

Tuesday 18 June 2019

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

TABLED PAPER

**Government Administration Committee A - Acute Health Services in Tasmania
Subcommittee - Final Report**

Mr Valentine presented the final report of the Legislative Council Government Administration Committee A subcommittee on Acute Health Services in Tasmania

Report received and printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for Murchison

[11.04 a.m.]

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

That the member for Murchison, Ms Forrest, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for the remainder of this week's sittings.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Skål International Launceston and Osaka

[11.06 a.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, today I am going to talk about the twinning arrangement between Skål International Launceston and Skål International Osaka.

Skål, meaning cheers or good health in Scandinavian, is a professional organisation of tourism leaders from around the world that promotes global tourism and friendship. It is the only international group uniting all branches of the travel and tourism industry. Its members are industry managers and executives who meet at local, national, regional and international levels to discuss and pursue topics of common interest.

The first club was founded in 1932 in Paris and Skål International today has approximately 15 000 members in 370 clubs in 83 nations.

Several months ago, I attended a Skål Launceston lunch where the guest speaker was Jo Breen, who with Peter Brooks - both from West Tamar - sailed in the Melbourne to Osaka yacht race held every five years. Skål Launceston was one of the sponsors and took that opportunity to connect with its colleagues in Osaka. As it was my intention to travel back to Tasmania from the Frank

MacDonald Memorial Prize pilgrimage via Osaka I offered to help cement that relationship by also connecting with their people. What a surprise awaited me. It was arranged for me to meet with their executive - President, Ms Yong Sook Lee; Vice President, Masahiko Torii; Auditor, Mr Tomihisa Ito; and Secretary and Treasurer, Tae Kawasaki. The meeting took place on the 57th floor of the Osaka Marriott Hotel, the tallest building in Japan. Meeting these people was a highlight of Jo Breen's and my trip in Osaka. I was pleased to read a letter from the Premier written especially for this moment at the dinner -

I am pleased to be able to provide this letter to the Hon. Kerry Finch MLC in recognition of the support he is providing to Skål Launceston in pursuit of a twin-club agreement with Skål Osaka. Tasmania has enjoyed a long and successful connection to Japan and the partnering of these two Skål Clubs is an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our ties. Tourism is an important industry in Tasmania and local Skål Clubs are highly regarded by tourism and hospitality professionals across the State.

As a member of Skål Hobart, I understand the value of the organisation and its role in connecting business operators and providing opportunities to share information and ideas. Skål Launceston has established a strong membership that is representative of the diverse and growing tourism sector in northern Tasmania.

He went on to say -

The number of visitors from Japan is growing and we hope a partnership between Skål Launceston and Skål Osaka will encourage even more travel between the two destinations.

During the evening the main focus of discussion was integrated resorts, which are being developed in Japan to attract people for family recreation and sport holidays. I talked to Skål Osaka that night about the Country Club Tasmania resort in Launceston and how it developed its attractions. That certainly attracted the interest of the Skål Osaka executive.

There is no doubt that members on the Japanese side have much to offer Tasmania in terms of contacts in Japan and north-east Asia. Their members represent top hotel chains and are really at the front line of contacts for the who's who of the Asian, Indonesian and Pacific regions.

This is not just as a result of Osaka being a major city and international sea and air hub, but also because Japan is probably one of the easiest countries in Asia to collaborate with and establish on-the-ground business interaction and trade. In some ways, Osaka may seem a world away from Tasmania. On the contrary, Tasmania has much to offer from its journey through tourism in the last 40 to 50 years - branding, nature-based tourism, developing premium destinations, excellent food and wine products, as well as event managing and management. Tasmania can hold its head high.

There are plenty of opportunities coming up to showcase Osaka and Japan. There are the Olympics in 2020, and in 2025 there will be the chance to show off Japanese technology, with the World Expo being held for the second time in Osaka. By the way, wellness tourism is well and truly on the radar as far as Osaka is concerned. With this twinning relationship we are offered a chance of a constructive two-way flow of ideas and experience. Well done, Skål International.

A return air trip from Launceston to Osaka is \$838. Sayonara.

Eureka Clubhouse

[11.12 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I welcome members and staff of Colony 47's Eureka Clubhouse to the Legislative Council today. Eureka Clubhouse plays a vital role in supporting the most vulnerable members of our community. It is part of a unique worldwide network of clubhouses that works within a framework guided by the international clubhouse standards.

A clubhouse is there to provide a restorative environment for people whose lives have been disrupted because of mental ill health. As we know, mental health conditions can cause distress, impact on day-to-day functioning and relationships, and can be associated with poor physical health and premature death. In contrast, research shows that high levels of mental wellness contribute to increased learning, creativity and productivity, more pro-social behaviour and positive social relationships, and improved physical health and life expectancy. Ultimately mental health is about being cognitively, emotionally and socially healthy - the way we think, feel and develop relationships. Eureka Clubhouse aims to promote such behaviours.

At Eureka Clubhouse, members gain access to opportunities, services and support that they may need to continue with their recovery. Eureka Clubhouse facilitates and supports employment, social inclusion, housing, education and opportunities for recreational activities. They are also a service delivery provider for the National Disability Insurance Scheme - NDIS.

The basis of Eureka Clubhouse is the work-focused day. Work is real and meaningful because it arises from the actual needs of members and the clubhouse. Eureka Clubhouse members are involved in the delivery of all services; indeed, they virtually run the clubhouse. Members manage food services, including menu planning and preparation; operate the canteen and dining room, including budgeting; undertake administration duties and provide support to staff; and make up the clubhouse advisory committee devising agendas and determining outcomes. They provide support to members who are unable to be physically present at the clubhouse.

As we know, those who work closely together should have a chance to relax and unwind together. Eureka Clubhouse also provides those recreational activities.

Over the past few months, Eureka Clubhouse has planned and undertaken many diverse activities, including a day out on the MONA ferry, a trip to see the V8 Supercars at Symmons Plains and a getaway to the west coast of Tasmania where members got to experience the Abt railway and a cruise on the Gordon River, which I am sure you would approve of, Mr President.

Work and play are important, but when walking into the Eureka Clubhouse it is overwhelmingly clear that its critical purpose is to act as a place to find acceptance, a place to be included and above all, a place for friendship.

As noted by member Peter in the *Eureka Gazette* -

... one of the most important things that a person can gain by going to the Clubhouse is to break down any isolation they may feel ... members can have a chat to other members and staff ... it can help with their self-esteem.

David Smith, who is here with us today, adds -

This place ... makes me feel needed and fills in my day ... being a clubhouse member ... makes me feel useful and I can make a difference to society.

David estimates that he has visited Eureka Clubhouse most days since he became a member in 2011. David's experience and long-time association with the clubhouse is reflected across the membership.

As you would be aware, another Eureka Clubhouse long-time member, Mr Keith Vaitkus passed away suddenly earlier this year. Keith joined Eureka Clubhouse in 2009 and became a close friend to members and staff at the clubhouse. I knew Keith well outside of Eureka Clubhouse. He had a keen interest in politics and was a member of the Glenorchy Labor branch, of which I am also a member.

Keith started his journey at the clubhouse volunteering in the kitchen and doing administration work. He was a member of the advisory committee. The clubhouse, its staff and the members meant everything to Keith. I cannot recall a time when I visited the clubhouse and Keith was not there. It was his life and he relished the opportunities it presented to him - opportunities which would not have been possible without the Eureka Clubhouse.

Before his passing, Keith had studied for part of his Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work. Keith wrote about it in the *Eureka Gazette*. In his article, Keith reported that he still needed to complete a placement and hoped that he would secure a position at Flourish. Significantly, Keith noted, '... I enjoyed the course immensely and it brought a lot of understanding around my own mental health.'

Keith also notes in the Clubhouse Rehabilitation Guide -

... the Clubhouse is a very important place in most of our lives ... the appealing aspect of the clubhouse is the way it is run by the staff and the members ... the friendship I have seen being developed between staff and members is one of respect and dignity.

Keith's positive, wise and articulate thoughts sum up the purpose of Eureka Clubhouse, the critical role of the clubhouse in our community and the people it is there to support. Much more than members, they have come together to make one big, diverse and eclectic family.

I again welcome Eureka Clubhouse members and Anita to the Chamber. It is usually the other way around - I am a guest at your house - so it is nice to finally return the favour. I hope we will do that in the President's lounge.

Recognition of Visitors

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members all welcome members of the Eureka Clubhouse to this place. I hope you enjoy the morning tea the member for Elwick has organised for you. It is a reminder to any member that if you bring along visitors to the Chamber, they are most welcome to have morning tea and a chat afterwards in the President's rooms. We hope you enjoy your time in the Legislative Council.

Members - Hear, hear.

Launceston Chamber of Commerce

[11.19 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, today I will speak about the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, established in 1849 and the oldest chamber of commerce in Australia. Its founding presidents were H Du Croz and JW Gleadow, begetting an organisation which would continuously run until this very day. At the time of its establishment, the chamber's concerns were primarily vested in shipping, pastoral and mining matters, with construction coming into focus in the following decades.

In 1876, one of the most well known figures in Launceston's commercial history, Charles Henry Smith - and I am sure we are all aware of CH Smith and the CH Smith building in Launceston - became president of the chamber in order to boost Launceston's interest in, and exposure to, importation of goods for farming and general retail such as groceries.

Today, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce is a small organisation, operating across a significant portfolio of interests. Of its core operations, the chamber regularly runs networking events for members to come together informally and hear about new, innovative business activities and share information and knowledge.

In addition, the chamber runs more formal workshops and seminars in conjunction with other organisations, such as the University of Tasmania's Tasmanian School of Business and Economics and the Australian Institute of Company Directors, to share business intelligence and create opportunities for ongoing professional development.

As a business lobby group, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce has prolific input to public policy, informed by the wants and needs of its members and leveraged by the skills and expertise of a diverse board of directors.

Key to the chamber's priorities at the moment are population growth in Launceston, inner city living and regional health networks, issues which have been picked up at the state and federal levels of government, emphasising the chamber's key role as a bellwether with policy issues relevant to the Launceston community and business climate.

The chamber has over 200 members from large organisations such as the University of Tasmania to small and medium enterprises and individual members such as myself.

Those who the board deems to have significantly contributed to the chamber and the Launceston community have been inducted as life members, including Bryan McKendrick, Brian Gordon, Peter Cooper, Max Buchanan, Margot Smart, Gordon Humphreys and David Stallard.

One of the most important functions of the chamber is its annual business excellence awards event, a gala celebration of business success, innovation and resilience of organisations based in northern Tasmania.

Previous business individuals who have rightly been acknowledged by these awards, include Ray Mostogl, Kim Seagram and Lloyd Whish-Wilson, who have been inducted into the chamber's Hall of Fame, while Kolmark Pty Ltd, Moores Hill Estate and TP Jones & Co have recently been awarded business of the year. Bianca Welsh has previously won Professional of the Year and now sits on the chamber board.

The awards for 2019 were recently launched at the Peppers Silo Hotel in Launceston with a focus on celebrating business in the north. In this year's awards, the staple categories are open for entry, including excellence in agribusiness, exceptional workplaces, marketing visitor experience and with a new category of design excellence being added to this year's mix. We are sure to see some creative and innovative entries to the competition.

In recent years, the board has taken steps towards diversifying the experience, skill and expertise of its directors. Out of 13 total board members there are five women, all of whom bring experience from the public and private sectors, including from finance, media, health, not-for-profit, supported employment enterprise, retail, hospitality, tourism and education.

This formidable milieu of knowledge propels the chamber to be active as an apolitical organisation in shaping Launceston's future and exposing its members to opportunities to communicate with the leaders of other states and countries.

In its 170th year of operation, I congratulate the chamber for its continuing successes. I look forward to Launceston's interests being represented by a diverse and innovative group of chamber leaders and members for many more years.

Thank you, Mr President.

Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails

[11.23.a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Mr President, I would like to share with members my experience on Saturday when the stage 2 of the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails was opened.

The member for Mersey was among the myriad people at this well-attended event. This is the second stage of the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails, set in Railton. There are four green trails over 16 kilometres with a loop through the forest hills above Railton's Goliath Park, a scenic 10 kilometres of dual cycling and walking trail - for those who do not necessarily have a bike yet - and links to and from Latrobe's Warrawee trails with a fantastic pump track at the beginning near Goliath Park. I know a little about pump tracks because I have seen them at Derby. Thinking we have another pump track happening, I arrived at Railton and went to Goliath Park on Saturday morning. The pump track is absolutely awesome and there were so many children, young and older, on their bikes, going around and around. It was absolutely fantastic to see such an alive community and I know the member for Mersey will agree with me. The place was really pumping.

I congratulate the two councils who have worked together, Kentish Council and the Latrobe Council. The take-home message of the whole event was the fact Kentish and Latrobe worked so well together to bring about the second stage. The first one was the Warrawee, then the Railton, with another part of the track - the Sheffield component - to come. That will be about mid-2019 and they are ready to go into the construction stage.

Tim Wilson, the Kentish mayor, gave a wonderful speech about the cooperation, the way the track had been developed and what the tracks meant to the Railton community; in the council's view, it will give Railton another string to its bow. Railton is known for its topiaries and this will be another part of what you will enjoy in Railton.

Deputy Mayor of Latrobe Graeme Brown also spoke about the cooperative approach in bringing stage 2 of the Wild Mersey Mountain Bike Trails together. He also had his bike with him. Gerald Monson, the general manager of Latrobe and Kentish councils - which works a treat - was there on his bike ready to take off. It shows the enthusiasm for mountain bike tracks. I did a small interview on the radio while there because they seemed to think I might know something about mountain bike tracks. Not from the bike I had on top of my car - because I do not have one - but certainly because of being the local member for the north-east where Blue Derby has become so popular.

I liken it to the golf course scenario where people come to our state and play a number of different golf courses around the state. I expect mountain bike tracks will bring the same sort of thing to Tasmania where people will ride Blue Derby, Wild Mersey, Maydena and all the other tracks coming online. There are tracks at George Town and Break O'Day. There is also the Blue Tier at Break O'Day so there will be a great opportunity for mountain bike tourism and opportunities for people to get fit and healthy.

I congratulate Kentish and Latrobe councils for being so proactive and putting on a fantastic day and the local Rotary club for its sausage sizzle. That is always well enjoyed by everyone.

Thank you, Mr President.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2019 (No. 22)

Consideration by Committee of the Whole Council

[11.28 a.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

With regard to the Appropriation Bills No. 1 and No. 2 2019 (Nos 21 and 22) that the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider output and other expenditure detail contained in the document Government Services Volume 1 and 2;

And further, that the Committee be empowered to exercise a vote on each proposed output as part of the process of approving appropriations contained within the Appropriation Bills No. 1 and No. 2 of 2019 under the two-line Operating Services and Capital Services appropriation;

And further, that the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider the outputs as recommended in the reports of Estimates Committees A and B and the outputs recommended in those reports be not subject to debate and only those outputs recommended and listed as being subject to further consideration be open to debate in Committee, provided that should any member require further consideration of any output then the procedural mechanism of recommittal is to be used.

Motion agreed to.

GREATER HOBART BILL 2019 (No. 11)

Consideration of Amendments made in the Committee of the Whole Council

[11.31 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council - 2R) -
Mr President, I move -

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

Amendments agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

HEALTH MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS BILL 2019 (No. 12)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

Second Reading

[11.34 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council - 2R) -
Mr President, I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

Bill read the second time.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

In Committee

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - Honourable members, I would like to make a brief statement in regard to the way the Committee is to be run. The stages of the bill are intended to achieve two primary objectives -

- (1) to enable full discussion of both the substance and form of the legislation
- (2) to ensure decisions already made at one stage are not reopened for discussion at a subsequent stage and do not, as a result; unnecessarily prolong the passage of the bill.

In the context of the debate on the Appropriation Bills, members are reminded the purpose of the consideration in the Committee of the Whole Council is to report to the House as to whether the bills should pass and whether clauses, items and schedules to the bills should be -

- (1) agreed to;
- (2) subject to a request; or
- (3) amended where the item is not for the ordinary annual services of the Government.

The consideration of the budget papers during the Estimates process is intended to assist the efficient consideration of the appropriation bills by resolving issues prior to the debate of the bills in the Committee of the Whole Council. This facilitates the efficient consideration of the bills, as in accordance with the permissive instruction, only those outputs recommended for further debate may be addressed in detail during the Committee stage unless the output is recommitted.

I have directed a list of the outputs recommended for further debate in each of the Estimates committee reports be provided to all members. Members will note this list specifies the matters that gave rise to the recommendation for further debate, and in addressing these outputs members should confine their questions to those particular matters.

The permissive instruction to enable the Committee of the Whole to consider and vote on the items under output groups in the budget papers is to facilitate debate on the proposed appropriation of public money contained in the appropriation bills. The instruction does not broaden the scope of debate that may take place in the Committee of the Whole Council. It is not an invitation to make statements unrelated to the proposed appropriation, to revisit the second reading debate or to introduce issues unrelated to the proposed appropriation.

I remind members the debate in the Committee of the Whole Council is not a grievance-type debate. I therefore ask members to be succinct and keep these comments in mind when speaking to items in the budget papers. Members, I am prepared to allow some latitude through this process, but I encourage members to have a question at the end of the statement they are making. That would be ideal for us to be able to proceed in an orderly manner.

Thank you very much.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5 postponed.

Clause 6 agreed to.

Schedule 1 - Purposes of Appropriation 2019-20

DIVISION 1

(Premier)

Output Group 1 - Brand Tasmania

1.1 Brand Tasmania

Mr DEAN - Madam Deputy Chair, I am pleased we were able to keep this item open in this context. During the Estimates process the Premier talked a lot about the appropriate gender balance, the geographic and the cross-sectional balance within the board representation.

Since the Estimates process it shows people do listen because I have been contacted by a number of people from a number of areas talking about the structure and personnel on the board, particularly from the agricultural and forestry areas.

For two of our major industries in this state, there is no strong or specific support on this board. We can identify the membership individually. Mr Haddow, the founding managing director of Bruny Island Cheese, has a background in that area; Jenny Gale, education; and Brett Torossi, property development and project management. Jessica Richmond is a commercial manager at Grange Resources, representing mining, which as it should be because it is a big producer in this state. Kim Clifford, Managing Director, Incat - shipping and ferries should be represented. Board member Kym Goodes - we know what a wonderful person Kym is - deals with community issues and the status of the community in this state. I am not sure where that fits into Brand Tasmania.

Leigh Carmichael, Creative Director of Dark Mofo, DarkLab - there are some questions there. Michael Cooper is the CEO of Juicy Isle fruit juices. Phillipa Dawson is an executive with a record achievement in complex domestic and international organisations across multiple industries. Not quite sure what the position of agriculture and forestry is there. Robert Atkinson is a university professor - again I am not sure where he fits into produce of Tasmania and selling it internationally. Sheralee Davies is board member and an executive of Wine Tasmania, so wine in Tasmania is looked after.

Was agriculture in this state, an industry we rely on heavily, considered in the structure of this board? Was forestry properly and effectively considered in putting this board together? I raise those issues to find out exactly what the position is with the board.

Mrs HISCUTT - I thank the member for his question. A lot of it is the skills represented there. I will read out the skills mix, if that is helpful.

The Brand Tasmania Act states that board members are collectively to -

have expertise relevant to the Authority's objectives and functions in addition to qualifications or experience in, or including expert knowledge of, most of the following matters:

These matters are -

- (a) place branding and public diplomacy;
- (b) trade and exporting from Tasmania;

I should imagine the exporting would cover a fair bit of agriculture -

- (c) industry development;
- (d) brand marketing and communications, including research and digital technologies;
- (e) heritage conservation, biosecurity, environmental conservation and natural resource management;

They also had to have skills in community engagement; corporate governance, including finance, accounting and strategic planning; legal and commercial skills; and public sector administration.

The board has the appropriate mix of skills to deliver on Brand Tasmania's functions as set out in section 8 of the Act, including to advocate for the protection of the attributes on which the Tasmanian Brand relies. I can go through some of those skills and who represents them on the board -

Mr Dean - I have a list of their skills in front of me.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is skills rather than industry and some of those skills, among those skills that are represented, cover most, if not all, of the range of industries.

Mr DEAN - I hear the answer but we have, for instance, a person on this board who is representing mining, Grange Resources. They have a background in and understanding of that industry and what it means to protect the brand as far as international trade is concerned. We identify specifically two to three areas here - wines, cheesemaking, and to some extent, small fruit. Why do we not get a skill set that directly identifies with two of those major areas in this state to deal with the international trade? As I said, that is agriculture and forestry. Where is forestry represented here? We do a lot of trade worldwide in our forestry products. That is an 11-member board, the number of which has been questioned. I am not advocating at all there should have been a larger board. I said at the Estimates it ought to be a smaller board.

Why have we identified some areas but not others when we are looking at the major areas of trade from this state worldwide?

Mrs HISCUTT - The people on the board were not selected on the industry they represented, they were selected on the skills they would bring to the board. There were 217 applications and these were the people who were selected.

Mr Dean - Did the TFGA put up anybody?

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not know; I would have to seek advice on that. No, they did not because it was not a representative board. It is a skills board.

Mr Dean - I would have thought that an organisation like the TFGA would have been requested to -

Mrs HISCUTT - It is not a representative board.

Mr Dean - I know that. I understand that.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a skills-based board to be able to promote Brand Tasmania. There were 217 applicants and these people were selected because of their skills. We have a list of each person's skill mix if that is helpful.

Mr Dean - It would be helpful. It will be on the record.

Mrs HISCUTT - One of the skills they were looking for was place branding and public diplomacy. The people who brought those skills to the board were Nick Haddow, Jenny Gale, Rob Atkinson, Leigh Carmichael, Brett Torossi, Kym Goodes, Kim Clifford, Michael Cooper and Philippa Dawson.

One of the other skills looked for was trade and exporting from Tasmania. The people who covered that skill were Nick Haddow, Rob Atkinson, Jessica Richmond, Brett Torossi, Kim Clifford, Michael Cooper, Philippa Dawson and Sheralee Davies.

The other skill was industry development. The people who brought that skill to the board were Nick Haddow, Brett Torossi, Kim Clifford, Michael Cooper, Philippa Dawson and Sheralee Davies.

Then there was brand marketing and communications, including research and digital technology skills. The people who covered those were Nick Haddow, Rob Atkinson, Leigh Carmichael, Brett Torossi, Kim Clifford, Michael Cooper, Philippa Dawson and Sheralee Davies.

Heritage conservation was covered by Brett Torossi. The skills of heritage conservation, biosecurity, environmental conservation and natural resource management were possibly covered by Sheralee Davies.

Community engagement skills were covered by Nick Haddow, Jenny Gale, Rob Atkinson, Leigh Carmichael, Brett Torossi, Kym Goodes, Kim Clifford, Philippa Dawson and Sheralee Davies.

Another skill sought was corporate governance, including finance, accounting and strategic planning. A lot of people covered those - Nick Haddow, Jenny Gale, Rob Atkinson, Jessica Richmond, Leigh Carmichael, Brett Torossi, Kym Goodes, Kim Clifford, Philippa Dawson and Sheralee Davies.

Legal and commercial skills were also sought. Nick Haddow, Jessica Richmond and Brett Torossi covered those.

For public sector administration, Jenny Gale, Rob Atkinson, Brett Torossi, Kym Goodes and Philippa Dawson covered that skill.

It is a skills-based board, not an industry representative board.

Mr Dean - I understand that, thank you.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output group 7

Safe Homes, Safe Families

7.1 Safe Homes, Safe Families - Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan -

Mr DEAN - I raised this issue during the Estimates process and a question was taken on notice to provide information on the criteria used to determine that an incident of family violence is

classified as serious. An answer has been provided from the Office of the Premier in relation to this matter. I will read the answer given here -

In the Committee's Hearing, it was stated that there has been a decrease in high-risk family violence incidents. The term serious incidents was also used. It should be noted that the correct term is high risk incidents.

The answer goes on -

Police attending a report of family violence determine if the people involved are in a significant relationship and if family violence has occurred or is likely to occur. If family violence has not, or is unlikely to have occurred, it is assessed as being a family violence argument. If family violence has, or is likely to occur, it is assessed as being a family violence incident.

Police attending family violence incident undertake a risk assessment using the family violence risk assessment screening tool (RAST). The RAST was developed under Safe At Home by Tasmania Police and the Department of Justice. It is utilised by operational police at the attendance of family violence incidents to assist in assessing the risk of a victim experiencing future violence. RAST was evaluated by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies in 2009 and again recently in October 2018.

The RAST is an actuarial assessment tool used to classify offenders and their risk of re-offending according to the score they receive, which is based on the type and number of characteristics they exhibit. A RAST classification of low, medium or high is scored.

That is the answer provided. I understand we now have three categories of recording family violence - family argument, family incident and a high-risk incident, which is the other classification referred to here. We keep breaking this down.

Reference is made to RAST, which was developed under Safe at Home by Tasmania Police and the Department of Justice. Is this a national strategy? I want to know if it is nationally recognised. As I understand it, for most things recorded for statistical purposes, there is some national basis.

Why are we now seeing three levels of reporting - family arguments, family violence and high-risk family violence incidents? It concerns me because it seems as though it is attempting to take away the seriousness of family violence and family incidents. That is a real concern to me and a concern to other people.

There were further exchanges during the Estimates process around new victims reporting and that this could mean more people are now reporting, not necessarily an increase. My question coming from that is: where is the evidence?

This is to suppose, or it is accepted, that if somebody new was reporting it, that they are now motivated to come in and report. It might not necessarily have been a new person reporting, but violence has been occurring previously and now they come forward to report it.

In reality serial offenders are moving from partner to partner, committing these crimes. New offences do not mean more people are now more willing to report the crimes. It could mean what is reported is only the tip of the iceberg and the crime is far more prevalent than the records show.

Is this an indication we still do not have this right? The numbers are increasing all the time. Is this a far more prevalent offence than currently recognised? A number of questions there about the RAST and whether it is nationally accepted, and the other issues I raised.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is not a national strategy. It is a state-based strategy Tasmania Police has asked for which is now being considered by other jurisdictions across the country. They are developing their own.

Mr Dean - Sorry, being considered nationally?

Mrs HISCUTT - No, by other states as their own state-based tools. Our police asked for this first; we were one of the first states to do it and now the other states are starting to consider their own, but similar.

You talked about what is not being reported. You cannot guess what is not being reported, but we know there is more reporting coming forward and there has been a decrease in the number of reported high-risk family violence incidents statewide over the past three years. There were 303 in 2017-18, and there were 344 in 2016-17 and 375 in 2015-16.

All the actions in the state plan are based on evidence from practices from ANROWS, Our Watch and the Victorian royal commission.

Item agreed to.

Output group 7 agreed to.

Output Group 2 Children Services

2.1 Children Services -

Mr WILLIE - This line item was left open by the member for Murchison who is not with us today. I have been asked to interpret this. I know she was not satisfied with the answer. I will read the question and the answer.

What is the allocations for overheads movement amount for the 2019-20 and forward Estimate years for output group 1.1 and 2.1 Children Services? A detailed reconciliation would be appreciated for all movements including those overheads.

The answer is -

There is no fixed allocation for the movement of overheads between or within output groups. Movements will occur in response to changed allocations or as a result of the reassessment of the appropriateness of current allocations.

I know the member for Murchison asked this question across government, so she has obviously been able to have an answer from other departments. Why can the member for Murchison not have that? Could there be more explanation around the no fixed allocation given that other departments are probably able to provide this information?

Mrs HISCUTT - I have a heap of figures here to read out. Moving to Output 2.1 Children Services, the major movement in the output group expense summary in table 2.2 in the budget papers can be summarised as the following -

For the budget year 2019-20 the budget increases from \$122.738 million to \$147.285 million, an increase of \$24.557 million and this includes:

\$1.381 million for the 27th pay in 2019-20.

\$16.882 million for the new funding for out-of-home care.

\$2.268 million new funding for Child Safety Service redesign.

\$2.348 million funding for the family support gateway moved from output 6.1 Community services.

\$816 000 in additional overheads and accruals.

For 2020-21 the budget decreases from \$147.285 million to \$127.011 million, a decrease of \$20.274 million and this includes:

The reversal of \$22.879 million in one-off funding in 2019-20 for the 27th pay, out-of-home care, Child Safety Service redesign and family support gateway and \$2.789 million in additional overheads and accruals.

For 2021-22 the budget increases from \$127.011 million to \$128.873 million, an increase of \$1.862 million and this includes:

A reduction of \$4.931 million for completing prior year election commitments.

\$1.801 million in internal budget reallocation which is largely amounts moved from other years to align to change of service requirements.

\$4.992 million in additional overheads and accruals, including the \$2.3 million moved from output 1.1 Children Services System Management.

For 2022-23 the budget increases from \$128.873 million to \$129.709 million, an increase of \$836 000 and this includes:

A reduction of \$1.496 million for internal budget reallocation which in part offsets the increase in the 2021-22 year to align to change of service requirements and \$2.332 million in additional overheads and accruals.

Mr WILLIE - Madam Deputy Chair, I have used one of my speaks -

Mrs Hiscutt - I was going to say how are you going to get through all of those questions?

Mr WILLIE - I am about to explain if you will allow me.

Mrs Hiscutt - I will. I was going to offer to help but off you go.

Mr WILLIE - Madam Deputy Chair, I have just used one of my speaks on the member for Murchison's question there; I will allow her to analyse that information and follow up at another time.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - You are entitled to have a speak on every line item.

Mr WILLIE - This line item contains a lot of open questions. They are mainly to do with the Intensive Family Engagement Services - IFES. If I could have a bit of latitude as there is a bit of a preamble and a few questions, we could probably deal with all of them in one go and then I can get up again.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I indicated I would allow some latitude through this process as long as there is a question at the end of it.

Mr WILLIE - On reflection on the Estimates hearings, I acknowledge that the minister for children, Mr Roger Jaensch, is a well-intentioned man, he is polite and pleasant to deal with, but I am far from satisfied with his performance in Estimates and the assurances he gave to the parliament when it comes to these matters.

I understand Mr Jaensch does not want to talk about individual cases that may be before a coroner, but he probably could have acknowledged that child safety is not an easy space for any government of any colour in Tasmania or any jurisdiction in Australia, or even internationally. He could have shown a little more empathy. There was some media reporting post-Estimates about that, and a family spoke about that to the ABC. He could have given some assurances to the parliament that these matters were being dealt with.

There were also reports about families not getting the support they needed. We discussed that at length in the hearing. These families are in crisis. My concern is there were family members being left in these situations and tragic things have occurred. There is some accountability there but I want to see some assurances as well. Being the shadow minister, it is my job to hold the Government accountable on this matter.

There was an evaluation of the Intensive Family Engagement Services, and I have acknowledged that is a good program, with good intent. We want to keep families together. We certainly do not get lost in all of this; we support the intent of it. It is about how it is implemented.

My question was around the evaluation and when the minister received that. He said that an initial briefing on the report was provided on 28 March.

That day of Estimates, there was some reporting in *The Examiner* about this issue. There were comments from me and also the minister.

In a statement of his own, Mr Jaensch said the improvements recommended by the report may be incorporated as part of a future review. He stressed the Government cannot comment on individual cases due to their nature, especially those which may be under coronial investigation.

In that statement he is saying that the report has been received, but they have not necessarily acted on it. That is not acceptable to me. I want assurances from the department that they have had a look if anything has gone wrong. We know six serious events were being investigated and, unfortunately and tragically, four of those involved child deaths.

I want assurances that they are being looked into and that the recommendations from this report have already been implemented. It is not good enough to say that in the future they will be incorporated as part of a review.

I acknowledge the report was widely supported, but there were implementation issues with it. Service providers were confused about what to do when a notification occurred regarding an IFES family. There are concerns that the delivery by the service providers against contracts is not being adequately monitored. The Department of Human Services needs to take greater oversight of the risk inherent in IFES cases.

There is a widespread view that a fee-for-service model is inappropriate because providers are struggling to maintain staffing. Some families who were referred to IFES were too high-risk to take part in the pilot program.

The IFES team leader role is too diverse, with too much responsibility for one person.

The Department of Human Services needs to undertake risk assessments when IFES intervention is concluding to determine whether children are safe to stay in their own homes. I want some better assurances.

The minister is well-intentioned but his performance in Estimates of this Chamber and the other place was far from assuring; it was far from empathetic, I thought. I cannot leave this matter alone until we get that. It is not good enough to wait for a coronial investigation to come out in a year's time with these recommendations. I want to know these things have been addressed by the department.

Some other questions were left open. There was information relating to the 62 packages provided under the pilot; 39 of those have been closed off and six resulted in care and protection orders being issued.

My first question was to do with the evaluation and whether those have been acted upon and not, as the minister says, that maybe in the future they will be. What were some of the reasons the other 23 cases were not closed off? Was it families disengaging? Was it that child protection thought a better response was needed? I want to know what happened with those other 23 cases. What were some of the reason for why those cases were not closed off?

Going back to whether the service is being delivered, in question (8): of the 39 with finalised closure reports, 20 families received 100 per cent or more of contracted hours. You would hope that would have been all the families. A further five families received 90 per cent or more of contracted hours. It is not quite the 100 per cent, but at least a service is being delivered. Fourteen families received less than 90 per cent of the contracted hours. Of those 14 families, nine families

either withdrew from the program early, refused to engage with the service provider or were referred back to CSS due to their risk profile being too high. Of those 14 families, how many ended in care and protection orders? Was that the six provided in answer (4)? If it was six, what happened to the other eight?

There is significant public interest in this. I do not think it is acceptable to say you cannot talk about individual cases and hiding behind that as a reason for not providing information. An opinion piece in *The Mercury* by Simon Bevilacqua on the weekend stated -

Mr Jaensch is right. These are sensitive issues and caution is paramount, but the questions deserve answers. This matter should not be swept under the carpet. It is too important.

We had a family also speaking to the ABC saying exactly the same thing: it is a tragic case. We are not asking for the sensitive information. We just want assurances that this is being dealt with appropriately. We want to know what has gone wrong, and I think they are reasonable questions to ask. To say you cannot talk about individual cases just to avoid providing the parliament with answers, I do not think is acceptable. I do not think there has been an adequate level of assurance here. Unless we can get that today, this will continue. I will not let this go. I acknowledge it is a good program, but I want to know that kids and families are getting the support they are being allocated and that children are safe.

Mrs HISCUTT - To the first question from the member for Elwick, we have implemented recommendations with the IFES and made changes as they relate to the current program. We will work through the other recommendations as they relate to the future design of any services.

Of the 39 cases for which a detailed analysis was conducted -

- (a) Twenty families received 100 per cent or more of the contracted hours. A further five families received 90 per cent of the contracted 20 hours.
- (b) Fourteen families received less than 90 per cent of the contracted hours.
- (c) Of the 14 families in (b), nine families either withdrew from the program early, refused to engage with service provider or referred back to CSS due to their risk profile being too high. Two families were withdrawn from the program early because they had successfully met all their wellbeing and safety goals earlier than anticipated. Three families received lower than planned hours of services, most likely due to changes in the service's understanding of the needs of the family.

Of the eight remaining families, we do not have that information here. If you are happy, we can seek the information to get back to you later.

Mr Willie - One other question was about the 23 discontinued packages. I want some more information around those.

Mrs HISCUTT - We will also take that on notice.

I have another follow-up. You asked - it was just a general comment. The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 restricts information being publicly shared regarding individual matters, even if it is only data. We are dealing with such small numbers here that it would be very easy to breach this requirement if we started sharing individual case data. Advice has come from the department's legal area with regard to obligations not to breach any provisions of the act. This means the minister does not comment on particular subjects.

Mr WILLIE - I am not asking for the minister to breach the act. I am asking for more information and he can provide that without breaching the act. That has been used in a protective way for the minister to not provide more information.

Mrs Hiscutt - The member's comments are noted.

Mr WILLIE - The minister needs to be more up-front about this issue. You would be surprised, when these things are raised, how many people contact members of parliament. People anonymously have contacted me, people deeply concerned about the state of the Child Safety Service. It is up to the minister to provide those assurances, to be open and transparent.

As I said at the start, government does not have this right anywhere in the world, but unless we are working in an open and transparent way and being clear, it is a government's responsibility to be there when things go wrong; it is difficult and it does not always happen. It is incredibly frustrating being blocked.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - We acknowledge the sensitivity of the issue.

Mrs HISCUTT - Other than to say the comments are noted and are very sensitive -

Mr Willie - The minister is not here but his staff are. I have offered this in the past and he has not taken me up. Last year I offered to undertake a briefing on the redesign. He did not provide me a briefing.

That offer remains with the Intensive Family Engagement Services. If there are things that can be said outside of the public domain to keep us more informed about what is happening, I would welcome that opportunity. The trouble is that it is not being provided.

Mrs HISCUTT - Your request has been noted and it will be put to the minister.

Item agreed to.

Output group 2 agreed to.

Output group 5 Housing Services

5.1 Housing Services -

Ms LOVELL - My question is in relation to a question taken on notice by the minister regarding funding from the 2018-19 Budget. It is confusing so I will talk through it.

My question related to funding allocated to a contractor trial of housing and accommodation support initiative which was to be a partnership between Housing and Health. In the 2018-19 Budget the initial commitment was for \$1 million over two years - \$500 000 in the first year and \$500 000 in the second year.

In the 2018-19 budget papers both years funding was allocated to Housing, though in this current Budget that money has been transferred across to Health. That, on its own, is fine and I understand.

My question was: what was delivered by the \$500 000 that sat with the Housing budget in the 2018-19 financial year? The money transferred to Health for 2019-20 is only \$500 000. The original commitment was \$1 million over two years; the second year allocation of \$500 000 has been transferred to Health. The first year's \$500 000 sat with Housing. My question was: what has been delivered by that \$500 000? The answer I received was that it has been confirmed the responsibility for HASI sits with the Department of Health.

I have looked through the budget papers. There is no mention of that first year's \$500 000 being transferred to the Health budget at any time during the financial year. If that is what happened, perhaps that is the explanation, but to date, and after taking that question on notice, it does not seem anyone can account for that \$500 000 from 2018-19.

What happened to that money and what has it delivered in terms of the HASI trial?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am told it did transfer to Health and is a matter for the Health minister; however, we can add at the time of the 2018-19 state Budget, it was intended the Department of Communities Tasmania would hold responsibility for the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative.

Since that time, given the better policy fit with the Department of Health, this program has been transferred to that department under statewide Mental Health Services. The money was transferred into Mental Health Services.

It is anticipated the program will save hundreds of hours in additional care and support. However, as indicated by the Minister for Health in his appearance before Estimates Committee A, the department is currently working with Colony 47 - the main component and supporter of this program - along with statewide Mental Health Services to develop, implement and undertake evaluation of the supported housing model.

Ms LOVELL - I thank the Leader for that answer. I will pursue that further with the Minister for Health to have a more fulsome update on the program. I wanted to clarify and confirm: has the \$500 000 for 2018-19, which had sat with Housing, been transferred to Health during the last financial year? Can you tell me more specifically when that happened and if it is reflected somewhere in the budget papers because I have not been able to find it?

Mrs HISCUTT - I am told that it did transfer but as to where we can find it in the budget papers, we would have to take that on notice.

Item agreed to.

Output group 5 agreed to.

Division 2 agreed to.

DIVISION 3

(Minister for Education and Training)

Output Group 1

Education

1.1 In School Education -

Mr DEAN - During the Estimates process a number of questions were taken on notice and we were given replies. The first reply received from the minister was to provide a breakdown of DoE expenditure on external recruitment agencies and consultants. The answer provided was: General consulting - \$32 993. This is a cost for Searson Buck to assist with the bulk recruit. The department has a partnership with an external provider, Teach For Australia, to provide placement and training of specialist teaching positions. The cost of this service is around \$200 000.

Coming from that, my first question is: Is that a \$200 000 payment each year? Is there a set fee or is it paid on services provided? I have a number of questions on this and I will ask those at the same time because I only get three speaks.

Because this service, Teach For Australia, works exclusively with schools in low socio-economic communities to fill actual vacancies - as I understand what this group is all about - what schools within the low socio-economic communities in Tasmania have had support from TFA in 2017-18 and this year so far?

How many vacancies have they filled in 2018 and 2019 to date? I understand that 13 placements to nine schools were provided in 2017.

How do they do their work?

Are we paying \$200 000? If we did so in 2017 for 13 placements, I query the amount of money we are paying in this situation. Could I be given some details on whether it is a standing \$200 000 fee, whether it is paid on service, and what services and money have been provided this year so far for this organisation? How many positions has it filled in these low socio-economic group schools?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are seeking a bit more information for you but I can tell you at the moment the \$200 000 is an annual fee and it goes into -

Mr Dean - It says here 'around \$200 000'. Is it \$200 000?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is around the \$200 000 mark. It goes into recruitment, induction and mentoring for a group of people who are training to get their masters in high-needs areas - maths, engineering and the like. It is around \$200 000. Sometimes it is a little more and sometimes it is a little less depending on the need. I have some more information coming for you.

I am terribly sorry but we do not have the schools you are looking for to hand. We could take that on notice to provide to you later. We do not have it here in all this.

Mr DEAN - I am a little surprised with the answer because the minister raises this very group in answer to the questions we asked during Estimates. I would have thought that we would be armed with most of the information about this organisation because it is taking the greatest amount of money from the Education department in relation to consultancy groups.

There are a number of other questions -

Mrs Hiscutt - Just to clarify, I think the original question was how much, not where. There may have been a misunderstanding.

Mr DEAN - Had the question been answered in Estimates and the whole information provided, we would have gone down that road as well of who is getting it, where to and for what purpose. When you ask a question in Estimates and the answer given is 'We will take that on notice', all the other questions you have are cut off. I need to make that clear in the interest of fairness to us and the members who are asking questions.

Another question comes from that. Of these placements - and you are talking about masters qualifications that the support is given for in some of these areas - on the placements in particular, I ask in among this: for how long have these people remained in those positions after being placed there? The attrition rates, say, for 2017-18 and 2018-19 in that regard would be worth having as well.

My next questions, as they were taken on notice again, were in relation to bullying. The minister provided some details on the level of bullying in schools. In 2018, 239 students received 264 suspensions for bullying or physical harassment of a student. Obviously some students are offending on multiple occasions. If that is the case, what is the outcome for those students who are committing multiple offences - bullying or physical harassment of a student - in a school? They are fairly serious matters. What is the outcome when they are offending on multiple occasions? That is the only answer I can see for bullying.

The next one is student assaults on teachers and the minister said in 2018, 224 students received 310 suspensions for a reason involving the physical abuse or harassment of a teacher or other staff member. Again, we had some students committing multiple offences in this area during 2018. What happens to these students who commit multiple offences? Where are most of these offences occurring? Is it in primary school, high school or college? Across what areas are we getting this type of offending? What is meant by 'physical abuse'? It refers to 'involving physical abuse or harassment'. I would appreciate the definition of 'physical abuse'.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - A punch, or a push and a shove.

Mr DEAN - Yes, it could be. I should imagine it is a physical contact of some nature.

Have any of these actions or activities been of a serious nature? Has police action been taken in any of these matters?

I need to ask all of the questions, Madam Deputy Chair. The other one was workers compensation claims, there were 39 up until 31 March this year. What costs were incurred as a result of these workers compensation claims? What were the numbers finalised in 2017-18, and the cost?

School attendance was another area referred to and questions were taken on notice, some of which were answered in Estimates. We were given details on the attendance at some of the schools, and they were given in percentages. While this question was not taken on notice, I ask it here now. We were told the attendance rate at Brooks High School was 82 per cent and that is probably for the current year, or it might have been the 2017-18 year or calendar year, I am not quite sure. How many are not attending school regularly?

The same with Ravenswood Primary School - what is the number not attending regularly?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I acknowledge the Leader needs to seek some considerable advice there.

Mrs HISCUTT - It should be noted that if you are talking about the suspension figures, there were 310. Out of the 61 500 students who attend the schools, 310; though it may seem like a big number, it is small compared to the 61-odd thousand students who attend.

Most of the bullying occurs in high schools and these students have student support people working with them. Physical contact - the definition of physical contact is push and shove, actual physical contact.

You spoke about Brooks High in particular - the average daily attendance rate was 81 per cent. The member might have mentioned 82 per cent. The 19 per cent left - you wanted to know how many students that represents. This is an average daily attendance rate over the whole year. It could be a cohort of students who do not come on a regular basis or it could be spread across many different children. The information is not available here as we would have to go back and look into every child's file to see.

Mr Dean - If you can give on average 82 per cent at school across the whole year, surely you must be able to say that equates to 40 kids not attending school on a regular basis?

Mrs HISCUTT - Or, if you want to go the other way, closer to 19 per cent not coming. I will seek some further advice. It is hard to say because it would be conflating a figure and it might not ring true.

Mr Dean - If you can say 81 to 82 per cent are attending on average, surely you must be able to? That is right. How many are in the school?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is the average. On some days there may be 100 per cent.

Mr Dean - If you can say 81 per cent are attending and you have 700 or 800 in the school, you must be able to tell us on average the actual number of kids not attending school regularly.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is students on the average who attend 81 per cent of the time. It is not 81 per cent of the students.

Mr Dean - How many kids make up that 81 per cent?

Mrs HISCUTT - That is not how it goes. On average every student would be there eight days out of the 10.

Mr Dean - I understand that.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is not the number of students there; it is the number of days they attend.

Mr WILLIE - Madam Deputy Chair, it has been about a month since I read the Auditor-General's report, member for Windermere, but I think from memory one of the findings was the data capture was too student-centric and some other data trends were not able to be analysed.

Mrs HISCUTT - Could the member please ask his question?

Mr WILLIE - I am doing this from memory. About a month ago I read in the report that one of the findings was that the data the Education department uses are too student-centric and it is hard to monitor trends in certain ways. Is that being addressed? It is probably not related to this, but it was part of the conversation we were having. Looking at these suspensions on notice, I was quite alarmed, but obviously if you put it in the context of 60 000 students, it is quite a small number. Does the department have the information available on trends? It would be good to have 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 figures. I certainly acknowledge other reports such as the annual Riley report about principals' wellbeing and there are statistics about things that happen to principals in that. It is concerning that we have teachers going to work in unsafe situations in some instances.

When I was a teacher I saw incidents every now and again, whether it was verbal or whatever. That is an acknowledgement that within the school grounds many community issues play out. Schools struggle to deal with those, as do most institutions.

Mrs HISCUTT - A key finding of the report is that the Department of Education has established appropriate systems and processes to identify and record student attendance and absence data so as to meet national reporting requirements and processes to identify, monitor, report and analyse student attendance, focused on individual students.

We are continuing to strengthen system and school reporting systems for reviewing student attendance, including by year level, and setting targets towards school improvements of attendance.

The member for Windermere asked about workers compensation claims -

Mr Dean - I did and I also asked about the seriousness of assaults on teachers and other staff. Were there any serious cases and were police involved in any of those actions?

Mrs HISCUTT - We will have to take your workers compensation claim question on notice as we do not have the answer here.

A small number of students have been expelled for serious assault. We can give you that figure, but we will have to look through the records because we do not have the answer here about police attendance.

Mr Dean - Whether there has been police action and whether charges have been preferred against them.

Mrs HISCUTT - Police action - do you want to know the whole kit and caboodle?

Mr Dean - I want to know if action has been taken and whether it was sufficiently serious.

Mrs HISCUTT - Is this against staff or against students?

Mr Dean - Against staff, students and teachers.

Mrs HISCUTT - Bear in mind we are talking to the Education department, not the Police department. They will try to look for those figures for you.

Mr Dean - The Education department ought to be able to say whether police were involved.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is often an individual action as to whether they make a complaint and whether police are involved. The Education department does not lodge a complaint like that.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The member has another call.

Mr DEAN - If a teacher or staff member is assaulted by a student at that school and that teacher or staff member goes to the police and makes a complaint about that incident, are you saying that the Education department would not have any record of that? The teacher or staff member would not come back and report they had made that complaint? To me, that seems to be a fairly ordinary situation because of the claims that might later be made against the government or the Education department.

Mrs HISCUTT - If it gets to a workers compensation claim, we would have that, but if the student or student's parents or the teacher decided to pursue it outside of the education system, we may not have that. It could just be a civil matter.

Mr WILLIE - My question is in relation to the ratios of speech and language pathologists, school psychologists and nurses. I acknowledge that nurses in schools was a commitment of the current Government but it is a particularly high ratio: one nurse for every 1844 students. I thought the commitment was for one nurse in every school. I know there is money in the Budget for colleges, but that is a particularly high number if there is one nurse in every school. Schools do not have that many students in them. I am wondering about an explanation there - whether it is one FTE or whether there is a part-time nurse across schools and that is the explanation. I am not sure.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am informed that it is not a full-time nurse in every school. There is not necessarily a full-time nurse in every school, but every school has access to one.

Mr WILLIE - On this, I know support staff work across schools, but it is incredibly difficult for them. I know of school psychologists who have had to work across three schools.

I am interested in the numbers of nurses having to work across schools. What is the total number of nurses and how many of them are working across schools? It is incredibly difficult to know each student's story if you are working in multiple school environments. If you are talking to support staff they will tell you that.

I know some schools are smaller in enrolments and there may be nurses working across three, four or five schools. Some information on that would be good.

Mrs HISCUTT - There will be 40.7 FTE nurses by 2021, which will be servicing a total of 110 schools and eight senior secondary colleges. The commitment was to have access to a nurse in every district high school.

Item agreed to.

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

QUESTIONS

Student Carers - Identification

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

[2.32 p.m.]

- (1) How many student carers has the Government identified in Tasmanian schools?
- (2) What proactive steps are taken to identify students with caring responsibilities?
- (3) What data does the Department of Education currently collect about students with caring responsibilities?
- (4) What specific supports are provided across Tasmanian schools to assist this cohort of young people in need?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his question. I have quite lengthy answers to some of them.

- (1) The Government does not systematically collect information on student carers in Tasmanian schools.
- (2) The Government is committed to enabling all learners to access, participate and engage in education and achieve quality outcomes through culturally responsive and inclusive experiences where all learners' needs and differences are recognised and respected, including those of student carers.

The Government is committed to prioritising supports and resources for learners with diverse learning needs and is working to minimise barriers to better enable learning outcomes through a continuum of support centred on collaboration, student agency and evidence-informed practice.

Schools are the best places to make the right decisions for students regardless of their circumstances. At the local school level, school staff proactively seek to know and understand each student and their learning needs, including understanding whether a student has caring responsibilities and, if so, how this impacts on their wellbeing and learning.

Teachers respond to these needs through quality-differentiated teaching practice that includes adjusting the content, pedagogies, products of learning and learning environments to promote achievement across the breadth and depth of learners' diversities. Teachers build adjustments in the universal platform to further remove barriers and impediments to learning, including for students with caring responsibilities.

- (3) Schools and professional support staff may record relevant information in the student support system about a student's circumstances, including caring responsibilities, where it has an impact on their attendance, wellbeing or ability to engage in learning, as well as recording potential strategies to support their engagement and participation in learning.

The Department of Education does not systematically or centrally collect information on students with caring responsibilities.

- (4) The Government is committed to the wellbeing of all Tasmanian and young people. Professional support staff, including social workers, school psychologists, speech and language pathologists and school nurses are available to work with students, schools and families to provide extra support when needed.

The Government has committed \$1.6 million over four years to establish the Child and Student Wellbeing Unit, to develop and implement the Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy.

The Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy is an important step towards achieving the Department of Education's goal for all learners to feel safe, supported and able to flourish so they can engage in learning.

Clear progress is underway on a key action of the strategy - to develop valid and reliable measures of student wellbeing in the student voice.

From 2019 all students in years 4 to 12 will be surveyed annually to capture their views on important issues such belonging, engagement and their sense of safety.

We are committed to providing extra support to children and young people when needed, to help them engage in their learning. We are achieving this by:

- employing record numbers of professional support staff in schools
- increasing investment in school nurses in this Budget to \$3.8 million, a total of \$17.4 million over the forward Estimates
- allocating an additional \$7.25 million in the 2019-20 Budget over the next four years to support students impacted by trauma and those with emotional and behavioural challenges
- continuing to fund dedicated support teams, such as the Interagency Student Support Team that works with schools and other agencies to support students impacted by family violence, abuse and neglect.

We are also committed to a proactive approach to wellbeing, which can be seen in the work being undertaken to:

- ensure safe and inclusive learning environments that are free from bullying
- embed respectful relationships education to support long-term change to attitudes on family and sexual violence
- deliver programs that support mental wellbeing, such as Speak Up Stay ChatTY and headspace in schools.

The Department of Education raises awareness of the particular needs of student carers through the Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy, the Support for Students with Carer Responsibilities fact sheet and through Carers Week activities.

Schools can make referrals to Carers Tasmania for students with caring responsibilities who need additional support.

The Department of Education is also updating guidance for schools on supporting student carers and continuing to raise awareness of the particular needs of students with caring responsibilities.

Harness Racing - Funding

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

[2.37 p.m.]

My question relates to the racing industry, in particular, the harness code. In your 2018 election policy for the racing industry, the then minister for Racing announced that if returned to government, it would provide \$350 000 a year for five years, commencing in 2018-19, of which \$50 000 a year was to go to the harness code. This grant was to implement the following policy which is repeated in the 2019-20 budget documents for DPIPWE -

Funding of \$350 000 per annum was provided in 2018-19, over five years, for thoroughbred and harness breeding programs. This grant aims to provide incentive to increase breeding of racehorses in Tasmania, create new jobs within breeding, racing and associated primary industries and increase Tasmania's presence in the national breeding market.

The numbers in the harness breeding program have deteriorated significantly over the past nine years and are continuing to decrease. In 2009-10 there were 17 sires, 181 local services, 225 foals and 177 horses named. In 2017-18 there were only four local sires, only 24 local services, foals not known at this time - but will be about 24 - and only 97 horses named.

Since 2009-10 local sires have decreased by 76 per cent, mares serviced by 87 per cent and horses named by 45 per cent. There is likely to be close to a 95 per cent decrease in foals born.

Will the Leader please advise -

(1) Has the \$50 000 annually gone into the harness code?

- (2) If so, what was it expended on and what did it achieve?
- (3) Having regard to the parlous state of breeding in the harness code, what positive changes are being made in this area?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question.

The Government is delivering on its commitment to enhance harness breeding in Tasmania with \$50 000 committed each year across the forward Estimates since the 2018-19 Budget. The objective of this funding is to support the industry as it seeks to grow, create jobs in the sector and increase Tasmania's racing presence on the national stage.

The money is adding to Tasracing's existing pool of harness breeding incentives, meaning the code has benefited from around \$410 000 in breeding incentives in the last financial year. This includes one-off payments for first wins, funding for stallion service fees or yearling sale purchases and other service fee support for participants not eligible for other bonus payments.

More broadly, Tasracing is about to begin a full and strategic review of the harness racing industry in Tasmania. This will inform the development of an industry development plan, covering all aspects of the harness industry, including breeding, ownership, participants and prize money, while identifying the challenges facing the industry and the strategies needed to address them.

It is intended the review will be completed by 31 December 2019. The details of the review have been agreed by the Tasracing board and shared with the industry for feedback. It is intended all areas of the industry will have the opportunity to engage and contribute to the development of the plan.

Tasracing - Racing Program and Prize Money Reduction

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

[2.42 p.m.]

Mr President, while I am horses, I will ask my question which relates to racing and, on this occasion, the thoroughbred code.

I am advised that of the races already run and the proposed races left for the 2018-19 financial year, there has been a reduction of two meetings and 17 races compared to the last financial year.

Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) Why were fewer races programmed for the 2018-19 season?
- (2) What is the race programming for the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years?
- (3) Since 2015-16, my advice is the number of independent races held have dropped significantly and are continuing to drop each year. What is the cause of this and where is it likely to end?

- (4) Owners and/or trainers are offended at the 30 per cent reduction in prize money for the New Year's Day meeting at Longford. Why has this occurred and is the full prize money payment likely to return for the event in 2020?
- (5) If not, why not?

You probably won't get any horses there and it will probably be a horseless racing day -

Ms Rattray - They will all be at St Marys.

Mr DEAN -From those questions, you can take it that there are some concerns within the racing industry, thoroughbreds, harness and trotting.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question.

- (1) Fewer races were programmed for the 2018-19 season due to the unavailability of the Elwick track as it undergoes a full redevelopment. However, Tasracing has maintained the flexibility to add races as necessary during the season to compensate for higher than expected nominations.

As a result of this extra demand, Tasracing expects to hold 551 races by the end of the current financial year.

- (2) In 2017-18, 537 races were programmed; in 2018-19, 532 races were programmed, but 551 are expected to be run; and in 2019-20, 542 races have been programmed.
- (3) The number of races actually held has dropped from 567 in 2015-16 to an expected 551 in 2018-19. Tasracing has advised the primary cause is a reduction in the racing population.
- (4) While there was a 30 per cent reduction in prize money between 2016-17 and 2017-18 race meetings (which excluded the Longford Cup), there was also a 75 per cent increase from 2015-16 to 2016-17, which reflected an opportunity to race on Sky One. Prize money then increased by 20 per cent in the 2017-18 year.

It should also be noted the standard race prize money at Longford has increased by 50 per cent since 2014-15. The Longford Cup has increased by 14.8 per cent in the same period. Due to this, there is no requirement at this stage to increase it for 2020.

As a matter of course, Tasracing does, however, carry out an annual review of prize money right across the state, including at Longford.

Built Heritage

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

[2.45 p.m.]

My questions relate to the Government Administration Committee B, Built Heritage Tourism in Tasmania subcommittee inquiry. Our chairman is sitting across from me.

In 2016, 26 recommendations were made in that report. The report was accepted by the Government as a quality report and an indication was given that all recommendations would certainly be considered for implementation.

Our heritage buildings, including 10 National Trust buildings, have a significant positive impact on tourism numbers to the state. I am advised that not one of the 26 recommendations has been implemented to date. Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) Is my advice correct - that not one recommendation has been implemented in full or part?
- (2) If any have been implemented in either full or part, which recommendations fit this category?
- (3) If applicable, what changes have been made?
- (4) If none implemented, why not?
- (5) What is the current status of the report? Is it now dead?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question.

- (1) In January 2017, the Government provided a response to the 2016 Legislative Council inquiry into built heritage in Tasmania. Since then, the Government has been progressing a number of initiatives that are complementary to the findings and recommendations of the report.

(2) to (4)

As per the response to (1), the Government and other relevant stakeholders have completed and continue to progress a number of initiatives that complement the recommendations and finding of the 2016 inquiry report. For example, in relation to the leadership and strategic direction area of inquiry, the Burra Charter is firmly established as the guiding document for good heritage management in Tasmania and this is articulated in the Tasmanian Heritage Council Works Guidelines.

The Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-20 and Brand Tasmania also recognise our cultural and built heritage as a key component of our visitor economy. Sites also continue to be assessed at both state and local government level for heritage tourism use. An example of this is the Government's decision to facilitate the development of new visitor accommodation in the heritage-listed former Health department building in Davey Street.

In the presentation and marketing area of the inquiry, the recent formation of Brand Tasmania as Australia's first statutory 'place branding' authority is an important step in assisting organisations and industries to deliver consistent branding and marketing.

In relation to the funding area of the inquiry, in 2018 the Government launched the \$10 million Heritage Places Renewal Loan Scheme. This is a major investment in heritage tourism, helping to facilitate the development of visitor services for places entered on the Heritage Register.

The Government is investing in projects that enhance the visitor experience in national parks and the historic sites they contain, including on Maria Island and Sarah Island. We also investing in new visitor infrastructure at Woolmers in Longford and Highfield House in Stanley.

We are enhancing the visitor experience with \$3.6 million for a new visitor centre at the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

This is just a small sample of the many good things happening in built heritage tourism around Tasmania.

- (5) The Government appreciates the work of the Legislative Council in highlighting the importance of built heritage tourism in Tasmania. It is a core aspect of our brand and a key reason tourists visit the state. The 2016 inquiry report will continue to inform the Government and other relevant stakeholders into the future.

Due to the breadth and depth of the areas covered in the 2016 inquiry report, the Government is pleased to offer a briefing to the member for Windermere and any other members who may be interested on this matter. The Leader's office would be happy to organise that if members desire.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2019 (No. 21)

In Committee

Resumed from above.

Output Group 2 Libraries Tasmania

2.1 Information Services and Community Learning -

Mr DEAN - I will take the Leader up on the offer for a briefing, and the member for Hobart might as well.

This item was left open and questions were asked about the physical loss of books from the community libraries and losses as a result of written-off fines. The answer from the minister was -

The number of items removed from Libraries Tasmania collections during 2017/2018 is provided below. Data is show for public libraries, the state reference collection, the History Room and the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts (Allport) collections. Archive items are not included.

- Items missing, lost or damaged:
 - public libraries: 4,526
 - State reference, History Room and Allport: 199

What are the follow-up processes to find out what happened to 4526 items lost or missing pieces of public property? This is state-owned property and it is important to know what it is and what is happening.

The answer from the minister was -

- Items withdrawn due to poor condition as part of standard library management practice:

- Public libraries: 73,806
- State reference, History Room and Allport: 8,129

I accept libraries have to keep their items up to date, meaningful and in good condition.

The next point was -

- Annual debt write-off for items not returned after three years:
 - Public libraries: 2,669

I take it that is probably financial value, is it?

Mrs Hiscutt - It is the number of items.

Mr DEAN - Right, because it says 'annual debt write-off'. What is the value of that in dollars? Dot point two says, 'State reference, History Room and Allport: N/A'.

The total items removed from public libraries during 2017/18 was 81,001. The current size of the collections in public libraries is 632,586 -

That is quite a large amount.

The total items removed from the state reference, History Room and Allport collections was 8,328 in 2017/18. The current size of the reference collection is 247,930.

The response continues -

The total number of items removed during 2017/18 was 89,329; however, 97,088 items were added to Libraries Tasmania collections during the same period.

Significantly more items are removed due to poor condition as part of good library management practice (81,935 in 2017/18) than because they are missing, lost, damaged or written off (7,394 in 2017/18).

Now we come to the interesting part, and this is from the minister -

Losses from written-off debts

Prior to changing to the new Libraries Tasmania fee model, the Department of Education (DoE) wrote off debts for all outstanding overdue items. The total of these written-off debts was \$331,817 and included overdue fines, processing fees and debt referral fees.

That is quite a staggering amount, and I know there has been a lot said in the press about this. It was on the news last night. There was a comment in *The Examiner* today in relation to this amount as well. The questions I have are: Who made the decision just to write them off? Why would we write off \$331 817 which rightfully belongs to the public of Tasmania - the state? We are not talking about small bikkies here; we are talking about a large amount of money.

If I get answers to those questions, I would appreciate it.

Continuing on with what the minister said -

Based on previous years, the majority of this figure would not have actually resulted in revenue, with a large amount often remaining unpaid, and other fees removed once a 'lost' book was returned.

I am trying to work that one out -

Libraries Tasmania would rather have an existing book returned than receive an amount to replace it. While Libraries Tasmania cannot definitively state the cost of administering the overdue items, previous analysis of library fees and fines has shown that the administrative and replacement cost is greater than any revenue earned.

The abolition of overdue, processing and debt collection fees also sees a corresponding reduction in internal DoE cost to administer these fees.

Library fees are also a barrier to access, with some Libraries Tasmania clients finding the payment of fines to be a financial impost.

Hallelujah, of course, fines are an impost to anybody - I do not need to be told that.

The fact is that if you incur a fine, you incur it for misbehaviour, you incur it because you have not done what is right and what you are expected to do. My question from that is: what happens to these people who owe all these debts? If they are never pursued, not paid back, are they barred from the libraries or are they still allowed to come into the library and take whatever they want at will - that is virtually what this is saying - without any real penalties being imposed?

I know we want to open our libraries up; I know that we want people to borrow and get information from our libraries, but in my opinion we still expect people to do the right thing because other people are looking for those same references and books.

I would like some of those questions answered if I could. Not only am I raising this issue, this debt has been raised with me by several people in the last few days as well, and what is happening.

Mrs HISCUTT - The answer to the first question, to find out what actually happened to them, is that in the past, an email reminder and then a letter would be sent out, and then a collection agency would be involved. You can see a lot of money was involved in recovery. Now we send one reminder out and if nothing happens after that, the borrower then loses borrowing privileges. They can still come into the library and use the facilities while they are there, but they cannot borrow items and take them home.

Mr Dean - They owe that debt, they have ignored the right to repay, but they are still allowed back into the premises to do virtually whatever they want except borrow?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, hopefully they would be in there reading; they cannot take it away.

Mr Dean - What sort of message does that send?

Mrs HISCUTT - It sends the message that you cannot borrow, but you can still come and read.

We are trying to encourage people to come in and use the library. Literacy is a problem, as you would know, so we encourage them definitely to come back into the library but borrowing privileges are denied.

I have some more information to seek.

Your next question was about the annual debt write-off. Public libraries have 632 586 books; the value on an annual basis is between \$150 000 and \$170 000.

The answer to the next question, about the items removed from public libraries during 2017-18, is 81 001 books. To give you some context, the total size of the collections in the public libraries is 632 586 books. This is general repairs and maintenance and replacement for a library, which is standard for libraries across Australia.

We are talking about losses from debt write-off. The decision was made by Libraries Tasmania as part of its strategic strategy to get more people to come into the library.

Mr Dean - The \$330 000 debt write-off was made by Libraries Tasmania?

Mrs HISCUTT - Around \$331 817. This was to encourage people back into the library to learn and read. In the five months between 1 November 2018 and 31 March 2019, there has been an increase of 8215 members compared to a decrease of 935 members over the same period the previous year. I am presuming because debts were wiped off, it has encouraged people back into the library bearing in mind people who acquired these debts do not have borrowing rights but can certainly come back and study in the library.

Mr DEAN - Who makes up Libraries Tasmania if there is a debt?

Mrs Hiscutt - I am not sure we understand what you mean.

Mr DEAN - You said a debt was written off by Libraries Tasmania. That Libraries Tasmania made the decision to write-off the debt. I want to know who the people are.

Mrs Hiscutt - Names? Do you want me name someone?

Mr DEAN - I do not understanding that. You said the decision to write off a debt of \$331 817 was a decision of Libraries Tasmania. Was it a board decision?

Mrs Hiscutt - Other than the fact Libraries Tasmania is part of the Department of Education, do you want me to name names?

Mr DEAN - Who are the people within the Department of Education at Libraries Tasmania that make the decision?

Mr Valentine - It is like any government.

Mr DEAN - What is difficult about that?

Mr Valentine - Who the secretary is.

Mr DEAN - Is it the secretary, the minister or the board that makes the decision? Is there something difficult about the question?

Mrs Hiscutt - No. Do you want me to say while you are on your feet?

Mr DEAN - I am trying to make it clear.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I think the Leader understands the question now. Does the member have another question?

Mr DEAN - Are debts written off irrespective of quantum? I am not quite sure how many items you can borrow at any one time now. How many items can you borrow at one time? I suspect a family could borrow a number of books. Some may be valuable, some of the items from the Allport side and some of other sides might be quite expensive. Is debt written off irrespective of value, irrespective of quantum with just one reminder? Or, is there a limit? In other words, if the debt is over a certain amount, are they pursued?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think you are asking for the order of authority as opposed to names of people.

Mr Dean - I am asking for those people who made the decision to write off \$338 800-plus.

Mrs HISCUTT - It goes through Libraries Tasmania to the Department of Education's Secretary to the minister. It is supported by the Tasmanian Library Advisory Board, which advises on that, so that is the process.

Mr Dean - The minister signs off on it at the end?

Mrs HISCUTT - The minister has the final say.

Mr Dean - Authorises the write-off of the debt?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. Each individual can borrow up to 15 items. You cannot borrow from Allport or the Archives. You can only study while you are in there. Debts may range from as low as \$1 to \$20.

Mr Dean - Then there is the cost of the books as well.

Mrs HISCUTT - There is the cost of the books; you did that figure earlier. The highest debt ever written off is \$195.98 and that was out of the \$331 817.

Mr Dean - \$195 was the highest debt?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think you have everything.

Mr Dean - That is probably not the end of it.

Item agreed to.

Output 2 agreed to.

Division 3 agreed to.

DIVISION 5

(Minister for Health)

Output group 2

Tasmanian Health Service

2.1 Admitted Services -

Ms LOVELL - I have a further question to one of the questions taken on notice in relation to the number of additional beds. My question to the minister was very specific. It was: how many additional beds will be open and staffed at each of these hospitals - Royal Hobart Hospital, Launceston General Hospital, Mersey and the North West Regional Hospital - by 1 July 2020.

The minister gave specific numbers for the North West Regional, Mersey and Launceston General hospitals in his answer but he did not answer the question for the Royal Hobart Hospital. My question very clearly asked for the number of additional beds to current capacity beds by 1 July 2020. The answer for the Royal Hobart Hospital talks about more than 100 beds over the next four years. It does not specifically answer how many beds by 1 July 2020, so I would like to put the question again.

Mrs HISCUTT - We do not have the number at the moment because the final number is subject to consultation with clinical leaders and the Access Solutions Meeting.

Item agreed to.

2.5 Statewide and Mental Health Services

Ms LOVELL - I have a couple of questions on this item. At the outset I will say I am happy for the Leader to take on notice one question because it has arisen from questions asked in the Housing output earlier.

First, a question taken on notice on the number of psychiatric emergency nurse positions both funded and then staffed at each of the emergency departments. In particular, it is a clarification on the numbers provided for the Royal Hobart Hospital.

The answer to the number of funded psychiatric emergency nurse positions for the Royal as at the end of March 2019 was 5.47 FTE. The following question was the current headcount in FTE and the answer as at the end of March 2019 was that there were 5.73 FTE permanent paid at the Royal Hobart Hospital. Further down in the answer it says, 'I am advised for the Royal Hobart Hospital there is presently 0.79 FTE vacant with the current expression of interest'. I could be missing something but those numbers do not add up. Could I have clarification because it appears the funded number of current FTEs actually working in the Emergency Department exceeds the number of funded positions. I do not know if I articulated it very clearly.

Mrs HISCUTT - It appears to be simply a matter of being oversubscribed in figures in the PEN services versus the funding staff levels in the pay period the data was drawn.

Ms LOVELL - My second line of questioning relates to the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative - HASI - trials. I am revisiting questions I asked this morning in Housing. In the 2018-19 Budget, there was a commitment of \$1 million over two years, so \$500 000 in 2018-19 and \$500 000 in 2019-20. That funding was allocated to Housing for a trial of a program that was to be a partnership between Housing and Health. I understand the funding for the second year, 2019-20, the \$500 000, is now allocated to Health under Statewide and Mental Health Services.

I asked the Minister for Housing: what was delivered with the \$500 000 allocated to the Housing budget in 2018-19? The explanation we received, which was confirmed by the Leader this morning, was that the money had been transferred to Health at some point during the last financial year.

My question to the Leader then is: in terms of the Health budget, what has been delivered for the HASI trial by that \$500 000 allocated in 2018-19?

Further to that, is the program trial on track to commence by the end of June as per the Government's commitment in the Building *your* future document, and how many Tasmanians are expected to be supported by this program? These are questions that were put to the Minister for Housing, but he referred us to the Minister for Health.

Mrs HISCUTT - To start with, any unspent funds will be carried over into the next budget. They have developed the initial service model in consultation with Colony 47 and this is on track to commence at the end of June, so that is part of that.

There are up to 20 clients in the HASI trial - that is involved in getting that together. The 20 clients will benefit from the trial.

Item agreed to.

Output 2 agreed to.

Output Group 3 Statewide Services

3.2 Public health services -

Ms LOVELL - This question was put to the minister and taken on notice in relation to a figure that the Government has continued to refer to; I believe this figure was used again as recently as last week.

The Government continues to state there is a spend of \$70 million per annum on preventative health, a figure explained as being made up of a range of different programs and initiatives across all government departments. We asked specifically in the Estimates process for a breakdown of what makes up that \$70 million and have not been provided with one. If the Government is going to continue to rely on this figure of \$70 million, it must have reached that by adding up a number of initiatives and different items. What the committee was after was a breakdown of what has been added up to reach \$70 million and we have not yet been provided with that.

Mrs HISCUTT - The Tasmanian Government currently invests in preventative health-related activities across all agencies and businesses. The correlation of information on

whole-of-government activity, including government businesses and expenditure related to preventative health, was a point in time figure representing the estimated total annual spend in this area.

Preventative health expenditure across government departments and government businesses included a range of activities aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. Examples include community programs aimed at increasing participation and physical activity rates, various staff health and wellbeing programs as well as activities undertaken by the Department of Health through Public Health Services.

Since that time further investments have been made through the \$6.4 million Healthy Tasmania five year plan, with further funding of \$1.1 million from 2020-21 included in this Budget. Healthy Tasmania highlighted a variety of activities ranging from supporting people to quit smoking through Quitline support to increasing physical activity with support to sporting clubs, building social inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse groups via Get Outside Tasmania with community activities, and reducing the likelihood of developing a chronic condition, disease or disorder through nurse-led primary health programs.

We can provide some examples of programs via correspondence and we would have to seek that from DPAC.

That gives you a few examples. It does not give you activities plus cost but some of the activities.

Ms LOVELL - I am mindful this is my last speak.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - No, it is your second.

Ms LOVELL - I thank the Leader for the information but it does not answer my question.

At that point in time, what figures were added up to reach that \$70 million? That is what we are looking for - a breakdown of the actual cost investment put into each of those programs across government departments.

Concerns have been raised about the lack of investment in preventative health programs in this Budget. The Government continues to rely on this \$70 million as its counter to those criticisms - that it is investing in preventative health, so it must be able to explain how it has reached that \$70 million. What items were added up? Was it \$5 million on this program, \$15 million on this program - whatever it is? What items, what amounts were added? I appreciate you might need to take this on notice but what programs have been added up to reach the \$70 million?

Mrs HISCUTT - The question can be answered, but not here and now and I have agreed to take it on notice.

Ms LOVELL - Thank you.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Division 5 agreed to.

DIVISION 6

(Treasurer)

Output Group 1

Administration of Justice

1.1 Supreme Court Services -

Mr DEAN - During the Estimates process a number of questions were asked about the backlog of cases we are currently seeing in both the Supreme Court and magisterial court services. One of the questions taken on notice was: how many defendants currently awaiting trial have been waiting for more than 18 months? The answer that came back from the minister was -

As at 4 June 2019, there were 128 defendants with pending matters before the Supreme Court that had been outstanding for more than 18 months.

We currently have 128 defendants waiting longer than 18 months. If you look at the number of other persons before the Supreme Court waiting for trial, it is a large number.

An additional judge is being admitted to the Bar. I am wondering what the projections are of how these numbers before the Supreme Court will be reduced when that extra judge comes on board. From memory, that is in 2020. I think it is about 12 to 18 months away. How far will they blowout? With the currently acting judges, we have not seen the list is getting any shorter because of the new cases coming in. We have extra police coming on board all the time, so we can expect more cases to come into the Supreme Court as well.

The Department of Justice must have a projection of where this is going. If it has, I ask for that information.

Mrs Hiscutt - To clarify, are you looking for the projection of the reduction in wait time?

Mr DEAN - That is right or the blowout because at this stage the acting judges have not seen a decrease in these areas. The list on hand is continually rising.

My next question also adds some information; it was: provide the numbers of reported crimes by region for the past two years. The answer was -

It should be noted that 'reported crimes' is a police data set and questions relating to police data sets may be better directed to the Minister for Police. The Departments of Justice and Attorney-General are better positioned to respond in relation to Court Lodgements by region.

The following information in relation to 'Reported Crimes' reports the court lodgements by region with offences under the Criminal Code Act (State or Commonwealth) in the Magistrates Court and Supreme Court. It excludes, for example, police offences or traffic offences.

If you look at those figures for both the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court lodgements, there is an increase across the years. I do not need to go into those, but in 2016-17, for instance, in the Supreme Court, we had 143 lodgements; in the 2017-18 year, we had 168 lodgements, a fairly quick increase across the board, the north, north-west and south.

We have this increase occurring despite the acting judges put there to decrease the number of cases. What does the Department of Justice see in relation to the cases on hand and whether they will be decreased or continue to blowout in the near future?

Mrs HISCUTT - In answer to your first question about projections, projections are not done but it is hoped improvements in technology and data will be able to assist with that.

In answer to your second question, why we are hoping it won't blowout is why we have put an additional magistrate in place.

Mr Dean - And an extra judge?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. Seven judges and an additional magistrate.

Mr DEAN - I may have asked this question during the Estimates. As the additional judge coming in will be full-time, will the current acting judges' terms be concluded or will they remain within the service of the Supreme Court?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Attorney-General will have that discussion, but it is intended when the seventh judge comes on, the contracts of the others will be terminated. Their term will conclude when the seventh judge comes on. The Attorney has indicated she will continue that discussion.

Mr DEAN - There is some suggestion the current three acting judges' terms will be concluded. With a view to decreasing this list - that is unfortunately blowing out - is it expected the one judge will pick up the work of those three acting judges, if we were expecting to keep on top of this?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Attorney-General has spoken to the Chief Justice. The recommendation from the Chief Justice was that, with the appointment of the seventh judge, the others were no longer needed. That is an ongoing conversation.

The Attorney-General has indicated she will discuss the needs of the court with the Chief Justice regarding acting judges closer to the end of their current term. That is a conversation yet to be had.

Item agreed to.

1.5 Legal Aid -

Ms SIEJKA - Only part of my question was answered during Estimates and during the question on notice. In this Budget, Legal Aid received an increase in funding, which no-one can deny is needed. The minister explained that is for use at their discretion; however, it has been acknowledged that it was provided due to the expected increase in demand as a result of the additional magistrate and judge.

At times Legal Aid refers people to the community legal centres. This can be when people do not qualify for their services, for example. It stands to reason that community legal aid will also experience increased demand as a result of the new magistrate and judge. Both Legal Aid and community legal aid provide valuable services in our community. My question was: why did community legal aid not also receive an increase in funding? I would appreciate it if the Leader could provide an answer as to why its funding was not also increased.

Mrs HISCUTT - The additional funding to the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania will be used to meet increased demand for legal services due to the continuation of three Supreme Court acting judges, an additional Supreme Court judge in the 2021-22 financial year and a new magistrate for southern Tasmania.

The increased sitting hours brought about by the appointment of additional judicial officers leads to a greater demand for services that provide representation services before the courts, most particularly for criminal law matters. This is one of the core activities of the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania.

This funding will provide increases in grants of aid provided to the private profession by Legal Aid in addition to increasing the commission's in-house capacity to provide representation before the courts.

The state Government will continue to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to ensure that the state's legal assistance sector is well supported as the new national partnership agreement is negotiated. In addition, community legal centres were also invited by the Attorney-General to apply for additional funding from the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund, with applications approved by the minister to CLCs in the amount of \$303 596.71.

Mr DEAN - A number of questions were asked of the minister coming out of Estimates and the answers provided to some were, if we look at one here -

Advise whether Community Legal Assistance has received any increase in funding other than funding to make up for the National Partnership Agreement shortfall.

The answer was -

This was not a question that was asked when I appeared before the Committee. As such, it was not taken on notice.

That has happened with three or four other questions.

I do not know about other members, but I will put some of these on notice. I would have thought it would be a quick and simple matter for the minister to provide the answers and not have to put us through that, but that is the way it has occurred. We have to suck it up and move on, which is disappointing.

Legal Aid paid to two lawyers is not a matter for the department and is a matter for community legal aid services. They apportion that.

With the funding provided to that service, is the Department of Justice or the minister able to talk to the community legal aid services in relation to its funding for the services bought in? I have

spoken to solicitors since and it has been in the paper. I think Evan Hughes has been fairly vocal on this point by simply saying solicitors are avoiding legal aid matters like the plague. A lawyer close to me says the same thing, they really cannot get by.

The sad thing is they say they cannot provide the same level of service to those deserving of a similar level of service they provide to other clients. That is a fairly ordinary situation to have.

What position does the Department of Justice and the minister have in relation to appropriate funding of lawyers to provide these very important services to people who, sadly, get themselves into trouble or in some cases there may only be an allegation against them - to be able to defend their positions?

Mrs HISCUTT - They liaise on an ongoing basis and is a matter for the independent board of Legal Aid. They continue to liaise with the Law Society of Tasmania, plus the profession, to review the allocation of grants.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output group 3 Corrections and Enforcement

3.1 Prison Services -

Ms SIEJKA - As the member for Windermere mentioned, I asked this in Estimates and also put a question on notice. This question was not answered, so I am asking again here.

I asked about the reasons for the attrition of correctional officers in the past year, for example, through resignation or retirement. I was hoping to understand how worker attrition was offset by the employment of new correctional officers. I would think the information should be available and presume staff would be required to fill out exit surveys and the prison would keep records. This seems like a relatively easy answer to provide and the minister has had two opportunities to provide it. I am hoping the Leader can provide the breakdown of the reasons for attrition of the correctional officers. I am happy to take it on notice.

Mrs HISCUTT - During the 2017-18 financial year, 32 staff separated from the Tasmania Prison Service. Of these, 14 were correctional officers, 11 separated due to resignation. To date, in the 2018-19 financial year, 27 staff have separated from the Tasmania Prison Service. Of these, 13 were correctional officers, with nine separating due to resignation.

Ms SIEJKA - Further to that, how many of them were due to retire? Do resignations encapsulate retirement as well or any other reasons people might leave?

Mrs Hiscutt - Is the member looking for aged retirement?

Ms SIEJKA - Yes. I guess resignation would mean move to another job, whereas retirement might be other reasons.

Mrs HISCUTT - A further breakdown of this information is: in 2018-19 as at 31 March, 13 correctional officers separated from the TPS; nine were resignations, three were due to ill health, and one was promoted to another agency. In 2017-18, going backwards, 14 correctional officers separated from the TPS, 11 were resignations, one was a retirement, one was due to ill health and one was transferred to another agency.

Ms Siejka - Thank you.

Mr DEAN - I will not ask any questions in relation to overtime. There were some questions in relation to work generated and any income received at the prison for works performed by inmates. The question that went to the minister was asking for the provision of figures on revenue generated by Tasmania Prison Service, including a breakdown of how the revenue is generated. The answer from the minister was -

The majority of revenue generated by the Tasmania Prison Service relates to its industries activities, for which revenue received for the 2018-19 financial year to 31 May 2019 includes:

Laundry services	\$804,000
Woodworking	\$94,000
Vegetable processing	\$274,000
Tailoring	\$21,000
Other revenues	\$97,000
Total	\$1.29 million

Does the money received go back into the prison service for operational requirements or is it paid into consolidated revenue? What happens to it? Does any of the \$1.29 million received actually go to the prisoners? Do they receive any of that for the work they do, their expertise, their professions in some areas? Are they given any contribution at all from that or does the total profit go to the jail for its running? I take it the amounts are a profit from these industries. That is less all the costs for the woodworking materials, for instance, and the profit is \$94 000. How are these figures worked out? Did Corrective Services receive \$1.29 million, where does it go, how is it accounted for and is it in other revenues? Other revenues are identified as \$97 000, which is quite a large amount of money so what fits in 'other revenues'?

Mrs HISCUTT - The industries are self-funding and not intended to run at a profit. The \$1.29 million covers costs of running industries and wages for the prisoners.

Mr Dean - Sorry, what was that?

Mrs HISCUTT - The \$1.29 million covers costs of running industries and wages for the prisoners and other revenues, the \$97 000, comes under conglomerate of small pilot programs and smaller industries. For example, this year the prison has been making oyster pots.

Mr DEAN - I want to make sure I properly understand. What we are now being told is the \$1.29 million is eaten up in costs and expenses and there is no real revenue coming out for Corrective Services. Is that what is being said? Because in answer the minister says the majority of revenue generated by the Tasmania Prison Service relates to its industries' activities for which revenue was received for the 2018-19 financial year. I am not disputing what is being said - it

would seem this a profit to Corrective Services of \$1.29 million. This needs to be made clear because it is not - all of it is eaten up in costs incurred and the small salaries prisoners earn as a result. That is my understanding and correct from what the Leader is indicating. A nod probably will not be recorded on *Hansard*.

Mrs Hiscutt - It is revenue generated by the prison. It is not a profit.

Mr DEAN - It is not profit. I am not saying it should not happen. Of course it should happen. What is the case then with our prisoners when they go outside and perform works with the botanical gardens and so on? Is there any income to the Corrective Services as a result or is that something simply done for the proper occupation of the prisoners? They go outside on other activities. Does that generate any income at all?

Mrs Hiscutt - Are you talking about revenue or profit when you say income? You are talking about revenue?

Mr DEAN - I am talking about revenue, income and profit. All of them, all at the one time. Is there any profit? What is the income from it, and what does it do?

Mrs HISCUTT - There is a difference between the industry ones we discussed earlier and community service.

Community service would be going out helping during bushfires or it may be tending gardens at Government House, but it is part of rehabilitation for prisoners and there is no profit or revenue there.

Item agreed to.

3.2 Community Corrective Services -

Mr DEAN - The question was: provide a number of people currently on parole and a number of reported breaches of parole during the current year. This matter was discussed during the Estimates.

The answer was that there are currently 113 persons subject to parole orders. Since 1 July 2018, a total of 128 breaches was heard by the Parole Board.

Mrs HISCUTT - Member for Windermere, may I correct what you just said? Since July -

Mr Dean - Sorry?

Mrs HISCUTT - Sorry, you were right. Carry on.

Mr DEAN - I thought I was right because I was just quoting word for word the answer I received.

We have 113 persons subject to parole orders and 128 breaches were heard by the Parole Board. I take it that not all of those persons committed breaches and that a number of them committed multiple breaches. My question there is: how many of these 113 remained out on parole during this period - that is, since 1 July 2018 until last week or the week before, whenever it might have

been? What types of breaches are we talking about here? Are they serious breaches, criminal breaches? What has happened to those parolees?

Mrs HISCUTT - Since 1 July 2018, a total of 128 breaches was heard by the Parole Board, which resulted in the following outcomes: 52 parolees had their orders suspended, 47 parolees had their orders revoked, and 29 parolees had their orders confirmed.

Mr DEAN - Fifty-two were suspended?

Mrs HISCUTT - Fifty-two parolees had their orders suspended.

Mr Dean - Meaning they were brought back into custody?

Mrs HISCUTT - Suspended means they may have been brought back into custody for a couple of weeks, as opposed to revoked. There were 47 parolees who had their orders revoked, and 29 had their orders confirmed - these are the ones who remain on parole.

Mr DEAN - That means the 52 suspended perhaps came back in into custody. I would like to get some confirmation of that. Did that happen and for how long were they brought back in? Are they then released again with similar conditions applying? What follow-up is then done in relation to those people who have breached, been suspended and are back out on parole again? How closely are they observed when they are back in the community? Is there greater emphasis on their activities and what they are doing to ensure they are complying with parole?

For the 47 revoked, does that mean they must serve their total prison time? In other words, they will not be considered for parole again during that time? Is that the position?

The 29 confirmed obviously have done right the thing.

You wonder about the sort of message it is sending. Of 113 subject to parole orders, only 29 have done the right thing, it would seem. It makes you wonder about the effect of parole orders and how well they are being monitored and processed. It raises that question. If I could get an answer to those questions, I would appreciate it.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to those suspended, everyone is brought into custody. The conditions may be varied or they may stay the same, and they will be monitored.

With those revoked, they have to reapply for parole, but they have to go through the whole process; it is looked at again.

Mr DEAN - I was following up some other questions and trying to think what the others were. It was in relation to the effectiveness of parole.

If you only have 29 out of 118 who have done the right thing, it is a very small percentage. How does that figure correlate with previous years? Has this position occurred over most years of parole, or is this one an unusual year where we had that many on parole and that many breaches? Can that question be answered?

Mrs HISCUTT - Of the 52 who have had their orders suspended, it may be a simple matter of readjusting something occurring or something little that can be changed with their parole that will

put them into the orders confirmed basket. The 52 are brought back into custody for some reason and that reason may be addressed and they are put back out and they might go on to be one of the confirmed ones at the end, so it may be something small they are brought in for that needs reassessment or readjustment.

Mr Dean - Who is the police officer on the Parole Board?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think the member asked who is the police officer on the Parole Board. The Government will be making an announcement shortly. I think it is imminent.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

DIVISION 6

(Minister for Building and Construction)

Output Group 1

Administration of Justice

1.10 Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal -

Ms SIEJKA - Could I have some clarity on one of the questions on notice we had? The question was to provide the number of cases concluded by the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal for the past two years

The answer given was -

In 2017-18, 1,298 referrals were finalised. As at 6 June 2019, there have been 1,220 referrals finalised in the 2018-19 financial year.

Considering more may have been referred in the past year, the question remains: how many cases remain unfinalised or outstanding at this time?

Mrs HISCUTT - Unfortunately this is a different question and we did not have a prepared answer so we have to take that question on notice.

Ms SIEJKA - I am happy to have that on notice.

Mr DEAN - I have to make sure I do not repeat the question. I was studying my questions and did not hear yours. You will obviously correct me if I repeat the question asked here.

We had 1264 cases in 2017-18 referred and we had 1220 -

Ms Siejka - That is the same question.

Mr DEAN - to the first week in June 2019. Mine might differ here a bit. What were the main causes for the referrals? What actions are being taken in those areas to try to prevent these causes? I am not sure whether that is a question for this or another area. We ought to know what the main causes are for these referrals. There are 1220 referrals for this year - it is similar; they have been

finalised so far this year. How many outstanding referrals are there with the tribunal right now? I am not sure if you asked that question.

Mrs Hiscutt - That is the one we took on notice.

Mr DEAN - Where are the referrals coming from? What was the amount of compensation paid out this year and in the last two years? To add to my other question, 1298 referrals were finalised in 2017-18, more than the numbers received. Is there an indication whether many more were on the books? What is the reason for the actual number currently before or on hand at the tribunal? What are the oldest cases currently outstanding?

Mrs HISCUTT - I will seek some advice, but as I work through them, please feel free to say I have missed one because there were quite a few questions in there.

You asked about the nature of the 1264 referrals. The biggest one in the 2017-18 financial year was 624, all from a dispute liability for weekly payments and other benefits. Do you want me to run through the others?

Mr Dean - No.

Mrs HISCUTT - The referral for settlement approvals in the year 2017-18 was 164. Reference of claims for compensation to the tribunal was 132 for the financial year 2017-18. These are the top three.

Mr Dean - What were the financial imposts? I asked a question about the payouts.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, we do not have the total figure for compensation here with us. We have many figures, but not that one, so we can take that on notice.

Mr Dean - Thank you.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Division 6 agreed to.

DIVISION 9

(Premier)

Output Group 2

Government Processes and Services

2.4 Corporate Support to Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices and the Office of the Governor -

Mr WILLIE - This relates to a question on notice that has changed. I am not sure why the detail has changed because I have the *Hansard* here and the question was very clear; a question has also been omitted.

The question and answer was about providing the date upon which Brad Nowland commenced duty as the Premier's Deputy Chief of Staff - and provide an explanation as to why the Premier is confident that the appointment complied with employment protocols. That was not the question - the question was about when he commenced as the Treasurer's Deputy Chief of Staff so that is a very clear detail.

In the *Hansard*, and I don't know what's gone on there, from me to the Premier - this is during the Estimates -

Yesterday there was a bit of discussion around one of your former employees, Mr Brad Nowland. Can you give me a date that he started as deputy chief of staff in the Treasurer's office?

It was very clear. The Premier responded. He said -

It is on notice. We can take that on notice.

My first question, Deputy Chair, is what date did Mr Brad Nowland start in the Treasurer's office, not the Premier's office - that was not what I was asking.

The second part to my question while I am here and this is also I think in the *Hansard* - I would need to double check that though - was: who conducted a review of the position and how long did it take? It was my understanding that went on notice as well.

I would like the answer to both of those questions, if possible.

Mrs HISCUTT - Before I start, can I say, member for Elwick, the questions come from the Legislative Council to the Government and we just answer what we get. Something may have happened, but it was not from our side.

After the 2018 state election, Brad Nowland elected to take a short-term one-year contract. On Monday, 17 September, Mr Nowland advised the Premier's Chief of Staff of his intention not to seek a renewal of his contract when it expired in March 2019. Mr Nowland's decision triggered an internal review of the role, purpose and duties of the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Treasurer. As a result of this review, the Government determined to redistribute the duties of this position, effective from Friday, 28 September. The decision to abolish the position of Deputy Chief of Staff to the Treasurer prior to the expiration of Mr Nowland's contract has resulted in savings to the taxpayer of approximately \$100 000.

Due to the uncertain duration of political office ministerial staff, contracts include provision for severance benefits to be paid upon early termination or expiry or non-renewal of the employment contract. This is a standard clause which has been in place under both Liberal and Labor-Greens governments. Mr Nowland had a standard MPS contract with the same clause that has been in place under both Liberal and Labor-Greens governments. However, it is important to point out Mr Nowland would be entitled to the same severance benefits whether the position was abolished early or at the completion of his contract. The only difference is that by abolishing the position early, we saved the taxpayer \$100 000.

Mr WILLIE - My question was: when did he start in the Treasurer's office? I know you have outlined the contract and when he informed the Government he no longer wanted to work until the end of the contract, but when did he start in the Treasurer's office?

Mrs HISCUTT - We are seeking the information you require, but in the meantime, the review was conducted by the Premier's office acting as the Premier's delegate and included consultation with the Treasurer's office. This took effect from Friday, 28 September. We will see how we go with the rest of the information.

Madam Deputy Chair, because we did not have the original question - and I am not disputing that you may have asked it, but we have not received that - we will take the question on notice and provide it to you. We are taking a bit of time getting it here.

Mr WILLIE - I am a little perplexed, Madam Deputy Chair. In Estimates I was very clear, and that is in the *Hansard*. The Premier was unable to give a very simple answer to a question about a date. He was happy to provide dates about all sorts of things to do with contracts, but not a start date for when Mr Brad Nowland started in the Treasurer's office.

I think something is going on here. We have another question on notice, or they are trying to take it on notice. If you could find the date for me before we get off the line item, I would appreciate it. I want to know when he started in the Treasurer's office. Obviously there were contractual arrangements previously to that commencement date in the Treasurer's office that started under the Premier. Mr Brad Nowland informed the Government that he no longer wanted to fulfil the contract, even though we were told it was terminated, so did he leave or was it terminated? There is something going on here and I am not satisfied with taking it on notice. It is an easy piece of information to get, I would think.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am quite happy to wait until the information comes forward, if we can seek that information, which we are busily doing. I am happy to take a moment to do that.

Mr WILLIE - Can we defer it to -

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I will take some advice on that.

Mrs HISCUTT - We do have the answer: 21 May 2018.

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate that when I asked this question, I was told it did not really come under the Premier's area, but I was given an answer. I do not quite understand why it did not because I would consider IT to be corporate support to our ministerial offices. The question with regard to our IT people who, I think we all know, are extremely important to us in this place, to everyone was -

Provide an update on air conditioning defects in the new Parliament Square building, as well as an anticipated date that the second new building in Parliament Square will be open?

The answer given was -

Treasury has been engaged with the building owner for some time regarding the building's air conditioning system, which is not performing to specification.

Treasury is pursuing rectification through the contractual mechanisms in the development agreement. This action is a high priority.

It is obviously not that high, because it has been quite a long time now that they have had nowhere to work out of.

The second new office building at Parliament Square for the Department of Justice corporate offices is expected to be occupied by June 2020.

I hope that our IT people do not have to wait a year. At the moment, they are finding office space where they can. We all rely on them for everything, constantly, with our computers and everything else. Treasury has been engaged for some time, but I would really like to know when Treasury is going to take some action and do something about it, or whether they are just going to let it linger. It is an OH&S issue. The IT people are very important to me, and I am sure to everyone else; they do a great job and I think we should be looking after them.

Mr Dean - So do I. Because it is not fit for purpose, does it impact on our lease of the building?

Mrs HISCUTT - I have to agree with the member, IT is a very valuable asset to all of us in parliament and this issue is being dealt with urgently as we hope for it to be resolved. The matter has been raised with the building owner and Treasury. The building owner has confirmed there is an issue which requires resolving and has proposed a long-term solution which has been accepted by the Computer and Electronic Services. The building owner has recently gone out to tender for the work required to resolve this issue.

Once the successful tender has been awarded, a solution will be implemented. An expected completion date for the works will be known once the tender has been awarded. The Government acknowledges it needs to be dealt with urgently and it has been escalated to the Premier's office.

Ms ARMITAGE - Thank you, Leader, and I do accept that. Is there a time frame for tenders to be in? Can you give us some indication of time rather than escalation and it is priority? Our IT people have probably heard that for a while.

Mrs HISCUTT - The tender process is expected to be completed within weeks and we have escalated it to the Premier's department and his office because it is urgent and needs to be dealt with.

Mr WILLIE - I would like to go back to the matter we were discussing earlier. A contract existed for Mr Brad Nowland as a deputy chief of staff under the Premier. That contract was then transferred to the Treasurer and he began work for the Treasurer on 21 May 2018.

Mr Nowland gave notice he no longer wanted to fulfil the life of the contract on 17 September 2018. That triggered a review from the Premier's office and a delegate reviewed the position and it was terminated - is that the language?

Mrs Hiscutt - Yes, for want of a better word, it was abolished.

Mr WILLIE - If Mr Nowland gave notice he did not want to fulfil the contract, is that not the same as resigning? Could I have an explanation? Why is that not seen as resigning? You are

giving notice, 'I no longer want to undertake this employment'. That is resigning, it is not terminating a contract. I imagine the termination of the contract triggered the big payout.

Mrs HISCUTT - Mr Nowland did not resign. He gave the intention not to seek a renewal of his contract, which is different from resigning and the intention was given in March.

Mr Willie - Sounds very dodgy.

Item agreed to.

Output 2 agreed to.

Output Group 3

Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community

3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania -

Mr DEAN - I asked some questions of the Premier about the movement of a number of departments from their current areas into the new CH Smith Building. What is happening with the old offices? For example, Service Tasmania from Henty House?

A question was asked about which agencies will move into the recently vacated office spaces in Henty House and the answer that came back was -

Treasury is currently reviewing the needs presented by a number of agencies to determine the most suitable tenancy mix for this space.

Why would Treasury not know what was going to happen with the old vacated premises, when you are moving a department from one area into a completely new building? How long is it going to take for this process to be worked through? Unless we get new departments or huge decreases in other departments, it looks like we are going to have vacant offices and floors somewhere. Or are we going to have leases on premises and on buildings where we do not have occupants? Is the new lease on the CH Smith Building in addition to all the other leases we have in and around Launceston at present? What are our lease costs now? What will our lease costs be after the government offices fully occupy the new CH Smith Building? Will our lease costs be the same or is there going to be a significant increase? I find it difficult to accept that Treasury would not have done that work as a part of the process of moving into the new building.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a very complex set of circumstances and it is just part of the complexity of leases et cetera. Nothing has changed. The Treasurer still is working through all this so there is probably not more that we can add to it as yet.

We cannot give you the answers to the questions you are asking because it is being worked through as we speak.

Mr DEAN - I will ask the question a different way. As a result of the move into the CH Smith Building, will there be vacant areas in Henty House? I am not quite sure where else we move from; we move from the tourism site on the corner of Cimitiere Street and St Johns Street. I think the office or some of the offices there moved out. Will there be vacant areas that we will still be paying

rent on for some time, knowing that we have had vacant areas in Henty House for quite a while? I am not quite sure what has happened there and what is happening now.

Mrs HISCUTT - We can be clear about who is going into the CH Smith Building - Health, State Growth, Communities Tasmania, Education, DPAC, Service Tasmania and justices of the peace. A number of things have to happen yet so we cannot really give you the answers. There are the leases. Some leases will be ended while others will be maintained. Some buildings may be owned by the government or sold or leased, but these are questions for the Treasurer. He is working his way through this, as we have said. The Treasurer is currently reviewing the needs presented, so it is very difficult to give an answer when it is still being looked at.

Mr DEAN - Education was in Henty House, apart from when they moved from the Inveresk building into some of the offices at Henty House. They are moving into the CH Smith Building. Other departments have moved from premises currently being leased by the state into the CH Smith site. I think the Government leased the whole of Henty House. I would have thought it was a simple question - let us take just the one building at this stage - what vacant areas will be in Henty House as a result of the move into the new CH Smith Building? Unless new areas are coming in somewhere at Henty House, I find it difficult to understand how there are not vacant areas and how leases will be impacted. Will there be an increase? I would have thought we would have known this. Will there be an increase in the leases on our buildings in Launceston as a result of the departments moving in to the CH Smith Building?

Mrs HISCUTT - With all due respect, member for Windermere, it is like a jigsaw puzzle and it needs to be put together and worked out. I cannot answer your questions as you talk about it at the moment. There could be subleasing to other departments or other non-departments. It has not been put together yet and the Treasurer is still looking at it so I cannot answer the questions as yet. In due course there will answers, but it is like a jigsaw puzzle at the moment.

Mr Dean - Why was a lot of work not done on this before the moves into the CH Smith site occur?

Mrs HISCUTT - I think this is the time the work is being done.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - I remind members we must have a question.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Division 9 agreed to.

DIVISION 10

(Minister for Primary Industries and Water)

Output Group 7

Environment Protection and Analytical Services

7.1 Environmental Management and Pollution Control -

Ms ARMITAGE - My question is about the health of the Tamar River. I accept there are difficulties with over 9000 homes in the Launceston area with joint sewerage and stormwater drains.

My question was asking for advice about incidences of effluent spills into the Tamar River, and I thank you for the response. I have a few additional questions.

There were 15 spills due to wet weather. Several of them - I presume this was litres - consisting of 400 000 litres, with one consisting of 1.2 million litres. Is there a volume, a certain amount, considered not acceptable? Obviously, a spill of 1.2 million litres is not acceptable, and some spills are much less. Is there an amount the EPA advises TasWater and the councils is unacceptable?

We do not fine them because I believe, and you might confirm, it is not something they have control over. Could you explain, particularly the 1.2 million litres - do we actually advise them of these spills? Do you have acknowledgement or what is the situation?

Mrs HISCUTT - The simple answer is no - there is no acceptable limit. It depends on how much rain comes in as to how much spill goes out. No spillage would be most acceptable, but we know that does not happen. There is no high or low spillage and it would be best if it does not happen, but at the moment it does.

Ms ARMITAGE - I am not sure whether the first no was whether we do not advise TasWater and the council they have had spillages and what they actually are. Could you answer that?

With regard to the Tamar, TasWater is hoping to do work on Launceston by 2026. For those of us who live in Launceston, seven years away is still a long time, if it actually happens. No-one is holding their breath.

Mr Dean - Near the river you would hold your breath.

Ms ARMITAGE - This was in *The Examiner* on 12 May 2019 where it related to the EPA -

A spokesperson for TasWater said Ti Tree Bend had already undergone \$10 million in upgrades to its solids handling process, and they were in discussions with the EPA over discharge levels before progressing with more upgrades.

'TasWater has recently proposed target discharge levels' -

I would be interested to know what the target discharge levels are -

'for Ti Tree Bend (and the other STPs in this part of the Tamar) to the EPA' ...

'This will enable us to meet the State Policy on Water Quality Management at these locations.

TasWater is awaiting feedback. EPA feedback will enable us to proceed with planning with much more certainty.'

Has the EPA provided feedback to TasWater yet? TasWater has recently proposed target discharge levels. I would be interested to know what the target discharge levels are and whether, as my first question, these are reported to TasWater and the councils considering their joint sewer and storm water.

Mrs HISCUTT - I think you may have misunderstood my original answer.

Ms Armitage - I was not sure if the 'no' was for everything.

Mrs HISCUTT - The 'no' is that there is no acceptable limit. TasWater's data is reported to the EPA, so TasWater is fully aware of what is going on.

With regard to discharge level, it is not about volumes, it is about the levels of nitrogen and phosphate that can be discharged. There are emission limits on those. The EPA is always engaged in dialogue with TasWater about requirements.

Ms Armitage - And the councils? The stormwater part is theirs.

Mrs HISCUTT - TasWater talks to the owner councils and the EPA talks to TasWater.

Mr DEAN - Madam Deputy Chair, I appreciate the questions being asked by the member for Launceston because it is a critical area and an urgent matter that needs attention.

How are the spills that are occurring into the river recorded? Is an alarm triggered when a spill occurs, or is EPA reliant on the information being provided by TasWater or the City of Launceston Council to record and monitor the spills? How much do we know is going into the river on these spills? Is that measured?

Ms Armitage - It's 1.2 million litres.

Mr DEAN - We have the figures here - is that just a guesstimate or is there a fairly accurate measurement of what is actually being spilled each time, and how do the EPA get to know about it?

My other question is, for how long will EPA tolerate this? It has been tolerated for 50, 60, 100 years. When will the EPA say enough is enough, this matter has to be fixed? Is there a time limit to put on this when these spills will be accepted to because of the infrastructure quality and the other causes? Where are we at with all of this?

Mrs HISCUTT - TasWater has flow meters in the river; they monitor them and then report it to the EPA. It is reasonably accurate because it is down to the literage.

The answer to your other question - how long will the EPA stand it - is: until someone provides \$200 million to fix it up, that is what it is. The EPA cannot say 'fix it today' because how is that going to be done without \$200 million or so? When that funding is there, it will be fixed.

Ms ARMITAGE - To follow on from the member for Windermere's question about how long will the EPA tolerate it, obviously we need the amount of money; with the Government buying into TasWater we were told that was certainly to assist with this. Will the EPA, given it is the Environment Protection Authority, write to the Government, indicating the situation is urgent, to ensure the work does happen and is not continually put on the backburner? Will the EPA stand up and be counted and put pressure on the Government that it is a priority, and that when funding becomes available, it needs to go to the Launceston sewerage system and not another area that is not quite as needy?

Mrs HISCUTT - I would like to clarify first that the \$200 million that I spoke of is a round figure; it may be more and probably will be more. I do not want to have that recorded in *Hansard* as being the figure because it is only an estimate at the moment.

Ms Armitage - I was not concerned with the figure. I wanted to know that the EPA will acknowledge the fact it is urgent and perhaps write to the Government to keep it in front of mind.

Mrs HISCUTT - The EPA and the Government are well aware it is an urgent problem. We keep talking to our federal counterparts about it. Everybody knows it is a problem and everybody is doing the best they can.

Ms Armitage - Will the EPA put pen to paper - apart from everyone knowing it is an urgent problem - and remind the Government we are continually having the spills that are outside the EPA and could be fined if there was a mind to do so?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is not that easy. This is a budget process and the EPA does not feel it is appropriate to answer that question here. Some part of the funding is in the City Deal as you may be aware.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The member might like to put her question in writing to the Government.

Mrs Hiscutt - On the Notice Paper perhaps. It is a question for the Government, not the independent authority.

Ms Armitage - I understand, but they are the EPA.

Item agreed to.

Output group 7 agreed to.

DIVISION 10

(Minister for Racing)

Output Group 5

Racing Regulation and Policy

5.1 Racing Regulation and Policy -

Mr DEAN - This is a question relative to the answers provided about oripavine. I raised this at some length during the Estimates process and the answers were given by the minister.

I am continually being asked by people in the industry about what strong actions are being taken to prevent the poppy growers from having their seed blowing around, which is creating the current problems. In his answer to this question the minister refers to some control over poppy producers to get on top of this.

What has occurred with the poppy growers to ensure there is some control over the wild growth of these poppies causing the problems?

It is a big issue, and we are talking about the reputations of people who have been in the racing industry all of their lives. One's reputation in the Launceston area was virtually destroyed. They became an emotional wreck; they have themselves back together again now. What has occurred to try and get on top of this problem with the poppy causing this issue? The questions asked on this occasion were to provide additional information regarding responses to the oripavine, provide the number of staff employed by ORI who have been on sick leave and advise the number of horses registered. That is okay.

It was really in relation to this dreaded oripavine issue causing and creating the problem. I will read the minister's answer in -

There is no additional information regarding the responses to Oripavine to that answered in Estimates. The Office of Racing Integrity (ORI) will continue to work with Poppy Growers Tasmania, AgriGrowth, and the racing industry to develop and implement ongoing education strategies that alert the racing industry to the risks of feeding opiate contaminated feed stuffs to horses, and also the obligation of poppy growers to control poppy regrowth.

It is all very well making that statement, but what has actually occurred in that area to take control of this? The horse people buy their feed all over the place and most of them buy it from a designated producers of the product they require. One wonders whether those people who are providing the feed lots to trainers and to horse owners should be held responsible for ensuring their product is clean. What has happened in regard to this? Is there any action taken there? It is all very well to put this problem off onto the horse owners and the trainers and those people engaged in this industry. They have no questions to answer and the others are really getting away with it. There ought to be some responsibility on their side of things. Is anything really being done or is it all just talk and the onus will be on the horse owners and trainers to ensure the product they are getting is not contaminated? I am not sure how they could unless each bale they buy goes through some scientific rigour to ensure it does not contain this dreaded product. How is it to be done?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is a difficult problem. Currently the obligation is on the trainer to present a drug-free horse, which is what you were talking about. There have been incidents in the last two years, but the Office of Racing Integrity will continue to work with Poppy Growers Tasmania, AgriGrowth and the racing industry to develop and implement ongoing education strategies that alert the racing industry to the risk of feeding opiate-contaminated foodstuffs to horses, and also to remind farmers about their obligations with regrowth. That is part of the original contract when they take on a contract to grow poppies. ORI met with Poppy Growers Tasmania in September last year to discuss and plan ongoing education strategies to ensure growers and trainers are aware of the issues.

Mr DEAN - I am not harping on this matter, but it is an important matter. With a reputation of a family who have been in the industry all their lives almost destroyed, that is the reason it is raised.

What has taken place between ORI and the producers of these feedlots to ensure that if they are baling a product close to where poppies have been grown they ought not to be making that product available to racehorses? There are other feedlots for animals that can use it; I guess it would have no impact on cattle and sheep, but horses are impacted by it - only those that are racing, of course. No other horses would be impacted by it and would not cause them any concerns. What

has ORI done in relation to those people selling that product from paddocks that are bounded by fields where poppies have been growing? Is there any control in that area at all?

Mrs HISCUTT - We acknowledge that it is a very difficult problem, but it is up to the trainer to ask. I would think that if I were a trainer and had had that incident, I would be asking every time, just to make sure that the grower or where it is sourced from is contaminant-free.

Mr DEAN - I stand again to follow up with the questions. It is all very well to say it is buyer beware, which is really what you are saying. They source a product that they believe is the right product for their animal, which is clearly a good product that does not have any added amphetamines or oripavine or anything else in it. It is a clean product, so surely there has to be some onus on the seller of that product? It is like when you buy a product from a shop. If you buy an orange or a potato or something from a shop, the onus is on the growers of those products to ensure their product is a clean and safe product, the onus is not on the buyer. The buyer is able to accept that the product is a clean product, so surely there has to be some responsibility and onus put back on the people who produce this feed?

Mrs HISCUTT - It has just been put to me that sometimes the feed is tested. The feed in this situation, the one incident in the last two years, has been tested. It has not been proved or it has not been conclusive that there were any opiates in that feed. It is very difficult to say exactly where it has come from.

In the contract for poppy growers, they have to control their regrowth. There has been testing done and there has been no evidence found that the feed has been contaminated. This is a presumption. We do not deny it has happened, but where it has actually come from has not been pinpointed.

Mr Dean - I have made my point. Thank you.

Item agreed to.

Division 10 agreed to.

DIVISION 11

(Minister for Education and Training)

Output Group 1

Industry, Skills Development and Business Growth

1.3 Skills Development

Mr DEAN - This matter was canvassed during the Estimates process and a question to the minister was: provide information on skills development programs for migrants. The answer coming back from the minister was, and I will cover some of that -

The Government recognised the valuable contribution that skilled migrants and refugees make to Tasmania, and this is reflected in the goals of the Government's Population Strategy.

State-sponsored skilled migrants and humanitarian visa holders are eligible for subsidised training from any endorsed Registered Training Organisation in Tasmania. This includes their eligible dependents. We are committed to supporting migrants and their families to enter the workforce and contribute to Tasmania's productivity.

TasTAFE supports migrants with English language training and extensive student support throughout their study period.

In addition, a number of projects have been funded by the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania) that benefit migrants. These include ...

It then goes through a list of areas. I am appreciative of that answer.

On Monday or Tuesday of last week, I had a migrant leader come into my office from the Bhutanese side. I have many Bhutanese and Sudanese migrants in my electorate in the Mowbray area. His statement to me was that the one area that they are struggling with in Tasmania is to get employment and to get the skills to get employment. He is saying that it is all very well to have all the programs that are available - and I was able to refer to some, not all, - but they do not understand the processes. As he said, you virtually have to get them one on one and talk to them and tell them what is available and how they can access these programs and the cost. I appreciate they are subsidised.

My question here is, how much are these courses subsidised? What is the subsidy provided to immigrants? As was put to me by Rup, what is the cost to them? As he said, it ought to be provided free. There would be a return to the state in the end if some of these courses were provided to them free. He said they are trying to get employment in the orchard area and many of them do that to some extent, but currently 80 per cent of the Bhutanese people and maybe even more on his calculations are not employed and will never be employed unless we can do something to get them into these courses to get the skills that they need, and into the right areas.

What else is being considered to get these people into employment? I asked the question particularly of my area, Windermere, the Mowbray area, where a great number of lovely people, Bhutanese people in particular, are congregating. How do we get to them? How do we get them involved in these courses and explain to them that they need these courses to get employment and move forward? It is a very important area.

I appreciate the answers provided by the minister but my view is we must do more. Where can we go to ensure we get these people into employment? It probably ought to be on their arrival in this state. We know who is coming, we know how many are coming, and we must work with them to get them into these programs - not that 'they are available to you', but 'you must do them'. We need to have a much stronger position in relation to these opportunities for these people.

Mrs HISCUTT - Tasmania has quite generous subsidies in place for all learners. TasTAFE provides concessions to learners, including migrants. Skills Tasmania works with organisations such as the Migrant Resource Centre, which has strong networks into the migrant community. That is one of the peak areas. Also, we funded migrant resource centres through the 26Ten grant program; this is specifically aimed at the Bhutanese community.

Mr DEAN - Thank you for that. In 2018 and moving into 2020, \$197 298 was provided to the Migrant Resource Centre North - that is in the north of the state we are talking about, I take it, Launceston - for delivery of the You're Welcome program. That is that amount of money over a

three-year period, 2018-19-20, I take it. Do we know what that funding has done? It goes on in the answer I received from the minister - he talks further about the hospitality industry and how a number of migrants, these new Australians, have gained employment in that area, have done courses in that area, and that 12 had secured employment.

If the \$197 298 can only employ 12 people - I guess there are more to come into it - I ask the question: How are we evaluating that program? Is it returning the number of employment positions that we would want from that expenditure? I might add, a gentleman who came to me last week also identified that they were seeking some further funding from the Government, so the Migrant Resource Centre is coming to me as another organisation for me to support some further funding towards some other employment program as well. That will be coming through shortly as well.

How good is this program? Are there any other similar programs being considered?

Mrs HISCUTT - We can take on notice the detail for outcomes funding because we are not sure exactly what it is here. We know it is expensive to provide support to disadvantaged cohorts.

The Migrant Resource Centre is paramount in this process. They set good employment outcomes which is why they are successful in gaining funding. The Migrant Resource Centre North Jobs for Migrants in Aged Care and Disability Program was funded in both 2017 and 2018. The project has resulted in 38 participants being employed. That is a 153 per cent increase on the initial target of 15, with the 2018 extension working with an employment goal of 33. They were a very successful group.

The actual outcomes we can take on notice and provide later.

Item agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

[5.29 p.m.]

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday 19 June 2019.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 5.29 p.m.