

**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**  
**DEBATES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**DAILY HANSARD**

**Wednesday 4 March 2026**

**Preliminary Transcript**

**This draft transcript of debates is issued in advance of the final Hansard for the use of the members of the House of Assembly and copies made from this may not be protected by parliamentary privilege.**



**Wednesday 4 March 2026**

The Speaker, **Mrs Petrusma**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message**

#### **Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

Reporting from ABC has today confirmed that the minister's office was aware of Tasracing's communications promoting TasInsure before they were issued, yet the minister repeatedly told parliament that neither she, nor anyone in her office, was aware. Why did you mislead parliament?

#### **ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. There is nothing new to see here. Tasracing has dealt with this issue. As to whether my office knew about the text message, I've been clear: it did not.

#### **Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - A supplementary question, Honourable Speaker.

**The SPEAKER** - Supplementary.

**Mr WILLIE** - You repeatedly told parliament that your office was not aware of the communications from Tasracing to promote TasInsure during the election period, but the ABC has confirmed today, through right to information, that they did. Why did you mislead parliament, repeatedly?

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable minister.

**Ms HOWLETT** - The email shows that an adviser provided details of the policy as he should, and I'm assured that the adviser had no prior knowledge of this message.

### **Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message**

#### **Mr WILLIE question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.03 a.m.]

When asked whether she or her office were aware of the communications before they were issued on 3 July, you told a committee:

I can certainly tell you that I and no one in my office was aware.

You then went on to say:

I can't speak for every single person in government or who works in government offices, but certainly, I wasn't aware and no one from my office was aware.

Reporting from ABC this morning has proved those to be lies. Why did you mislead parliament over your office's involvement in the communications?

**Mr FERGUSON** - Honourable Speaker, point of order. That is unparliamentary language.

**The SPEAKER** - To use the word 'lies', it does require a substantive motion. If you just want to quantify the word 'lies'. If you use the words 'lies,' 'lie,' or 'lying' in parliament, it is by way of a substantive motion because it is a higher level. If you want to withdraw the word 'lies' and reframe it.

**Mr WILLIE** - I withdraw the word 'lie' and reframe it as 'misleading'.

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I stand by what I said.

**Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Mr WILLIE** - ABC reporting today clearly shows that the minister's chief of staff was made aware of the communications from Tasracing promoting TasInsure prior to that going out the minister's office was clearly aware. Minister, when did you become aware?

**Ms HOWLETT** - Honourable Speaker, I stand by exactly what I said. To attack a staff member is extremely disappointing to us.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. I understand the gravity of the questions being asked, but the minister will be heard in silence. She only has one minute, and I will have no hesitation in giving warnings and they can come in quick succession, so I ask that the minister be heard. You can ask further questions on this matter, or you have the chance to raise it in MPI or on Adjournment or other forms of the House. Minister.

**Ms HOWLETT** - Honourable Speaker, thank you. I stand by exactly what I said.

**Dial Ranges - Forestry**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.07 a.m.]

Yesterday was World Wildlife Day and Forestry Tasmania started clear-felling the Dial Range against the wishes of the community and the Central Coast Council and in defiance of a Saul Eslake report that showed the Dial has far greater economic value left standing. Hundreds of people have been emailing and calling you and the minister, Mr Ellis, in desperation for weeks. So far you have given them a non-response. Will you respect the wishes of your community and council and act to stop this logging in the Dial Range immediately?

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order, the Premier has the call. Member for Franklin, Mr Winter, member for Braddon, the only one who should be speaking right now is the honourable Premier.

**ANSWER**

I can't ask the questions, unfortunately, Dr Broad, but again, your Facebook was very informative. I thank you very much for that.

Honourable Speaker, in all seriousness, I thank the member for the question. I have taken a great deal of interest in this matter because it is part of my electorate and community. I respect the opinions of those who have written to me. I can't always agree with those opinions, but I respect them nonetheless. The facts are that forestry, mining and recreation have successfully coexisted in the Dial Range since the mid-1800s and practices in all those industries have improved dramatically since then.

This area has long been a working landscape, a place where Tasmanians have balanced jobs, entrepreneurship, and economy with the landscape and access to the natural environment. My understanding is that the Dial Range covers about 5800 hectares in total and Sustainable Timber Tasmania manages about 300 ha of permanent timber production zone land at the southern end. That amounts to just over 5 per cent of the entire region; so it is a small, carefully managed part of a larger landscape. The harvesting scheduled for this year, which you have identified in your question, represents only 0.31 per cent of the total Dial Range area. It's part of Tasmania's long-standing commitment to sustainable native forestry, where only a tiny portion of forest is harvested each year and every coupe is regenerated to native forest - so that it's a renewable resource, effectively.

I understand the emotion around this. I recall there has been discussion on this particular area for a couple of decades, if my memory serves me correctly. I understand that. I am aware of the Central Coast Council's view on this matter as well. I've spoken to other Independent members for Braddon on this issue. Again, I've taken great interest in it, but the facts speak for themselves, honourable member.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - A supplementary question.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Premier, you didn't answer the question. You've been giving non-responses to community and you're still standing on the fence. The fact is that things have changed since the 1800s and the values of this forest, right in the heart of Dial Range, visible to everybody who goes there, speak for themselves. You have to stand up for your community because it's worth more standing. The evidence shows that. The economics for the heart of Dial Range, and the reason that people go there. Your local community, tourism, it's centred on keeping those forests standing.

**The SPEAKER** - I will take that as a statement, not a supplementary question. Dr Woodruff, your 30 seconds have been used up. When you ask a supplementary question, it is not an opportunity for you to make a statement or a speech. It is supposed to be a question. That went over time. You did not ask a question, so it was a statement.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Point of clarification, please, honourable Speaker. I respect that clarification, thank you. At the very beginning, I did ask the question, which was that he didn't answer the original question - his non-response to community.

**The SPEAKER** - Dr Woodruff, for clarity, I highly recommend to all members that you make your question very clear. It is not an opportunity for a speech. Your statement is now on the *Hansard* so it is now part of the parliamentary record.

### Homes Tasmania - Return to Government

#### Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

[10.12 a.m.]

The creation of Homes Tasmania was a terrible decision. It has wasted time and money. The waiting list for public housing has grown to 5387 applicants. Housing developments have stalled and industry confidence has collapsed. The heartbreaking stories of thousands of Tasmanians unable to access safe and secure housing or access affordable housing is its sobering legacy. From day one, I opposed the creation of Homes Tasmania and every day since I've campaigned for its return to government. Your government has finally accepted the reality and made the decision to bring it back into your hands. I welcome it. Your government has a tremendous record of slick announcements but a trackable record of poor delivery. Can you please tell me and give the Tasmanian people confidence that this will be different? Minister, what is the plan?

#### ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, and I thank honourable the member for the question. Yes, it has been an interesting few months of working through the issues around Homes Tasmania. I wish to acknowledge a lot of very dedicated people there who have kept their focus on crisis, social, and affordable housing, as well as a lot of other things that I have been quite amazed by in the scope of what Homes Tasmania looks after in that area.

A lot of decisions had to be made, and the Crawford report has indicated several things to do with the finances and suggested changes through there, and it's been a work in progress for me before Christmas and since in working through a lot of those issues. A big move was made in understanding the need for a stronger direction towards building places.

That also links up with my other portfolio of Planning, where a lot of the changes that are required - throughout Australia, I might add - towards building more homes that are suitable for the massive increase in one- and two-bedroom accommodation units, which is different to our traditional three- and four-bedroom conception of what we grew up expecting and being used to. That is creating issues in Planning on the size of blocks and how you make them appropriate for subdivisions, as well as the building industry changing the techniques of building away from traditional homes to more modular or prefabricated builds.

Mr Wilson's ability in this area is probably second to none in the state and I have been talking through a lot of situations in the couple of weeks since he has been in the role, and because of my building background, it is a focus I think I can make a big difference in. I can give you my assurance that I dedicate most of my ministry time to the building of more social homes and the different parts that are needed for that. That's from council through to planning and housing finance and everything else that needs to happen for that. My assurance to you in answering your question is that we are focused on delivering more homes as quickly as we can and talking to all aspects of the industry to make sure that happens.

## Supplementary Question

**Mr O'BYRNE** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - I appreciate the genuine nature of the answer from the minister, but I suppose the question more goes to not defining a problem. We know what the problem is, but what are the next steps in delivering Homes Tasmania back into government hands, and what steps have been taken to act on the challenge before us?

**Mr VINCENT** - There is still a lot of things in swing with the Crawford report and things that need to happen to change the focus of Homes Tasmania to more deliverable instead of some of their construction side of things of planning and doing subdivisions. I think that can be done differently. We will be working through that in the coming months to make sure that by 1 July - and before, as soon as we can - a lot of those changes will be made. I am more than happy to keep you up to speed with that as we work through that transition.

## Department of State Growth - Job Cuts

**Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.16 a.m.]

Hundreds of Tasmanian families want to know what your redundancy plan is for them after you told an entire department by email that 250 jobs were being axed. That's a quarter of the Department of State Growth's workforce. You made only a vague reference to them in your state of the state address yesterday, describing them as 'head count'. These are not sheep in a paddock. They are people with families, mortgages, rents to pay and cost-of-living pressures. The email announcement was heartless and carelessly short on detail for families desperate for certainty. So much for a sensitive transition. It was an announcement without substance. When

can DSG staff expect to know their fate, or are you going to leave a sword of Damocles hanging over these families' heads while you work out the details?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question and interest in this matter. Of course we will work through this sensitively with the affected workforce, and the non-essential recruitment freeze amount announced in March 2025 continues.

I'm sure it hasn't escaped your attention that we announced the rightsizing of the public service 12 months ago when it comes to the reduction - at that time, 2500 across the public service. This is part of that rightsizing and right structure and right delivery model for the public service. I recognise behind every number there is a person, an individual, and of course a family. I'm very mindful of that, as I said this morning.

The non-essential recruitment freeze announced last year continues, including the DSG workforce committee reviewing all requests to advertise vacant positions. Other methods could include natural attrition, redeployment, targeted and negotiated voluntary redundancies and the Workplace Renewal Incentive Program. There is a range of areas we can work through with the transition, and we will do so with our workforce. We will do so also with industrial advocates and unions, which also will play a very key role here. As we committed to openly and transparently 12 months ago, we mentioned a figure of 2500. We will embark on that in a very sensitive way. It's a very sensitive matter, taking into account the individual circumstances of each person.

**Supplementary Question**

**Ms JOHNSTON** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - The Premier outlined a range of ways he intends to achieve the 250 reduction, including a freeze, natural attrition and redundancies. When will the details be made clear about how many you're expecting to achieve under each particular category? How many people exactly are expected to be made redundant from the Department of State Growth?

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I said, we will work through this in a very sensitive way to achieve our commitment. We will do that in an open and transparent way with the workforce, individuals, and no doubt the union representatives will also play a very key role here. Agencies have communicated with employees and provided information about supports that are available. These include speaking with their managers, executive member HR team, including assessing agencies' employee assistance programs as well. As I said, these changes will take place over coming months with absolute consideration to ensuring our workforce is involved, supported and respected, as I said yesterday.

**Middle East Conflict - Impact on Meat Industry**

**Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER,  
Mr PEARCE**

[10.20 am]

We are all deeply concerned with the conflict in the Middle East and the impact that can have on our export markets, particularly our meat industry, which relies heavily on exporting to that region. What measures are you taking to ensure that farmers and importers have security through this uncertain time?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and concern for the industry and constituents who are in a troubled time. As we all know, trouble in the Middle East affects us all. In particular, it directly affects our agricultural sector in Tasmania, with the amount of lamb that we put, under the halal market, into the Middle East. That market is approximately 5600 tonnes per annum. Although we only have about 2.376 million sheep in Tasmania and about 3 per cent of the federal or the national flock numbers, it's important because that's all processed.

Tasmanian Quality Meats (TQM), the Olivers, run a fantastic operation in Tasmania and they're predominantly aimed at that market. About 60 per cent of their business is that market; that lamb into that market. Since the trouble in the Middle East, they haven't been able to put that into places like the UAE, Kuwait, Dubai and other places. That's all had to come back, and it's come back frozen. First of all, they've got that stock that has been halal slaughtered, they need to look after it, they need to get rid of it and they need to keep it cool so that they can resell it. A lot of that is specific to market. It's cut into basically six big bits and put into a box. It needs to be reprocessed before that can be redistributed to local markets.

What have I done? I've been in contact constantly with the Olivers, constantly. They ring me all hours of the night. We are trying, with the help of the Minister for Trade, to explore domestic market options; but you've got to remember, and this House needs to remember, that the whole country is in the same boat. I don't want to see us flood that market and drop the bottom out of it. A lot of those lambs are what we call 'light lambs'. They're between 18 and 22 kilograms, they're dressed, slaughtered. That will mean that a lot of those lambs that are on the books from Olivers will go back into the [inaudible] market. They will be grown out into bigger lambs. That can only happen for so long. They need to be slaughtered eventually before they get into mutton and the price drops down.

Again, just to reiterate, this is an important industry. It is heavily impacted. We are working constantly and giving those reassurances. The work that the Minister for Trade has done in conjunction with his counterparts at the federal level has been very positive and has been welcomed by TQM and the other members of the industry. We're all leaders here. As you go back to your electorates, I encourage you to tell your constituents that that eating lamb is an option to help our farmers out at this particular time.

## North East Wind Project - Community Impact

**Prof RAZAY question to ACTING MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT**

[10.24 am]

The Tomahawk community in north-east Tasmania feels they are being ignored by ACEN in Australia over its North East Wind project, planned to be one of the largest wind farms in Tasmania, with the installation of 210 turbines. The coastal community feels that there has been a lack of transparency and lack of thorough community engagement. Concerns raised include: the impact on amenities; noise; property prices; increased stress and anxiety among the community. How are the department and the company going to engage further with the community to address their concerns, especially regarding the location and scale of the project and the need to reconsider the Waterhouse component near the town?

### ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. It's a pleasure to stand in this place and to respond to this important question. Tasmania is a renewable-energy state. We're very pleased and proud of our history, our heritage and our plans for the future. Of course, Marinus Link is part of that, which will deliver improved and a boost to our economy, to our jobs and, indeed, to the environment. We have legislation to double the renewable energy target in Tasmania; to double that by 2040, which this parliament passed some years ago.

Developers, in responding to your question, have identified 7 gigawatts of potential generation. Additional renewable energy generation is very important to our economy to help us to continue to grow, particularly the importance in the regions, in terms of new investment and jobs. Like many new developments, it is important that proponents work with their communities - and this is a key point of your question, I think. It's important that the benefits of the developments are understood and also any impacts are minimised or responded to. We, as a government, have a rigorous assessment process in place - assessment and approval process - opportunities for input from the community is critically important; it's part of the process and we support that.

Your concerns on behalf of the Tomahawk community are certainly acknowledged. We have four large-scale renewable energy projects underway: Equis, Whaleback Ridge, ACEN's North East Wind and also Cellars Hill, down near north of Bothwell.

**Ms Finlay** - What does 'underway' mean, minister?

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable member can ask a question herself later on.

**Mr BARNETT** - They're undergoing assessment. You mentioned, in terms of ACEN's North East Wind: 1200 megawatts, 400 construction jobs is the plan. The concerns of the Tomahawk community - the Tomahawk Protection Society - are acknowledged and that project does require public consultation.

The process is part of the statutory decision-making process. You have the major project that was classified in 2022, and so it has to go through that community assessment process. There will be a major project impact statement for the proposal; once prepared, that will also

be publicly exhibited and available for the public to comment on. Of course, through the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) at the federal level, there's a process to go through there again for public feedback. Engagement with the community is really important. As a government, we've released the guidelines for community engagement, benefit-sharing and local procurement. So, that's our expectation. I would be more than happy to continue to liaise with the honourable member to respond for yourself and on behalf of your community of Tomahawk.

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Deputy Premier's time has expired.

### **Native Forestry - Future Agreements**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.28 a.m.]

The native forest logging industry is in its death throes. Tasmania's native sawlog supply falls off a cliff in mid-2027, just as the industry will be captured by new national environmental laws and current contracts end. Your second 100-day plan commits you, by 9 March, to signing binding term sheets until 2040, with Forestry Tasmania's existing customers. Signing any new binding agreement among so much uncertainty about the industry's future is a massive sovereign risk. Tasmanians could be on the hook for hundreds of millions in payouts to private companies if federal law reforms mean wood-supply contracts can't be fulfilled. Premier, you should walk away from this destructive industry entirely. But will you at least commit to doing the right thing for Tasmania and not signing any agreements with sawmillers prior to the finalising of national environmental standards?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. Of course, the federal government has announced major changes to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, including the creation of new national environmental standards. As part of these changes, Tasmania's long-standing Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) that has provided excellent forestry outcomes and certainty for the industry will end, as you point to, on 1 July next year, 2027. From that point, Tasmania's forest management system will need to be re-accredited under the federal system.

I'm advised that Tasmania is well placed for that shift. Our forest management system already delivers the kind of outcomes the national standards are aiming for: strong environmental safeguards, science-based decision-making, and a balanced approach to managing our forests for the long term. That has been the case for some time. The Regional Forest Agreement has served Tasmania and the many people employed within the industry well.

I'm very mindful of your first question and the statement you made within the question about jobs and families. We've had that discussion in the public service. We're very mindful of it. We also need to be very mindful that, as you termed it, almost with the stroke of a pen there are people out of work, and that families, livelihoods and regional communities are impacted. We need to be very careful about that.

I understand the intent of the question. Sustainable Timber Tasmania is negotiating long-term wood supply contracts for native and plantation saw logs - again, mid-2027 expiry. The federal changes have meant that more time is needed to work through these matters. The government has a responsibility to manage transition risk responsibly. The industry also needs very clear visibility after 1 July 2027, you'd appreciate, about operating conditions to make commercial decisions.

Naturally, Tasmanian taxpayers need protection as well, but industry also needs that certainty. We're working through ensuring that we can, as best as possible, achieve balance. We need both industry certainty and protection of Tasmanian taxpayers.

### Supplementary Question

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary question?

**The SPEAKER** - Yes.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - To the question, the federal minister has made it clear that they won't be coming in and bailing out Tasmania. There's a sovereign risk issue here. Will you commit to not resigning or making any legal commitments on wood supply contracts until the national environmental standards are known and the impacts on forestry in Tasmania are known?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the supplementary. As I say, we need to work through the federal government changes. We're aware of the expiration of the contracts on 1 July 2027. We need to balance protection for Tasmanian taxpayers, and we need to balance that also with providing industry certainty moving forward as well. This is a very sensitive issue in rural and regional Tasmania, in Circular Head and elsewhere.

**Dr Woodruff** - Tasmanians deserve to know where their money will go.

**The SPEAKER** - Dr Woodruff, you can ask another question. Allow the Premier to respond, please.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We need to avail ourselves of all the information and take a very considered view to Canberra. Also, there are negotiations between our federal counterparts, being the federal Labor government -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

### Budget - Treasury Assessment

#### Ms BURNET question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.34 a.m.]

According to the financial sustainability report released last week, Tasmania's financial position is unsustainable and, if unaddressed, the budget will rapidly deteriorate. Treasury identified that the economic impacts for repairing the budget to be the smallest when there is reduced operating expenditure, higher state taxation and lower infrastructure expenditure, and these are all used together. That would ensure that no one sector or community group bears

a disproportionate share of the burden of budget repair. Do you agree with that assessment by your own department? If so, how can you rule out higher taxation like you did in your state of the state address yesterday?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question and attention to detail about the state of the state address, which I appreciate, but the word I think most telling within your question was the word 'unaddressed'.

**Ms Burnet** - 'Unsustainable' it might have been.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - 'If unaddressed, it's unsustainable'.

**Mr Willie** - That's kind of what you've been doing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Every time there's a microphone in front of a Labor member about what's their alternative, it's crickets.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

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

**The SPEAKER** - For the sake of the House, I draw the Premier's attention to relevance to the question. I ask other members, especially of the opposition, that you have five other questions that you could be asking the questions of yourself, so I bring the Premier back to the original question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, honourable member, for the question. I also thank the honourable member for the interjection which I enjoyed answering. When it comes to matters being unaddressed, we are addressing them, and as I said this morning on Mr Compton's program, Treasury and our government are working very closely on the Budget to be delivered on 21 May. We had an announcement yesterday around that sustainability in terms of departmental and machinery of government changes, but what the fiscal sustainability report had not factored in was the uplift in Health of some \$700 million which we fought hard for. It might have gone unnoticed but we also had a small state adjustment for the first time ever, which is tremendous, and that will be also bedded in beyond the five years if the federal government have any compassion or common sense.

**Ms BURNET** - Point of order, Speaker, relevance again, Standing Order 45. He is not addressing the question I asked.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is relevant, with respect, honourable member, because what is also missing is the -

**The SPEAKER** - Sorry, to assist the honourable Deputy Speaker, your question was quite broad. I appreciate that your question at the end was a bit more pointed, but your intro

does allow a bit of preamble and we do not know what the Premier is going to be saying, so I will ask the Premier to respond, please.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The other areas that were not factored in was the uplift in GST and the GST guarantee beyond 2028-29, if my memory serves me correctly, and then coming into the early 2030s we have Marinus coming on line, which we expect will increase -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

### **Supplementary Question**

**Ms BURNET** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Ms BURNET** - I draw the Premier back to the three areas. Is the Premier going to consider reducing operating expenditure, higher state taxation and lower infrastructure expenditure? Those three are key to bringing in financial security.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I thank the honourable member, for her question. We have already lowered our infrastructure profile. I announced about 12 months ago the right-sizing, right structure and right focus of the public service and that was evident in yesterday's state of the state address. I am very mindful of the potential damage that higher taxes can provide to our community and constricting the economy, but also I am mindful of Tasmanian households when it comes to higher taxes. Tasmanians are doing it tough with respect to cost-of-living pressures and national inflation has resulted in higher interest rates in recent times. That is a big impact on families with mortgages. I am mindful to try to get the balance right. What we will not be doing is slashing and burning and -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Premier's time has expired.

### **Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message**

**Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.40 a.m.]

It is now clear from this morning's ABC reporting that your office was aware before Tasracing issued their communications spruiking your TasInsure election commitment. You've confirmed today that your office did give advice to Tasracing about the TasInsure election commitment. The question for you is very clear. Were you aware before the communications went out, yes or no?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for her question. In terms of whether I or my office knew about the text message, I've been very clear that we did not.

**Mr Winter** - What about the rest of the comms?

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable members of the opposition have four more questions. The honourable minister will be heard. You can have further opportunity for questions after.

**Ms HOWLETT** - I just want to say that to attack a staff member is appalling.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms HOWLETT** - This has already been addressed. I would like to take the opportunity to table a statutory declaration, honourable Speaker.

**Paper tabled.**

### **Supplementary Question**

**Ms HADDAD** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Ms HADDAD** - Minister, we're not attacking a staff member. The question was very clearly addressed to you, minister. If you say you weren't aware of the text message, were you aware of their website, their media release, or your own social media?

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The supplementary was still relevant to the original question. Honourable minister.

**Ms HOWLETT** - I've made it very clear. I'm not going to repeat it again. I'm not quite sure why those opposite can't - TasInsure is a great policy.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Member for Clark.

**Ms HOWLETT** - Why don't you want Tasmanians to have access to cheaper, fairer insurance premiums? I don't get it.

---

### **Recognition of Visitors**

**The SPEAKER** - Before I call on the next question, I'd like us all to welcome to the Chamber the students from Rosny College year 11-12 legal studies. Welcome to parliament.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

---

**Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message**

**Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.43 a.m.]

It's extraordinary that you can't see the issue here, minister. You misled the House about the first time we raised it during Question Time. At that time you tried to claim that you only learnt about Tasracing's communications during budget Estimates. You were then forced to correct the record in this place because you had in fact shared the communications on your own Facebook page on 3 July. The reporting from the ABC today does prove that that attempt to correct the record was also misleading parliament. What do you say to those allegations today? Does that not make it clear to you that you and your office were aware before the communications went out? The issue, I will remind the minister, is that we were in caretaker mode at that time. Whether TasInsure is a good policy or not is not the issue here. The government cannot use taxpayer money to spruik Liberal Party election commitments at any time.

**ANSWER**

I stand by what I've said. The opposition knows that the head of the State Service conducted inquiries into this matter last year.

**Mr Winter** - Are you still under investigation?

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable member for Franklin.

**Ms HOWLETT** - Following this referral and those inquiries, the Premier confirmed with the leader in writing that he was satisfied with the explanation provided to the head of the State Service and the manner in which things were dealt with.

**Mr Willie** - It doesn't mean anything. His word means nothing.

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Leader of the Opposition, this is your first warning.

**Members** interjecting.

**Dr Broad** - Wilfully blind.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Point of order, Speaker. Dr Broad has just used at the same word as Mr Willie did earlier. We all heard it. I heard it from here. I ask that it be withdrawn. It's unparliamentary - wilfully lying.

**A member** - He said 'wilfully blind'.

**The SPEAKER** - Right. 'Blind' is okay, but for all members of the House, the words 'lie', 'lying' and 'liar' are prohibited in the parliament and do require a substantive motion.

**Salmon Industry - Impact on Fisheries**

**Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE.**

[10.45 a.m.]

My question will come as no surprise to the honourable Minister for Primary Industries and Water, from whom I received a letter today revealing that abalone processors have been advised by his department to consider limiting seawater intake because of the dangers to trade posed by the antibiotic florfenicol residue affecting abalone and rock lobster fishers, and potentially shutting down exports. Since you have not seen fit to do due diligence and enquire of the abalone processors, I can inform you that industry operators report at least two of them have stopped receiving fresh produce from our Tasmanian divers.

Here's the question for which I live in eternal hope of a straight answer: given this government's earlier support for the salmon industry's use of the antibiotic florfenicol, and given what we have subsequently learned, why have you failed to make a submission to the federal veterinary authority, the APVMA (Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority) -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable member's time has expired. Sorry, Mr George. The minister only has to answer the part that you had asked before your time expired.

**Mr Pearce** - Have we got a question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - Yes. There were a few words of a question.

**ANSWER**

The APVMA was mentioned. Might I add, just to refer to the question, that is a federal independent authority which the state government does not interfere with. Once requested by the APVMA, we will give certain data and information to them at their request, but in terms of influencing their decision, that is a matter for the federal body.

**Minister for Racing - Legal Expenses**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.47 a.m.]

The reports that your office knew Tasracing was planning to campaign for the Liberals during last year's election are highly concerning, but as is already on the public record, it's not the only cloud over your conduct as minister. During budget Estimates, we asked you whether any taxpayer money has been spent paying for legal fees that you've incurred. You refused to answer. Since then, the Greens have confirmed through RTI information that you have had legal fees covered using public money. The question is, how much? Last year, your colleague Madeleine Ogilvie was asked the same question, and to her credit she answered. Will you follow the example set by minister Ogilvie? What is the total amount of taxpayer money that has been spent on your legal fees?

**Mr Winter** - What are you defending, and are you still under investigation?

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable member for Franklin, this is your first warning.

**ANSWER**

Thank you very much for the question, and I will need to seek that advice.

**Dr Woodruff** - And provide it on notice to the House?

**Ms HOWLETT** - Yes.

**Marinus Link - Energy Cost Modelling**

**Mr GARLAND question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.48 a.m.]

Tasmanian power prices are set to increase if Marinus Link is built. Yesterday you doubled down, stating there is no doubt that in a world with Marinus, power prices will be cheaper than in a world without Marinus. However, Tasmanians have plenty of doubt. If other Australian states such as Victoria transition away from coal to gas, batteries and wind farms, it is predicted that the wholesale electricity prices in Victoria will rise sharply over the next two decades. If the Victorian wholesale price remains higher than Tasmania's, more interconnection into the national electricity market through Marinus Link will lift Tasmanian prices as the prices merge.

What Victorian wholesale price trajectory between 2026 and 2040 does your most recent modelling assume, and does it account for significant increases in mainland wholesale electricity prices? The public deserves transparency. Will you table that modelling in the House today, and will you now correct the record and admit that power prices could go up -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable member's time has expired.

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank honourable member for his question and his interest in this matter. We're continuing to gather information for the honourable Member, and I will be tabled this week.

What is clear, and you've highlighted the fact that power prices are going up across the Eastern Seaboard, most certainly, but across Australia - going up, absolutely. Which is why, in the Tasmanian context, Marinus is so critically important. I stand by my comments, noting the nuances in the last line of your question. Power prices are going up; they will go up less under Marinus than no Marinus. Not only that, we will have investment in wind farm generation, solar generation and have the opportunity, of course, with Lake Cethana coming online with the second cable for the pumped hydro.

As well as that, the ability to have more power-generation for Tasmania, more access to power for Tasmania and Tasmanians and Tasmanian industry, therefore not only securing

a power resource, but also a renewable power resource. Which, of course, flows on and adds so much more value to our Tasmanian brand and, indeed, the products of which are manufactured through that renewable energy resource.

**Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message**

**Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT**

[10.51 a.m.]

Despite your attempts to avoid this issue today, it is clear that you have misled parliament about this issue multiple times. We asked you repeatedly about this matter during budget Estimates, GBE hearings, Question Time and in the media. You maintained then that neither you, nor your office, knew about the communications prior to them going out - you've confirmed that today. However, the ABC has proved that that is untrue and they said:

[they] understand that your office was made aware of the message as a standard courtesy to ensure the relevant ministerial office is aware of upcoming communications to be sent out by a government business.

They were communications between your office, Tasracing, and Core Communications, which is a private communications company managing Tasracing's communications. Are you alleging that the ABC report is untrue? If not, will you admit that this is not the right thing and you should resign from Cabinet by the end of today. Will you do that, minister?

**ANSWER**

As I have said, the email shows an adviser did what he did. In terms of whether my office knew about the text message -

**Mr Willie** - 'Okay for tonight'.

**The SPEAKER** - Order, honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms HOWLETT** - I have been clear: it did not. We provided details of the policy, and I'm sure that the adviser had no prior knowledge of this message and I've tabled the statutory declaration today.

Tasracing has dealt with the issue of whether the message should have been sent. As I've said, the opposition knew that the head of the State Service conducted inquiries into this matter. Following the referral of those inquiries, the Premier confirmed with the leader in writing that he was satisfied with the explanation provided to the head of the state service and the manner in which Tasracing board responded to the issue.

**Mr Willie** - It might not have known about this email.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, this is your second warning.

**Ms HOWLETT** - To reiterate those points, the board Chair, stated:

In no way did Tasracing endorse or recommend the election commitments during the caretaker period. The Tasracing CEO removed the material after Mr Winter raised the matter.

As we noted last year, there were several supportive and public media statements by stakeholders at the time, which reference the policy and its likely positive impacts -

**Mr Willie** - They're not GBEs. They're not government businesses.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The honourable Leader of the Opposition, this is your third and final warning. The next one can come very fast - I warn all members. I understand the gravity of the questions being asked. I ask that the honourable minister be heard. You still have two more questions, plus supplementary questions to further your case, plus you also have other forms of the House. I ask the honourable minister be heard in silence, please.

**Ms HOWLETT** - Thank you, honourable Speaker. There is absolutely nothing new here.

**Ms HADDAD** - Speaker, a supplementary question?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Ms HADDAD** - The minister has refused to address the fact that a government business used taxpayers' money to spruik a Liberal Party election commitment. Does the minister recognise that? If she does, will she recognise that she has misled parliament and breached the ministerial code of conduct?

**The SPEAKER** - You are drifting into new areas. Do you want to have that as a new question?

**Ms Haddad** - No.

### **Wilkinsons Point - Sale of Public Land - LK Group**

**Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.55 a.m.]

Multiple departments told the Premier to stop private negotiations with LK Group over the sale of public land at Wilkinsons Point and to take the land to the open market instead because he is exposing Tasmanian taxpayers to up to \$100 million worth of risk. Why don't you follow their advice? What do you know that they don't?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. As I said quite clearly in opening yesterday, this is an opportunity for Tasmania in terms of development, jobs, infrastructure development. Of course, when you add the potentials of developing Dowsing Point, more broadly it becomes a great opportunity for not only infrastructure and the economy, but for housing as well.

Back in 2019, if my memory serves me correctly, the local council not only endorsed this development and this move, but also the developer as well. My predecessors set us upon this course of action, and I am continuing the commitments that were made. I am a great believer in this project. I appreciate the advice that departments provide me with from time to time and I weigh up a lot of factors when it comes to making decisions. I believe, for the benefit of the community more broadly, we've made the right decision.

**Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Mr WILLIE** - Premier, you didn't answer the question, which is why are you exposing the state government to \$100 million worth of risk and will you table the advice that you were given by your departments?

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Honourable Speaker, I reject the premise of the question because we're still under negotiation.

**Wilkinsons Point - Sale of Public Land - LK Group**

**Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.58 a.m.]

The Premier released the Valuer-General's confidential valuation to the LK Group, despite being told explicitly not to do so. It is a massive advantage for the LK Group to have access to information that no other potential purchaser has. Why did you share that information with LK Group, thereby giving a billionaire developer preferential treatment?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. First, the council endorsed the development. Commitments were made for valuation and we've come good on those commitments. As for your characterisation of the LK Group and the individual concerned - people have a right to invest in Tasmania and as I've said publicly, come to Tasmania to invest. We're a great place to invest in and we welcome investment wherever that comes from to drive the economy, to drive jobs, and to keep young people here in Tasmania. To keep young people here in Tasmania.

**Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Mr WILLIE** - Honourable Speaker, a supplementary. The Premier hasn't answered the question. He gave an evaluation to LK Group, giving them an advantage. He did not take it to open market. Why did he do that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I refer you to the willingness of the council at that particular time. Nothing was developed on this particular land. There was an opportunity that my predecessors saw for that investment to take part. I take advice from wherever it comes from across the department, but at the end of the day, I look at that advice, I consider that advice, I weigh up the benefits for such developments for Tasmania overall -

**Mr Willie** - You don't know what's in the market.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - and I stand by those commitments.

**The SPEAKER** - There's time for one more question. For the benefit of those in the room, Question Time finishes at 11.02 a.m., so there's still two more minutes of Question Time.

### **Wilkinsons Point - Sale of Public Land - LK Group**

**Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.00 a.m.]

The Premier has ignored departmental advice, he's been given advice that he's exposing the state to \$100 million worth of risk, and he handed over a valuation to the LK Group, against advice, giving them an advantage in the negotiation. Premier, why haven't you tested the open market?

**ANSWER**

Honourable Speaker. The price was determined by a Valuer-General determination. Therefore, that was the commitment that was made in the interest of progressing the development. You can go outside if you like and talk about the fact that you don't support this development and this opportunity but the fact is the local council wanted the development and even endorsed the developer, then my recent predecessor made the commitment, and we're coming good on that.

As to the \$100 million matter, we're still under negotiation to protect the state's interest and ensure that Tasmania gets the best deal possible and the opportunity of jobs and growth.

### **Supplementary Question**

**Mr WILLIE** - A supplementary question, Speaker?

**The SPEAKER** - I will hear the supplementary question.

**Mr WILLIE** - Honourable Speaker a supplementary question. The Premier just talked about the best deal possible, but he hasn't tested the open market, and he hasn't answered my question as to why he hasn't tested the open market.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. The only one who has the call right now is the Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Because of the willingness of the local government at the time to ensure that not only this development opportunity came through, but to also endorse the developer themselves, a series of commitments were made by my predecessor. I am following up on those commitments because I embrace opportunity, I embrace development, I embrace jobs and I make no apologies for it.

**Time expired.**

**The SPEAKER** - For our newest members, Question Time goes for an hour, so if we get through the allocated questions or minimum number of questions, whoever jumps first may be able to ask another question. That's why the opposition got eight questions today. Keep that as something to be aware of. We now move on to constituency questions.

### **PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**Member for Bass - Mr Ferguson**

[11.03 a.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, on your indulgence, I wish to offer my apologies to Dr Broad for mishearing him and raising the earlier point of order. It was an honest mistake, but a mistake nonetheless.

### **CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**Northern Suburbs Community Recreation Hub**

**Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT**

Residents near the Northern Suburbs Community Recreation Hub at Mowbray support the project in principle, but say that the construction process has caused serious and ongoing impacts to both their health and ability to enjoy their homes. They report persistent dust, noise, soil particles and out-of-hours works, including occasions where fibreglass insulation has blown onto private properties. Some residents are now experiencing breathing issues and eye irritation, and are concerned about materials, including asbestos, that may have been disturbed during the demolition and construction. Residents also say that complaints have led to little or no action and that notifications about early starts often arrive too late to be useful. With further construction planned now to at least 2028, their concerns are ongoing.

What steps is the government taking to ensure construction conditions are enforced, health risks are properly managed, that residents have clear and effective complaints processes, and that affected households are not left bearing the cost of clean-up of damage or the health impacts potentially caused by this project?

**Mornington Roundabout**

**Ms BROWN question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,  
Mr VINCENT**

My question comes from Steve who is a tradie on Hobart's eastern shore. Steve travels through the Mornington roundabout to get to and from work every single day and he wants to know why the state Liberal government hasn't acted on a dangerous roundabout when the federal Labor government has provided the funds for the works. He wants to know why it's taking so long.

**Bruny Island - New School**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

On behalf of locals on Bruny that I met with last week, they have talked about their great pleasure and joy to have finally EL3 happening at the Bruny local school. They have waited since the 2022 announcement from the government for the EL3 trial to commence. It has been running now for a year and is an outstanding success and shows why it has to be continued. They welcome the announcement by the federal government for a new build for a childcare centre on the school site, but they are concerned to make sure that the minister advocates for EL3 and childcare provision to occur in this new building and they want a commitment from the minister that there will be no loss of resourcing for staff and resourcing to EL3 service provision -

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable member's time has expired.

**Russian Oil in Tasmania**

**Ms BURNET question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

My question is on behalf of Mark Corrigan from Sandy Bay. On the anniversary of the fourth year of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, can you categorically deny that Tasmanian government departments and GBEs are not importing Russian oil directly or via a third country?

**King Island to Geelong Shipping Service**

**Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,  
Mr VINCENT**

Over the years I have been contacted by several King Island producers and farmers who are concerned about limited and unreliable freight access to Victorian markets. My question comes from a conversation with Noel on King Island wondering if the government will commit to establishing a direct King Island to Geelong shipping service to ensure fair market access and stronger returns for island businesses. Additionally, what steps will the minister and TasPorts take to support a larger and more reliable vessel transport freight between the north-

west coast and King Island to address the shipping frustrations the government has caused the community?

**Hobart College - Management of Bushfire Risk**

**Mr VERMEY question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER**

A constituent in Mount Nelson would like you to please outline how the vegetation and fuel load levels are managed at Hobart College site to reduce bushfire risk?

**Copper Theft - Police Response**

**Mr JAENSCH question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS**

Constituents' businesses in my electorate have experienced significant losses, damage and delays due to the theft of copper and other metals from their building sites. What additional powers are police expected to have to target these criminals and when will they be introduced?

**Expansion of Public Land and Hunting in STT Properties**

**Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE**

My question is from Simon. You have made clear your intention to expand public land and hunting in Sustainable Timber's properties. Can you give a clear timeframe when and where these properties will be available?

**Time expired.**

**TABLED PAPERS**

**Ministerial Letter - Mr Pearce - Abalone Processing**

[11.09 a.m.]

**Mr GEORGE** (Franklin)(by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I table the following document: a letter received on 3 March 2026 from minister Pearce in relation to abalone processes.

**Paper Tabled**

**Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee 2025 - Report**

**Ms BURNET** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I have the honour to bring up the report of the Government Businesses Scrutiny Committee 2025.

**Paper tabled.**

**BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 1)**

**First Reading**

**Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.**

**TABLED PAPER**

**Parliamentary Research Service - Sitting Days Data 2016-2025**

**Ms BURNET** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I seek leave of the House to table research by the Parliamentary Research Service comparing parliamentary sitting days over the past 10 years in lower Houses across the country. This relates to the question I asked the Premier yesterday during Question Time. This was circulated by email to all parties and Independents, and there are three copies for anyone who wants to check the document.

**Leave granted.**

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**Member for Clark - Ms Burnet**

**Ms BURNET** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I ask to correct the record in relation to the proposition in the question I asked the Premier that the average end-of-year break of the Tasmanian House of Assembly was 112 days. This was the original calculation provided by the Parliamentary Research Service, but when it was double-checked yesterday it was revised to an average break of 108 days.

**MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Integrity**

[11.13 a.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: integrity.

This is a matter of public importance for this Chamber to consider today, because what we saw today from the Minister for Racing was extraordinary. I've actually never seen anything quite like it in the time I've served in this place or in the time that I've observed politics as a citizen. Her attempts to obfuscate, shift around and avoid this question were breathtaking. For the benefit of the Chamber, I will just go through the timeline so that it's abundantly clear.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

On 11 June, parliament was prorogued. Tasmania was heading to the polls. On 2 July, a text message was sent out by Tasracing to their members and supporters, and for the benefit of the House, I'm going to read that text message in now:

Tasracing is pleased to advise that TasInsure, a Tasmanian insurer that will be established by a Liberal government if re-elected, will provide workers compensation insurance among its products that is expected to be applicable subject to eligibility for racing industry participants. [TBC]

Deputy Speaker, if that is not an advertisement to vote Liberal, I don't know what is. It's very clearly a text message sent by a government business enterprise, a government-run business running presumably for the interests of Tasmanians, sending out communications via a text message, and it was later discovered that there was also a website and a media release telling their people to vote Liberal because they wanted TasInsure to get up.

You can strip all of this back, Deputy Speaker. You can strip back whether or not you think TasInsure is a good idea and whether insurance is an issue. Of course it's an issue. The issue at stake here is that this communication was sent out using taxpayer money, which is unacceptable at any time. GBEs are not to use taxpayer money and governments are not to use taxpayer money to spruik political commitments from one party or any other at any time. At this time, I will remind you, we were in caretaker mode - 2 July.

On 3 July the minister shared it on her Facebook page. A few months later on 26 November, we were sitting at the Estimates table and the minister admitted -

Well, actually this is the first time I've heard about this.

It was then shown later that she had in fact shared it on her Facebook page during caretaker mode, before we faced the polls. She came in here on 3 December and attempted to correct the record, but what has been shown today, not only through the ABC's reporting and the RTI that they have gained, but also through the minister's failure to answer every time this question was asked in this place today - what has been shown is that her attempt to correct the record on 3 December was also untrue. It was also untrue because the minister herself confirmed that, yes, her office gave information to Tasracing about the TasInsure policy.

Why? Why did her office give information to Tasracing, a government-owned business, about an election policy?

We all make mistakes, but it's really important that, as community leaders, we stand up and admit them. We admit those mistakes and cop it when we have something wrong. I've seen that happen in this place. I was on the staff of Steve Kons - albeit I was on maternity leave at the time - when he misled this place, and what did he do? He resigned when he did the wrong thing.

That's what is supposed to happen when governments are held responsible and held accountable for their actions, which is not what we saw today. The minister was misleading Estimates when she said that the first she ever heard about it was at Estimates on 26 November, when, in fact, she had shared it on her social media months earlier. She was misleading parliament when she attempted to correct the record a month or so later on 3 December. She has misled consistently in this place and she's got form on this, and this government has form.

We've had over a decade of deception from this government; over a decade of them transforming Tasmania into the most secretive state, politicising the public sector, politicising government business enterprises. We've seen it time and time again, not just from the minister, Ms Howlett, but from the Premier himself, Jeremy Rockliff, from his predecessors who sat in this chair, and from pretty much every one of his Cabinet members. A decade of deception and more is what we have seen.

Today, the minister had the chance; she had the chance to stand up and face the fact that she was wrong. She would have gained some respect had she done that, and she chose not to, and this won't be the last they will hear about this issue.

[11.17 a.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Attorney-General) - Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to speak on this topic of integrity. I will pick up on the last remarks of the shadow attorney and Leader for the Government in this place, that there's been a decade of deception. What rubbish. It's rejected outright. The slurs and defamatory remarks being made with respect to this government, with respect to all the ministers in this government, which were the words used by the honourable member in her remarks as she sat down. The aspersions to the reputation of our government business enterprises is not accepted.

**Mr Willie** - Why are you trying to defend the minister?

**DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - It's not accepted. The allegations have been made in the remarks today in terms of integrity of all of our Cabinet ministers and 'a decade of deception' by our government. We won't have a bar of it. This is personality politics being used by Labor in an attack on our government over the last decade. Well, we won't have a bar of it because I will talk to our integrity reforms very shortly. However, right up front I want to say that this is typical of Labor, in terms of the relentless negativity and personal politics. There have been slurs, indeed, today on staff members, slurs on investors from the Leader of the Opposition and ongoing relentless negativity. We won't have a bar of it.

I will go into the important reforms that we've undertaken with respect to integrity. I've had a lot to do with all of this, particularly in recent times with crossbench members, with all members of the parliament, in terms of the reforms.

We take it very seriously. It's very complex and it's very comprehensive and substantial. I acknowledge, again, Robert Hay KC, who has taken on the chief commissioner's role at the Integrity Commission. I thank him for his leadership working with the Integrity Commission and I've had a number of engagements with the chief commissioner and the commission itself. We're getting on with those substantial and complex reforms. The Integrity Commission last year introduced the mandatory reporting bill in terms of reporting misconduct across the public service. That bill was introduced last year and is soon to be debated. I can't go into it today because it's pre-empting the order of the day, but it's on the agenda. We're getting on with the job. It's a very important reform. It draws on the reforms and recommendations recommended by the Honourable Bill Cox, the Cox recommendation. We're getting on with the job.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

It also reflects some of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry into the Tasmanian government's response to child sex offences. We take it very seriously. There were 191 recommendations and we are implementing each of those recommendations as a priority. In my space and the justice space there are very substantial number. I'm very pleased and proud of our efforts to progress all of those recommendations to date, with a lot more work to do.

I've mentioned previously the Weiss review. We're getting on with implementing the recommendations. We've accepted them and are implementing them. That's the first stage -

**Dr Woodruff** - There are more questions to answer that the Weiss review didn't deal with.

**Mr BARNETT** - Yes, and I'm trying to respond to the allegations that have been made by the opposition today.

The second stage was the Integrity Commission reforms, which are very substantial, complex and comprehensive. Again, this has been put out for public comment. It was opened on 12 January and will be closing on 2 April. I was hoping to get to it before Christmas and to release it. I acknowledge that, through the honourable member for Franklin, and that was my ambition. I am disappointed we couldn't get there, but we had extra work to do to make sure we crossed the t's and dotted the i's with that. I'm pleased that we got it out on 12 January. I apologise for those extra weeks, but we have left it open for public comment for several months right through to 2 April. I'm looking forward to that feedback coming in and acknowledge the independent member for Franklin and indeed other members here who know how important that very comprehensive bill is.

We're getting on with the job. The department is working closely with a whole range of stakeholders and getting that feedback.

Of course, the third stage, I wanted to put on the record, in terms of the reforms, in the second half of this year there will be more work to do and we will be looking carefully at the Cox report and recommendations, and the Weiss report. In parallel, the Department of Justice is working with other government departments in terms of recommendations. In conclusion, I would say that regarding the RTI reforms, we've been very open and transparent and we're getting on with the job.

[11.23 am]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Deputy Speaker, I thank Labor for bringing this debate on today. As we start a debate on integrity, it's incredibly important to remember that there are two long-running Integrity Commission investigations to MPs that are outstanding, and both of those investigations are coming up on four years now. That is a shocking situation.

The Integrity Commission has said that when MPs don't cooperate with their investigation, it adds to the difficulty and duration of this work. I note that this Liberal government has never answered the questions over which MPs are being investigated, and we've been to two elections in this time period.

The Rockliff government has dragged its feet on reforming the Integrity Commission and it seems to be serving their interests. As well as that, they've refused to properly fund the commission. We now have a bill from the government, which the minister just referred to, that might deliver on the outstanding reforms. We hope it does, finally; but without the funds to do its job, the commission is effectively weak, and that is a situation the government has to fix.

On those specific matters that I hear today, the Greens have been trying to get to the bottom of the vast sums of taxpayers' money that has been spent on lawyers for members of this government. The question that I asked to the minister earlier this morning was about the money that taxpayers have spent on the legal fees of different government ministers. People have a right to know this information.

The Greens have exposed the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been spent by this government on lawyers for ministers. We've been on a mission ever since to understand why, and to get to the bottom of it. It is a simple transparency and accountability issue. It shouldn't be hard. Last year in Estimates we asked every single minister if they'd had legal fees covered, and we got a straight answer, for once, from every single minister except for minister Howlett. When we followed up on those questions late last year when we heard from minister Ogilvie that she had spent money on her legal bills, I acknowledge again that minister Ogilvie provided us with that information. It wasn't comfortable for her, but she did it anyway. Now, there are outstanding questions about why minister Ogilvie incurred \$120,000 in legal fees. What for? Why don't we get to understand what for? It is a lot of money. It is a public servant's salary in a critical job, so we should know. We recognise there might be reasons she cannot tell the full picture and whether it was in her ministerial duties or whatever, but surely she can tell us under which portfolio it was incurred.

When it comes to minister Howlett, we did not get any answers in questions and Estimates, and we did an RTI and it confirmed that the minister had indeed had legal fees covered by the taxpayer. We still do not know how much. I acknowledge that the minister has said she will tell us today, but it should not be this hard. Four years the Integrity Commission has been doing investigations into MPs. Four years and so many unanswered questions.

Do not forget the sports rorts saga. That sports rorts saga wasn't just about pork-barrelling at elections, it was about the conflicts of interest of multiple ministers. The Liberals have tried to hide all of the pork-barrelling and the conflicts of interest over the last two elections, but they have been exposed by the Greens, the media and the relentless digging of people who are good public citizens who care about integrity in government.

We have seen from the Premier his misleading statements about the real cost of building the stadium, about other recent issues in his comments about Wilkinsons Point and questions about the way the pokies industry buys influence and outcomes still in this state.

On the issue today, this has a long way to go because it is clear that minister Howlett's office was flagged by Tasracing that they would be breaking caretaker rules and communicating Liberal policy to the community. It is there in black and white. It went on a website, it went on text and it went on social media, and we only have a statutory declaration about two of them. It is obvious that she knew.

**Time expired.**

[11.28 a.m.]

**Mr WILLIE** (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the Leader of the Greens, particularly about some of those legal matters. Their pursuit of integrity matters in the parliament has been good - I will give them that - and hopefully we can work together on more integrity matters.

It was very telling that the Deputy Premier went nowhere near defending the government's minister. He spoke generally in terms of the government and government businesses. He spoke about integrity forms. He spoke about everything else except for this minister and this allegation.

It is very clear that where there is smoke there is fire. This minister has form and is a liability for this government. She has already had to correct the record once on this matter. She sat at the Estimates table last year and said that was where she first learned about this matter. She had to come back and correct the record because it was clear from her Facebook page on 3 July that she knew about this communication because it had been shared on her Facebook. This minister has already had to correct the record once and has been caught out once.

For the benefit of *Hansard*, I'm going to go through the ABC story that was published today because there are some details in here that will add value to this debate because it's not going away. In the story, it says:

TasInsure had been announced by Premier Jeremy Rockliff on July 2.

It was more of a concept than a fully mapped-out policy, -

That's probably fair.

... but some industry bodies appeared to have more details than the public, including the workers' compensation aspect.

This may have come via briefings, but no information on these could be discovered under right-to-information requests.

I will come back to that point in a moment.

What did emerge, however, was that Tasracing started preparing communications to send out to its members that afternoon.

The first written mention of this occurred at 4.48 pm when the public relations consultant Nicolas Turner -

From Corporate Communications.

... who handles Tasracing's PR - emailed a draft of the message to Tasracing chief executive officer Andrew Jenkins.

A minor change was made - adding a 'subject to eligibility' line - and then it was ready by 6.16 pm.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

In sending the completed version to Mr Jenkins, Mr Turner added this comment to the top of the email.

'Luke says okay for tonight now,' he wrote.

That Luke referenced is Luke Gaetani, senior advisor and now chief of staff to the Racing minister, Jane Howlett.

The ABC understands that Mr Gaetani was made aware of the message as a standard courtesy, to ensure the relevant ministerial office is aware of upcoming communications to be sent out by government businesses.

It is very clear that the minister's office knew about this communication prior to it being sent out. The Premier himself has acknowledged that this was inappropriate and wrong, but has he done anything about it? No. I will remind the Premier that when he did nothing about the Sports minister, this parliament held the Sports minister accountable, and I don't think this matter is going to be treated any differently.

Clearly, the minister's office knew. Clearly, she has misled parliament and committees repeatedly, saying that neither she nor her office was aware of this communication. It is there in that story, in that RTI, in black and white. They were aware.

Another interesting thing came up today, Deputy Speaker. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the minister has denied that her office or herself were involved in giving Tasracing the information about TasInsure, particularly that bit about workers compensation. Yet today in Question Time, she said that Luke, her advisor and now chief of staff, had provided advice to Tasracing on TasInsure policy.

This is very murky, Deputy Speaker, and it's not going away. As much as those on that side might like to look at the ceiling and hope this goes away, it is not going to go away because there is a fundamental principle here, which is that government businesses and taxpayers' money should not be used for political purposes in caretaker mode in an election or outside of it, or ever. Clearly there has been a breach of that principle in our democracy, a blatant breach to try to get an electoral advantage. This parliament should have absolutely none of that conduct and this is going to keep going.

**Time expired.**

[11.33 a.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to speak on the topic of this MPI, which is integrity. We can explore that in all of its forms. I think we've got the latitude to do that, Mr Willie, and you shouldn't be lecturing us on what we can and cannot speak about on an MPI when you've put up the topic of integrity.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - Order. Can we hear the member, please.

**Mr JAENSCH** - I acknowledge the contribution made by our Deputy Premier, my colleague, the Honourable Guy Barnett MP, outlining the government's contribution to

integrity reform. We also have a very clear commitment to transparency and we're undertaking a number of actions as a government to increase transparency and accountability.

Since March 2014, the Tasmanian Liberal government has been committed to improving the transparency and accountability of government decision-making. We have released more information than any government before us and we will continue to do so. The government routinely discloses information at six-monthly intervals, in October and April each year.

Information routinely disclosed by government departments usually relates to government operations and is information that is in the public interest. This includes annual reports, organisational structures and functions, departmental government policies, major policy programs initiatives and reviews, employment and workforce statistics, Senior Executive Service details, telecommunication and mobile device expenditure, contracts and consultancies awarded that are greater than \$50,000, employee gift benefits and hospitality registers, and RTI disclosures.

Ministerial and Parliamentary Support also routinely discloses information about MPS employees and salaries, Tasmanian government card expenses, fleet cars and taxi services, ministerial travel and entertainment expenses, and office refurbishment expenses. Additionally, ministers routinely disclose their diaries on a quarterly basis.

A key focus of our transparency agenda is the commitment to improving processes in information access under right to information. That's why we established an independent review into Tasmania's right to information framework and invested in systems and capability improvement through our Right to Information Uplift Project.

In September 2025, the Tasmanian government received and released the final report of the independent review into Tasmania's Right to Information framework prepared by eminent Tasmanians Tim McCormack and Rick Snell. Titled 'Getting Back on Track', the report confirms that Tasmania's RTI legislation is fundamentally sound, but there are improvements we can make. The full report, including public submissions, is available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website. The report identifies practical opportunities to strengthen and improve administrative processes. It also makes suggestions for continuing to foster a culture of transparency in relation to the provision of information.

As the Premier has already done, I thank the reviewers for their work and for acknowledging the work that government has already done to make it easier for Tasmanians to request and receive the information they're seeking. This includes the delivery of the RTI Uplift Project, which has seen government agencies collaborating to develop standardised policies and processes and new training modules for officers in public authorities right across the state.

The government's currently considering all 43 recommendations in the report, both administrative and legislative, and will shortly release a response that focuses on practical implementation solutions.

I do support my colleagues, our Premier, and our ministers. They are all people of the greatest integrity and that's been my experience in working with them over many years and that's clearly the view of their electorates who have chosen them and elected them to office again and again and again. Some of them for decades. We are all accountable in this place and

must always display the highest level of integrity and accountability. The personal attacks today do reveal again what the opposition's priority is, however.

**Dr Woodruff** - Are they personal attacks?

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr JAENSCH** - In calling for a minister to resign, they are showing what their actual intent is.

**Members** interjecting.

**The SPEAKER** - The honourable Deputy Leader can make her own contribution.

**Mr JAENSCH** - It is to score political points.

**Dr Woodruff** - To hold people to account, for starters.

**The SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr JAENSCH** - They did it again yesterday. Bringing in here detailed cases of individual public service employees and patients in our health system, not in order to try and seek better outcomes for those poor individuals, and knowing that we're not able to share their details in this place, but to score political points. Where's the integrity in that?

**Time expired.**

[11.38 a.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker. I rise to support this very important MPI brought by the Labor Party. It feels like Groundhog Day every time we talk about this topic. It's not just about the minister, Ms Howlett, today, though it is. It's not just about the Premier, though it is, because this is a continuation of 12 years of Liberal government.

We've seen everything from the sports rorts scandal for many elections now. Even the description yesterday from the Premier about our budget state as lacking integrity. We have seen any number of scandals; the pork-barrelling and election grants from the 2018 election. We've seen the concerns around the conflicts of interest, particularly around the sports clubs; Bracknell Hall I recall and the Sandy Bay Rowing Club. We've seen the minister, Ms Howlett, cease to be a minister of this place without answering a single question about the question that was put in this place time after time after time four years ago about her relationship with the former CEO of the JackJumpers, Simon Brookhouse. Those questions were never, ever, ever answered.

The Deputy Premier is doing his little skippy thing that he does. I know you don't like these questions being asked, but they require answers and because this government has never answered any of the questions from four years ago, it still lingers today.

The Premier made his choice after the 2024 election when he made the decision to reappoint the minister, Ms Howlett, even though he knew that she is almost certainly - and that's being very kind - being investigated by the Integrity Commission. We know that there is

a minister, at least one minister, being investigated by the Integrity Commission. We've just heard this morning that that same minister has significant legal expenses. We know the Integrity Commission still has Investigation Loyetea ongoing. The questions were never answered. Then premier Peter Gutwein never instigated any kind of inquiry or investigation. He just let it linger.

The Integrity Commission, which by the way, says that it doesn't have the resources it needs to actually do its job - deliberately underfunded so that it can't do its job and can't investigate these things. We have these lingering integrity issues.

Then we get to the last election campaign, when Tasracing sends a text message out to the racing community, a community that I know very well. I start getting it sent back to me from people saying, 'What on earth is this?' It's a text message from Tasracing telling people about a Liberal Party election commitment. During Estimates and GBE hearings last year, we heard that it wasn't party political. The Chair of Tasracing said it wasn't party political. The definition is it was party political. It is in breach of the *Electoral Act 2004*. It has no authorisation. It's in breach of caretaker conventions. But as Mr Willie just said, it doesn't matter whether it's an election period or any period; GBEs should not be spruiking policy for political parties, and yet they were.

The Minister for Racing this morning has stood here and said that it has been dealt with because the Premier sent a letter to the Leader of the Opposition so therefore it's finished. I've got news for the minister. Those answers this morning were pathetic. The minister's performance has been horrendous. The minister is still under investigation by the Integrity Commission. It is true, it is a fact, and yet was reappointed or appointed again by this Premier. He was asking for trouble when he appointed this minister. The minister has not told the truth to a committee. She will need to be held to account. Simply saying 'It's not true' this morning does not work. It does not pass muster. I assume and hope that the crossbench will not be just simply taking the word of the minister. This is really important.

This is a government that is bankrupting Tasmania. They say they're building Tasmania, but they are bankrupting Tasmania. Bankrupting us financially, and when it comes to integrity, completely bankrupt as well.

We are not satisfied with the answers provided by the minister today, or non-answers provided by the minister. We demand more. There are more questions that need to be asked around the government's behaviour during caretaker; the Project Marinus week of farce that we all heard; the Pulse advertising and what really happened with that; the TT-line financial assistance where caretaker conventions were breached when the then-Treasurer simply called to tell the then-shadow treasurer what was happening rather than consulting with which is actually required by the conventions.

This isn't going away. This is serious. The opposition will lead the charge on this.

**Time expired.**

[11.43 a.m.]

**Mr GEORGE** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, The central pillar of my election campaign was the promise to work towards more transparency and accountability in government. Both the perception and the reality of this issue was raised with me time and time

again during the campaigns. Whatever the government may say now, this state is way, way behind practices that should already be the norm. Right to Information, Cox recommendations, Weiss recommendations all lag behind the nation.

I acknowledge the Attorney-General's work on producing legislation that is intended to implement the recommendations of both the Weiss and the Cox reports. I thank him for including me in the discussions and the lead-up to the legislation.

However, I still have a number of concerns that the legislation does not actually do the job that I and many thinking Tasmanians are seeking. That I hope will be dealt with on the floor of this House and I hope through review in the upper House. In relation to this matter affecting the honourable minister for sports, I do need to do my due diligence. I hope to learn more than what I have learnt from a mere news report.

What I will say that deeply concerns me is not just the lack of transparency in this government, but the kind of arrogance it displays with its ministers that they seem to derive from being so long on the Treasury benches. Information that affects our state's economy, its welfare, its people and its future belong to the Tasmanian public. They do not belong to the government. It's the way a government business enterprise also seems to think that it's okay to spruik a Liberal Party policy in an election campaign. That's an outcome, unfortunately, of how this state works: bureaucrats, public officers, government businesses taking part in partisan politics, either in public, as in this instance, or behind closed doors, which is even more insidious.

This state needs real transformation; not just in legislation, but in the behaviour of an entitled elite, which Prof Robyn Lewis describes as 'the elite cartel' in her paper 'Tasmania: The Corruption Island'. I hope this parliamentary term will undermine that elite cartel. It's a change of behaviour and of approach that is in urgent need of reform, along with legislation to promote it and ensure that integrity in public administration will hold firm. Thank you.

[11.46 a.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on this matter of public importance on integrity. It is absurd that this parliament needs to spend so much time focused on integrity when it should come as a matter of course. It should be a matter of fact. Yet, on the floor of the parliament, across tables at Estimates, across tables at GBEs, in the media and in the community, members of this place and members of the community have to call on ministers to tell the truth and to be upfront about their actions. It is not good enough, and Tasmanians expect and deserve more.

This government has form and it is a pattern of behaviour that they believe they don't have to stand up and be accountable. Just this morning, we heard members of the government say, 'How dare you ask ministers such questions? How dare you raise points of accountability in this place?' That is our job. Tasmanians need ministers they can trust, and respect, and, when information is provided by the government, they should be in a position where they can have regard for that information.

**Time expired.**

**Matter noted.**

**STATEMENT BY SPEAKER**

**Condolence Motion - Bondi Beach**

[11.47 a.m.]

**The SPEAKER** - Before I give the call to the Premier on the motion soon to be before us, I acknowledge the deep pain and fear that this tragedy has stirred within our communities across Australia, including in Tasmania, and that today's discussion may impact people sitting here in the House or those watching online.

I also understand the broader sensitivities involved, so for this motion I ask that members please be aware and cognisant of the potential impact of their words and that contributions are kept relevant to the condolence motion before us. Please use other forms of the House, including Adjournment, to raise other matters of importance to you.

I also strongly encourage anyone in this parliament who may feel overwhelmed, anxious or isolated today to reach out for support, as we have arranged for support to be on hand in the antechamber for members or their staff to make use of.

For members of the public who are watching today, there are also a range of free supports available to the community, including the Access Mental Health phonenumber service for support, triage and referral, delivered by the Department of Health. This service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support the Tasmanian community and to make it easier to access the Tasmanian mental health system. Anyone in Tasmania can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388 for counselling support over the phone. Other supports include Lifeline on 13 11 14 and Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

**CONDOLENCE MOTION**

**Bondi Beach Terror Attack**

[11.49 a.m.]

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

That the House of Assembly -

- (1) Express Tasmania's heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people murdered at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025;
- (2) Condemn the atrocity which stole their lives, an act of terrorism deliberately targeted at Australia's Jewish community gathering to celebrate the first night of Chanukah;
- (3) Unequivocally condemn the evil of antisemitism and vows strong action to prevent extremism and keep our state safe, resilient and united;

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

- (4) Honour the courage, composure and quick action of all the police officers, first responders, healthcare workers and everyday people whose dedication and skill saved lives;
- (5) Acknowledge the trauma of the men, women and children injured physically and psychologically, including those who witnessed the horror; and
- (6) Affirm every Tasmanians' fundamental right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety; to participate fully and freely in public life and to gather in community without fear or hindrance, proud of who they are and the contributions they make to our state and our way of life.

We move this motion today in solemn respect for those victims of the Bondi terrorist attack, for all those who love them, and for a community that has endured unspeakable pain. On 14 December, what should have been a joyful gathering for family, friends and community to celebrate the first night of Chanukah became an unimaginable tragedy as 15 innocent lives were taken and hundreds more suffered injury and immeasurable trauma forever. This is an attack that is now etched into our national memory.

I welcome to the condolence motion today in the House of Assembly, Parliament of Tasmania, Rabbi Yochanan Gordon. Thank you for your leadership, Rabbi, and thank you for your willingness to embrace members of parliament within your community. I also thank you for the time spent with myself and a member for Bass, Michael Ferguson, so we were able to truly understand the trauma that your community felt very directly and very personally within the Launceston Jewish community.

I also acknowledge Doug Cooper, the president of the Holocaust Museum and Education Tasmania. Doug, we spoke following the tragic and horrific event and I appreciate that. I also appreciate the opportunity I had in the last week to provide an update on the Holocaust Museum to Mr Josh Frydenberg personally when we met in Melbourne.

I acknowledge Leanne Good from the community organisation, Never Again is Now, which is a multi-faith organisation - if I can I use that terminology - rising up and standing against anti-Semitism. I appreciate the three of you in person today and all those Tasmanians and members of the Jewish community who may well be and are watching online.

I mentioned that the attack is etched into our national memory. Tasmanians, sadly, understand the enduring pain and the senseless violence that such horrific attacks leave behind in our community. We are reminded that the impacts of such tragedies are profound, long-lasting and deeply personal. It was one of those moments, tragically and forever unfortunately, that one remembers where they were when they heard of the news of the Bondi attack. I was in my loungeroom at Sassafra that evening and saw a message come across the screen when I was watching TV. As we are unfortunately desensitised to international attack, trauma and murder, I thought it must have been overseas in another place, until of course I very quickly realised that this was in our own community of Australia. That hit home very hard. I also remember where I was in April 1996, when the Port Arthur tragedy happened.

Reflecting on that, and the fact this happened within our own community, I realised that the senseless act of violence and anti-Semitism very much physically played out before our eyes. We can try very hard, as we should, to always empathise and walk in the shoes of those

who were directly affected and will be traumatised forever. but as much as we try that is just impossible, because we were not directly affected, we did not lose direct loved ones, but we witnessed the trauma before our eyes and we should walk in the shoes of others, as difficult and impossible as that is.

On that, we must pause to remember and honour those innocent lives now lost to us forever:

- young Matilda;
- Edith Brutman;
- Dan Elkayam;
- Boris and Sofia Gurman;
- Alexander Kleytman;
- Rabbi Yaakov Levitan;
- Peter Meagher;
- Reuven Morrison;
- Marika Pogany;
- Rabbi Eli Schlanger;
- Adam Smyth;
- Boris Tetleroyd;
- Tania Tretiak; and
- Tibor Weitzen.

Each name represents a life cherished; a family grieving and a future for those families and for our nation forever changed. We offer our love, sympathy and unwavering solidarity to all those who are carrying the weight of trauma, heartbreak and irreplaceable loss as a result of this devastating act of terrorism. Violence and hatred have no place in our society.

I acknowledge again, as the motion clearly articulates, the extraordinary bravery of first responders, police, paramedics, surf lifesavers, community service volunteers and the everyday ordinary Australians who stepped forward in a moment of extreme danger. In the face of fear people demonstrated remarkable selflessness and courage protecting those around them. Their actions stand as a testament to the strength and compassion of our nation and our communities.

I welcome the news of a special honours list to recognise those brave community members that put themselves in danger to help others during this abhorrent attack. This list will recognise those who are nominated and recommended for bravery or meritorious awards under the Australian honours and awards system for their actions during and after the attack.

We cannot forever change what has happened, but we can work together to make sure that a tragedy like Bondi never ever happens again. As part of this, the Tasmanian government is committed to participating, alongside our jurisdictional and national partners, in the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

Every Australian has the right to practise their faith, celebrate their culture and live in their community free from fear, free from intimidation and free from violence. In times of such tragedy, we come together with strength, compassion and resilience. We must not allow those who seek to divide us undermine what makes Tasmania, and indeed Australia, so special and free. That means standing together against hatred in all its forms. It means working together to confront and eradicate anti-Semitism wherever it appears. We stand in solidarity with New South Wales and our own local Jewish community.

I received a letter from a member of the Tasmanian Jewish community shortly after the tragedy. I won't identify the author, but the person did right to thank us for joining the calls for a royal commission into the rise of antisemitism in Australia. Australians, and especially Jewish Australians around our country, have a lot of questions in the wake of the Bondi attack. I will paraphrase part of that letter which sheds light on why a royal commission is needed. It says:

These questions are not just about accountability; they are essential for healing and prevention.

The Jewish community in Tasmania, though small, has felt the ripple effect of this national crisis with the heightened anxiety and calls for enhanced security measures.

It went on to say:

The rise of unchecked anti-Semitism is not just a risk to the Jewish community but a threat to all Australians, and prejudice must be combated at its roots.

We never, ever want to see another atrocity such as this in Australia and we continue to offer our ongoing support to Tasmania's Jewish community, including through Tasmania Police, who have felt the effects of this national crisis.

Thank you, Rabbi Gordon, and indeed, thank you to members of the Jewish community and the Hobart Synagogue as well for inviting us at a very important time. Most importantly, as a person with limited understanding of the Jewish community, thank you for inviting us to learn more, to be educated during that tragic time and for the heartfelt and deeply emotional thoughts and words expressed to me as Premier of Tasmania.

I was able to get an appreciation of not just the prejudice that is felt by a community, but by individuals, not just at the Bondi tragedy, or a month before or a year before, but for generations and generations and generations. It has instilled that feeling of being forced from home, from country, to find solace in a free place such as Australia, and in this case, Tasmania.

Again, walking in the shoes of the individual I spoke to - and you were present there as well, Rabbi Gordon - it really hit home, that deep, personal hurt that anti-Semitism can bring to individuals and families and communities. For me, that was a profound moment and a profound time where it struck me very personally how Jewish people feel, particularly after such a horrific attack. We continue to offer our ongoing support to Tasmania's Jewish community, including through Tasmania Police, as I've said, who have also felt the effects of this national crisis. We will all collectively, within this parliament, and indeed our

responsibility as the government of the day, do everything to ensure that Tasmanians feel safe and are safe in their community.

I said at the outset of this tragedy, we cannot let division breed hatred. Our community must rise above terrorism, as I believe we are. In Tasmania, our rich and diverse culture is our connection to the community that unites us. While our laws must reflect the community we are, we must also display those beliefs and values in our everyday lives. That is respect. That is understanding. That is kindness. Today we wrap our arms around our fellow Australians, our Jewish community, and we reaffirm our belief that light will always triumph over darkness.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.06 p.m.]

**Mr WILLIE** (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I commend the Premier on his beautiful words: thoughtful, respectful and filled with hope for the future. I also recognise Rabbi Jochanan Gordon, Leanne Goode from Never Again is Now, which is a Christian-Jewish interfaith group, and Doug Cooper from the Holocaust Museum and Education Centre. He's the president. I thank you for joining us today. Tasmania is a successful multicultural, multi-faith society. We all stand with you.

I rise today to speak on this motion in the shadow of one of the darkest moments in our nation's recent history. On 14 December, a peaceful gathering at Bondi Beach, an event marking the beginning of Chanukah was shattered when two gunmen opened fire on more than 1000 people. Fifteen innocent lives were taken, including a 10-year-old girl. Dozens more were injured. This was the worst act of terrorism on Australian soil. It targeted members of our Jewish community at a moment of joy and cultural celebration. Families who came together to celebrate found themselves fleeing for their lives. Survivors, eyewitnesses and first responders have described scenes of fear and chaos, yet also extraordinary courage. Many community members have spoken about the importance of remembering the victims and ensuring their names and stories are never lost.

In the months since, Jewish Australians have shared the deep sense of vulnerability that they now feel and have felt in the lead up to this event. Leaders within the community have said that families feel hunted, a sentiment that should trouble every single one of us in this country.

Our nation's response has been firm and consistent. The establishment of the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion by the federal government reflects a commitment to understand how this attack occurred and how we can prevent such hatred from taking root. The commission is proceeding under the internationally recognised definition of anti-Semitism, ensuring its work is grounded in clarity and accountability. We've also seen swift action to strengthen public safety. A national firearm buy-back scheme has been established. Strong laws are being enacted, and a national law-enforcement intensification has increased its vigilance.

The Bondi terror attack was not only an assault on individuals, but an assault on the values that define Australia. Freedom of belief, cultural diversity, and the right of every community to live without fear. As Tasmanians, we have a responsibility too. We understand the pain and lasting impact of a mass shooting, an experience that remains deeply embedded in our communities. Nearly 30 years ago Port Arthur became a symbol of grief no community

imagines it will ever bear. For many, the events on 28 April 1996 are not confined to history. They continue to shape our daily life. They surface quietly in reflective moments, and they return sharply whenever violence occurs elsewhere in the country.

I recognise every Tasmanian for whom this moment has stirred up difficult memories, and I know in my wife's family that has been the case. Port Arthur's impact extended far beyond those who were physically present or directly affected. It also reshaped Australia's understanding of its responsibilities in the wake of the tragedy. In the aftermath, our nation made choices that were challenging and at times divisive, but they were grounded in a single guiding belief, the safety of the community must come first. Those choices did not undo the loss, but they reflected a shared determination to learn from it.

That experience reminds us that honouring a loss of this magnitude carries obligations. We must listen closely to those who are suffering. We must place the needs of our nation above our own and we must not allow time to dull our memory of what happened or why certain actions became necessary.

For families affected by the Bondi attack the weeks and months ahead will be as painful as the early days of public mourning. Support will be needed long after the news moves on, but I know as Australians we always rise to the challenge together.

Anti-Semitism has no place in Australia. Terror has no place in Australia. The people of Bondi and the Jewish community and the families of those lost deserve not only condolences, but our action - steady, principled and enduring.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.12 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Premier for the opportunity to speak on this condolence, and I would also like to pay my respects and welcome in the Chamber Yochanan Gordon, Rabbi of the Jewish community here in Tasmania, Doug Cooper of the Holocaust Museum, and Leanne Good of the interfaith and no-faith communities, committed to anti-Semitism and speaking up for unity. These three represent the community voices of love, of the spiritual guidance and voices promoting unity and respect, and we welcome them and thank them for coming today.

On behalf of the Greens, I acknowledge the tragedy that occurred on 14 December at Bondi and, probably like others in the Chamber, it is difficult to put feelings about what happened into that day into words. There is a lot to say but words feel empty compared to the enormity of what unfolded and is continuing to unfold in communities, particularly Jewish communities, around Australia. The anti-Semitic attack at Chanukah by the Sea sent shock waves across our nation and there is no doubt that that horrifying act of terrorism and violence has changed our community forever.

On behalf of the Greens, I recognise the devastation felt by the friends and families of the 15 people who lost their lives that Sunday in Sydney, and the desolation that is felt and continues to be felt by their community. The Jewish holiday at Chanukah commemorates the triumph of religious freedom over oppression and the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days with the lighting of the candle in the menorah, but that community celebration was targeted by

hateful radicals and a time of joy turned to a time of fear and terror. The festival of light turned into the darkest of days.

On 14 December we all felt the shock and grief of Jewish Australians, their heartache and their resounding pain and the names and stories of the 15 innocent people who lost their lives are now etched in the memory of us all.

Boris Tetleroyd and his son Ya'akov were shot during the attack, but while Ya'akov recovered from his injuries, Boris died at Bondi. Boris has been remembered as a deeply loving father and nature-lover. In a statement about him, his family described him as a warm, generous and deeply sociable man; somebody who loved conversation, connection and helping others wherever he could.

Rabbi Eli Schlanger was 41 years old and a beloved pillar of the Jewish community. Eli was the husband of Chaya and a father of five. His youngest was just newly born.

Boris and Sofia Gurman were married for 34 years and were North Bondi locals. They were walking, as they would have done on so many days, along Campbell Parade, when one of the gunmen emerged from behind their car. Boris confronted and tackled the shooter and stripped his weapon away before the gunman charged, drew another rifle, and killed both him and Sofia. Boris and Sofia died in each other's arms.

Reuven Morrison came from the Soviet Union before discovering his Jewish identity in Sydney. In video footage, we saw Reuven approaching one of the gunmen moments after he was disarmed by Ahmed Al Ahmed. Reuven held an object towards the attacker but then died trying to defend his community.

Edith Brutman was the vice-president of the NSW branch of the international Jewish group B'nai B'rith. Her family's tribute to her would give us all pause to think. They said:

Our beloved Edith was a woman of integrity who chose humanity every day. She met prejudice with principle and division with service. Our family mourns her deeply, but we ask that her life, not the senseless violence that took it, be what endures. We hope her memory calls us as a nation back to decency, courage and peace.

Marika Pogany was 82 years old. A dedicated volunteer of the COA Jewish Seniors Association, she is renowned for having delivered more than 12,000 kosher Meals on Wheels in her time. What a woman, who obviously cared for her community.

Rabbi Yaakov Levitan was known for his generosity, his kindness and his quiet service. He was described as someone always willing to be there for others. At the Chanukah by the Sea event, Rabbi Levitan was sharing tefillin, a traditional Jewish prayer practise, when the attack occurred.

Peter Meagher was a retired police detective and former rugby union player. He was known for his generosity, warmth and strong sense of community. At Chanukah by the Sea, Peter was working as a freelance photographer. Friends and colleagues have noted the painful irony that he worked and survived years on the frontline of policing just to lose his life pursuing something he loved in his retirement.

Tibor Weitzen was 78 years old and was attending Chanukah by the Sea with his wife and grandchildren when he was killed trying to shield a family friend.

Alexander Kleytman was a grandfather who attended Chanukah by the Sea with his wife Larissa, and he was originally from Ukraine. Both of them endured the horrors of the Holocaust as children before they migrated to Australia, where they built a life together. Alexander died trying to shield his wife.

Dan Elkayam was a 27-year-old French national who made Australia his home. He was loved for his warmth, talent and passion for life and his beaming smile. Like many that day, he was killed while running away in fear.

Adam Smyth was a husband and father. Adam was walking at Bondi Beach with his wife Katrina on the afternoon of the attack. They found themselves caught in the middle of this horrific attack.

Tania Tretiak was, like many, a grandmother, attending the celebration with her Jewish husband and granddaughter.

Possibly the most remembered victim of the shooting, the youngest victim was 10 year old Matilda, daughter of Michael and Valya. Her father said they'd named her because they thought Matilda is the most Australian name that can ever exist. In the setting sun before the attack, Matilda was celebrating Chanukah by eating cake and patting animals. For many, Matilda's story is hard to forget. I wish that we would not.

The brutal way lives were lost echoed around us all in the weeks and months following the Bondi massacre, as did the stories of the first responders, the healthcare professionals, the police, and of course those who were warned, who defended or shielded other people, the people who saved lives.

A lot is said in times like this about bravery, and I acknowledge that bravery manifests in many forms. As the country felt the impact of Bondi, many in Tasmania felt it in a more intimate way. On this island, we understand too well the rippling shock, the hurt and the silent grief that grips a state in the aftermath of violence. I acknowledge that for many in our community, the horror at Bondi brought back painful and traumatic memories.

Today, standing in this place, remembering and paying our respects to the people who were killed at Bondi has meaning. but this was not just about violence against 15 individuals, it's about the anti-Semitism experienced by a group of our fellow Australians. What is truly meaningful is making change so this will never happen again.

There is no doubt extremism and anti-Semitism were the main motivations for the Bondi attack and we must do more to prevent these dangerous ideologies from taking hold and spreading. We also must recognise that those responsible for the horror at Bondi were only able to inflict such devastating harm with the use of firearms. It's an irrefutable fact that strong firearms laws create safer communities. Weak public safety measures equate to weakened public safety. Let me be clearer: division and fear only fosters or festers hate.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

I also feel compelled to acknowledge that the Bondi attack - a deliberate attack on Jewish people - also had a ripple effect for many Muslim Australians. That has even shown its face in our federal parliament. The reality is that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are two sides of the same hateful coin. In a time of wide and worldwide instability, of war crimes and bombings, wherever possible, unity is desperately needed.

This parliament has a critical role in promoting peace and non-violence, in standing up against hate and division, against racism and discrimination, and against fascist and extremist ideology. No family should suffer as the loved ones at Bondi have. No community should have to suffer and mourn as the Jewish community continues to do.

As we reflect on this terrible tragedy, I urge us all in this Chamber to also reflect on our responsibility as leaders in our community and our responsibility to protect the people in this island state. It's our role to protect the people we represent from any targeted attack and terror.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.24 p.m.]

**Mr GEORGE** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I hope the words in this House will give some sense of peace to the Jewish community that is represented here today. To the Jewish members of my family, who are my stepdaughter, my son-in-law and two lovely granddaughters, and to all my Jewish extended family, I wish you safety, happiness and the freedom to go about your daily lives in peace. To their friends, their school friends, and to all the Jewish community of Bondi, Sydney, I extend the same good wishes. To the Jewish communities of Australia, I hope you can live your lives in the security that a nation like ours should provide for people of all races and religions.

My Jewish relatives lived not far from the scene of the Bondi outrage. We were out strolling as the sirens placed their ways past us. I sat beside a stepdaughter as she tried to explain the inexplicable to her two daughters. But how do you explain to two little girls the hatred and abuse that they might experience, not because of who they are, but because of the fate of their birth.

I've witnessed the horrors of intercommunal and international violence in my life around the world that have pitted tribe against tribe, race against race, religion against religion. But to witness it in our own homeland and to experience it through the eyes of family feels inexplicable. Events like the Chanukah horror, the massacre at Bondi, are in the end, inexplicable. They are the upwelling of savagery, whose roots are so deep and so ancient, a modern society struggles to understand where it comes from and how it can be eradicated.

In the aftermath of outrages like this, it's important to see individual faces of those so mercilessly killed and targeted. The families, the children, the grandparents, the friends, the witnesses, the Jewish community, the emergency services. They all suffered and they will continue to do so.

Events like Bondi impact all of us, and so they should. But if we allow them to change our choices and to change the way that we live. Then we will fall victim to their hatred. What we do, where we go, to whom we speak, and what we think should always fight against those who try to change the way that we live.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

The impact of the Bondi outrage will be felt for months, years and decades. In its immediate aftermath, it's reasonable to experience fear, confusion, anger and even a sense of wanting to hide ourselves away, to segregate ourselves from other communities. But we must come together, and rather than fracture, we have to unite.

We can unite to reject violence, extremism and hate. We can unite to promote diversity, inclusion and peace. This motion states that we want to keep our state safe, resilient and united for all. Underpinning this are shared values of respect and kindness. We dare not lose sight of this.

At times like this, it's more important than ever to connect to our communities, to attend multicultural festivals, learn new languages, sit at shared tables and frequent the many businesses that are owned and operated by members of our Jewish and multicultural communities. Irrespective of race, religion and culture, there is nothing to be gained through hatred and division wherever it occurs.

We can step up to defend the innocent and reject the abhorrent behaviour of just a few individuals, because that's what they are, they're only the few. Individuals that have nowhere to go in the face of collective goodwill and commitment to peace, prosperity, diversity and inclusion.

The extremism of those few can be seated in communities that feel unheard, where misinformation spreads unchecked, and when people lose trust in institutions. Which is why it's imperative to work towards strengthening a social cohesion that is more than aspirational words of government and government action plans that may sit idly on dusty shelves. This is a collective responsibility.

The news media, in which I worked for so long, and social media have responsibilities not to magnify hate and division, and to remember that along with the right of free speech comes the responsibility not to promote those damaging divisions.

Closer to home, we as parliamentarians must recognise that what we say does come with consequences. Anti-Semitism is real, malicious and insidious and Jewish people have lived with that for 2000 years more. Unfortunately, it coexists in our society with other forms of racism and discrimination in Tasmania, but it has existed since early colonial settlement.

By acknowledging that fact, we can individually take responsibility for combating those ancient prejudices and take whatever steps we can individually take towards overcoming them. Every effort a government can take to heal wounds, unite Australians and confront the curse of anti-Semitism should be taken. As the royal commission commences hearing testimonies of those who witnessed and suffered this horrendous crime in Bondi, I hope it will encourage an even broader discussion about systemic racism that exists in Tasmania and throughout the country, unfortunately.

May I say that my hope for a future in which communities can live in peace with each other was to witness my family's rabbi who stood in public with Sydney's leading Muslim cleric, and both expressed one message: it's not who we are; this is not what we stand for.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

I join my parliamentary colleagues, Tasmanians and all Australians, in condemning this act of terror. This motion is about acknowledging the victims and their families. We will not forget you.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.32 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge the Jewish community here today. I rise to express my horror at the Bondi terrorist attack and to offer my deepest condolences to their families and loved ones of the victims. I acknowledge the beautiful tributes that have been paid to those victims today. These are families who will everyday miss the sound of their laughter, their footsteps down the hall, the scrape of a chair at the dinner table, and knowing that they will never say again, 'I love you', and hear it back. I extend my condolences to the broader Jewish community still trying to make sense of this atrocity and to the community of Bondi itself, to all who feel now less safe, less welcomed, less at home in a place that should feel ordinary and familiar. To all of you, I am sorry: for the loss of loved ones, for the loss of safety and, perhaps, for the loss of a sense of our communities that are united and secure.

I acknowledge the extraordinary courage shown that day; the bystanders who gave comfort to the injured; those who risk themselves to protect strangers. People like Ahmed Al Ahmed, who briefly disarmed the attacker, and Jessica Rozen, who put herself between danger and children - other people's children. As I learned how the horror unfolded, I was struck by the simple, profound fact that a human being might seize a weapon from a gunman or shield a child with their own body. It brought tears to my eyes and, strangely, it brought a measure of comfort. I will return to that in a moment.

This attack is a horrific reminder that anti-Semitism is present, and it is real, and it appears to be rising not only online, but in our streets. Jewish Australians are justified in feeling fear. They deserve not only our words of solidarity, but real safety and protection.

It is equally important to acknowledge that Muslim Australians are facing suspicion and backlash in the wake of this attack. Islamophobia is also real. It too has consequences for safety, belonging and dignity. In the week since Bondi, I have seen commentary filled with distrust and anger. I find that deeply saddening, because hatred does not cancel out hatred; it multiplies it. Targeting people because of how they look or how they worship does not make us stronger. It weakens the social fabric that holds us together.

Let me return to those moments of courage: when the unthinkable happened, instinct took over, and the instinct was not division, it was protection. In the face of horror, people protected life. They comforted strangers. They shielded children. They acted without asking about religion or background. In that moment, the community was united. Our task now is to hold on to that truth, not to retreat into fear or allow grief to be weaponised into division. We honour the victims by building community, not tearing it down. That means confronting anti-Semitism clearly and without hesitation. It also means confronting Islamophobia and all forms of racism with the same clarity. We cannot pick and choose which prejudice we oppose.

In Tasmania, I believe we are well placed to meet the challenge. We are a small state, but a diverse one. In my electorate of Clark around one in four people were born overseas. When I walk through Glenorchy, I see cultures and faiths living side by side, working together, raising

children together, supporting one another in quiet everyday ways. It would be a tragedy to allow that to be fractured by attempts to separate us based on our birthplace or belief.

After Bondi, many people feel shaken and that is completely understandable, but I believe we can emerge from this with a clearer sense of what unites us - our shared humanity. There is no better symbol of that than the actions of Ahmed Al Ahmed and Jessica Rozen; two people of different faiths, united not by politics or identity, but by their instincts to protect and nurture other human beings. In the end, the instinct is so much stronger than the hatred. If we choose to nurture it in our language, in our leadership and in our communities, it will remain so much stronger than hate.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.37 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge and thank the Premier for this motion. I stand in strong support. I thank him for his beautiful words. I acknowledge the contributions of the Leader of the Opposition and other members in this place. I particularly acknowledge the member for Franklin, Peter George, with members of his family, as he's recognised today. It's a very special and important motion for him as it is, no doubt, for many others in this place.

This is a time when a parliament like ours does its best work, where we can unite and stand together to share personally and from our hearts how meaningful a motion like this is. I believe that the condolence motion today will send a message to the community that anti-Semitism is not what we want in Tasmania. I acknowledge Rabbi Gordon and the Jewish community here today: Leanne Good, Never Again Is Now; and, Doug Cooper from the Holocaust foundation; I know Josh Frydenberg, who's a former colleague and friend, is delighted with the work that you're progressing here in Hobart on behalf of all Tasmanians.

I acknowledge that upfront, but also to pay my respects to the 15 innocent people murdered by terrorists at Bondi; 15 people who have been tragically taken from their families and loved ones. Their deaths were a tragedy that shocked our nation and indeed the world. We mourn their loss; we grieve with their families and friends. We're appalled that members of Australia's Jewish community and guests in our country could not safely attend a celebration marking the first night of Chanukah and the Festival of Lights. I believe, as someone with a personal Christian faith, that light does overcome darkness. Sometimes it's hard to see that happening, but that's a belief that I have and share. I think we can all be determined that the anti-Semitic hatred, the evil ideology that was the root of this act of terrorism, will be stamped out and eradicated from our country.

Last Friday, I attended the most recent meeting of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General in Sydney. As you would expect, Australia's response to the Bondi massacre was on the agenda for that meeting of attorneys-general and our efforts to tackle the scourge of anti-Semitism was front and centre on the agenda of the meeting. Jillian Segel AO, who the Prime Minister appointed the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, was there and gave a presentation. It was an honour to meet with her and to hear her message, which was very strong, and to be reminded of her report and recommendations that call for all in our community to stand strong and to promote a better education, awareness and the importance of anti-Semitism and to rid it from our community altogether.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

In the morning, I took a taxi to Bondi with a driver named Steve. I indicated to Steve that I wanted to go to Bondi, and he responded somewhat emotionally. I was thinking, 'Wow, this is very important to him'. Steve told me that he took an elderly couple for a drive on a monthly basis. Two weeks after Bondi, he went to the elderly couples' place and home to pick them up for their drive and the very elderly lady came out and got in the taxi. Steve said to this lovely lady, 'Where is your husband?' The response from the lovely elderly lady was that her husband was one of those killed at Bondi. This impacts so many people in so many different ways. Steve, the taxi driver in Sydney, is impacted directly by this act of terror and the massacre that occurred on that day.

I know so many thousands of Australians have visited Bondi. That was my first visit. It was an honour to be there. It wasn't a pleasure. It was very difficult. It was a sombre occasion for me. I had the opportunity to meet some police upon my arrival and I introduced myself, thanked them for their work and their service to the community. I then met with a sergeant who kindly showed me around, as it were. He showed me the bridge. - He showed me the bridge and I stood on the bridge where the two gunmen were standing. He showed me the park where the families were celebrating the festival. The proximity and the closeness of the park was somewhat overwhelming for me. It was very near the children's playground. Now there is a memorial in that park where I spent some time to reflect.

I thank the sergeant, who I won't name personally, but it was a very special time. The sergeant lives in Bondi. He'd been on a shift that day at Bondi. He'd just finished his shift, gone home to clean up, as it were, then he heard the sirens and was thinking, 'What's going on?' He then went down to see what more he could do to support the first responders, the police and others who were doing such a wonderful job.

I recognise the police, the first responders and those who cared for those who were killed and those who were injured and their families. I know we do that in this place, but I say it again today, they did a wonderful job under very difficult and onerous and awful circumstances. I left Bondi that morning with great sadness. It was a sombre time, a time of grief; thinking of the victims and their families and one that left me with an even greater sense that Australia needs to redouble our efforts to stamp out anti-Semitism in all its forms.

To go back to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General that day, it was a very meaningful discussion, which was great to be able to share with colleagues around the table. Just as I felt this sadness and shared the grief with Tasmania's Jewish community on the day of mourning at the synagogue, representing the state government and the Premier on that day. That was a very special day to meet family members of the Jewish community and to hear some of the family members talk about their children not being confident about going to school, being anxious and fearful going to school in Tasmania.

That was upsetting to have those conversations, which I was not aware of at the time. I'm learning more every day as we connect with and relate to our Jewish community. Isn't that excellent that we can learn and understand more about what it's like to be in your shoes? I wanted to share that remark with you today.

As Tasmanians, we continue to sadly understand the unspeakable pain of a mass murder in our community. It's been referred to already, a 30-year anniversary coming up on 28 April, which is not far away, the Port Arthur massacre. The pain and loss is still felt very strongly by many in this community, particularly in my electorate of Lyons and on the Tasman Peninsula,

and all around our great state. For many in the community, we know that the pain for those families who've lost loved ones at Bondi will certainly likewise endure forever.

It's important to be completely clear, in my view, about the evil ideologies that caused this attack. Anti-Semitism has been a stain on many societies in many countries and states over thousands of years. It's an issue I've spoken about with the former Israeli ambassador to Australia, Amir Maimon, one of many Jewish people who've warned about the growing threat of anti-Semitism in Australia. I acknowledge the new Israeli ambassador, His Excellency Hillel Newman, in his efforts to work with all of us in this place and around this country and with the Australian Government, in particular, to tackle the scourge of anti-Semitism.

Certainly, the Holocaust that was perpetrated by the Nazis showed the world what happens when anti-Semitic prejudice becomes anti-Semitic hatred, which becomes violence and the murder of Jewish people. For those of us fortunate to have been born after the horrors of World War II, the world that I grew up in, it became impossible to fathom how citizens could turn towards such a despicable prejudice and hatred towards Jewish people.

It's a sad reflection on our country that since the horrific activities of 7 October 2023, activities and tragedy in Israel perpetrated by Hamas and funded by the Islamic Republic of Iran regime, anti-Semitism has emerged and it's spread throughout Australia at an alarming rate. The world promised 'never again' after the Holocaust, yet the growing threats to Jewish people since 7 October 2023, in my view, and, indeed, the abhorrent celebration of the October 7 terror attacks from some quarters, shows that this commitment is not shared by 100 per cent of our Australian community.

Long before the Bondi terror attacks, Jewish Australians were warning us all that they were being threatened and intimidated. Synagogues were firebombed and, disgracefully, as I've indicated earlier, Jewish schoolchildren couldn't even attend school without requiring security or protection at their school gates from those consumed with anti-Semitic hatred. We now know, thanks to our security and intelligence agencies, that some of these threats against Jewish Australians were orchestrated by agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran regime. It's on the public record.

This week we've welcomed, in my view, the demise of one of the most evil and brutal dictators the modern world has ever seen, Ayatollah Khamenei. Good riddance to the dictator who murdered tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of his own citizens. Also a dictator and head of a regime of which a core principle has been to spread violence against Jewish people in every corner of the world.

It's shameful that they were able to successfully bring their side in terms of people living here in Australia where there should be no place for anti-Semitism and certainly no place for violence against our Jewish community.

The Bondi terror attack was an act of radical Islamist terror, seemingly inspired by ISIS. It is yet more evidence that radical Islamist terrorism remains a significant threat to Australians in Australia and we must do everything in our power to prevent future attacks.

We also must acknowledge that those with terrorist ideologies have been able to camouflage themselves within a larger cohort of people in this country, have expressed openly

anti-Semitic views and contributed to the lack of safety and security for our Jewish Australians, and that's certainly been the case ever since 7 October 2023.

Tackling anti-Semitism and violent extremist ideologies that promote and use anti-Semitism to recruit and spread violence is a core responsibility of all governments at all levels. That's why the Tasmanian government was so supportive of the royal commission into the Bondi terror attack and anti-Semitism. We're very pleased that the royal commission has been called, albeit belatedly. It's certainly getting underway and we look forward to its findings and its recommendations.

Additionally, I've tasked the Department of Justice with providing urgent advice on whether Tasmania's laws relating to the display and use of terrorist symbols and flags can be strengthened so that we can take strong action against anyone promoting those ideologies in our community. We're also considering any further urgent law reform that may be required to protect Jewish Australians from attacks on them because of their religious observances and at synagogues.

It's worth noting at the end of last year, on behalf of the government, I was able to act to extend Tasmania's anti-terrorism laws, and that law was passed through the parliament. I'm pleased about that. Just weeks after the legislation passed the parliament, the Bondi terror attack occurred. It's interesting timing.

We all have a responsibility to those killed in the Bondi terror attack to make sure that we all collectively do everything in our power to stamp out anti-Semitism. It's not what Australia is; it's what Australia should be.

I also acknowledge the bravery and heroism of the many ordinary Australians who were caught up in the terror at Bondi and put themselves in harm's way to protect others. That typifies the best of our country. The courage of Australian heroes like Ahmed Al Ahmed, who ran unarmed towards one of the terrorists and disarmed him, was a display of heroism that few of us will ever forget. I know that's been recognised already in the contributions today.

In conclusion, we strongly endorse this condolence motion, particularly the last part, which says we affirm every Tasmanian's fundamental right to live, to worship and learn in peace and safety, to participate fully and freely in public life, and to gather in community without fear or hindrance. We are proud of who we are, of who they are, and the contributions they make to our state and way of life.

Matthew chapter 5, verse 4: 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted'. It comes from the Sermon on the Mount, or the Beatitudes, which in my view is probably either the greatest speech ever given or close to it. Those words can be words of comfort. They were shared by Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew, and in my personal view, the Son of God.

In Psalm 34, verse 18, David says, 'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit'. I hope those words are some comfort to those who are in grief and mourning at this time and in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. May their memories be a blessing.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[12.54 p.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I rise quietly and with respect today amongst our parliamentary colleagues and our visitors in the Chamber as we express our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people murdered at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025, and as we condemn the atrocity which stole their lives; an act of terrorism deliberately targeted at Australia's Jewish community gathering to celebrate the first night of Chanukah. We unequivocally condemn the evil of anti-Semitism and vow strong action to prevent extremism and keep our state safe, resilient and united

As we honour the courage, the composure, and the quick action of all the police officers, the first responders, the healthcare workers, and everyday people whose dedication and skill saved lives, and acknowledge the trauma of the men, women, and children injured physically and psychologically, including those who witnessed the horror, as others have said and reaffirmed, that we do affirm every Tasmanian's fundamental right to live, work, worship, and learn in peace and safety, to participate fully and freely in public life, and to gather in community without fear of hindrance, proud of who they are and the contributions they make to our state and our way of life.

I stand today and speak directly to my Jewish friends, to our Jewish community here in Tasmania and across the country, and acknowledge Rabbi Gordon, Leanne Good, and Doug Cooper [names tbc] here with us today.

Like so many over recent times and particularly in advance of our contributions today, we're all deeply moved and deeply impacted. That day was meant to be an ordinary day for so many, but in a moment, it changed. A place that we've all visited and loved and a place of energy and life has now become a place of shock and sorrow with an impact that will always be felt.

Today we honour the lives - and I acknowledge the contribution of the Premier, the Leader of the Tasmanian Labor Party, and particularly I thank the Leader of the Greens, for the personal contribution shared by each of the lives lost.

It's in these moments, remembering people as people and their friends, their relatives, and the contributions they make, that mean something. To our Jewish community listening and here today, and also to the member for Franklin for sharing your personal family stories, it is the reality of the moments when we stand here that mean something in our words.

As we honour each of them as people deeply loved, known fully, and now profoundly missed, each of these lives carrying stories, relationships, friendships, lost futures, and meaning, we stand with the families and communities grieving. There are no words that can make it easier. There is nothing that can soften the weight of such a loss to individuals, to communities or to our country.

Today, we express to each and everyone feeling something different and unique that you are not alone. Across the country, we want people to know that we're holding you in our thoughts, quietly, respectfully, with care and compassion. As others have said, grief is different for everybody, and it's not neat. Some days will be really heavy, some days overwhelming, others strangely quiet. There is no right way to grieve as an individual or a community, no right

way to express our condolences today. There are only our personal feelings and thoughts around this. We all need to take this one breath, one moment, one day at a time.

Particularly those injured - those individuals who witnessed and responded - we acknowledge the trauma that you will carry indefinitely. For many, some wounds are visible, but for many, not. We need you to know that your experience and your instincts matter, and they mean something to our country to remind us of who we are and what's most important.

People in this Chamber today clearly are unsettled. People in our Tasmanian community - and I thank the Deputy Premier for the learnings that you shared with us.

**The SPEAKER** - For the honourable members who weren't present in the Chamber before this debate started, I remind members that support services are available in the antechamber over lunch break and for the rest of this debate. The antechamber is the room beside our Sergeant of Arms room with the Legislative Council. Please make use of those services if you need them today. Thank you.

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

## CONDOLENCE MOTION

### Bondi Beach Terror Attack

**Resumed from above.**

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, as many in the Chamber have already mentioned, alongside grief, we also saw deep compassion. We saw people put themselves at risk and run towards danger. We saw strangers comfort strangers and we saw the incredible bravery of our first responders, our healthcare workers and our community members act with trained professionalism, instinct, and with calm and with kindness under unimaginable pressure. None of this erases what happened. In fact, it reinforces it, but it does remind us that even in the most frightening of moments, people choose care. They choose action.

Bondi as a place is known for its light, for its connection, for its gatherings, and there's a hope and a trust that this spirit is not lost to that place. We know, however, at the moment that the experiences are shared in both silence and in tears. As a community, as a state and as a country, we have a profound responsibility right now, to look after each other in its greatest simplicity. As others have shared, it's to listen, to continue to learn, to be patient with one another. The consistency in the message from this place today absolutely is that anti-Semitism has no place in Australia, no place in Tasmania.

I believe it's that how we respond in these moments that really matters and it's been said already that as people, we remember first and foremost, to respond with care, patience and kindness with each other. Particularly today, as we stand with the most affected and we honour the lives that were lost, we acknowledge the pain that remains and we commit quietly and respectfully to holding one another with compassion in not only the days and weeks ahead, but in the years ahead.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

To the people of Bondi, to our Jewish community and to the families who have lost loved ones, may those who were lost be remembered with love, may those who grieve be surrounded by care, and may we always continue to support one another gently as humans to humans as we move forward with the greatest respect for our Australian community.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[2.33 p.m.]

**Mrs ARCHER** (Bass - Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge the deep pain and fear that the Bondi attack has triggered within our communities across the whole of Australia, including in Tasmania, and particularly our Jewish community. I acknowledge the leaders who have joined us in the gallery today, including Rabbi Gordon from my own electorate of Bass.

I'd like to associate myself with the very fine words we have heard from right across the Chamber in relation to this condolence motion today, and I'd like to say to the community that I extend my sincere condolences to all of you and your community and that there are no words that can provide comfort following such tragic event.

Events like this reach far beyond the immediate tragedy, and they strike at the heart of people's sense of safety, identity and belonging. I recognise that many in the community are still carrying heavy emotional burdens since this tragedy and that the shock of such violence can leave lasting ripples of distress. I encourage anyone who may be feeling distressed following the tragic events in Bondi to reach out for support and connection. We recognise that distressing events like this can affect people in different ways and it's important to remember that you don't have to manage those feelings on your own. To reiterate the words shared by our Speaker this morning, for anyone who is listening and is feeling overwhelmed, anxious or isolated, please reach out for support. That extends to everybody here in the Chamber and in the parliament today who might be listening.

I'd like to say thank you to Relationships Australia who have provided some on-site support here today. If anybody would like to seek out that support after today as well, that can also be made available to you. There is also a range of supports available in Tasmania. For example, Access Mental Health is a mental health support triage and referral phone line delivered by the Tasmanian Department of Health. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support the Tasmanian community and make it easier to access the mental health system. Anyone in Tasmania can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388. Other supports that you may wish to access include Lifeline 24/7 on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

As the Premier indicated yesterday in his state of the state speech, Tasmania is a caring community and we are stronger together. I stand here today as a proud Tasmanian and proud Australian who values all members of our community. Tragic events like Bondi also remind us that we are a community that looks after each other. Motions like this today are an important part of that. They allow us to stand together, to acknowledge grief, to affirm our shared values and to send a clear message of solidarity to those who are hurting.

On behalf of the parliament, I extend our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives, to those who were injured and to all who have been affected. We hold you in our thoughts and we stand with you.

[2.37 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I'd like to also acknowledge the members of the Jewish community in the parliament today, those watching online and those who have been impacted by the tragic events in Bondi of December last year. I also acknowledge the wonderful sentiments and considered contributions by members and I have no doubt that we will conclude this debate today.

As a parliament, we gather to reflect on the lives of those lost during the attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. Fifteen innocent lives were lost, with dozens more injured. Victims ranged from ages 10 to 87. Families, children, older Australians, people who gathered in celebration, were deliberately targeted because of their faith. This was an anti-Semitic attack. These were parents, daughters, sons, friends. Each victim was more than a statistic. They were deeply loved and cared for and are deeply missed. There are families whose lives have been permanently changed. I acknowledge those survivors, those who were injured, who continue to recover physically and emotionally. Parents and other family members will forever carry the weight of that loss.

In the midst of fear and chaos, we also witnessed extraordinary courage. I thank and acknowledge the first responders, police, paramedics, hospital staff and members of the public who showed courage in protecting others. I recognise and acknowledge the instinctive goodness that emerged in the midst of fear. Through that crisis, it revealed within us and within our community, compassion - strangers helping strangers. It's in moments like these we are reminded that even in the darkest of hours and moments, humanity asserts itself. This parliament stands with the victims, the families and the Australian Jewish community. We also stand with every community that feels fear in the aftermath of violence carried out in the name of hatred.

Australia has long been regarded as a country with a strong sense of safety and with strong gun safety laws, particularly following the incident at Port Arthur in 1996. The reforms post-1996 fundamentally changed our national approach to firearms and it has saved lives. However, there are growing concerns about the circulation of illegal firearms, organised crimes, access to weapons and the online radicalisation of individuals. We must, as a community and as a country, recommit ourselves to vigilance and enforcement, intelligence-sharing and prevention, but without politicising the tragedy.

In moments like this, words do matter, because grief can quickly be weaponised. Pain can be manipulated into anger. Anger can be steered towards entire communities who bear no responsibility for the act of extremists. We must be careful not to conflate the actions of individuals with entire faiths.

We must not attribute collective guilt or allow political rhetoric to inflame community tensions. We must be alert to prejudice and vilification in all its forms. This parliament also must model restraint, respect and unity.

We live in a hyperconnected world. Conflicts that occur thousands of kilometres away reverberate here. The actions of governments overseas have generated deep and emotional reactions here within our local community. When we as leaders escalate rhetoric or pursue actions that inflame division, the consequences are not abstract. They're felt in our suburbs, in

our schools, and our places of worship. That reality places a responsibility on all leaders, globally and locally, to act with awareness to those downstream impacts.

In this Chamber we debate fiercely, and that's our role; but today, we stand united in sorrow and united in our resolve to uphold the values that define us: respect, decency and care for one another. To every family carrying this unbearable loss, this parliament stands with you. We cannot remove your grief, but we can acknowledge it, we can honour it, and we can commit ourselves to ensuring that your loved ones are remembered not for how they died, but for how they lived.

I ask that we hold the victims and their families and all those affected in our thoughts. May their memories endure, and may we strive always to be worthy of them.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[2.42 pm]

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I wish to add my words to the condolences shared by this parliament and others around the country, but particularly by this parliament, and thank the Premier for bringing forward this very important motion today. I wish to add my condolences to the families and loved ones of the 15 people brutally killed at Bondi on 14 December last year, and to the wider Jewish community.

The attack at Bondi was abhorrent, it was vicious, it was brutal and it was frankly un-Australian. As others have said in this Chamber today, anti-Semitism, racism, hatred and division have no place in Australia. On that day, 15 Australian lives were lost and many others were injured and traumatised; trauma that will last the rest of their lives.

The attack was deliberately targeted at Jewish Australians gathering together in celebration at Chanukah by the Sea. The fact that people were killed at Chanukah, a celebration of light triumphing over dark, is not only unthinkable; it is in fact one of the darkest days in the history of our nation.

In Tasmania, when reflecting on this unprovoked act of terror at Bondi, it is impossible not to be reminded of the tragedy of Port Arthur almost three decades ago. I want to recognise, as others have, that for many Tasmanians, Port Arthur is still a very live and visceral trauma. While it's nearly 30 years since that massacre, it lives in the minds of Tasmanians still, and I recognise that for many in our community and our state, seeing what happened at Bondi in December has very much revived those traumas from Port Arthur.

As was the case that dark day in our state, it was first responders and brave members of the community who acted swiftly and courageously during the Bondi terror attack. I pay tribute, as others have, to those Australians; the paramedics, police, health workers and others, and to the brave community members who put their own lives in danger to protect the lives of others. Just a few examples of this bravery include Boris and Sofia Gurman, a Jewish couple who ran towards danger, confronting those terrorists before losing their own lives; Jessica Rozen, a pregnant mother who shielded children from the gunfire; and Ahmed Al Ahmed, a Muslim Australian who wrestled a gun from one of the attackers, preventing even further loss of life. To me, that is what is Australian. That's the Australian way: to look after each other, to protect each other, to have each other's backs no matter someone's background, ethnicity or faith.

Attacking and killing Australians during a religious celebration, in this case Chanukah, or in any place of worship such as the synagogue, a church or a mosque, is the lowest of the low. The people who perpetrated this act of terror were dangerous extremists, and extremism is dangerous. It seeks to inflict maximum harm, driven only by hatred and malice. That is the absolute opposite of what is the best of Australian culture: respect, kindness, gratitude and community. Indeed, the kind of massacre we saw that day is the kind of thing we just don't expect to happen in our country - one based on multiculturalism, multi-faith, community, inclusion and diversity.

It's deeply worrying that in the months that have followed that December attack in Bondi some in our community, and even some people who serve in parliaments around this country, have sought to exploit this tragedy; to use it to increase division, increase disharmony and to pit Australians against one another. Australians don't deserve that. We know we are stronger when we are united. United in the multicultural, multi-faith nation that we are, respecting one another, respecting our community and the differences that we have, and finding strength in those differences together. That's who we are. That's Australian culture.

Earlier this week I attended an uplifting multi-faith event, one which welcomed Australians of every culture and every religion. It was an Iftar dinner, held during the holy month of Ramadan, which is underway right now. The event invited people from all faiths - Jewish people, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, others and people without faith - to come together in community and celebrate what makes us strong. We heard from a range of inspiring speakers. We heard from Deepak Joshi, who was representing Hindus in Australia, and he said the following:

Events like tonight's remind us of something beautifully simple: that when we share a meal we humanise one another. We discover our commonness and we chip away at the stereotypes that divide us.

We are a culture where deep interconnectedness between people of different faiths and backgrounds is woven into everyday life. Yet far too often there are vested interests that seek to exploit our differences, to divide communities along fault lines.

We heard from Ms Mariam Chowdhury, the director of the office of the Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, who told us about the important work of the envoy in strengthening social cohesion. She explained that their work is not only about addressing hate, but it's about nurturing belonging, protecting dignity and strengthening the social fabric we all share. She said that in their work, one message has come through clearly, across all faiths and backgrounds, and that is that faith matters. She said:

Faith is not something to be managed or sidelined. It is part of the solution, offering moral grounding, compassion and leadership in uncertain times.

I recognise the important work of this envoy, as well as the importance of the establishment of the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, announced by the federal government, which, no doubt, will reinforce that anti-Semitism has no place here.

The event organiser, Hobart community leader, Aimen Jafri, reminded us that this year, for the first time in 200 years, Ramadan coincided with the Catholic month of Lent. The Very

Reverend Richard Humphrey, the Anglican Dean of Hobart, also spoke about that coinciding and spoke of the similarities between these two holy months observed by Christians and Muslims. Both are about fasting, about personal sacrifice; both are about acts of service to people in need; and both are about connection to faith and family. Reverend Humphrey told us that, while there are similarities between the two, that part of what respecting each other's faith looks like is also respecting our differences. He said:

What our world needs is not for us to say that we agree on everything, when clearly we don't, but we need people who can disagree well and enter into meaningful dialogue. This is something that our culture has lost the art of: to respectfully disagree is not to hate, as our culture assumes. Rather, it is to honour the other and show well respect as we listen to each other.

He said:

We must, as Saint Paul said in his letter to the Romans, in *Romans 12:18*:  
'We must as far as possible, live at peace with everyone.'

I conclude by recognising that in our great nation there is more that unites us than divides us. Together, we must stand up to all forms of hatred and division whenever we encounter them in any form.

What was inflicted on Jewish Australians on 14 December was a horrific act of terror that we never wish to see repeated on Jewish or any Australians. We share our condolences with everyone impacted and I want to especially recognise the members of Tasmania's Jewish community who joined us today, Rabbi Yochanan Gordon, who's still here today, also Mr Doug Cooper and Ms Leanne Good.

That attack at Bondi was inflicted, as I said, during Chanukah, a peaceful celebration of light triumphing over dark. As a community, we must stand up against people who provoke hatred, who seek to divide us or pit us against one another. The way to honour these victims is to cherish and protect what it is to be Australian, which is respect for all of us, having each other's back, respecting and celebrating our diversity, living together side by side, in strength and in peace, and to ensure that light triumphs over dark.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[2.51 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Premier for his motion today. I rise to support it on behalf of the people of Bass. I speak today with both great sorrow and great resolve. Colleagues, last month I travelled to Bondi to pay my respects in person. I spent that afternoon with the Chabad of Bondi community, meeting with Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, speaking with men and women of that congregation and being guided through their shul, their synagogue.

When I arrived, there was a significant security presence. I just have to emphasise that, in nearly 52 years of attending churches across Tasmania, interstate and overseas, I have never walked through armed security personnel in order to worship. Not once. That reality alone told me a real story, and an important one. A stark reality for people living in a country that believes we respect freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Inside the shul, I was shown behind the curtain to the ark that holds the sacred scrolls of scripture at the heart of the Jewish faith and tradition. For Christians, it's our Old Testament. I felt without doubt that this shul was a place of reverence, prayer and also continuity connecting Abraham, the children of Israel, and today's believers. But, what was the hardest was not that symbolism. It was the silence.

Why, you may ask, during a condolence motion about murdered Australians, would I begin my contribution by sharing about this visit? It's this, as I move through that synagogue, I saw the empty seats. Seats that should have been filled with fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. Seats now marked with simple signs asking visitors to please not sit there, because it's a seat of the deceased. One sign read, 'This is the seat of Tibor Weitzen, please leave his seat vacant, his presence is constantly felt.' Another, 'This is the seat of Reuven Morrison, please leave his seat vacant, his presence is constantly felt.'

Reuven Morrison's story reflects a journey familiar to many Jewish Australians. As a teenager, he ran away from the Soviet Union with his family, seeking the freedom and the safety that our country offers. It was here in Australia that he met his wife Leah on that very beach at Bondi. Following 7 October and before he was murdered, he spoke openly about the rise of anti-Semitism, warning leaders that Jewish families should never have to live in fear and that both condemnation and action were needed. On the night of the attack, when gunmen opened fire on families gathered to celebrate Chanukah, Reuven did not run away. He ran toward that gunfire, unarmed except for a brick, he confronted the attackers, shouting and throwing whatever he could to try to stop them. In doing so, he actually helped others to escape. Reuven Morrison died as he lived, protecting his community. Reuven was a strong supporter of our Chabad of Tasmania and an encourager of our guests here today, Rabbi Yochanan Gordon.

This is the seat of Alex Kleytman. Please leave his seat vacant. His presence is constantly felt. My host on that day, Mendy, said these words to me, 'Alex was known as a man who always had a smile. A Holocaust survivor and a deeply loved member of the community. He was devoted to his wife and rarely left her side.'

This is the seat of Rabbi Eli Schlanger. Please leave his seat vacant. His presence is constantly felt. Rabbi Eli was the son-in-law of Rabbi Ulman who I had met earlier that day. He was also the brother-in-law of my guide and host, Mendy Ulman, an assistant rabbi and a close friend of Rabbi Gordon and his family. Those impacts reached our small state profoundly. Speaker and colleagues, to see these seats deliberately left empty is to feel their absence in a profoundly human way and I was not ready or prepared for those feelings. It wasn't abstract. It wasn't political. It became personal.

Afterwards, I was escorted to Bondi Beach, to the site of the atrocity, the massacre. The lawn. The beautiful playground. The footbridge. My eye was mostly drawn to the footbridge first. It was very busy with pedestrians going about their day. Lots of people. The playground was alive and really noisy. I believe that the sound of children playing is like a symphony and their laughter is like a song; it's the happiest, most wonderful sound a human can enjoy. That was what it was like on the day that I visited, midweek, just as it should be. But, as we all know, on that Sunday night in December, that's not how it was.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

On the first night of Chanukah when the community gathered for their beloved tradition, Chanukah on the beach - it had been going, I think, for over three decades - many present were refugees from the Soviet Union and their descendants who had come to Australia to escape religious persecution. As we all know, Chanukah is the festival of lights. That festival commemorates a moment in Jewish history when oppression sought to extinguish faith, and yet the light endured. Jewish people believe it was a miracle of the hand of God. The message at the heart of Chanukah with the light enduring is a simple but profound one. Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. The light of truth, courage, and faith is stronger than hatred. Perfect love drives out fear.

Colleagues, another great Jewish festival carries a similar lesson, the festival of Purim. Purim recalls the story told in the Book of Esther, when Haman, with the consent of King Xerxes of Persia, plotted the annihilation of the Jewish people throughout that empire. Through the courage of Esther and Mordecai, that evil plan was exposed and stopped. The very day chosen for the destruction of the Jewish people instead became their day of deliverance. In fact, it's this week Jewish communities across the world have been celebrating Purim. Today, as we meet, speak, and listen here in this House to consider the condolence motion, Purim continues to be celebrated in Jerusalem. For thousands of years, these stories, Chanukah and Purim, have been told because they remind humanity that when darkness threatens to prevail, courage, faith and righteousness can overcome it.

An act of anti-Semitic terror sought to turn a place of celebration into a place of horror. It sought to make worship fearful. It sought to silence the joy and the sounds of children playing. It succeeded that night in bringing horror, but it will never succeed in extinguishing that light, because the Jewish people have carried that light for thousands of years.

Those motivated by hate and evil have actually got it exactly the wrong way round, for it's the light, however small, however fragile, which drives away the darkness, however great, however overwhelming, that darkness may seem. The Jewish truth is also a human truth. It calls on us to act. We must condemn anti-Semitism, an ugly and ancient hatred, without hesitation. I certainly do and I know this House does, and we must affirm clearly and confidently that every Australian, every Tasmanian, of any religion has the right to live, work, worship and gather in peace.

Those empty seats in that synagogue made a big impact on me and they are a big reminder of lives stolen, taken from their community, their family and our nation, but they're also a reminder that hatred has not broken that community. That synagogue still gathers; I wouldn't say fearlessly, but it still gathers. That playground is still full of children. Right now, on a Wednesday afternoon, it would be noisy, with families enjoying each other's company. That footbridge is still walked by ordinary people living their lives, knowing just how significant that site has been in the trauma of our nation.

As I close, I want to share this. In moments like this, in need of comfort, I'm reminded of the words of scripture:

The Lord is my shepherd  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures  
He leads me beside still waters  
He restores my soul

He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no  
evil,  
For you are with me.  
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil.  
My cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall  
dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

That is Psalm 23, a psalm of David, the great king of ancient Israel, shared, loved and believed by both Jews and Christians and many others.

Life continues, faith continues, communities continue and as Tasmanians together, so must our resolve as we stand with our fellow Tasmanians who have been so impacted and harmed by the events of last December.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.04 p.m.]

**Prof RAZAY** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to honour the memory of those who had their lives so brutally and cruelly taken in the Bondi Beach shooting on 14 December last year. This horrific act of anti-Semitic violence stole 15 innocent lives, the youngest victim 10-year-old Matilda. It left families shattered, communities broken, and our national identity fractured.

Today, we pause to remember those who lost their lives - mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, brothers, sisters. To the families and loved ones of those lost and to the Jewish community, I know there are no words that can ease your grief, but know that you do not grieve alone. An entire nation stands beside you.

Moments like these test us. They shake our sense of safety and challenge our way of life. Bondi Beach is a place that symbolises the carefree essence of Australia - openness, warmth and the easy rhythm of life by the sea. It is a place where families and friends gather, visitors explore, and strangers share the same stretch of sand as equals. That such a violent, wicked act could be carried out in such a place feels especially painful and personal. On that warm summer night as families, friends and strangers gathered for Chanukah, the festival of light, no-one could imagine that terror was about to unfold. This attack on the Jewish community was an attack on us all and it's not who we are.

The hurt of Bondi is still with us. This hurt is what unites all of us to stand up to hate. Hatred has no place in our society and country. In the days following this darkest of days, I attended community vigils at Launceston's St Johns Anglican Church and Hobart's St Davids Cathedral. Both were powerful displays of our community standing together in the face of violence and loss. A community united in love. In honouring those who lost at Bondi, let us choose unity over division, compassion over suspicion and resolve over despair.

The family of 10-year-old victim Matilda came to Australia as immigrants from Ukraine before the Russian invasion. Her dad, Michael, said, 'I named her Matilda because she was our

first born in Australia and I thought that Matilda was the most Australian name that could ever exist.' Just remember her name. Her mother, Valentina, said she hoped her daughter would be remembered like a light that will overcome darkness. We must remember. We must all help spread the light.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.09 p.m.]

**Ms BURNET** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the Premier for bringing this condolence motion to the House. I also recognise those who have joined us in the Chamber and who are listening at home. It was an act of treachery when on Sunday, 14 December 2025, a father and his son opened fire on a peaceful gathering for a religious festival, Chanukah by the Sea at Bondi. They killed 15 men, women and children and wounded countless more festival-goers, innocent bystanders and first responders. My thoughts are with those who lost loved ones, friends, members of their community, including Rabbi Schlanger and Rabbi Levitan. When the brave Ahmed El Ahmed, whose fearless intervention reduced the heinous terrorists' toll, and those other first responders who were injured or who were there.

My thoughts are with local Bondi residents and Sydneysiders more generally. As a nation, we are united in mourning. We are still grieving months later, and this emotion, still very raw, has been on display here today.

This was an assault that occurred at a peaceful gathering in an iconic place. Bondi: Quintessentially Australian. It was therefore fitting that those heroes and first responders were welcomed onto the SCG at the start of the Sydney Test. Terrorists do not win. Their names will be not named today. This was the case for the man who murdered worshippers at the Christchurch mosque in March 2019, whose name New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern never uttered.

Bondi on 14 December 2025 was an act of violence concentrated at one place against Jews practising their faith; a calculated act of terror that stains our country. I do remember joining Rabbi Gordon and members of the Chabad and Jewish community some years ago at the Chanukah celebrations at Mawson Pavilion.

This is something that our nation will never forget. It is redolent of Port Arthur in 1996, for those Tasmanians and tourists still bearing the scars, both physiological and mental. It is very difficult to heal from such violence. To help me understand, I have met with and spoken to various members of the Jewish community here in Hobart since the Bondi attack. It was important to reach out to them. They have told me that the response from the Tasmanian community, the outpouring of support, the laying of flowers at the Argyle Street Synagogue and the offerings of condolences, have been very much appreciated.

They report few acts of anti-Semitism targeted at them as individuals. Some are concerned that pro-Palestinian rallies or media commentary are anti-Semitic, that any criticism of Israel is an attack for them as Jews. Others understand that there is a genocide in Gaza and that Israel does not represent their view. For me, it was important to reach out to these community members to offer my support, my condolences, and to help me understand some members of the Hebrew congregation's positions, to understand that there is a diversity of views.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

I do not even begin to know what the community has really experienced, and those generations of trauma, but I offer my condolences to those who have lost loved ones who have been touched by this targeted violence. I know that there are other members of our community who have also been affected by repercussions after the actions of the gunman on 14 December at Bondi who were not Jewish. Not only did I speak with members of the Jewish community, but I thought it was also important to speak to other leaders and everyday members who make up our Tasmanian community: Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Palawa, gay, queer and transgender, to gain an understanding of the world for them after Bondi at a time of global conflict and growing intolerance in Australia.

Let us acknowledge that only a month after the Bondi attack, a man tried to detonate an explosion at a rally in Perth in what is now acknowledged as a terrorist attack, motivated by racist ideology targeting Aboriginal people. I acknowledge Western Australia's Premier Roger Cook's strong position on condemning this act of violence against the Aboriginal community.

For some of our community in Tasmania, they feel afraid, that hate is growing, that to wear religious or traditional dress, to be different in any way, they in turn become a target.

Out of a violent, abhorrent act can and must come some good. We have a responsibility to ensure that good does happen out of such a tragic event such as Bondi. Tolerance and multiculturalism needs to be nurtured through thick and thin of events as they unfold. This motion of the Premier's that I endorse unequivocally condemns the evil of anti-Semitism and vows strong action to prevent extremism and keep our state safe, resilient and united.

I acknowledge the hate-speech laws passed last year by the Tasmanian parliament and acknowledged the Attorney-General for bringing those laws to the parliament. They have placed Tasmania ahead of the game, in some respects. You cannot legislate or impose tolerance and social cohesion. Law reform is not a panacea for extremism, but it is important. Harsher punishments aren't a panacea for extremism. Tolerance and understanding needs to be taught, and it needs to be modelled, and it needs to extend to all communities and all religious beliefs.

Indeed, that is what has been told to me, by people of Jewish faith, secular people, and people of Indian descent, who say to me, through education tolerance can grow. It is something that Mr Bayley and I raised in 2024 with the Minister for Education about having more anti-racism training in schools and now more than ever we need action on this.

As Dr Woodruff has so eloquently said, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are two sides of the same coin. One of our great national successes has been to build a tolerant and effective multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural nation, one that has as part it, the world's longest surviving culture.

But multiculturalism requires constant vigilance, and it requires listening to our communities. The Jewish community have long been warning of the rise of anti-Semitism. Have we heeded that? The Jewish community have so many questions; Australians have so many questions, that I am hoping will be answered by the royal commission which has already commenced.

We can't leave all the work to the royal commission. We need to look inwards to try to understand where this extreme is coming from. What we are seeing is an increasing number of

people feeling aggrieved, fuelled by a belief that we no longer live in a fair society where everyone has equal opportunities. That they are being left behind by the rising tide of wealth that is not lifting all boats.

We are seeing that anger and frustration misdirected towards migrants and minorities like the Jewish population. Misdirected anger and frustration that is being amplified by social media, driven by algorithms that rewards extremity. Around the world and in Australia we are seeing in real time where this can lead, and it is frightening. This rise in extremism is not just the fault of social media. It is also a product of an economic system that is fuelling unrest and a great and growing divide between the haves and the have nots. We have seen these patterns before and unless we are able to learn from the mistakes of history, we are doomed to repeat them.

What can we do as a parliament to respond to this? I also attended the Iftar evening with Ms Haddad, which was sensational, and those speeches, as you refer to them, were so right for the time, right for the moment. I urge us all to celebrate our religious and cultural diversity.

I acknowledge all our migrant communities. More than 15 per cent of Tasmania's population was born overseas. We now practise many religions and speak many languages. We are a pluralistic state and society. There are now more than 10,000 Hindus and 5000 Muslims in Tasmania. Almost 10 per cent of our population speaks a non-English language, 8129 at last count Mandarin speakers, 7248 Nepali speakers, and to the 500 or so people who openly practise their Judaism in Tasmania, including those here today and listening, thank you for making Tasmania your home. You are welcome here.

Tasmanians should celebrate the richness of our diverse stories, cultures, beliefs and practises. Our state is richer for them all. Remember, too, if it weren't for our migrant population, our population and our economy would be in decline, and, lastly, I say to my fellow MPs that we need to be conscious that the community is watching us as leaders, as we represent them in this place and out in the community. Let us redouble efforts to look for what unites us to seek our common ground. Where we disagree, we need to disagree agreeably, respectfully, because if we can't do that, what message are we sending our community in these difficult times?

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.22 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak on the condolence motion for the people of Bondi and New South Wales. I acknowledge Rabbi Gordon here with us today in the Chamber. No state more than Tasmania understands right now how this horror has rocked their community. We have lived through that horror, we remember it and we carry it with us. As a member for Lyons, the site of our own state's tragedy falls within my electorate and, as with my fellow members for Lyons, it falls to us in this Chamber, perhaps more than other members, to ensure it is spoken of on the anniversary of the event as a permanent record in *Hansard* that we will never forget.

There will be people who are angry, scared, confused, looking for answers and finding some answers where they shouldn't. This is understandable and we should not judge them poorly for it. To them I say look for the light, look for the best in others and for common ground, look for community. Wrap it about yourself like armour. Seek shelter in that

community and let's weather this storm together. Ahmed Al Ahmed ran into harm's way to subdue two gunmen. He ran into harm's way, saving who knows how many lives.

Boris and Sofia Gurman, elderly Bondi locals who nearly prevented the tragedy from happening at all, managed to take one of the firearms from one of the terrorists before being overpowered. They paid for their heroism with their lives, and today we remember them. The countless others who shielded children with their bodies: they did not seek, nor did they provoke, an assault on our freedoms and our way of life; they did not expect, nor did they invite, a confrontation with evil, yet the true measure of people's strength is how they rise to master that moment when it does arrive. The streets of heaven are far too crowded with angels. They're our children and our neighbours and our parents and our friends. The streets of heaven are too crowded with angels, but every time we think we have measured our capacity to meet a challenge, we look up and we're reminded the capacity may well be limitless.

It was Roman philosopher Seneca who said, 'as fire is the test of God, so too is adversity the crucible of men'. Horrific events like this will define us, will forge us into something new, but we have the choice to determine what that looks like, what we are forged into through that crucible of adversity. Let us aspire to be remade better. To the Jewish community, know that we will always offer you succour. To the families and friends of the 15 slain, we stand with you. May their memory be a blessing. Thank you.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.25 p.m.]

**Mr ABETZ** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, today, the Tasmanian parliament has been at its very best, considering some of the very worst behaviours ever undertaken on Australian soil. I salute the contributions of the Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Greens, and every other member in this debate. It is a testament to the social fabric of Tasmania that, no matter what our political differences may be, we can unite on an occasion such as this.

Since the very beginning of European settlement in Australia and Tasmania, the Jewish community has been part of our society, some of them undoubtedly selected by the very best judges of the United Kingdom, as they came out here as convicts, but also as free settlers. Only about six blocks away from here stands Australia's first synagogue. A few more blocks away - alright, hundreds of kilometres away - up in Launceston, stands Australia's second oldest synagogue. Here, at the Cornelian Bay Cemetery, there's a separate section for the Jewish community, which tells me that the Jewish community has been embedded within our society over the last 200-plus years, right from the very beginning of European settlement. They have made a substantial and a significant contribution to our society.

After the horrors of the Holocaust, undertaken by the National Socialist ideology, many Jews came to Australia thinking that they would find a safe haven. I think, overwhelmingly, they did up until 14 December 2025. Many came here as refugees and they felt safe. Indeed, a couple who came to Australia to flee persecution in Poland became my parents' closest friends. The two males of the two couples met at the Moonah workshops of the Hydro-Electric Commission, another great melting pot for the migrant communities within our country.

Jewish Australians have been productive members of our state and our nation, and have added to the welfare of our country. At this stage, I recognise the wonderful work of

Rabbi Gordon, who is with us. The wonderful work of Never Again Is Now, headed by Philip and Leanne Good and Doug Cooper, who heads the Holocaust Museum. It was my pleasure to be able to invite them yesterday, suggesting that they might like to attend in the Chamber. I am glad that they were able to do so and, as a result, pass back to the organisations that they represent and the community they represent the unanimous goodwill of the Tasmanian parliament as a reflection of the unanimous view, I'm sure, of the Tasmanian people.

With that said, I have been deeply horrified and concerned by some of the anti-Semitic behaviour that occurs in Tasmania. If I recall correctly, there were certain anti-Semitic inscriptions in the township of Perth and Rabbi Gordon was asked to comment on that - this was quite a few years ago. There was an article in the *Examiner* and, I confess, up until that time, I was not aware that we were blessed with a rabbi in Tasmania. I reached out to the rabbi on that occasion, and we have remained in contact ever since for a whole host of reasons. I have been delighted to be able to share that journey with the rabbi and the Jewish community in Tasmania.

Also, whilst I served in another place, I had the privilege of being the chair of the Israel-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group and they did me the great honour of giving me a little plaque, which hangs in my office here now, thanking me for my service. That was given to me by the then ambassador Amir Maimon, who has been referred to previously.

The Jewish people should feel safe, need to feel safe in our country and our nation. Regrettably, well before Bondi there was a need for armed guards at Jewish schools in our country. That is a disgrace. It is a national shame that such a thing as armed guards at school gates should be necessary. The events of Bondi, I confess, when I heard about them, I cried for my country. What had Australia descended to?

Some people on social media and other places like to remind me of the country of my birth and then try to make a connection. Can I tell you the evils of National Socialism, the Holocaust and the persecution of Jews is something that I abhor. I dare say, I abhor it so deeply as a result of coming from a country that, in fairness, I thought was generally well educated, well cultured, et cetera, and yet it succumbed to this untold evil. If that country under National Socialism could fall to that evil, I suspect any other country or society can as well.

That is why Holocaust museums are just so important right around the world to remind people that the evil of anti-Semitism can infect any society. That is why I was delighted to join with the then federal treasurer Josh Frydenberg when he made monies available for a Holocaust museum in every single state and territory of Australia. As a reminder to us all of the evil of anti-Semitism, the evil of judging people on the basis of their identity as opposed to character. That is something that we as a community need to always be mindful of.

To think that what occurred at Bondi was perpetrated on the first day of Chanukah, shows the ugliness of the ideology that motivated the terrorists on that day, that such a day should be deliberately chosen for that which occurred. Mowing down, through ugly hatred, 15 people and injuring physically, psychologically and emotionally, undoubtedly hundreds if not thousands, tens of thousands of people right around our country, including Steven, the taxi driver who was referred to in a previous contribution.

To think that this evil could be perpetrated on Australian soil. I join with what the Premier told us that when we see these items on our TV screens, we automatically and immediately

assume somewhere else in the world, never thinking that it would come to our very own shores. But it has. Let us stamp it out before it is allowed to repeat itself.

Hatred is solely founded on the concept of identity as opposed to anything else and that should be something we guard against and continually remind people is completely and utterly unacceptable.

On occasions such as this, condolence motions are vital and necessary. I join in the expressions of condolence with all other members, yet I trust we can move beyond just the expression of condolence with a commitment to removing the scourge of anti-Semitism from within our community and society. The Tasmanian Jewish community is suffering, not only from the events at Bondi but also nasty expressions of language and behaviour here in Tasmania, and we've got to call it out on every single occasion we see it.

Like others, I extend my condolences to the families who lost loved ones or had loved ones injured. I extend my sincere appreciation for the brave people who sought to minimise the slaughter that occurred on that occasion and attended to the wounded. Can I also say that I trust each and everyone of my colleagues in this place, irrespective of their political views, to personally commit themselves to call out anti-Semitism wherever it appears, and on that basis, I trust that those who lost their lives will have not lost their lives in vain but will have helped to stamp out anti-Semitism.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.38 p.m.]

**Mr BAYLEY** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I acknowledge Rabbi Gordon and the Tasmanian Jewish community as I rise to add my voice to the chorus of condolence for the victims of the 14 December terror attack. Their families, friends, first responders, and all have been impacted by this abhorrent act of violence that was driven by hate and intolerance. Fifteen people died, including a 10-year-old girl and a Holocaust survivor. I acknowledge and thank my colleague Dr Woodruff for taking the time to recognise and touch on the life and a little of the legacy of each of the victims, saying their names and a bit about who they are.

But of course, they were not the only victims. Many others were injured and an entire nation was impacted in an extremist act of gun violence that deliberately targeted the Jewish community as it celebrated one of its most cherished festivals of the year. Chanukah, the festival of lights, is an eight-day celebration of ancient achievements, today accepted and celebrated as a triumph of hope, faith, and freedom over oppression and darkness. But a deep darkness fell upon the Sydney Jewish community on Bondi Beach and for many, Chanukah will now have a tragic undertone forever. I acknowledge that this, our country's worst-ever terrorist attack, will come as a shock and tragic reminder to many in Tasmania of our own history of gun violence and mass murder.

As the shots rang out across Bondi Beach and reports of an attack came filtering through social and mainstream media, many will have had flashbacks to Port Arthur and the trauma Tasmanians suffered at the hands of an armed murderer. I won't dwell on this, as others have already touched on it, but as we approach the 30th anniversary of the Port Arthur massacre, I recognise the pain that that chapter continues to inflict and the decades-old wounds that Bondi will reopen.

As was the case at Port Arthur, the expertise and bravery of first responders, both professional and civilian, must be commended. Police, paramedics, lifeguards, and ordinary Sydneysiders moved towards the chaos and gunfire, compelled to help. The professionals did their jobs, confronting the attackers and tending to the victims. Civilians stepped up in acts of incredible bravery and selflessness, sometimes with tragic consequences. Boris and Sofia Gurman disarmed one gunman, only for him to take another weapon and turn it upon them. Ahmed al Ahmed has been celebrated around the world for stepping in and tackling one attacker, sustaining wounds along the way. Others shielded children and each other. From tragedy comes extraordinary inspiration, but this inspiration must translate into action.

Hate and intolerance has no place in a civilised society and we must confront them wherever they arise. While anti-Semitism and ISIS ideology motivated the Bondi gunmen and drove them to terrifying acts of targeted but indiscriminate violence, we know that hate takes many frightening forms. No-one should be afraid of practising their religion or culture. No-one should fear being who they are. No-one should be targeted because of what they believe, where they were born, who they love or how they look. Whether you're Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Aboriginal, LGBTIQ+, migrant, or living with a disability, no matter who you are, you have a right to live free from violence, hate, discrimination and exploitation.

While we need to confront anti-Semitism at its core, so too must we address every form of intolerance and aggression. That means calling out all forms of vilification, dog whistling, the stoking of fear and the politicisation of difference. The Greens are strong supporters of equality, equity and multiculturalism. As spokesperson for multicultural affairs, I'm committed to ensuring that we do all we can to address racism, hatred and discrimination, no matter where they raise their ugly heads.

We also know from painful experience that in the wake of attacks like this, Muslim Australians and those of Arab or Middle Eastern background too often find themselves targeted by suspicion, harassment and vilification. That is not okay. It's the same hatred wearing a different face. We cannot mourn one community suffering while turning a blind eye to the hostility visited upon another. If we are serious about a cohesive and inclusive Australia, that commitment must hold in the hardest moments, not only the easy ones.

In mid-2024, respected ABC journalist Laura Tingle was howled down by the conservative press for calling out Australia as a racist country. She said at a writers festival:

We are a racist country, let's face it. We always have been and it is depressing.

Not every Australian is racist, but whether it's the Cronulla riots, the inability to address the date of Australia Day or the current debate over migration, Australia needs to reckon with all forms of intolerance and promote a culture of acceptance, inclusion and cohesion. The rise of anti-Semitism is but one of the very real challenges Australia must today confront equally. In the wake of Bondi, the speed at which some jump to conclusions and launch straight into politicisation without the facts and while the shock is still raw, deserves calling out condemnation and rejection.

Another Australian icon is now synonymous with tragedy and terror. An Australian community group has been targeted in an abhorrent act of violence and destruction. I stand with all of you in this House and the masses across the world in condemning this hate, in

naming up intolerance and in offering my heartfelt condolences to all those affected by an unacceptable act from which many will never recover.

This motion is a good one, and I commend the Premier for moving it. I acknowledge the contributions of all in this House and I embrace the sentiment we have expressed. Finally, we Greens anchor our commitment to you as colleagues, to Tasmania's Jewish community and to every person in the state, to both the sentiment and the specifics of paragraph 6 in this motion. It affirms our collective and individual right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety, to participate fully and freely in public life and to gather in community without fear or hindrance, proud of who they are and the contributions they make to our state and our way of life. This is the right of every Tasmanian, no matter who you are.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.45 p.m.]

**Mr Di FALCO** (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, first off, I acknowledge the presence of Rabbi Gordon and the representatives of the Jewish community. I rise to contribute to this important motion. I will be brief, as others have spoken strongly about this already.

The Bondi incident was a tragedy and hard to comprehend. I mourn the loss. My condolences to those affected. This was a senseless act of terrorism and has no place in our country. While we are all aware of the aftermath and law changes that followed, I used this tragedy as an opportunity to learn about different cultures. I spent time with the Jewish community representatives to see first-hand the challenges that they face and the impact that this horrible incident had on them.

I also acknowledge the extraordinary courage shown by members of the public who help strangers to safety. I acknowledge the first responders who ran towards danger, police officers who put their lives on the line, and paramedics and medical staff who worked tirelessly to save lives. Growing up in an immigrant family, I saw first-hand the challenges people who look and speak differently face. People who come to this country for a better life and choose to be Australian have a right to feel safe and protected. We must protect this right at all costs.

Gathering to celebrate your faith and beliefs is a cornerstone of Western liberal society. An attack on this is unacceptable. I stand with the victims and all the people affected by Bondi and I support this motion.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.47 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I will begin by welcoming Rabbi Gordon to our parliament and acknowledging the members of the Jewish community who were with us earlier today, and to those that may be listening online, and to indeed all members of our community that may be listening to the parliament today. I thank them for being with us.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise to speak on this condolence motion. At a time in our world where there is enormous conflict, uncertainty, violence and struggles for power and wealth, it is just so important that we as community leaders work together to unite, not divide our country, our state and our local communities. Now more than ever, our communities are in great need of compassion, empathy, understanding, and decisive, inclusive leadership. This

extends across all walks of life and all cultural and religious backgrounds and every part of our country.

I extend my heartfelt condolences, thoughts and love to the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people who lost their lives during this horrific terrorism event on 14 December last year: the people of Bondi and NSW, our local and national Jewish community and everyone affected by this act of terror, directly or indirectly. Time will pass, but you remain in our country's hearts and minds forever.

I will never forget the moment that I learned of the horrific tragedy that took 15 innocent lives and injured many. An act of violence and terror at an iconic Australian place, our beloved Bondi Beach, a place of national significance that epitomises the values, cultures and way of life of our Australian society. I was at home in the laundry when my family, who were watching the television at the time, called out and said that there'd been a shooting at Bondi Beach. My first response was, 'What? A terrorist attack? That can't be right'. As we sat that evening and watched this horrific tragedy unfold, it felt like time had stopped. It was in this moment, the enormity of this national event, the realisation that we are not immune to acts of hatred, terror and violence really hit me. I haven't stopped thinking about it since, and how it will change our country forever.

This attack was on a night of very special significance for the Jewish community, the beginning of Chanukah and the celebration of religious freedom, hope and the triumph of light over darkness. That night should have been a beautiful celebration of resilience; a night filled with light and hope; a night that many families, including many children, should have been able to be out enjoying and celebrating. It is hard to comprehend the actions of these two men. I'm a lover, not a hater, and I will never be able to understand targeted violence against or persecution towards others, but I recognise that there is hatred in our world and others are not motivated by the same intrinsic values as I am.

Our country will be forever scarred by this senseless attack on humanity, but I'm forever the optimist and I believe that our community will be stronger because we demonstrated again those Australian values we hold so dearly that they are enduring even in the face of fear and attack. I acknowledge the enormous bravery of those individuals who took it upon themselves to intervene during the attack and assist others in their time of need, putting themselves at incredible risk but standing by and protecting their fellow Australians, putting themselves in the way of harm.

I also acknowledge the police officers, first responders and hospital staff who provided emergency and ongoing care to those injured and affected, and to all those Australians who donated blood to save the lives of their fellow Australians, thank you. There is a need for ongoing support as our country continues its healing and recovery from this national tragedy. Many of these same people will be providing that as support across our community in the days and years to come, and I thank them for this in advance.

I'm reassured today by the Tasmanian government's commitment to continue to offer ongoing support to the New South Wales government and members of our Tasmanian national Jewish community and indeed our community as a whole in the days, weeks, months and years ahead, and I believe this will be very important. There is no place for anti-Semitism and discrimination of any kind in our communities.

I conclude my contribution by reading into the *Hansard* again the final point of the Premier's motion today, and that is that this House:

Affirm every Tasmanians' fundamental right to live, work, worship and learn in peace and safety; to participate fully and freely in public life and to gather in community without fear or hindrance, proud of who they are and the contributions they make to our state and our way of life.

This is a fundamental human right and, as elected representatives of places and communities that we love, we should always uphold this fundamental human right.

I once again extend my heartfelt condolences, thoughts and love to the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people who lost their lives during this horrific terrorism event last December, the people of Bondi and New South Wales, our local and national Jewish community and everyone affected by this act of terror, whether that be directly or indirectly and, as I said before, time will pass, but you remain in our country's hearts and minds forever and we will keep the light shining for you.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.53 p.m.]

**Ms OGILVIE** (Clark - Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs) - Honourable Speaker, shalom. I also recognise Doug Cooper, Rabbi Gordon, Leanne Good, who've sat with us today and I rise today to again offer my deepest condolences to all those impacted by the horrific terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. I particularly acknowledge the profound grief felt by Australia's Jewish community who are directly targeted during what should have been a moment of joy of celebration and cultural pride. The Chanukah celebration, Chanukah by the Sea, was meant to mark the first night of a 2000-year-old tradition, a festival of lights symbolising resilience, hope and the triumph of spirit over oppression. Instead, at one of our most iconic Australian landmarks, that celebration was shattered by an act of hate-fuelled violence that has left a permanent scar on our nation. I'm deeply sorry. I'm deeply saddened that this has ever occurred.

In the days following the attack, I reached out to members of the Tasmanian Jewish community, people my family and I know and have known personally for a long time, and they were still trying to comprehend the horror of what unfolded, and like so many Australians, they were grappling with disbelief, fear and grief, and I spoke with many who were shocked that such an atrocity could occur on our shores. There was bewilderment, yes, but also disgust and so much anger. Anger that innocent people were targeted because of their faith and because a celebration of light was met with darkness.

I also attended a small interfaith vigil on the lawns of Parliament House in the days leading up to Christmas. At a time of shock and sorrow, it was comforting to stand alongside Tasmanians of all faiths and backgrounds - Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and those of no determined faith - united in grief, solidarity and compassion. We stood not only with the Jewish community, but with all of those impacted, including the general public and the first responders who ran towards the danger.

There are images from that day that will remain with me forever, and I know I'm not the first one to have spoken of this in this Chamber today. The footage of Ahmed Al Ahmed

wrestling a gun from one of the attackers was an act of extraordinary bravery. The image of Tamarama lifeguard Jackson 'Jacko' Doolan - what an Australian name - barefoot, a red first-aid kit slung over his shoulder, sprinting down Bondi Road towards the sound of gunfire - sprinting. Even now, I can only imagine the terror he must have felt, yet he ran forward anyway.

Thankfully, despite what has occurred, it continues to be Bondi: that place where people from all over the world come together and every weekend can feel like the United Nations gathered on one beautiful strip of pure Australian coastline. Our easy-going Australian way of life was taken advantage of that day, but I dearly hope, and firmly believe, that while there will be and must be significant changes to legislation and security arrangements, this attack will not diminish who we are, as Australians. We must not allow hate to reshape our identity.

One of the most distressing developments in the aftermath was the rhetoric of hate that emerged from some corners of society. Media reported attacks that were against Muslims, against people of Middle Eastern appearance and further attacks against Jewish Australians. This behaviour does nothing to honour us, as Australians. It does nothing to strengthen our nation. While the vast majority of these incidents did not occur in Tasmania, they still reverberate here. I've spoken to individuals of different nationalities who have experienced abuse in recent months, and some remain in fear even months later. It is just wrong and we will not stand for it.

I'd like to mention specifically the work that we've been doing with the Holocaust Museum. In Tasmania we have long recognised the profound responsibility of preserving the memory of the Holocaust with dignity, with accuracy and with deep cultural sensitivity. Our work to establish a Holocaust interpretation and education centre, guided by the Tasmanian Jewish community and supported by the Australian Government, reflects our commitment to honouring the 6 million Jews and all innocent victims murdered and to ensuring that the lessons of that atrocity are never forgotten. This initiative is grounded in remembrance, in education and in the unwavering belief that understanding the past strengthens our resolve against hatred in the present.

In the wake of the horrific violence at Bondi Beach, we stand even more firmly with our Jewish community, united in grief, in solidarity, and in the shared determination that such acts of hatred have no place in our society now or ever again. Hate, division and simple narratives do not protect us; solidarity and community does.

This attack has shaken the Jewish community across Australia, including our dear friends here in Tasmania. The 2021 census recorded 266 Tasmanians with Jewish ancestry and 376 who practise Judaism. Ours is a small, but deeply connected community, centred around the Hobart Hebrew Congregation here, in my electorate of Clark - the oldest synagogue in Australia - and the Chabad of Tasmania in Launceston, which continues to grow and support families, including through a new Hebrew school.

We know and thank the Tasmania Police who've been actively engaging the Jewish community leaders to provide reassurance and ensure safety at public events. Their work, informed by ongoing dialogue with the community, has also shaped recent reforms to sentencing and symbol prohibition laws. The broader multicultural community has also felt the impact. Members of Tasmania's Muslim, Hindu and Indian communities have expressed love and concern about their Jewish friends and want to make sure that everybody can hold faith-

based events in public in safety and security. This is an environment we must confront honestly and compassionately.

Nationally the response has been swift and significant. Our federal government has established a Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion led by Hon Virginia Bell AC. Its mandate includes investigating the nature and prevalence of anti-Semitism, examining the circumstances leading up to the Bondi attack and developing recommendations to strengthen social cohesion and counterterrorism. Tasmania is fully committed to this work. We want to participate. We have issued complementary letters patent and establishing whole-of-government arrangements to support the commission. The Australian parliament has also passed major reforms, including legislation combating anti-Semitism and extremism and strengthening criminal penalties for hate-fuelled conduct.

Here in Tasmania, we have taken important steps of our own. In December 2025, parliament passed amendments to the Sentencing act to ensure that racial or ethnic hatred, including anti-Semitism, is treated as an aggravating factor in sentencing. We were the first jurisdiction in Australia to ban Nazi symbols and gestures, and those laws continue to be actively enforced. Our government is also investing in programs that strengthen social cohesion and address racism. Through the 2025-26 Social Cohesion grants program, funding is available for community-led projects that foster inclusion and counter discrimination. We have provided funding to the Multicultural Council of Tasmania for Harmony Week activities and a cultural safety project, and we continue to support multicultural festivals, employment services and community outreach programs across the state. Our multicultural action plan 2025-2029, which is called Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging, was shaped by the voices of more than 1000 culturally and linguistically diverse Tasmanians. Its first priority is ensuring that communities feel safe and that they are safe. This includes legislative reform, improved reporting of hate-related offences, prevention and early intervention programs, and therapeutic services for victims of racism. The establishment of a new ministerial multicultural advisory council under the portfolio of Multicultural Affairs later this year will ensure that lived experience remains at the centre of this work.

We are also grateful for the federal government's commitment to \$4.5 million nationally for mental health supports following the Bondi attack, including \$125,000 for Primary Health Tasmania to support our local Jewish community. We've provided funding to the Migrant Resource Centre to deliver therapeutic supports for victims of racism.

Tasmania has a long and proud history of welcoming people from around the world. Our multicultural communities enrich our state culturally, socially and economically. They make Tasmania more vibrant, more resilient, more connected to the world and everybody deserves to feel safe, included and valued. The Bondi attack was intended to divide us. It was intended to instil fear, so we must respond with unity, with compassion and unwavering commitment to the safety and dignity of every Tasmanian - Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, all of us, everyone in between. But we must confront anti-Semitism wherever it appears and we must confront racism in all its forms. We must ensure that no community feels isolated or targeted because of who they are.

To the families of the 15 people killed, to the dozens injured, including the two New South Wales police officers, and to all those who carry the trauma of that day, we stand with you. Tasmania stands with you. To the Jewish community here and across Australia, you

belong, you are valued, you are not alone. To everybody, and to anybody who has faced fear and vilification in the aftermath, you too belong, and you too are valued.

Our strength as a nation lies in our diversity, our compassion, and our commitment to one another. Let us honour the victims of Bondi not only with our words, but our actions, with laws that protect with communities that welcome, and with a society that refuses to be divided by hate. May we continue to be a state and a nation where people of all cultures and faiths and backgrounds feel safe, included and empowered to contribute. May we continue to choose unity over division, hope over fear, and light over darkness. As we watch the news from the fighting in the Middle East each day now, I fear we're about to see another extended onslaught of war and destruction.

In closing, on a personal note, I'd just like to say, again, outside this parliament stands a statue of my great uncle, A.G. Ogilvie, who travelled to Germany in the 1930s - he actually went twice - saw what was happening and worked to save Jewish refugees. He proposed bringing Jewish refugees to Tasmania and worked with the local community. As I've mentioned before, his hand is raised in that statue and I'd like to think he is saying, 'Be kind to one another. Reject anti-Semitism, reject racism. Choose humanity.'

As a final comment, I will mention the trip that I took, where I was so grateful to see it first-hand, to visit Israel, to the grave sites of people who fell at the Battle of Beersheba, to which the Tasmanian Lighthouse paid a pivotal role. I note Tasmania's deep connection and historic connection to Jerusalem.

I wish everybody peace. We are devastated by what has happened. I recognise that this has touched a nerve, particularly in Tasmania due to our circumstances with Port Arthur, a time at which I had a dear friend shot and killed. I say that by way of trying to show my deep empathy for those who have been touched by this horrendous act of incivility.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[4.07 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to add my condolences and thank colleagues for the sentiment expressed. I wish to associate myself with all the comments that have been made today. Certainly a beautifully articulated debate on a devastating subject.

I thank Rabbi Gordon for being here today and members of the Jewish community, to all those either here or online. Excuse my accent, but: shalom aleichem. Baruch haba. We're grateful for your presence in the Chamber and we're so grateful to the contribution that the Jewish community has made to the Australian way of life since the First Fleet, when the first Jews arrived with many others to Australia.

This parliament speaks with one voice across all parties, in grief and in solidarity. We acknowledge Australia's Jewish community and all Australians in that mourning. The attack was, of course, on 14 December 2025 and the Chanukah by the Sea celebrations at Bondi Beach in Sydney. But indeed the months and the years that led up to it, particularly punctuated with the 7 October attacks, the worst loss of Jewish life with an act of aggression since the Holocaust - is a pogrom that unfortunately has had its echoes in our country. The fact that there were the ghoulish celebrations on the footsteps of the Opera House the day after 7 October is

something in which we all need to reflect on - about the threat that we face here with our Jewish community and that we all need to deeply examine. That is a stain on the soul of our nation, as is Bondi. We all must take that seriously.

We've seen throughout history that when anti-Semitism grows from thoughts to words, to actions, and to violence, that the dividing line between good and evil cuts right through the middle of every human heart. It's so important that we reflect on the threats that this old hatred has brought to our shores in a way that we've never seen before. Fifteen innocent lives taken, more than 20 others hospitalised with serious injuries. An ISIS inspired attack, with victims aged between 10 and 87, a child, a Holocaust survivor, a rabbi and families celebrating their faith in this beautiful country. We've spoken about the names and the stories of those people; people from every walk of life and at every stage who had their lives cut shorter than they should have been. We expressed parliament's deepest condolences to every family. That grief is carried by this nation.

We saw extraordinary courage, of course, and the way that ordinary everyday people stepped up in a moment of great fear shows what true courage is. It's moving towards the danger even when even when your hands are trembling and there's enormous risk to your life and the and the ones that you love.

We saw enormous courage from our first responders who take an oath and step up because they believe in this country and they believe in our communities. That doesn't make it any easier. Indeed, the police officers and other first responders injured on that day are a reminder to all of us about the risk that they face; not every day, but they're there, and we ask them to be there on the worst days, and they acquitted that duty with honour and great courage.

As Minister for Police, I'd like to particularly express my condolences and solidarity with NSW Police. They faced an extraordinary threat that day and we're very grateful for the work that every one of our first responders does.

On a personal level, I acknowledge my brother-in-law who's a member of NSW Police, who was there at the scene as well.

I acknowledge Tasmanians touched by this attack. No community is untouched by an atrocity of this scale; it affects all of us. Parliament's motion today, with so many heartfelt tributes and so many touching reflections, is a reminder that we are a very large country but we're a small place in many ways as well, and we're all Australians. Whether Jew or gentile, we are all Australians and we all have a special bond and duty to each other. We want to ensure that there's safety for Australians at places of worship, gathering and public celebration, and at our iconic locations that we have around Tasmania and Australia. We need to work everyday to do that.

We do need to name the evil, of course. This was not random. It was a targeted anti-Semitic attack on Jews practising their faith. It must be named plainly that anti-Semitism has no place in Australia, in Tasmania, and certainly we're sending a strong message in this parliament. We stand with Australia's Jewish community. The right to live, celebrate, worship and gather freely is non-negotiable. What happened in this country on 7 October is something that we all need to face up to, and what happened in this country on Chanukah 2025 is something that we all need to face up to.

There has been much grieving, and as we work through the healing process, there also needs to be that strong resolve to continue to do more. To the families, this parliament will not forget the names of those that you've lost. May the memory of the 15 be a blessing, and may their families find, in time, some comfort. Chanukah represents, of course, light over darkness, and our duty is to keep that light burning in every corner of Australia and for every member of the Australian community.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[4.14 pm]

**Mr FAIRS** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I'd like to start by acknowledging Rabbi Gordon. I thank him sincerely for being here today, and also Doug Cooper and Leanne Good, who were here earlier, and the Jewish community. I pay my sincere condolences to the families, the victims, obviously, friends and colleagues.

Today this parliament pauses in sorrow, in reflection and in unity to honour the innocent Australians whose lives were cruelly taken in the anti-Semitic terrorist attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. The Premier was absolutely spot on when he made his contribution earlier in regards to knowing exactly where you were, what you were doing. My parliamentary colleague, Ms Dow, remembering she was in the laundry at the time it broke. For me, I will never forget this day because it's my wife's birthday. We were preparing to go out for dinner, but this changed that.

Fifteen lives were lost in an act of hatred directed at Jewish Australians gathered peacefully to celebrate Chanukah, a moment of faith, family, and community. In the Jewish tradition, Chanukah is a celebration of light. Dozens more were wounded, many carrying injuries that will never fully heal. Behind every number is a name, a family, a future interrupted. Behind every survivor is a life permanently altered.

Among those taken from us was young Matilda, a 10-year-old girl. Ten years old. Whose smiling face is now forever in our national memory. Her life had barely begun. She represented promise, innocence, and possibility. She deserved birthday parties yet to come. Friendships yet to form, dreams yet to be imagined. She deserved safety. She deserved kindness. She deserved so much better than the hatred that ended her life.

We mourn those who will never return home. We acknowledge the parents who lost children, the children who lost parents, partners separated forever, and communities left with grief that words cannot adequately express. This was not random violence. It was terrorism motivated by anti-Semitism. It deliberately targeted Australians because they were Jewish.

Federal authorities have confirmed that the attack was inspired by extremist ideology rooted in hatred towards Jewish people, making it the deadliest anti-Semitic terrorist act in our nation's history.

Such hatred strikes at something far greater than any single community. It strikes at the foundations of Australia itself. Australia is built on the promise that people can live freely, practice their faith openly, gather safely in public places, and celebrate cultural traditions without fear. When terrorism motivated by racial or religious hatred occurs on our shores, it seeks to erode those freedoms. It seeks to divide neighbour from neighbour and replace trust with fear. We must say clearly in this place that it will not succeed.

The attack at Bondi Beach changed lives forever, not only for those injured physically, but for those who now carry trauma that will endure long after the headlines fade. Survivors face lifelong medical recovery, psychological harm, and the quiet burden of remembering a day of evil that reshaped their existence. Their courage in rebuilding their life deserves our enduring respect and support.

We also recognise the bravery shown by ordinary Australians who rent towards danger to protect strangers. In moments designed to provoke fear and division, humanity prevailed. Yet this tragedy also confronts us with an uncomfortable truth. The Bondi attack did not emerge in isolation. It occurred amid a documented rise in anti-Semitism across Australia, culminating in violence directed at Jewish Australians simply for who they are. That reality demands more than sympathy. It demands action.

The establishment of the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion is therefore an appropriate and necessary national response. Its establishment explicitly acknowledges that protecting social cohesion, religious freedom, and public safety is not optional. It is fundamental to preserving the Australian way of life because terrorism seeks more than lives. It seeks to change how we live. If Australians begin to fear gathering in public, fear attending places of worship, or fear expressing their identity, then the damage extends far beyond the immediate victims. Our open society and our multicultural success and our shared freedoms are diminished. That is why remembrance must be accompanied by resolve. Resolve to confront anti-Semitism wherever it appears. Resolve to reject extremism in all its forms. Resolve to ensure that Jewish Australians, and indeed all Australians, can live openly and safely in this country we share and love.

Today we stand with the Jewish community in grief. We stand with the wounded, whose recovery continues. And we stand with every Australian who believes that hatred has no place in our national story. May the memories of those innocent lives lost be a blessing. May their legacy strengthen our commitment to unity over division, courage over fear, and freedom over hatred. We must never forget.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[4.20 p.m.]

**Mr VERMEY** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, today, along with all my colleagues here in this House, along with people, communities all over Australia, we pause in sorrow, sadness, disbelief to condemn the atrocities that were committed at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. I pay my respects to Rabbi Gordon, Doug Cooper and Leanne Good, the Tasmanian Jewish community, and the Australian Jewish community and all Jewish communities worldwide.

The anti-Semitic terrorist attack that deliberately targeted a gathering of our Jewish community and robbed us of 15 innocent lives on that day when it was a day to celebrate the light over darkness, a day where people gathered, having fun and enjoying friendship and unity. Chanukah is a period of time that brings people together and lights the light.

We condemn the evil atrocities that occurred driven by anti-Semitic beliefs and hatred of our Jewish community. We also share our support to those who suffered the trauma, the men, women and children injured physically and psychologically, including those who witnessed

this horrible event during and after, and that has had a devastating effect on all of us all over Australia and the world.

Out of adversity, the Australian way to help and support shines brightly. We honour the courage and quick reaction, composure of our first responders, police officers, life-savers, paramedics, health professionals and the everyday people that put their own lives at risk to attempt to save lives, assisting the wounded, giving protection and comfort.

Our Australian way is built by many different nations. We embrace all communities, giving us diversity that makes Australia a wonderful country to live, work and worship. Australia is the place which we should all live freely in public life and gather as a community without fear, we should be proud of our Jewish community, proud of who they are and the contributions that they've made to Australia and our state, Tasmania.

My father came out from Holland, as I said before, in 1950. His father had a butcher shop in Amsterdam and during the war looked after many of the Jewish communities who were suffering at the hands of the Nazis. My father, when he came to Australia through his father, was said to get involved with communities, to be part of other people's lives and assist and help, and there are so many communities that do this. We are in a good place, and it's very few of these who act against our way. It's up to us and our communities to stand up against anyone who stands against any religion, race, et cetera.

I'm proud to be here to support our Jewish community along with everyone else and I welcome everybody's contribution.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[4.24 p.m.]

**The SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I'd like to just make a short contribution myself and I too would like to extend my deepest and sincerest condolences to our guests in the Chamber today, those who have been watching online, as well as the families and loved ones of the 15 innocent people murdered at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025. They were gathered peacefully to celebrate the first his night of Chanukah, a celebration of light and faith, when their lives were cruelly taken in an act of terrorism. This atrocity, deliberately targeting Australia's Jewish community, was an assault not only on those present, but on the values we hold in common: freedom of worship, respect for diversity and the right to gather in safety.

I, too, join this House in unequivocally condemning anti-Semitism. I stand united with you in affirming that every person has the right to live, work, worship, learn and participate in public life and our community without fear or hindrance.

I, too, would like to acknowledge the bravery of the police, first responders, healthcare workers and members of the public whose swift, courageous and selfless actions saved lives. And to likewise recognise the profound and ongoing physical and mental trauma experienced by all those who witnessed and are affected by this horror and its aftermath. In times of darkness, I believe our duty is clear: to uphold the dignity of every person, to defend the freedoms entrusted to us and to stand together in unity and resolve.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

**The SPEAKER** - I now ask members to signify their support for the motion by joining me in standing.

**Motion agreed, *nemine contradicente*.**

[4.27 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, thank you for your words and I thank members for their profoundly personal, at times, always empathetic, and deeply moving contributions and reflections in unity. On that, I move -

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting its concurrence with the resolution.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

[4.28 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the House now be adjourned.

**The SPEAKER** - To facilitate Adjournment I thank Rabbi Gordon for attending today. We felt very honoured and blessed by your presence here in this Chamber and the significance of you being here all day. We all greatly appreciate it. We will now move into Adjournment officially.

### **Men's Sheds**

[4.28 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Deputy Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I concur with your remarks with respect to Rabbi Gordon and colleagues in the Chamber today. It's been a very special day, I think for all of us in the Chamber, those who contributed, those who didn't, and I say thank you and acknowledge all the wonderful contributions in this Chamber today.

On the Adjournment, tonight I rise to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of men's sheds across Tasmania, in particular to recognise the remarkable story of the Westbury men shed in the Meander Valley. Men's sheds are far more than workshops, they are places of connection, purpose, quiet support, mental health and wellbeing. They're spaces where men can gather shoulder to shoulder, work on practical projects, share skills and, most importantly, look out for one another. I'm advised that the movement has grown across Australia from around 200 sheds in 2005 to more than 1300 today. That reflects the simple truth that Men's Sheds matter. They support mental health, reduce social isolation, and provide a safe and welcoming environment where conversations happen naturally while hands are busy with meaningful work. In Tasmania there are now more than 70 men's sheds, I'm advised, operating around our great state. Certainly, in the electorate of Lyons, there are many dozens and I enjoy visiting all of them.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

The story of the Westbury Men's Shed shows exactly why the movement so powerful. I had the pleasure of turning the sod and sharing a few remarks at the Westbury Men's Shed just Tuesday week. I was there with Stephen Gregory, president, and Rob McKenzie, president of the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association, Wendy Kennedy, executive officer of the Men's Shed Association and the local mayor and deputy mayor Wayne Johnston and Stephanie Cameron, and so many other local councillors and community representatives. It was fantastic and we were hosted on the grounds of the Westbury Agricultural Society, where the new men's shed will be located.

In February 2021, the Westbury Health Advisory Committee, alongside the Lions and Rotary Clubs of Westbury, began exploring the establishment of a local shed. They saw a need for a place where men in the community could come together to find connection and purpose. In July 2021 a bank account was established and the Westbury Men's Shed was formally incorporated. A public meeting was advertised by radio and 50 men from Westbury and Hagley - which is my hometown, I'm very proud of that - and Hagley and Westbury are great, fantastic community of which I'm very proud. At this stage, there was no shed and no funding to build one and the small shed at the Westbury Health Community Centre was too limited for what was needed, so the Meander Valley Council stepped up and made space available at the King Street local depot. That was intended as a temporary solution, but it provided a vital foothold for a good period of time.

By April 2022 the shed was operating on Tuesdays and Thursday mornings, already giving back. Members repaired picnic tables for the Westbury Community Garden and the Westbury Primary School; they constructed a park run tag board; erected screens for the community garden; and repaired furniture for local groups. These are practical projects and they represent something much deeper: service, connection, pride in place. Monthly barbecues became a cornerstone of the shed's activities and by the end of 2022 there were 21 financial members and the momentum was growing.

As I've indicated, the Westbury Agricultural Society in 2023 offered land for the permanent facility and it was last Tuesday week that I had the real pleasure of attending and turning the first sod with Stephen and many others in the local community. I particularly thank Kerry Lawrence from my office for doing a lot of the organising, working with Stephen and the Men's Shed. Together with David Lee, who was a founding member and vice president of the Westbury Men's Shed, I had the honour of officially breaking the ground. It was very dry soil, it was hard, but we got the job done and then we had a wonderful morning tea to celebrate the occasion.

I pay tribute to all those involved in the establishment of the Westbury Men's Shed, those that have been part of the history to help make it happen. I pay a tribute to them, one and all. It was a wonderful day of celebration. I thank the sponsors for their support and I look forward to getting back to the shed when it's erected - I'm advised in coming months, in and around May this year - and it will be great to be together again with the men and, indeed, many others from Westbury.

## Monte Mumford OAM

[4.33 p.m.]

**Prof RAZAY** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, today I recognise Monte Mumford, who, earlier this year, was honoured for his contribution to music education with an Order of Australia Medal. With the career spanning 50 years, Monte has inspired generations of musicians and, in doing so, finetuned a network of connection, creativity and shared purpose. He holds an international reputation as a conductor, educator, adjudicator and clinician, and maintains an active profile as a freelance trombonist playing with orchestras around the world, including our own Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. Yet, while he has performed and mentored on the world stage, one of his proudest achievements is the Launceston-based UTAS community music program.

When Monte Mumford arrived in Tasmania from California in 1984, taking up a senior music lecturer position at UTAS Newnham campus, he was keen to establish a wind band but did not have the numbers, so he put out a call to any professional wind players in the Launceston community and the first UTCMP concert band was born. A beginner band soon followed, made-up of community members and music students interested in learning a second instrument. Gradually, more ensembles were added to accommodate the growing numbers and ranges of abilities. Today, UTCMP offers four graded ensembles and boasts 135 players from the Launceston community, ranging from 10-80 years old. There are 40 semi-professional players in the wind orchestra, while the beginners band continues to attract adults and children starting from scratch, along with people who are interested in playing a second or third instrument.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the program is its inclusivity. Beginners stand beside advanced musicians, children learn alongside adults, and no-one is turned away because they lack experience; instead they are welcomed, guided and supported. Young players show older players that it's okay to make mistakes - we forget that as adult learners - while all the players show focus and commitment and ask questions. I speak from experience as I joined the program seven years ago.

At their heart, community orchestras offer a powerful antidote to some of the most pressing challenges of modern life. We live in a world where loneliness is increasing, recognised as a public health issue, where stress and anxiety are woven into daily routine, and where many people feel disconnected from those around them. Music has a unique power. It transcends language, culture and circumstance. It's thread that ties us together, but the benefit extends far beyond musicians themselves. Community orchestras strengthen the wellbeing of the wider community. They bring people together in a shared cultural experience that foster belonging and pride.

With the solid focus on high standard of music education, word has spread across Australia and beyond of Monte's model, with mainland tutors and international conductors giving the time to contribute to the program's summer schools held each January in the Newnham campus. With the gradual demise of the music faculty in northern Tasmania from 1999, the program continued with the support of UTAS, through its community engagement arm.

In 2021, UTCMP was devastated to learn that no more funding would be available from UTAS. This meant becoming a tenant of UTAS and having to find \$4800 annually for various insurances. With tenacity and passion, UTCMP was determined to play on and raise annual

subscription and instrument hire costs marginally, while the major savings were made through cuts to payments, to tutors, conductors and the administration team.

There is no other community music education program like this in Australia. We have Monte Mumford to thank for creating such a valuable model. This program has survived due to his determination, and it is being safeguarded by similarly passionate and dedicated conductors and trustees, ensuring that quality music education is available to all in our community. As this magical program enters a new era, I am so glad that its mission of fostering musical growth and community connection from first notes to lifelong expression will keep its melody lingering on.

### **Tasracing - TasInsure Text Message - Update**

[4.38 p.m.]

**Ms HOWLETT** (Lyons - Minister for Racing) - Honourable Speaker, I can update the House on a matter I took on notice earlier today. I'm still awaiting confirmation of final details about the legal fees incurred in the execution of my duties and will provide those details to the House at the earliest opportunity.

I also take this opportunity to respond to the opposition's questions to me earlier today regarding the Tasracing public pro announcement in relation to TasInsure during caretaker. I stand by my statements. Neither I nor my office was aware of the text message about TasInsure from Tasracing. The adviser named by Labor has even provided a statutory declaration stating he did not know about the text message or social media post. The adviser did what he was employed to do: answer stakeholder questions about the policy. As the ABC stated today, there is no evidence or suggestion the staffer had any input into the wording of the messaging.

A Tasracing RTI released in December last year highlights the fact that Tasracing did not include the adviser or government on the only correspondence that clarifies that the message was intended for an SMS, email to quarterly forums and on a link on the Tasracing website. This is important context. Had my adviser been privy to the fact that this information was intended for public release, he would have immediately told the company of his concerns. This RTI released in December captured all communication to Tasracing staff from Jane Howlett and anyone acting on her behalf regarding TasInsure. For clarity, this would have included the adviser's name in the House today. The first time matter was raised with me was at the Estimates table last year. Neither Mr Winter, the Chair of Tasracing nor the CEO of Tasracing informed me of the text message prior to Estimates last year. Mr Winter did what I would have done had I become aware and requested through the Chair the statement be taken down. Mr Jenkins took full responsibility for the text message.

I too have taken responsibility when I corrected the record and said, 'Yes, it's my Facebook page', so I take full responsibility for the reposting of the Tasracing media release about TasInsure. My adviser takes full responsibility for not understanding the context in which he answered stakeholder questions about the policy. With the appropriate background and context, it would have been addressed appropriately. I again put on record an answer I provided on 3 December last year:

I rise to add detail to my response in the House earlier to claims I misled the House regarding Tasracing promotion of TasInsure. As members would know, I corrected the record today as soon as I was made aware that a previous Facebook post indicated I had been aware of Tasracing's social media post prior to my appearance at scrutiny committee hearings. Yes, it is my Facebook page, so I take full responsibility for the reposting of the Tasracing media release about TasInsure. I had not recalled that from during the election campaign, but as I've said, as soon as it was brought to my attention today, I corrected the record. I also want to make it clear that at no time did I direct the company to send out a text message or statements about the policy.

As for the appropriateness of the company's text or media release, as I said, that was a matter for the company, and the Chair addressed that at the scrutiny hearings. This was an operational decision made by the company, not me. It was a matter for the Tasracing board, and the Chair has already addressed it during the scrutiny committee hearing and he took action.

Tasracing took full responsibility at the Estimates table for the operational decisions to promote the policy. I took full responsibility for the reposting of the social media post in December and corrected the record, which was the right thing to do.

As I know all members of this House do, I take my responsibilities incredibly seriously. That includes, but is not limited to, being clear and truthful in every contribution I make in this place. When corrections to the record are required, I take the earliest possible opportunity to ensure this occurs. I also honestly and earnestly vouch for the good character and integrity of my staffer. I hope this provides further detail and clarity to the House in relation to this matter.

### Racing Industry

[4.43 pm]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Honourable Speaker, I will start by saying that I find the idea that the Minister for Racing didn't know about the text message during the election campaign difficult to believe; extremely difficult to believe, given it went to every single racing participant, and I was sent it I don't know how many times, multiple times. The idea that the minister wasn't aware does not hold with me and I find it difficult to believe. That said, I will review the transcript of the minister's response. I did actually want to get up and speak about racing. I was not planning to speak about what the minister just said.

I remind the House today that the only mainstream political party that actually supports the racing industry is the Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party Tasmanian branch continues to stand strongly behind this industry, which has been so badly let down and is being systematically destroyed by the Premier, Mr Rockliff, and Ms Howlett. Over the course of the summer, we have seen some fantastic performances by our racing industry, by the clubs, by the participants, and by the animal athletes who are loved and adored by their owners, and yet the Liberals have been completely missing; missing on integrity, missing on governance and missing at the actual races.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

Right now, I can believe that the minister, Ms Howlett, wouldn't know what was going on in the racing industry because she's not there; physically not there. Over the course of the summer, we had another fantastic racing summer carnival. We had the Scottsdale and Burnie cups, won by Horatius Speculo for Tammy Langley. The Tasmania Cup on Saturday night was won by Celebrity Royal for Bill Dornauf. Of course, we had the entire Labor team - well, a large contingent of it - at the Tasmania Cup on Saturday night.

For the first time in my time, not a single member of the Liberal parliamentary caucus was there. Not a single person was there for a Group 1 race in Tasmania. Harness racing doesn't know if the Liberals support them. The greyhound racing industry certainly knows that the Liberals don't support them because they are shutting it down.

There are only two Group 1 races in Tasmania: the Hobart Thousand greyhounds, where there were no Liberals, and of course, the Tasmania Cup on Saturday night where not a single member of the Liberal team decided it was worth their time to come and support the harness racing industry. A terrible indictment on this government that doesn't seem to care.

We have had some brilliant days in the gallops. We had the Devonport Cup and the Launceston Cup, which was won by Asva for the great Glenn Stevenson, who won his first group race last Wednesday and it was fantastic for him and his entire team. For Wendy and for their whole family, it has been an incredible ride for them and particularly with that horse Asva.

The Hobart Cup, over the not so time-honoured distance of 2363 metres this year, was won fairly and squarely by Blonde Star, which is a fantastic training effort and a fantastic local result. All three of our feature races - the three cups - were won by locals this year, which is a great thing and a great demonstration of the quality of our trainers, the quality of everyone working in the industry.

I also wanted to talk about the greyhounds of course, with Slick Badger winning for David Geall in the Hobart 1000 and Devonport Cup. I was very happy to be at both of those. I was also happy to be at the Launceston Cup of Greyhounds when Appenzell won for the great Michael Stringer, someone who is well known to people in this place but feels so let down by this Liberal government. He won the Launceston Cup once again with Appenzell and he deserved that win. A great trainer, a great guy, and really strong supporter of the campaign that is now gaining more and more momentum.

I've never seen anything like the debate that we had here last year where people weren't interested in the evidence and weren't interested in a proper process. But I'm very pleased the other place was. The industry knows that they are under pressure, but they also know that they're ready to fight. I want to pass on my thanks to them for what they've been doing, but also my support for them in what's going on with kennel cough at the moment. As soon as kennel cough hit, they were in contact with me asking what needed to happen and I was very pleased with the response, I have to say, by Tasracing and I thank them for the briefing that they provided to me regarding the response.

I still think there is still an unanswered question around compensation and I'm very keen to hear from the minister and the government about the sort of compensation that they might be entitled to.

### **LGH - Unsafe Emergency Department Conditions**

[4.48 p.m.]

**Ms ROSOL** (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to speak about unsafe conditions in the emergency department at Launceston General Hospital because today Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmania raised the alarm. They've declared the Launceston General Hospital emergency department catastrophically overcrowded. That's because there were 64 patients in the emergency department today. Of those patients, 41 were admitted. The capacity in the emergency department with clinical spaces for admitted patients is 33 clinical spaces. 41 admitted patients in an area that can safely hold 33 patients. Then there were 17 patients in the waiting room and some of those people had been there for more than 40 hours. More than 40 hours. That is a long time to be waiting for care when you are feeling unwell, and it's an unsafe amount of time to be waiting.

The emergency department is understaffed. There were 25 rostered staff on when 28 are needed for safe staffing levels. Not only do we have too many patients overcrowding the emergency department, but we also have less staff than are needed to care for the patients in there. This is an unsafe situation in the emergency department. It's unsafe for patients and it's unsafe for staff who are working under incredible levels of stress and are struggling to cope. There are 35 vacancies in the positions in the emergency department at Launceston General Hospital. There are 35 vacancies because why would you want to work there when the conditions are so bad? There are staff who are so worn down they are taking leave because they're breaking. That's the words of the ANMF today. The staff are breaking with the conditions that they are dealing with there. This is a crisis, a crisis in one of our major hospitals in the state and it's not good enough. I ask what will it take for the government to fix this problem? It's not new. This is not the first time this has happened. We've had rolling crises in the Launceston General Hospital emergency department for years now, and every time the government come out and they say the same thing: 'We take this seriously. We really do. We're working on this. We're recruiting staff. We've recruited this many new staff.' The number changes each time. 'We're on it'. We've heard that so many times before, and yet here we are, the same issues over and over again. Today in the Launceston Emergency Department, there are patients who are suffering, unable to get the care that they need, nursing staff who are suffering and I have no doubt there are medical staff suffering as well in a situation that's intolerable.

This is an unsafe situation and the effects flow on. We've heard news recently about the ambulance response times that patients in Tasmania - people who phone up for an ambulance - are waiting too long for an ambulance to come for them. The government is so embarrassed about that, they've changed the way they track the records for that now and we can't track it anymore because they report one week of daily figures and we can't see the overall trend. They don't want us to know what the situation is with ambulance response times. Tasmanians are waiting too long. They're waiting too long in the emergency department, they're waiting too long for ambulances and it's not okay, it's not good enough. What we have is a government ignoring the evidence, they're ignoring the terrible situation for patients. They're ignoring the reports of staff experiencing difficulties, they're ignoring the ambulance ramping figures, and they're ignoring the ambulance ramping report.

It's time for the government to stop ignoring this. It's time for them to stop fiddling at the edges. It's time they stepped up and took real action that will make a difference. We have had enough of the same tired answers every time this crisis makes its way into the media. The government need to do something more than what they've been doing, and we have a few suggestions, 41 suggestions. That's how many suggestions and recommendations that were in

the Ambulance Ramping Inquiry report that came out last year, and none of them have been addressed. There are still 41 recommendations waiting to be implemented and they would make a difference.

That report was comprehensive. It looked at the situation across the board, and it made recommendations that would make a difference to the emergency department and to ambulances and to the response times. I've have 42 suggestions, the 41 suggestions from the recommendations of the ramping report, but also a suggestion that the government meet as quickly as possible with the ANMF for those wage and condition negotiations that should have commenced already and need to start - 42 suggestions that would make a difference for patients.

**Time expired.**

### **Bike Week 2026**

[4.53 p.m.]

**Ms BURNET** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I wanted to make the House aware that this is Bike Week from 1-8 March. We're celebrating this in so many ways. It started on Sunday where the odyssean Swag family returned from their two-year odyssey around the world travelling by bicycle with their three kids. It was quite a feat and an interesting story as to what sort of lessons they learnt on two wheels for each of the members and what sort of lessons that they could bring back to their classrooms as well. I commend Nic and Andrew who were away and are now back teaching and telling their stories of the benefits of bike riding and what they saw around the world.

Yesterday was Super Tuesday and a lot of volunteers were out, as they are every year, measuring how many bikes are on the streets and I want to particularly acknowledge the work of the Bicycle Network and volunteers in recording streets such as Augusta Road and Collins Street, the intercity bikeway, and those areas particularly where there are going to be upgrades by the City of Hobart. Everybody needs safe facilities and safe bike riding facilities should be an important consideration of this government.

There are a number of interesting activities; on Thursday 5 March there's a tour of Hobart's new cycleways, there's the Cornelian Bay ride at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, bike network coffee at 11.00 a.m., then on Sunday there's the bike kitchen, which is open, and various other activities. One of the other things is, the Parliamentary Friends of Cycling - so, myself, the minister for Health, and Jen Butler, member for Lyons - will be hosting a session tomorrow for parliamentarians in the Long Room. I thank those parliamentarians who are coming along, and we will learn some more about the illegal bikes and some of the legislation required to ensure that it runs smoothly.

I will also take this moment to say that the changes to the *Traffic Act* on helmets were brought to the House yesterday. Those came in for December, Christmas purchases for bike riders, and I think that was a very good thing as well.

I would also like to correct the record again. In my response to the condolence motion, I talked about how good the hate speech laws were. What I meant to say was the Sentencing Amendment Act, passed last year, was a strong statement by this parliament that offences motivated by hatred and prejudice directed towards people of a particular race, ethnicity or

religious belief, amongst other attributes, will not be tolerated. I wanted to correct the record there.

### **Alternative Site Proposed for Tailings Dam**

[4.58 p.m.]

**Ms BADGER** (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, what a fantastic time for our magnificent Takayna/Tarkine on our state's west coast with the news that MMG has sought an alternative location for their toxic tailings dam. They have moved away from McKimmie Creek. This is a fantastic win for the thousands of people from not only this state and across this country, but who came from around the world to stand up for and protect this magnificent stand of ancient forest of outstanding universal values. Forests that should be protected, that should never have come under threat from a toxic tailings dam. The McKimmie Creek site is so significant, to change it for MMG to move, they have now proposed and put forward a site in the Exe Valley.

This is good news, but it is not a complete celebration yet, they must completely withdraw their proposal for McKimmie Creek, that includes from the EPBC assessment process. This is a huge step in the right direction, where people power is proving that we can protect these magnificent places, particularly in Takayna, of outstanding universal significance for its natural values, but also for its cultural values and its importance to the Palawa people. That when governments will not protect these magnificent wild landscapes, people will stand up and do what is right.

What has been proposed in the Exe Valley is better. It's the best of two bad options. It is still not the best though, and we can do so much better for mining in this state. What we desperately need to see is not just minute revisions of the *Mineral Resources Act*, but a full overhaul, so that what we see moving forward is the best, the global best mining practices and proposals put forward in this state. Are we not the clean and green state that is celebrated for our natural values? Let's ensure any industry that is here has to put forward the very best practices that they possibly can.

I want to congratulate the Bob Brown Foundation for the work that they have done over many years, holding the line at McKimmie Creek. Well done to every single person who went out there and put their body on the line to protect something for generations to come. This is a huge win, but it's not a complete win yet. We call on MMG to completely withdraw their proposal for McKimmie Creek, to move on and to do better. We call on this state government and, indeed, the federal government to properly protect the Takayna as part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and a national park that is managed by Tasmania's Aboriginal community.

### **World Wildlife Day - The Maugean Skate**

[5.00 p.m.]

**Mr BAYLEY** (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise on the Adjournment to talk about World Wildlife Day, which was yesterday, 3 March. I could choose to talk about any number of species that exist in this state, are unique in this state, and that are managed incredibly poorly in this state. I could talk about the wedge-tailed eagle, the swift parrot, the giant freshwater crayfish - all threatened by the logging of native forests, the logging of habitat, the damage to

their habitat. I could talk about the orange-bellied parrot, the Tasmanian devil and some incredible migratory species that fly from the other side of the world, all threatened by an industrial wind farm on Robbins Island. I could talk about the sand flathead, subject to a current fishing ban in south-eastern waters. Or, I could talk about the scourge of roadkill on our roads, which I know is something that concerns so many of us as we drive around and see the damage and sometimes have to take precautionary action. We need to do more to talk about roadkill and the wildlife that's impacted.

However, I take the opportunity tonight to talk about the Maugean skate because it is an incredible prehistoric species, absolutely unique to Tasmania, and it is under incredible pressure thanks to one of our industries here in the state. It is prehistoric. It is restricted to just two locations. Historically, it's been found in Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour, and at the same time it's found in Macquarie Harbour. Scientists say that the population in Bathurst Harbour was never very strong; never very great because of the topography, the minerals and the nutrients that come down from the rivers. Macquarie Harbour, however, was the stronghold of this incredible species.

That is, until 2016 because in 2012 there was an approval of a massive expansion of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour that was green-lit by the federal Environment minister without so much as a referral, or a controlled action. It didn't even have a proper assessment. It took only a few years, until 2016, when we had a warming event, when we saw a catastrophic decline in the population of that species. It declined by rates that scientists were shocked by and they identified, and the expert conservation advice identified, that it was salmon farming - the excess nutrients that it creates through the excess feed and the faeces of the fish - that was compromising the oxygenation levels in the water and, as a result, compromising the survival of this species.

What we have seen in the days, weeks and years that have followed that decision in 2012 and that population collapse across 2016 and beyond, is both federal and state governments fundamentally ignoring expert and scientific advice to deal with - to remove - salmon farming from the waters of Macquarie Harbour to save the Maugean skate.

A few years ago, the Bob Brown Foundation, the Australia Institute and the Environmental Defenders Office sought a review of that expansion - that 2012 decision by the federal minister to allow an expansion of salmon farming in Macquarie Harbour. They sought a review on the basis that it was threatening the skate and that it should not have gone ahead. Clearly, the scientific advice, the departmental advice, that has only just come to light in the last couple of days, advised the minister at the time to accept that request to review that decision and to take that as a controlled action - to look at the impact of salmon farming on the Maugean skate in Macquarie Harbour..

However, that was ignored and last year we saw an abhorrent act of vandalism and legislative override. We saw the federal government last year, just before the election, actually pass legislation with the support of the Liberal national opposition to override the need for that review. Absolutely abhorrent. What we have seen now and just recently is also the federal minister refusing to uplist the Maugean skate from endangered to critically endangered irrespective and despite the advice.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF

I congratulate our community groups, the BBF, the Australia Institute, and the EDO for taking that action because it has shone a light on the shocking mismanagement of this waterway and the impact of industrial salmon farming on the future of an iconic species in this state.

**Time expired.**

**The House adjourned at 5.06 p.m.**

DRAFT