to recognise that the time of the House is a precious commodity and prevent duplication of debate.

12.4 The rule was not interpreted in a restrictive way and was applied in balance with the fundamental right of the House to legislate on any matter it thinks fit.

12.5 In practice, such a rule was rarely invoked as it is seldom the case that a motion is exactly the same as a motion that has previously been decided – i.e. because its terms are sufficiently different, is part of a different 'package' of proposals, or because of changed circumstances.

12.6 The Standing Order is also able to be suspended should a majority of Members wish to re-debate a matter that has already been decided.

12.7 While there have been no negative impacts reported or observed to date with the removal of this rule, it remains the case that such a rule does have a valid purpose and should be considered for reinstatement.

Recommendation 5

That former Standing Order 93 is reinstated.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Having reviewed the Sessional Orders and deliberated upon the options presented, the Committee recommends as follows:

Recommendation 1

That Sessional Order 48C be amended to allow other Members to seek the call where nominated crossbench Members have waived the opportunity to ask constituency questions. (see Appendix 1)

Recommendation 2

That Standing Order 42(b) be amended to ensure equitable rotation of times allocated to crossbench Members' business. (see Appendix 1)

Recommendation 3

That the Committee continue to monitor the application of the Sessional Order and consider making a recommendation as part of the ongoing review of Standing and Sessional Orders.

Recommendation 4

That the Committee continue to monitor the application of the Sessional Order and consider making a recommendation as part of the ongoing review of Standing and Sessional Orders.

Recommendation 5

That former Standing Order 93 be reinstated: *The same Question not to be again proposed.*

Except as provided for in Standing Order No. 94, no Motion or Amendment shall be proposed which is the same in substance as any Question or Amendment which, within the preceding twelve months, has been resolved in the Affirmative or Negative.

14. REGULAR REVIEW OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

14.1 The Committee noted the importance of a regular cycle of review of the Standing and Sessional Orders, with the optimal time for this to occur being towards the end of a Parliament.

14.2 The Committee intends to conduct a review of all Standing and Sessional Orders towards the end of this Parliament. The Committee encourages all Members to raise any issues or suggestions regarding the Standing Orders with the Speaker as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

Hon. Michelle O'Byrne MP
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE
6 May 2025

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY SESSIONAL ORDERS 42(b) & 48C

42

(b) ***Private Members Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following weekly rotations:—***

WEEK ONE

For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Braddon (Mr Garland)*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1 Hour	*JLN Member*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

WEEK TWO

For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Franklin*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Bass*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

WEEK THREE

For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Clark*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Braddon (Mrs Beswick)*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

WEEK FOUR

For 1 Hour	*JLN Member*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Braddon (Mr Garland)*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

WEEK FIVE

For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Bass*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Franklin*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

WEEK SIX

For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Braddon (Mrs Beswick)*
For 1.5 Hours	*Greens Members*
For 1.5 Hours	*Opposition Members*
For 1 Hour	*Independent Member for Clark*
For 1 Hour	*Government Members*

48C Constituency Questions

(1) At the conclusion of Questions without Notice, Members may ask questions to Ministers relating to constituency matters.

(2) The total number of Constituency Questions each sitting day is eight, allocated as follows with the order being at the discretion of the Speaker:

- ***(a) Two Government Members;***
- ***(b) Two Opposition Members;***
- ***(c) One Green Member;***
- ***(d) Three to be allocated at the Speaker's discretion between the JLN Member and Independent Members; and***
- ***(e) Any questions remaining after an allocation has been waived to be allocated to any Member seeking the call.***

(3) The time limit for each constituency question is one minute.

(4) Replies to constituency questions must be given in writing by the relevant Minister to the Clerk within 30 days. The Clerk must provide the response to the Member who asked the question and electronically publish the response.

Appendix 3

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 14 and 16 of 2024
House of Assembly

The petitioners ask the House to:

Call on the Government to

- Immediately stop Renewable Energy Zoning, and approvals, construction of wind power projects and infrastructure, including Marinus Link.
- Thoroughly research the negative effects of wind projects beyond economics.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

RESPONSE:

- While Tasmania is already able to generate the majority of its electricity from renewable sources, growth in state population and increased electrification in the business and transport sectors are expected to increase future energy demand in Tasmania.
- The Australian Energy Market Operator forecasts around 1000 gigawatt hours of new generation will be required by 2030-31 to support electrification and decarbonisation in the state.
- Additionally, the Government has identified that Tasmania has the potential to aid the national transition to renewable generation that is underway. Much like the exports from our agricultural sector, we can export Tasmanian electricity and benefit the state.
- Developing new sources of renewable energy generation, like wind and solar, will help us meet this increased demand and maintain our renewable energy credentials.
- Consequently, in 2020 we legislated the Tasmanian Renewable Energy Target (TRET), with the aim of doubling our renewable energy generation by our 2020 baseline by 2040.
- The government is agnostic to the type of renewable generation to meet TRET.
- In order to support the development of new generation needed for Tasmania's own future, further interconnection with the mainland is needed. This is of strategic significance for both Tasmania and Australia as it will help secure the state's energy security and increase our ability to aid the transition to renewables underway in the wider National Electricity Market.

- Further interconnection will be provided through Marinus Link; a planned 1500MW electricity interconnector between Tasmanian and Victoria, to be delivered in two 750MW stages. It is supported by upgrades to the transmission network in the north-west of the state, known as the North West Transmission Development (NWTD).

- The Tasmanian Government is undertaking a Whole of State Business Case (WoSBC) to comprehensively consider the opportunities and impacts of Project Marinus for Tasmania.

- The WoSBC will also consider the grid reliability impacts of progressing or not progressing Marinus Link and associated projects.

- The WoSBC will be completed and independently peer-reviewed at least 30 days before a financial investment decision (FID) is due and will be made publicly available.

- The Marinus and NWTD projects are still subject to standard development and environmental approvals, which will be completed in parallel with the FID. These approval processes allow for public representations as a matter of due process.

- For example, Marinus Link has recently lodged its development application for the Heybridge Converter Station site with Burnie City Council. The application includes an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which covers the environmental impacts of the project as it comes ashore in Tasmania and on the Heybridge site itself.

- Wind and solar farm proposals are required to undergo rigorous planning and assessment processes to ensure they are appropriately sited and designed to minimise environment and social impact. This includes considering factors such as landscape character (capturing shadow flicker), community views, and tourism value.

- Regulatory bodies such as the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Tasmanian Planning Commission play a role in ensuring that renewable energy developers meet their legal and environmental obligations through the assessment and approval processes, requiring transparency in project reporting and monitoring compliance with environmental conditions. This helps to ensures companies are operating in a sustainable manner and are accountable to both the public and environmental expectations.

- As with any development in the state, windfarms are required to consider and mitigate potential impacts on the environment. Each new wind farm must ensure it meets stringent environmental standards.

- Whether projects meet these standards is assessed by Tasmania's independent Environmental Authority (EPA), who assesses environmental risks of developing new generation and transmission and sets operating requirements for any approved wind farms. There are investigation and compliance powers under both state and federal legislation to assist in the enforcement of environmental requirements.

- Public input is an essential part of these processes, with opportunities for community engagement built into various stages of assessment. This includes a

public exhibition of the approval documentation, which the responsible regulator will advertise.

- As part of the protection of flora and fauna, recent approval conditions for wind projects also require erosion and sediment control plans. The Tasmanian Government also recently committed to ongoing funding to the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program, as well as establishing a new Threatened Species Fund for Tasmania. Such measures help to protect biodiversity through construction and operation phases of new projects.

- A wind farm is expected to have an operational life of approximately 20 to 30 years. After this time, the project owner will either decommission the site and, as part of its environmental approval, be required to restore the area to its previous land use or negotiate with the landowners to repower or upgrade the equipment and extend the wind farm's operational lifespan.

- The EPA and planning authorities require developers to create a decommissioning plan before construction begins, outlining the steps for removing infrastructure, restoring the land, and managing waste.

- In Tasmania, such pollution, including noise, is regulated through strict assessment and approval processes set out under the *Environment Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* and regulated by the EPA.

- The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, a Federal statutory position charged with representing landholder interests in disputes with renewables proponents, recommends turbines should be at least 1.5 kilometres from neighbouring residences to address noise concerns.

- BPA levels in food are also monitored to assess the impact on humans. For example, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) undertakes the Australian Total Diet Survey that measures BPA levels in some foods. The results of the most recent survey in 2016 indicated the dietary exposure to BPA in Australia is low and within acceptable safe exposure limits[1].

- TasWater is the responsible authority for the testing of drinking water in Tasmania and their comprehensive water quality testing program is agreed with the Department of Health as required by the Tasmanian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines. These testing programs and proactive risk management of water quality is developed in accordance with the best practise 12 Element framework of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) published by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)[2].

- Water impacts, such as groundwater, are a standard consideration in any construction project, including wind farms. These risks are carefully assessed and managed through established mitigation measures.

- Fire risks and mitigation responses are also considered as part of the development process. In the event of a wind turbine fire, or fires in areas

[1] Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), 2014. 24th Australian Total Diet Study, https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/24th%20Total%20Diet%20Study_Phase%202.pdf

[2] https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-drinking-water-guidelines#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1.

surrounding wind farms, the Tasmanian Fire Service and wind farm operators have standard procedures, emergency plans and training in place.

- As part of the approval process for renewable energy projects, a thorough Aboriginal Tasmanian Heritage Assessment is required to ensure that potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage are carefully considered and minimised. This assessment involves a detailed review of the proposed project site to identify any Aboriginal cultural sites, objects, or areas of significance, such as middens, artefacts, or burial sites. It includes consultation with Aboriginal communities and heritage experts to ensure that the project complies with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* and that appropriate measures are taken to protect and preserve any identified cultural heritage.

- In relation to health regulation, there is no proven link to health impacts from wind farms. Seventeen independent reviews by leading health organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council, the UK Health Protection Agency, and the US National Research Council, have found no published evidence linking wind turbines to adverse health effects.

- Scientific research around the impacts of infrasound is relatively new, however, the research that exists suggests infrasound does not cause any psychological or physiological impacts. No public health regulations currently govern this issue which suggest it is not deemed necessary to regulate.

- The government understands the importance of communities being meaningfully engaged in the process of new renewable energy development and that they are provided with a range of opportunities to provide input.

- In addition to public consultation processes on individual proposals through the statutory approvals processes, the Tasmanian Government is also exploring further ways in which local communities can have their say on energy generation projects in their area.

- The Tasmanian Government's *Community Engagement, Benefit Sharing and Local Procurement Guideline* (the Guideline) sets a standard for best practice community engagement for renewable energy development in Tasmania. Developers operating in Tasmania are expected to meet this standard.

- In addition to setting expectations for how, when and who is engaged, the Guideline sets out the expectation for a benefit sharing budget to be set aside by the proponent of a new generation or transmission project. This would see funds delivered directly into an impacted community to ensure lasting benefit is delivered and project impacts are mitigated.

- Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) are one way to facilitate additional energy generation for the state and deliver the accompanying transmission that may be required. REZ is particularly useful as a coordination tool if the level of demand requires multiple new generation projects and new transmission capacity.

- The concept of REZ is to identify geographic areas where new renewables can best co-exist with existing land uses while ensuring environmental, cultural and social values are considered.

- REZ models then aim to utilise existing transmission capacity where it exists, share the cost of additional required transmission and reduce the potential for congestion. These features in turn lower a proponent's cost of capital and delivers the lowest cost new generation to consumers.

- A REZ model also provides optionality for parties other than consumers to pay for required transmission infrastructure, in particular the project proponents who would benefit from new REZ infrastructure.

- Ultimately REZ seeks to reduce the amount of transmission being built for a given level of new generation by confining the generation to a geographic area. The alternative is for projects to locate in a dispersed way around the grid, each potentially requiring their own transmission upgrades.

- All projects within a REZ would still be required to undergo standard planning and environmental approval processes.

- Extensive consultation was undertaken on a REZ proposal for Tasmania last year, and the Government is currently considering community feedback.

- The Government must be confident a REZ must add value to the community and to proponents before proceeding.

- While renewable energy projects can promote economic growth and attract workers and families to the host region, this can potentially impact the availability of accommodation and local services.

- Proponents typically speak to local councils early in their engagement to understand the local landscape and I understand there are many innovative solutions to the housing issue being considered. For example, one council has spoken to developers about repurposing any construction phase accommodation so that it could be turned into aged care facilities to cater for its demographics into the next decade.

- Workforce planning is also a key consideration. Government is playing a role through Skills Tasmania who works to forecast labour and skills requirements, helping to ensure that local workers are equipped to take advantage of job opportunities created by renewable energy projects. Jobs and Skills Australia also provides workforce analysis and planning to support industry needs. These efforts help reduce reliance on fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workers and maximise local employment benefits. As indicated, it is our hope that an extended pipeline of construction over the next decade will ensure long term opportunities for Tasmanians.

- The Tasmanian Government is committed to balancing the development of renewable energy with the long-term prosperity of the state and its foundational industries.

- Progressing the Government's renewable energy agenda does not need to come at the expense of other key industries like agriculture or tourism. In fact, these priorities can complement and strengthen each other.

- Facilitating renewable energy development provides competitive power supply options for businesses—including farms, food producers, and tourism operators. More electricity generation in Tasmania allows existing businesses to expand and

new businesses to establish here, enabling economic growth in many industries in the state.

- A strong renewable energy sector also creates jobs, attracts investment, and can further enhance Tasmania's clean, green reputation, making our agricultural products even more desirable and positioning the state as a world-class eco-tourism destination.

- It is misleading to assert that providing what are small tracts of land over to the energy sector will mean the demise of agriculture, tourism or land values. By pursuing these priorities together, Tasmania can build a more resilient and diverse economy, ensuring long-term prosperity for all sectors.

Hon Nick Duigan MLC

Minister for Energy and Renewables

Date: 05/05/2025

Appendix 4

Petition No: ~~129~~ 11 of 2025

RESPONSE TO PETITION
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TITLE OF PETITION: Swanwick to Coles Bay Bike and Walking Track

The petition of the undersigned Citizens of Tasmania draw to the attention of the House:

We, the undersigned Residents of Tasmania, draw to the attention of the House the need for a safe bike and walking track to connect Swanwick and Coles Bay.

This track will connect the communities of Swanwick to Coles Bay, whilst providing a safe cycle and walking corridor, opening usage up to people of a wide range of ages and abilities.

The sole road between Swanwick and Coles Bay is narrow and lacks spaces where vehicles can safely overtake cyclists. It sees a huge influx of traffic during summer and key holiday periods. A dedicated cycle and walking track would significantly improve safety for all users.

Health and environmental benefits of cycling and walking are well documented and a perfect fit for the nature-based tourism destination of Freycinet and Coles Bay.

This initiative was proposed as part of the Freycinet Master Plan. Not action has been taken.

Your petitioners request the House call on the Government to:

- Develop a plan for the design and construction of a trail between Swanwick and Coles Bay from Hazards View Drive to the entrance of Coles Bay.
- Identify potential funding sources for the trail.
- Assess the environmental impact of the trail, including any mitigation steps that could be taken for protection or accessibility, such as bridges.
- Undertake community consultation on the trail to ensure the design meets the needs of the local community and users of a wide range of ages and abilities.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

The Freycinet Master Plan, June 2019 (the Plan) identifies a number of initiatives and priorities that aim to protect and manage what makes the Freycinet Peninsula unique and special for Aboriginal Tasmanians, locals and visitors, while ensuring it can continue to play an important part in the tourism industry by providing a world-class visitor experience. It is a 20-year plan with priority initiatives completed within the first five to ten years.

The Plan identifies improvements to the walking and cycling connection between Coles Bay and Swanwick, noting that these improvements are sequenced for investigation following the development of the visitor gateway.

Table 6 of the Plan, pages 125 – 128, identifies the Master Plan priorities, initiatives and business owners across a one-to-ten-year timeframe. The Coles Bay to Swanwick cycle and walk track is not included within these priorities, due to the infrastructure being proposed post completion of the visitor gateway.

> The Plan states on page 112
> *"The existing informal walking track from Coles Bay to Swanwick will be retained and **formalised with connections into the visitor gateway** through the coastal reserve area. This track begins at the southern end of Muirs Beach in Coles Bay, and follows the beach for most part, moving inland to a formed track at its northern end as it enters Swanwick."*
>
> Further, on page 112
> *"**Once the visitor gateway is established**, an additional walking/cycle connection directly from Swanwick to the gateway (and then through to Coles Bay) may also be investigated."*

The Tasmanian Government has committed $14 million towards the Freycinet Gateway project with the Australian Government committing a further $7.2 million.

The project planning is progressing and will see initial community and public consultation commencing next month (May 2025). The Coles Bay and Swanwick communities are key stakeholders and have received email communications in July and August 2024 directly from

the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) regarding the Gateway Project and other prioritised initiatives from the Plan.

Additional communication in December 2024 and March 2025 has been provided to the project's Reference Group members, which includes representation from the local Coles Bay and Swanwick communities.

From 2019 to date, PWS has delivered directly, and/or in collaboration with the community, the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council and Marine and Safety Tasmania the following initiatives:

- Pedestrian connections at the foreshore walkway between Muirs Beach and Garnet Avenue, shared use track between Garnet Avenue into Freycinet National Park and through to the Wineglass Bay carpark track head.
- Extension to the floating pontoon at the public boat ramp to allow for additional boat standing during trailer parking.
- The Wineglass Bay Lookout extension and loop track at the 'saddle'.
- New toilet facilities at north and south Wineglass Bay Beach.

Consideration of further projects, such as the Coles Bay to Swanwick bike and cycle track, will occur upon completion of the Freycinet Gateway project.

Should the community and those supporting this petition wish to discuss the priorities in the Master Plan, they are encouraged to make contact directly with PWS's Regional Manager North, Donna Stanley on email Donna.Stanley@parks.tas.gov.au or mobile 0428 151 918.

Nick Duigan MLC
MINISTER FOR PARKS

Date: 5th May 2025

Appendix 5

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 43 of 2025
House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Tabatha Badger MP, Member for Lyons

ANSWERED BY: The Hon Eric Abetz MP, Leader of the House

QUESTION:

Ms Badger to ask the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management in relation to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Fire Management Plan 2022:

(1) Have the following Management Actions contained in the TWWHA Fire Management Plan been completed:

- *a) the Cradle Mountain Fire Management Strategy*
- *b) developing strategies for any of the 11 priority Ecological Management Zones identified by the TWWHA Fire Management Strategy*
- *c) the Reserve Values Fire Protection Plan for Cradle Mountain and Cradle Valley and*
- *d) a system for the prioritisation of multiple new ignitions on PWS managed land, and its incorporation into the PWS Bushfire Season fire Action Plan?*

(2) If the above actions have been completed, please provide the applicable documents.

(3) If the above actions are underway but not completed, please provide an update on their progress.

(4) If the actions are neither completed nor underway, please provide an explanation as to why this is the case and when they are likely to be progressed?

(Asked 6 March 2025)

ANSWER:

1(a) The Cradle Mountain/Cradle Valley Reserve Values Fire Protection Plan (RVFPP) will encompass the Cradle Mountain Fire Management Strategy. The Strategy is not a separate document.

Emergency Response Plans already exist for Cradle Valley and The Overland Track. These Plans detail the initial Bushfire Response activities until an Incident Management Team has been established to respond to an emergency.

1(b) Research and planning work has commenced for each of the 11 Ecological Management Zones that are identified in the TWWHA Fire Management Plan. This work will be used to inform the fire management strategies for each zone. All of the strategies are at different stages of development based on the progress with the research and planning around the specific values in that zone.

- Strategies for Melaleuca and the Louisa Bay Peat Mounds are contained in the Southcoast Landscape Fire Region Strategy.
- Significant research work is being undertaken in the Lake McKenzie recovering ecosystem which is being used to inform strategies for fire management in that zone.
- Strategies for Cradle Mountain and February Plains are being developed as part of the Cradle Mountain RVFPP.
- The Walls of Jerusalem unburnt ecosystem strategies are being considered in the development of the RVFPP for this area.
- Significant research work is being undertaken around the Lake Augusta montane grasslands to inform the strategies for fire management in this area. This work will also be used for the February Plains montane grasslands.

1(c) RVFPP plans have been commenced for Cradle Mountain/Cradle Valley.

Ultimately, the PWS will document RVFPPs across each of the 11 Ecological management Zones noting one RVFPP may cover more than one zone.

The RVFPPs consist of strategies for fire mitigation and protection actions as well as details for fire response activities and include:

- Identification of values
- Prioritisation of values
- Details of tactics to protect values
- Equipment required to implement tactics
- Details of access to the values
- Identification of appropriate landing sites in order to implement tactics and
- Biosecurity concerns that exist in the area.

Planning has commenced for the Cradle Mountain/Cradle Valley RVFPP with the ongoing work to be supported by a fire planner in the North West region, in collaboration with the TWWHA fire operations officer.

1(d) A mapping (ArcGIS) tool has been developed for triaging multiple ignitions on PWS tenure.

The PWS Bushfire Triage Tool provides critical spatial and weather information providing the duty officer with important information in determining initial prioritisation of response.

The Tool was utilised effectively in February 2025 to prioritise response to the numerous lightning strikes that occurred.

(2) All actions are in progress. The RVFPPs for Mt Field, Mt Anne and the Walls of Jerusalem have been completed. These documents are not for general release as they are operationally focussed and may contain sensitive information such as the locations of highly sensitive natural and cultural values.

(3) Update on progress is provided above.

(4) The TWWHA Fire Management Plan does not stipulate a timeframe for each strategy to be completed. Each strategy is dependent on the collection of data and information about the relevant natural and cultural values specific to the ecological zone.

APPROVED/~~NOT APPROVED~~

Nick Duigan MLC
Minister for Parks

Date: 5th May 2025

Appendix 6

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 44 of 2025
House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Tabatha Badger MP, Member for Lyons

ANSWERED BY: The Hon Eric Abetz MP, Leader of the House

QUESTION:

In relation to the Maria Island National Park and Ile des Phoques Nature Reserve Management Plan:

(1) To date, how much has been spent on the cost of consultants for the Maria Island Management Plan Review?

(2) What is the forecasted spend on consultants for the Maria Island Management Plan Review?

ANSWER:

(1) To date $151,209.82 has been spent on consultants for the Maria Island Management Plan Review.

(2) No further expenditure on consultants is expected.

APPROVED/~~NOT APPROVED~~

Nick Duigan MP
Minister for Parks
Date: 5th May 2025

Appendix 7

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 45 of 2025
House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Tabatha Badger MP, Member for Lyons

ANSWERED BY: The Hon Eric Abetz MP, Leader of the House

QUESTION:

In relation to the Next Iconic Walk and measures to prevent the spread of phytophthora:

(1) Please provide a map of known locations of phytophthora along the proposed route of the Next Iconic Walk.

(2) What measures, if any, are proposed to prevent the spread of phytophthora both during track construction and when the walk is operational?

(3) What is the cost of the measures proposed to prevent the spread of phytophthora both during track construction and when the walk is operational?

ANSWER:

(1) Phytophthora cinnamomi (PC) has been recorded in and around the Lake Spicer Track, near Lake Huntley, Farquhar Ridge, the proposed location for the south service and construction depot, and Lake Margaret Road.

(2) Mitigation, management and monitoring measures during construction and operation of the NIW will be presented in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS). The EIS will be made available for public comment in mid-2025. With the implementation of these NIW measures, some of which are noted below, phytophthora spread will be effectively controlled and managed. The measures proposed will seek to effectively contain and reduce the spread of PC, achieved through the following actions:

- Installation of boot and equipment cleaning stations to enable construction crews to clean all gear and equipment prior to accessing NIW sites and surrounding areas.
- Construction works will consider the order that sites are visited to reduce the potential spread from locations where PC has been found (i.e. PC contaminated sites programmed to be visited last).
- Include controls for PC management in project documentation, including construction environmental management plans; NIW Operations Manual; and a Weed and Disease Management Plan.
- Hut and other infrastructure sites are located away from known PC locations. Minor track alignment modification may be considered as a mitigation option in some instances.
- During construction, all new material introduced to a site will be free from contamination of weeds and pathogens (this will be a condition on all contracts and procurements). Construction materials will be stockpiled on hardstand, elevated off the ground or away from soils infected with PC. Construction vehicles must remain on formed tracks and be cleaned in accordance with guidelines for weed and disease control.
- During operation of the NIW, walkers will be given briefings by PWS Host Rangers that will include the strategies for PC management and outline the importance of adhering to these measures. Gear checks will be conducted at check in, including identifying unclean boots, walking poles or other equipment. Hygiene stations and signage will be placed at trailheads and key access points) along the track and at each hut/campground to reduce the spread.
- Testing and ongoing monitoring of key sites.

(3) The costs associated with managing the spread of PC have not yet been determined but will be delivered as part of PWS business-as-usual operations.

APPROVED/~~NOT APPROVED~~

Nick Duigan MLC
Minister for Parks
Date: 5th May 2025

Appendix 8

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 50 of 2025
House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Ms Helen Burnet MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

1. Are there any identified illegal unlicensed tobacco sellers, associated with identified organised crime organisations, operating in Tasmanian selling illicit tobacco and vapes, and if so, how many?

2. What enforcement steps, if any, are the government taking to prosecute these operations?

3. If there are such unlicensed tobacco sellers in Tasmania, where are they located, by Local Government Area?

4. Are there currently any vacancies in tobacco control enforcement officer positions, and if so, how long have there been vacancies?

5. If there are vacant tobacco control enforcement roles, when will these positions be filled in Public Health?

6. Are tobacco control enforcement officer positions subject to a recruitment freeze?

7. Is Public Health affected by the cuts to 'non-essential' public service non 'frontline positions,' and if so: (a) which positions will be cut? and; (b) do these cuts affect staff involved in the implementation of the Tobacco Action Plan, the Tobacco Coalition and legislation needed to close loopholes in the tobacco legislation and for illegal vape sales?

ANSWER:

The delivery of the Tobacco Action Plan remains a Tasmania Government priority.

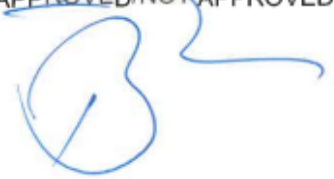
The Department of Health is working to enhance its enforcement tools to combat the sale and supply of illicit tobacco and vapes, actively engaging with the Therapeutic Goods Administration to carry out joint operations and prosecutions under the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989,* where appropriate.

This financial year (2024-25), the Department has conducted 636 inspections and seized 60 000 cigarettes, 64 kg of loose tobacco and 5400 vapes.

The Department has identified a number of illicit tobacco sellers in Tasmania. The Department shares the information collected through its investigations with partner agencies such as Tasmania Police, Biosecurity Tasmania, Australia Post, the Australian Border Force, the Australian Government Illicit Tobacco Taskforce and the Therapeutic Goods Administration. It would be inappropriate to disclose locations due to ongoing investigations.

As announced by the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing during debate on the *Public Health Amendment (Vaping) Bill 2024*, there are four newly established positions to support compliance, enforcement and education. Three of these roles were advertised for recruitment on 13 March 2025. Applications for the three new positions closed on 23 March 2025 and the recruitment process will be completed as a matter of priority. The remaining role will be recruited later this year.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED



Hon Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Date: 10/4/25