



# **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

## **TRANSCRIPT**

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

### **ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A**

Hon. Nic Street MP

**Thursday 9 June 2022**

#### **MEMBERS**

Hon Nick Duigan MLC;  
Hon Ruth Forrest MLC (Chair);  
Hon Mike Gaffney MLC (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Dean Harriss MLC;  
Hon Sarah Lovell MLC;  
Hon Meg Webb MLC



## **IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon. Nic Street MP**, Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Hospitality and Events, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Sport and Recreation.

### **Ministerial Office**

Vince Taskunas	Chief of Staff
Tim Lovibond	Senior Adviser, Hospitality and Events
Lara Kirkpatrick	Senior Adviser, Community Services and Development
Melissa Geard	Adviser, Local Government
Tom Cooper	Adviser, Sport and Recreation

### **DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH**

#### **Hospitality and Events**

Kim Evans	Secretary, Department of State Growth
Amanda Russell	Deputy Secretary, Corporate Services
Angela Conway	A/Deputy Secretary, Cultural and Tourism Development
Adam Sproule	Director, Events Tasmania
Claire Fitzgerald	Director, Tourism Hospitality and Support

### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES TASMANIA**

#### **Community Services and Development**

Michael Pervan	Secretary, Department of Communities Tasmania
Kate Kent	Deputy Secretary, Communities, Sport and Recreation
Ingrid Ganley	Director, Community and Disability Services
Wendy Yardy	Manager, Policy and Programs
Jackie Honey	Manager, Grants, Sport and Recreation Infrastructure

#### **Sport and Recreation**

Michael Pervan	Secretary, Department of Communities Tasmania
Kate Kent	Deputy Secretary, Communities, Sport and Recreation
Paul Austen	Director, Tasmanian Institute of Sport
Helen Langenberg	Manager, Sport and Recreation
Jackie Honey	Manager, Grants, Sport and Recreation Infrastructure

### **DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET**

#### **Local Government**

Craig Limpkin	Deputy Secretary, Policy & Intergovernmental Relations
Mathew Healey	Director, Office of Local Government



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**The Committee met at 3.33 p.m.**

**CHAIR** - Thanks. Welcome, Mr Street, for your first budget Estimates with the all-important Legislative Council.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - He's very lucky to have to be our last minister. I think everyone knows Dean. Minister, I'll invite you to introduce the other members of your team at the table. If you wish to make an opening comment, we're starting with local government.

**Mr STREET** - No worries, thank you, Chair. To my right, I have the Deputy Secretary of DPAC, Craig Limkin, and to my left, Director of Local Government, Mathew Healey. Just to let the Committee know, Mr Limkin has to leave at 4 o'clock for a national meeting.

**CHAIR** - That's a good excuse.

**Mr STREET** - It is a good excuse. As the Director of Local Government, Mat is an ex-officio member of the board that's undertaking the review chaired by Sue Smith. If you want to ask questions that need a department answer about the review process, Craig's the man, but he has to go after the first half an hour.

**CHAIR** - Sure. We'll start with those.

**Mr STREET** - I'm more than happy to hand over, Chair, to you for questions.

**CHAIR** - Okay, all right. Well, I'll go straight to Mike, who's the lead on this item.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thanks, minister. I realise there will be questions from other members as well, and after reading the transcript from yesterday's debate downstairs, I can well imagine the current confusion there is in 'local government land' about what's transpired and what's going to happen. But I'm going to confine my questions to the Budget, more so than the policy questions I think you were asked yesterday - a lot.

I acknowledge the footnote which identifies the increase in 2022-23 reflects new funding for the Future of Local Government Initiative. In our papers it was altered to \$1 006 000, but in your opening remarks downstairs you said you think it was \$1.6 million over the two years. So that's the one I'll go with for ease of consistency.

On the front page of the website of that initiative it says:

The Tasmanian Government has commissioned the Local Government Board to undertake a Review of the role, function and design of local government in Tasmania.

The future of the local government review commenced on 22 January 2022, and will take approximately 18 months. It's a five-member board, and the Director of Local Government is on that.

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Can the minister provide me with a breakdown of what that \$1.6 million covers? Staff, website, salaries and any other? What are we expecting out of that of the \$1.6 million?

**Mr STREET** - Yes. I'll pass to Mr Limkin for a breakdown on the staff, as that's an operational question.

**Mr LIMKIN** - Thank you, minister, and through you.

So, Mr Gaffney, there is a mixture of costs into this. There are board sitting fees for the members of the board. The chair of the local government board is paid at an annual rate of \$43 000, where board members are paid an annual rate of \$28 000. The Director of Local Government is an ex-officio member so there is no payment to him. These are consistent with Tasmanian Government board fee policy as level E1, which has been independently sized.

There is a small secretariat in the department that reports through me for administration purposes - for execution of procurement contracts, leave and those type of matters to make sure we comply with government process. But I have no direct operational management of the group of people. There is also money in there for a piece of consulting work. The board has engaged UTas and also KPMG who had done the performance management work on it. There are some funds to support communication and the local government sector as well.

Under the Local Government Act, the head of the State Service or her delegate - which is my position - needs to make funds available or resources available for the board to do its job. The Government has decided to allocate money in this Budget to enable that to happen.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. I think that's important to understand what that money's there for and it will cover that expense.

It says on the website:

Although government will not introduce a new local government bill until there is a clear reform pathway rising out of the future of the Local Government Review Initiative,

my understanding is that the review was to be completed by 30 June 2023.

In light of recent events, will the website need to be updated? What changes will need to occur? I think the board is supposed to prepare an interim report by the end of this month for the minister to review.

**Mr STREET** - For me, yep.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Will the Government be increasing resources for advertising the need to vote and enrol, regarding compulsory voting now? Will the Government be increasing resources for advertising the need to both enrol to vote and then vote in the local government elections? If so, by how much, and where will that funding come from? Obviously, it won't come out of the \$1.6 million for the review.

**Mr STREET** - Mr Healey is telling me that the expected cost for the advertising and education programs in terms of compulsory voting is approximately \$150 000. That will be

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resourced from the Office of Local Government. So no, it won't come out of the \$1.6 million that's been dedicated for the review. And you said something about updating the website?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The website will need to be updated. It says here clearly that until a review was undertaken, there would be no legislation going through. That's not what's happened.

**Mr STREET** - Mr Limkin tells me that it's been raised with the secretariat as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay, thank you. And what additional support would be provided to the sector to also promote the changes that are going to happen? Local government will have to be getting out there and telling them, or is it all going to come from the state government?

**Mr STREET** - I would imagine that the education process for the general public will come through the program that the state government is putting together, but the intention is to put that program together in consultation with local government, with LGAT, and through the Office of Local Government.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay, thanks. I'll come back to the consultation comment. Councils cannot simply absorb the additional costs associated with compulsory voting and, for those who don't know, at such short notice as they are in the final stages of confirming their 2022 and 2023 budgets.

The late notice will have a big impact on many councils' budgets for this year. This is particularly the case given many councils' budgets for the elections over the preceding three years - that's a four year term - so they will take so much out of their budgets. In 2018 it cost urban councils more than \$300 000 to run that election.

What's happened now? They weren't planning on that, there was no preparation for that, because they thought that would be a four-year cycle. So now compulsory voting is coming in -

**CHAIR** - The question? What are you asking them?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I'll get there. So the late notice at this change had nothing to do with local government. Who's going to be absorbing those costs and paying the extra costs for councils who haven't budgeted for that increase?

**Mr STREET** - Well I guess my response to that, Mr Gaffney, would be what have they budgeted for in the last three years? Have they only budgeted for a certain percentage turnout of their rate base? Shouldn't they be budgeting for 100 per cent of their rate base to vote in putting aside costs for local government elections, and then anything less than 100 per cent is a saving? I don't understand how you would budget for -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I'm really quite concerned at the naivety of that comment, because councils would have known that they would have had 50 per cent or 60 per cent voting for the last 10 years. This is going to be an extra 20 to 30 per cent, on top of their already worked out approximate budget.

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**Mr STREET** - I understand that, Mr Gaffney. But my point is that the situation you're describing is that somehow councils should be glad that they get less than a full turnout because they save money somehow in the election process.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No. That's not the crux of the question. The question is over the last four years they would have budgeted X amount of dollars for the election at the end of this year. Now that it's compulsory, there's going to be an extra 20 to 30 per cent, according to the cost on that.

**Mr STREET** - And my point is, Mr Gaffney, where would they have got the extra money from if they'd got an increased turnout under non-compulsory voting? If they got 50 per cent last time and they got 70 per cent this time, where would they get the extra money from? They had no way of knowing. You're trying to tell me that they're budgeting across a four year period for an unknown rate of return.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No. They have known for quite some time now - 13 elections - how much they would have to budget for and they would do that. Now with this unexpected impost on them, there is going to be an increase in their budget. Who is going to be paying for that increase, that is up to 20 to 30 per cent, as I have been informed?

**Mr STREET** - As I have made clear during the debate, Mr Gaffney, the enforcement of compulsory voting will be covered by the state government.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Well, that's good.

**Mr STREET** - But the actual rate of return is for individual councils to deal with.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - And I'm sure now they know it's a four year compulsory voting that they will be able to budget that accordingly between 2022 and 2026; that is not an issue. The issue they were not aware of this; in fact, they weren't even consulted when they've done their budgets. They've already done their budgets.

**CHAIR** - Okay. I'm just going to go to Sarah, who's got a question on this.

**Ms LOVELL** - Just a follow-up question in light of your comments about turnout and budgets. Did you consult with councils about how they budget and plan for elections and turnout and how they make those determinations in planning?

**Mr STREET** - The consultation that took place before I made the decision was with LGAT only. I wrote to individual councils once the decision had been made, but I didn't consult with individual councils about their budgeting process for elections.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay. Related to the above, the question is, will the Government work with the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to implement costs-saving measures to limit cost impact on councils? How will that occur?

**Mr STREET** - Well Mr Healey is nodding. I would absolutely expect that we would be working with the TEC. Right. So the example that Mr Healey gave was that the Local Government Division will be buying some letter sorters for the TEC to help with the processing of votes, that is one example of where we'll be helping to reduce the cost and also help with the



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speed of vote counting as well. Hopefully that would defray some of the extra costs of an increased rate of return.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. With respect to the Code of Conduct, the Government released its response to submissions on the review of the Code of Conduct on 20 December 2021. Page 2 of the Government's response reads:

the Government will introduce amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 in the 2022 autumn session of parliament to implement its immediate reform package. Draft legislation will be released for public consultation early 2022.

Resolving issues with the Code would be a very high priority for the local government sector. Could the minister please provide an update as to the progress of the draft legislation?

**Mr STREET** - I can tell you is that the Local Government Division and OPC are working on a final draft of the legislation that will be brought to the House for the improvements to the Code of Conduct.

There have been three versions, I believe, before this one. We are now on what we hope is the final version. Once that work is completed with OPC it will be put out for consultation again, and we are hoping to introduce that legislation into the parliament before the end of the year for the improvements to be made to the Code of Conduct.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay. I think one of the significant issues identified during the recent local government voting compulsory voting debate was the inadequate consultation process and you've highlighted that as well.

**Mr STREET** - I have.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It was previously the accepted communication protocol, a five week period was not observed, and both the LGAT president and CEO were totally unaware of the legislation until 5 May. Can the minister confirm that this instance was a one-off and not to be repeated?

**Mr STREET** - I can absolutely, with 100 per cent certainty, Mr Gaffney, tell you that it was a one-off and that it won't occur again. And I've already given that assurance to LGAT and to the individual mayors that I have spoken to.

I explained both in the House during the debate, but also in the briefing with the lower House and with the upper House, I apologised for the fact that the five week consultation didn't take place. And I explained that the timing of me coming into this portfolio and making the decision myself that it was an important reform to introduce before this year's election meant that the five-week consultation would have pushed out past the point where we could introduce the legislation and have it in place for this year's election.

That was twofold. That was in relation to the parliament sitting, but also the fact that we do want to actually put this education program together and make sure that it's widely distributed and that it hits the mark in educating the public about the change that's taken place.

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And we needed the time from when the legislation passed to the period before the ballots go out to make sure that that occurs.

I can absolutely guarantee that the five week consultation period won't be waived again, and I understand that that was a commitment that was given previously as well, and I have apologised for that.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's really good to hear. Is it worthwhile for the minister to consider to have that protocol signed again? Because if the minister of the day is not the minister tomorrow because of a number of reasons, we want to ensure that the Government itself takes on board that protocol arrangement, just not if there's a change of minister.

Mr STREET - Yes. Look, I'm giving that commitment today in this place and it will be on Hansard. If LGAT would like to have me sign a formal document committing to the five week consultation on changes, I don't have a problem doing that, because it's my absolute intention that the consultation period will be a minimum of five weeks, and probably longer.

Mr GAFFNEY - That's very good to hear. Should LGAT and councils be concerned that there will or could be further legislation arriving in the parliament before the review board has a chance to finalise its report in June and go forward with recommendations?

You spoke about the Code of Conduct, because that was already a process that was going. I'm assuming that there's no other pieces of legislation that could be brought forward because you're waiting for the review process to run its course?

Mr STREET - I note that you made a comment in your opening about confusion after reading the Hansard of the debate downstairs yesterday. What I tried to make clearer - and obviously it didn't come across in Hansard - is that there is an interim report coming to me at the end of the month.

The intention of that interim report when the process was put in place was that it would come back to the minister to identify the areas that the board then wanted to go away and drill down on for the following 12 months.

What I said to the committee yesterday and what I'm happy to commit to here again, is I have been clear to Mr Limkin and the Office of Local Government I want to publish that report publicly. Once I have had a chance to consider it myself and take it to cabinet, we want to publish that report and to offer a briefing to both Houses of parliament to any interested members. You can see what has come out of the first six-month process in terms of the consultation and the areas they have identified they want to drill down on, so everyone is well aware of what they are going off to do for the next 12 months.

Mr GAFFNEY - Okay, thank you. In the fact in your comments in the House of Assembly, you sort of said the interim report from the board goes to you for review and then goes to Cabinet for consideration.

I would like to understand, minister, that in your review and Cabinet's consideration, that the interim report that will be released to the public cannot be redacted or altered because it is a community consultation piece and not a vehicle for the Government to push its own agenda.

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The review that is presented to you and to the Cabinet will be the one that will be accessed by the community?

**Mr STREET** - My commitment is that the report that comes to me and I take to Cabinet - the only reason for me to receive it is to review it myself and familiarise myself - the same with my Cabinet colleagues - so when I come and do the briefing to members of both Houses I am across what is in the interim report.

There will not be anything in the interim report that cannot be released publicly. The report that I receive will be the one that is made public. It is just a matter of timing and allowing me the opportunities, as minister, to familiarise myself with the document before it is publicly released.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you very much. Thanks, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Other questions for local government.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Certainly, yes. Minister, I know the member did cover this to some extent, but the Code of Conduct review is something that comes to me quite a bit. There are councils in my division who are very interested to hear about the progression of the Code of Conduct review. Can you provide some information on what the next steps are in the Code of Conduct review?

**Mr STREET** - I can. Thanks for the question, Mr Duigan. Like I said before in speaking to Mr Gaffney, I am aware of the media attention on the Code of Conduct review and also on alleged toxic cultures in some councils, which have obviously been fairly prominent in the media recently.

It is important everyone has a workplace where they feel safe and respected and I support the provision of safe workplaces where respectful debates are encouraged. Councils have an important role in the community and should be treated with respect in their workplace and not subjected to bullying or harassment. The Government is committed to supporting the local government sector to explore options to address issues raised about discrimination in local government workplaces including any alleged bullying and harassment.

We are focused on initiatives to support a positive culture in local government and this includes the development of a state-wide pre- and post-election education framework and program for councillors. Because, quite frankly, one of the things I noticed when I was first elected to Kingborough Council in 2011 was I was told I was successful and then basically dropped into the first meeting on the following Monday with very little preparation.

**CHAIR** - Yes. That is exactly like what happened when I was elected here.

**Mr STREET** - Yes, it is a bit. Although I should say that Father Michael Tate did have me out for lunch before my first session in parliament to give me some instructions at a lunch I attended with Mr Willie, who was elected at the same time.

The education, framework and program include the development of learning packages for those considering nomination and for successful candidates. The Government has provided funding to LGAT to undertake a workplace, health and safety review and risk assessment

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associated with the bullying and harassing behaviour of councillors, council staff and community members and the review will include appropriate mitigation measures that could be applied under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

The Government has committed to implementing the agreed reforms to the Code of Conduct system for local government. The Government's response commits to reform across six key areas.

They are: improving consistency and clarity across councils, using a dispute resolution process for the less serious matters, focusing initial assessment on more serious allegations, increasing confidence in the assessment and investigation process, stronger monitoring of compliance with sanctions, and positioning the framework for the future by review of the model Code of Conduct and consider the merits of transitioning the framework into the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Many of the changes proposed will require amendments to the Local Government Act 1993. The Office of Local Government is currently working with OPC to draft these amendments, which we intend to introduce to parliament later this year and I hope to release a draft bill for these amendments in the very near future.

A key element of the reforms will be ensuring councils have robust local dispute resolution procedures. The Government will continue to work with LGAT and councils to ensure these procedures are in place.

I acknowledge the media that has been around particular councils of late. I do not back away from the fact that this is a long-term issue with the Code of Conduct that has been around for a while. We are determined the changes that we make to the legislation later this year lead to a better framework and system for everybody that is involved. Both local councillors, but also staff and members of the local community.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Are you going to a different area, Nick?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes., unless anyone else has more on Code of Conduct.

**CHAIR** - I just wanted to follow up on that and I am not sure what exactly is being proposed with this, but will it enable the consideration of historic matters, or it will just be future thinking?

**Mr STREET** - You mean the Code of Conduct?

**CHAIR** - Code of Conduct Changes.

**Mr HEALEY** - The act still requires the complaints are less than six months old in terms of the behaviour, unless there is ongoing behaviour that can be linked to an original cause. Not historical complaints, no.

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**CHAIR** - No. But from the date that the legislation comes in - in November for argument's sake if the complaint relates to a matter that occurred in September, could it be considered?

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely. I am not sure whether if something happened that was a continuation of behaviour you would be able to recall previous events or not. You would not be able to discipline an offence, but you would be able to use a demonstration as a pattern of behaviour under the framework.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes. There are specific provisions within the act that says if you can demonstrate a consistent chain of behaviour -

**CHAIR** - Which is what bullying is.

**Mr HEALEY** - Absolutely. If there is a history of bullying and a history of behaviour and you can demonstrate that is demonstration of a character or behaviour that is not in line with the Code of Conduct, then absolutely you can refer to older events.

**CHAIR** - I take full responsibility for any ignorance in this, but does this cover behaviour of members outside of the council as well as serving their constituents?

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes. When you read the Code of Conduct it does make reference to instances where it covers personal behaviour that will reflect poorly on a council. In some areas, it is about the councillor in their performance of their duties as a councillor, such as complying with policies of council or et cetera. Yes, you can cover both personal behaviour and formal behaviour as a councillor.

**Mr STREET** - But also, without putting words in your mouth, Chair, what you are talking about is somebody outside of the council chambers performing their councillor duties with a member of the public and whether you can make a complaint about their behaviour on that occasion. Not necessarily bumping into them at the supermarket and having a verbal joust with them while you are both going about your business.

**CHAIR** - Well it could be behaving in a way that does not meet community expectations.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - How is that dealt with?

**Mr HEALEY** - There are provisions in the Code of Conduct, that personal behaviour of councillors cannot bring the council into disrepute or reflect poorly.

**CHAIR** - Currently or?

**Mr HEALEY** - If it is an older incident, then you would need to demonstrate that behaviour associated with that incident is ongoing and extends into the period of the last six months. Does that make sense?

**CHAIR** - Yes. But the current act does not provide for that is what I am saying.

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**Mr HEALEY** - The current act does. The current act allows you to consider personal behaviour of a councillor that will bring either the office of councillor or the council into disrepute. And if that behaviour - even if it originated some time ago - but you can demonstrate that there is a pattern of behaviour flowing from that even that it still bringing the council or the role of councillor into disrepute then, yes, that would be an issue that could be considered under the Code of Conduct system.

**CHAIR** - There has been a highly publicised case considering one of my constituents.

**Mr STREET** - I just realised where you were going with that as well, sorry. I am under a little bit of pressure here. I just realised what you were asking about and yes, absolutely. When the behaviour away from the council chamber reflects poorly on the council and is outside what would be deemed proper and acceptable behaviour, then absolutely, a code of conduct complaint can be made against that councillor.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HEALEY** - And through you, it is on the record and it's not something that would be appropriate to talk about, but I have taken the unprecedented step of lodging a code of conduct under those circumstances.

**CHAIR** - Yes. And that's obviously within your in your power to do that?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr HEALEY** - Anyone can lodge a code of conduct complaint against a councillor or a council. It's certainly not something that, as Director of Local Government, I would like to do frequently. In fact, previously we've not taken that step. But I took the view that in these circumstances, the behaviour was very significantly impacting on the reputation of the council and the reputation of the office of councillor, and so I thought

**CHAIR** - And the wider community broadly.

**Mr HEALEY** - And the community broadly.

**Mr STREET** - Yes, exactly right.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HEALEY** - So it was appropriate to take that step in those circumstances.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Through you, I think one of the issues that I'm sure that will be highlighted through the review is that it's the lack of teeth or penalty that the code of conduct review has, which was initiated back 10 or 15 years ago, I suppose. That's one of the issues: what teeth and what legs it has. So, whilst there can be complaints and reviews, that's an area that will no doubt be looked at.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. Without speaking out of turn too much, I've been on Kingborough Council when somebody had a code of conduct upheld against them and they just didn't turn up to the next meeting where they'd been asked to formally apologise.

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**Mr GAFFNEY** - And there's nothing that can be done.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - So even where there's a clear breach of community expectation, there is still no requirement for that person to resign or move away.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I asked the question if a member of a local council was actually guilty of some crime of rape or murder, would they be required to stand down?

**Mr STREET** - Yes, they would. There's a distinction made at the minute between a summary offence and an indictable offence.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - An indictable offence would lead to

**CHAIR** - Dismissal.

**Mr HEALEY** - If they received a sentence for a crime, the way the act is constructed, their position would be automatically vacated. Unfortunately, that's not the case for offences that are not crimes, so summary offences.

**Mr DUGAN** - Minister, I'm wondering if you can provide some details from the Tasmanian Audit Office work program relating to the local government sector.

**Mr STREET** - I can, thank you, Mr Duigan. A report was presented to the Public Accounts Committee when a couple of the committee members opposite me were sitting with me on that committee.

The Tasmanian Audit Office's 2021 22 and 2020 21 work program included a report into council general managers' recruitment, appointment and performance assessment. The Audit Office's work program for 2022 23 includes a report into procurement in local government following two previous performance audits on council procurement in 2020 21 and 2019 20.

The report of the Auditor-General into Council general manager recruitment, appointment and performance assessment was tabled in parliament on 8 October 2021, and the report made four recommendations. Importantly, its first recommendation is that the Department of Premier and Cabinet support the Minister for Local Government to develop and issue mandatory requirements and supplementary guidance on recruitment, appointment, and performance assessment procedures that are consistent with contemporary HR practices. That report drew attention to various shortcomings in the recruitment and performance management processes adopted by a number of councils.

The former Minister for Local Government approved on 24 September 2021 that work commence on the drafting of a ministerial order prescribing minimum standards in relation to the recruitment, appointment, and performance management of council general managers by

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elected members with close regard to the recommendations of the Auditor-General. The proposed order will strengthen existing practices and, importantly, ensure that the potential and actual conflicts of interest of consultants are disclosed, documented and managed appropriately.

Consultation on policy directions was undertaken with LGAT in late 2021. Feedback was received and broadly supported. All councils will be provided a subsequent opportunity to review a draft of the regulatory instrument prior to the order being made, and the Office of Local Government has also discussed the proposed directions with the Tasmanian Audit Office, which is supportive of this move.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you, minister.

**CHAIR** - Can I just follow up on that, Nick?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Of course.

**CHAIR** - I appreciate the Auditor-General has an important role to play in these, including auditing the financial reporting of local government.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I also note that in the outline of the output group description, it talks about the role of local government - Department of Local Government here administering and ensuring the sector is compliant to relevant legislative and regulatory revisions. So what work is undertaken under this area, and where failures or problems may arise, what's the process taken?

**Mr STREET** - Mr Healey.

**Mr HEALEY** - Through you, minister. We do keep track of all the reports and plans that councils have to have in place, such as their strategic plan, their long-term financial management plans, their asset management plans, et cetera. So we maintain visibility of all of those.

**CHAIR** - You can take your mask off if you like.

**Mr HEALEY** - Oh, okay, thank you. Only a couple of years ago we did an audit and we found that there were some gaps in compliance of councils in that area, and we've worked pretty strongly with them to make sure that they fill those gaps.

In some very rare instances where we believe that there is a critical failure of councils to comply with their obligations under the act, we can make a recommendation to the minister to issue a performance improvement direction, which is a statutory instrument requiring them to rectify any issue of non-compliance. We have done that, most recently with Glamorgan-Spring Bay, because they didn't have in place their core statutory documents. They've since rectified that, so they've now got them all in place.

**CHAIR** - So over the past four years - so pre-COVID-19 and up to date - how many of those directions have been issued?



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**Mr HEALEY** - We've issued two directions, one to Glamorgan-Spring Bay. We've previously, I think, issued a performance direction to one of the islands before I was director. I'm not sure of the detail of that. They're not used very frequently. I must say, as coming back into the role of the Director of Local Government, I think we could use them more to highlight areas of less-than-satisfactory performance, both for individual councillors and potentially for councils. But in the past we've used them fairly sparingly.

**CHAIR** - It seems to me that the Auditor-General undertakes his works program with some input from the Public Accounts Committee, as those who have been on the committee would understand, and also by referral to some other bodies and by his own assessment. He takes quite a strong interest in local government. So, if he's having to focus a lot of his attention in that space, is the local government division doing enough to ensure compliance? Ultimately, it should be the role of the local government division, rather than the Auditor-General. I'm not saying he doesn't have a role.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - But I would've thought that it would've been what this area's responsible for.

**Mr HEALEY** - Through you, minister, I'm sure the Auditor-General would hold fairly dearly his function of auditing the performance of councils.

**CHAIR** - Are you talking about financial or performance?

**Mr HEALEY** - Both. He has a statutory role to do both. To a degree, I don't disagree with you that the office should be fairly visible in its encouragement of positive behaviour and strong performance of councils.

You'll note that through the Future of Local Government Review process, they've now published a data dashboard on the website. As an office, will be hoping to build on that work following the review to have a much more visible and robust process of communicating about the broader performance of councils. As I said, I'd certainly like to consider in my role whether or not we can use some of the statutory instruments more frequently to highlight the need for councils and councillors to perform well.

**CHAIR** - Some sort of formal notice, if you like, is one aspect. What role does the local government division have in taking a more educative role? I know there's a limited budget for these things, but prevention's always better than cure.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - So what work does the local government division do in that support? We talked a little about new councillors.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - There may be more you want to speak about on that. But also new staff, people who particularly don't - we see the rotation of GMs a bit around the state, but other senior staff.

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**Mr STREET** - I would think that the lack of use of enforcement from the local government division would indicate that most of their role has been educative rather than enforcement. Mr Healey seems -

**CHAIR** - What evidence have we got of that, minister?

**Mr HEALEY** - Well, on a couple of fronts. I have been working very proactively with a number of councils in this state to try to address some systemic issues that they've had, particularly with councillors being able to work together collaboratively. We've had some success in running workshops and reminding councillors of their obligations, not only as an individual councillor, but under the act they have obligations to work collectively as a council. We do work quite hard at that level.

As the minister mentioned before, we are actively developing some modules for local government. We absolutely want to be more deliberate and rigorous in the education that we provide, particularly to elected officials, but I'm more than happy over time to consider whether that extends into non-elected officials. As I mentioned before, taking a much larger role in promoting a positive conversation around performance of local government and where improvement could be had is something that we really hope to be able to do over the coming years.

**Mr STREET** - Sometimes that improvement comes without the Local Government Division having to get involved as well. I met with the mayor of a small council last night who made it very clear that she's come in with a new general manager and a far more strategic view of the operations of the council and far more analysis of how they're going to get to a sustainable position as well, rather than the fly by the seat of the pants approach that might have been at that council previously as well.

**CHAIR** - This is fine, but it can't be a person-dependent approach.

**Mr STREET** - No, it can't.

**CHAIR** - It has to be a systems approach.

**Mr STREET** - It does, absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HEALEY** - Other areas where we are supporting councils at the moment, is in areas like how to promote the importance of confidentiality, how to improve the management of interest, pecuniary and non-pecuniary, how to manage difficult behaviours inside or outside of council. We're actively working with them in those areas as well.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any questions where you want to follow up on the matter?

**Ms LOVELL** - Thank you, Chair. To back, minister, and apologies if I missed this before - and if I did miss it, you can tell me to review the Hansard. You were talking about the increased costs for compulsory voting.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Bearing in mind, that we would be talking about presumably staffing costs for the TEC, the increased costs of increased numbers of returned ballots. I understand that the state will be covering that increased cost for this first election.

**Mr STREET** - For the increased staff costs for the TEC, yes.

**Ms LOVELL** - Not the increased costs for returned ballots?

**Mr STREET** - I don't know that we -

**Mr HEALEY** - Certainly the increased costs of enforcing. Compulsory voting is all entirely covered, including any staffing required in that process, and we'll certainly pay for any of the campaign costs and some of the supplementary equipment costs that might help them to manage the incoming ballots. So that's what the state is covering.

**Ms LOVELL** - The cost of the ballots themselves won't be covered by the state. That will need to be picked up by councils?

**Mr STREET** - Every voter receives a ballot anyway, even under non-compulsory voting. It's only the counting of the ballots.

**Ms LOVELL** - My understanding is that if they're not returned, there's a greater cost for those that are returned because there's the return postage.

**Mr STREET** - There is. There's a marginal, yes.

**Mr HEALEY** - There'll certainly be some costs for councils. The cost of actually counting the ballots goes up and down every election, depending on what the return rate was. For example, Hobart had quite a significant bump in return -

**Ms LOVELL** - You can take your mask off if you'd like, too.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes, thanks. Hobart had quite a significant increase in ballots returned last election, which was put down to some fairly significant issues, such as the cable car, being run at the same time. The cost of counting those ballots, the TEC needs to staff those, and then they're apportioned across all councils.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay.

**Mr STREET** - But in terms of enforcement notices because of compulsory voting, we have said that we will cover the cost of enforcement. We will cover the cost of the enforcement notices.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes, exactly.

**Ms LOVELL** - Typically the state will cover the cost of enforcement notices and the additional staffing with the TEC.

**Mr STREET** - And promotion.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Or the staffing across -

**Mr HEALEY** - The staffing for the enforcement, additional staffing costs for enforcement.

**Ms LOVELL** - Not in the counting of ballots?

**Mr HEALEY** - At the moment, no. That's the ordinary cost of councils for running the elections.

**Mr STREET** - For running their elections.

**CHAIR** - I thought you were buying a letter counter.

**Ms LOVELL** - Right, okay.

**Mr HEALEY** - I got that slightly wrong, it's a letter opener.

**CHAIR** - Oh, a letter opener, right.

**Ms LOVELL** - I don't think that was particularly clear.

**Mr HEALEY** - It's not the manual one. It opens about 20 000 an hour.

**Ms LOVELL** - That was a question that was asked in the debate in the Legislative Council, and I don't think that was particularly clear. You mentioned before 150 000 was the budget for education.

**Mr STREET** -Yes.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay. And that will come from existing budgets?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms LOVELL** - How much has been budgeted for the enforcement notices and staffing costs associated with the enforcement notices?

**Mr HEALEY** - A lot of these costs, within the - oh, sorry -

**Mr STREET** - You're right, it's all right.

**Mr HEALEY** - Within the budget for the Office of Local Government. There is some rollover of funding from last year into next year, which gives us the capacity and some flexibility to cover these costs. We don't know exactly what the cost of enforcement will be. We don't consider it to be significant. Well, we believe that we can cover it within our budget.

**Ms LOVELL** - And that's from essentially unspent funds from last year?

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes, that's right.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Okay.

**Mr HEALEY** - If the costs are very significant, then the department always has the option to request additional funds at the end of the financial year.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay. And so the additional costs of conducting the ballots themselves - the return postage, essentially, I guess, would be the primary cost there for additional returned ballots - that will be borne by councils. Do you have you modelling for how much that's anticipated to cost councils or has there been any consultation with councils on that since the legislation has been tabled?

**Mr HEALEY** - We had some discussions and have ongoing discussions with the Electoral Commission about those costs. Those costs are relatively unknowable in absolute terms because it depends on what the uplift in return ballots is. We do know that, over time, those costs will be more than offset by the revenue that's coming in from fines. I've had discussions with a couple of councils, one of which pointed out that they do budget these things over four years. All of the information that we have says that over the four years, this will be absolutely cost-neutral, if not cost-positive for councils.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay. So in this election this year, what modelling have you - what is the expected return? How big an uplift are you expecting? Have you got modelling on that?

**Mr HEALEY** - Well, it's hard to model. It depends on the success of the communications.

**Mr STREET** - Exactly right.

**Ms LOVELL** - Have you got an aim or a target?

**Mr HEALEY** - Look, it would be great if we can get somewhere between 70 and 80 per cent. That would be a very positive turnout.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay. Is there any modelling, then, in that being a target, between 70 and 80 per cent? Is there any modelling for the additional costs that will need to be borne by councils should that target be achieved?

**Mr HEALEY** - The modelling says if we reached a target of 80 per cent, the total additional costs of counting the ballots would be somewhere in the order of \$300 000 across the 29 councils.

**Ms LOVELL** - But that's of counting the ballots.

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes.

**Ms LOVELL** - So that's the staffing costs of the TEC?

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes, that's right.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Okay. So no modelling of the return, increased costs for the increased number of returned ballots?

**Mr HEALEY** - No, sorry, that is the cost of counting the increased number of ballots. If we got 80 per cent returned, then the increased cost of counting those ballots would be about \$300 000 across all 29 councils.

**Ms LOVELL** - So \$300 000 across all 29 councils is the total increased cost of a return rate of 80 per cent?

**Mr HEALEY** - That's right.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay.

**CHAIR** - Did you have another?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That's contrary to the information I received. But I can't - Flinders Island might have an 80 per cent return, so it's not going to affect them because they'll probably go to 88, 89 per cent.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Something like Devonport might have 50 per cent. But I've been informed that each council's expense will go up by 20 to 30 per cent if it goes from 50 per cent up to 80 per cent return, which is -

**Mr HEALEY** - No, that's not the case. After speaking with one council today - and look, let's be frank, for small councils this will mean very little in terms of costs for them, you know, down into \$1000 or \$2000, perhaps. For the large councils, the number is slightly larger, but still a small number. I was speaking to one council today and know they were concerned the additional costs would be a lot greater than what is modelled and what our advice from the TEC. I won't say which council it was, but for that council the increased cost represented, 0.06 per cent of their expenditure. It is very small compared to their budgets.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Could I ask for the modelling then to be tabled for us you have just spoken about?

**CHAIR** - Have you got the modelling?

**Mr HEALEY** - Yes, if the minister is comfortable. The modelling, just to stress, is based on assumptions that are unknowable. It is just a working assumption as to what the cost could be.

**CHAIR** - Do you have that with you now?

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely. If you have the modelling with you, I do not mind.

**Ms LOVELL** - It is pretty clear there is significant confusion around this amongst councils, because some councils are anticipating much higher costs than the costs you are talking about. What are the next steps for you, minister, in terms of consultation and working

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with councils to understand what this means? It is pretty clear to me, certainly in my electorate, there is still a fair amount of confusion around this.

**Mr STREET** - I have made it clear to every council my intention is to visit every council after the budget session to have a conversation with the council, the mayor, the general manager and any staff they would like to include. I will be doing as quickly as possible post next Thursday.

**Ms LOVELL** - Yes, okay.

**Mr STREET** - I have obviously done one council last night, which was very handy they were in Hobart, because without giving them away, they are quite remote. I have made it clear, yes, we will be visiting every council.

**CHAIR** - You have just given it away.

**Mr STREET** - Sorry?

**CHAIR** - You have just given it away.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Minister, can you please detail the services and community role the local government sector has played throughout the pandemic and what support the Government has provided to the local government sector during that time?

**Mr STREET** - Are you talking about during COVID-19?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - During the pandemic?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mr STREET** - Obviously, as a frontline service provider, councils were important partners with the Tasmanian Government in the COVID 19 relief and Tasmanian communities social and economic recovery. All councils adopted support measures to help their communities with the impacts of COVID 19, including zero rate rises for the 2020 21 financial year and a range of community initiatives and grant programs.

Local government is well represented on the Tasmanian Government's Regional Recovery Committees, which was established in order to identify the specific impacts of COVID 19 on the region and the regions priorities for recovery. It was also there to recommend government-led recovery activities and enable community-led recovery activities and support the Government in the ongoing response to and recovery from COVID 19.

The Tasmanian Government made up to \$200 million equivalent in funds available to councils through the Local Government Loans Program with interest rebated on loans for up to three years. A total of \$127.2 million equivalent of borrowings was accessed by 19 councils through the program which has been used to bring forward a range of infrastructure projects and to support councils to meet the impacts of COVID 19.

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Notices under the COVID 19 Disease Emergency Act of 2020 were reissued in 2021 to continue to provide operational flexibility for councils to meet their obligations under local government legislation and provide services throughout the pandemic period. These notices continue to provide flexibility to councils, including the recent resumption of online meetings by some councils in the short-term in response to the presence of COVID 19 in our communities.

The financial impacts of COVID 19 on Tasmanian councils have been uneven due to a range of factors, including greater impacts on certain revenue streams such as parking, only accessed or available to some councils. Councils have been incredibly important service providers during the pandemic. We have done everything we can to support those councils. In terms of the loans, it has allowed them to bring forward projects and provide employment in their municipalities they otherwise would not have been able to do during that period of time.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you. Yes, and following on from our theme of the week with a visit from Eddie, the assistance dog.

**CHAIR** - Teddy.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Teddy. I call him Edward. Minister, could you please advise how the Government is assisting local government with the regulation of assistance animals?

**Mr STREET** - I can. I did not get a visit from Teddy.

**CHAIR** - We might need one after this.

**Mr STREET** - I may well do. I might need it during it.

**CHAIR.** The adviser closest to my office upstairs though was watching when he came into the Chamber and I heard her squeals of delight at seeing him on camera. The Tasmanian Government is committed to putting in place a regulatory framework to protect the rights of Tasmanians with disability who rely on assistance animals and I am aware local government has a strong interest in this matter from a dog control perspective.

While the Tasmanian Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs Act 1967 provides public access protection for dogs trained through Guide Dogs Tasmania, some community members who use assistance animals continue to experience discrimination when trying to access certain services and premises. An assistance animal is a broad category referring to sight dogs, hearing dogs, mobility dogs, psychiatric service dogs, and other animals trained to support people with disability in public places, in employment and when accessing goods and services.

They are animals trained to assist a person with disability to alleviate some of the effects of that disability. In Australia, the most commonly used and recognised assistance animal is a dog. Tasmania continues to participate in a national working group that is looking to establish a national framework for the accreditation of assistance animals.

A nationally consistent framework is important to ensure people who need assistance animals are afforded the same rights, no matter where they travel to in Australia. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is working with Communities Tasmania to ensure there are appropriate opportunities for local government input and consultation into this framework.



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**Ms WEBB** - Yes, and apologies if this was covered earlier in the midst of something and I missed it as it went past. The shift to the mandatory voting for the elections this year, obviously a rationale provided for that was to increase participation from voters. On the other side of the coin is of course increasing participation for people putting themselves forward for election.

What are you and your office planning or in the process of doing to encourage groups who are traditionally underrepresented on local council to step forward and attempt election in these upcoming elections so we get a better diversity amongst the candidates?

**Mr STREET** - Certainly one of the motivating factors is increased engagement in the community, but it was also the hope with compulsory voting, people would also feel more comfortable putting their hand up. That it would give them confidence to do so if they are accountable to the whole community, rather than to the narrower range of people who were voting. One of the graphs I was shown indicated the disproportionate number of younger people between 18 and 34 who vote in local government elections compared to other age groups.

In encouraging them to put their hand up in the future to run for local government, that is incredibly important engagement. It is not just young people that need to be encouraged to put their hand up. Obviously, with the work with LGAT through the workplace, the workplace culture is important in terms of improving the workplace culture. Undoubtedly, if you were considering putting your hand up and read some of the stories that have been in the media recently, it would dissuade you.

I did make the point yesterday in the other place, that as parliamentarians we also need to take responsibility of encouraging a workplace where people feel like putting their hand up to run for state and federal parliament, even though the focus of the media recently has been on local government. I am just being made aware LGAT and the state are actually funding a campaign encouraging people to put their hand up to run.

**Ms WEBB** - Can I ask for more detail on that, in terms of the question is really directed on what is actively being done to encourage peak groups who are traditionally underrepresented. In terms of what you have just mentioned, is this a broad or is this a targeted program to encourage those underrepresented groups?

**Mr STREET** - I am happy for you to answer through me.

**Mr HEALEY** - It is a campaign run by LGAT and it is ordinarily run by LGAT in advance of elections and the focus will be on trying to encourage those that have not previously engaged in council to engage and we are funding half of that campaign. That would be both targeted resources to encourage young people, members of the multicultural community to engage, et cetera.

**Ms WEBB** - When you were contemplating the change to mandatory voting, were you presented with any evidence to show that mandatory voting can result in more diverse candidates and more diverse people or groups being elected, or was there no evidence in that space?

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**Mr STREET** - I couldn't say. I was presented with a lot of information in support of it. I don't recall whether it went as far as stats from other states that had compulsory voting as to whether or not it led to a more diverse candidate field. I would certainly be hopeful that it will, but like I said, I can't absolutely confirm that I was presented with that information.

**Ms WEBB** - In this iteration of the elections that we have coming in October and the significant change, can you describe to me the variety of ways that you'll be evaluating the different outcomes of that election? I know the TEC will do their usual assessment, so I'm not asking about that one. But for example, the TEC will describe the one to five change in voting, in its report but they won't necessarily analysing its impact. So how will we gauge that change? How will we gauge the change in, say, diversity of candidates and, ultimately, elected representatives? Will we have a structured process to make that evaluation?

**Mr STREET** - I'll pass to Mr Healey, but I would say that it would be an absolute certainty that we'll be taking a very keen interest in analysing -

**Ms WEBB** - I'm asking something beyond a keen interest; we'll all have a keen interest, naturally.

**Mr STREET** - I would imagine that there will be a process of analysing the results from this local government election to analyse the effects that the changes we instituted in parliament last week have - not just on turnout but on a broad cross-section of demographics and criteria. I don't know whether I can commit to whether there'll be a formal report, but I can certainly -

**Ms WEBB** - I'm quite interested to see if you would. Naturally anything that's done internally isn't necessarily then public and it means that the rest of the community and those who are interested in this don't have an opportunity to see that analysis.

**Mr STREET** - As you indicated, the TEC do undertake a pretty thorough analysis of the results of the elections. I'm not in a position to commit today to anything further than that, except to say that as local government minister and the person who took this reform through, I'm going to be as interested as you are about what the impacts have been.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, sure. But you'll have access to the analysis of it, potentially, in different ways than I or the public will if that's done. And I don't mean the TEC report, which will obviously be public.

**Mr STREET** - The commitment I can give you is that there'll be no information that I am able to access that I won't be able to make public for people to see. So, if there is further analysis done outside of the TEC report, I'm more than happy to say that I will make that available to members of parliament who've got an interest in the changes that have occurred because of the compulsory voting that's being brought in.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Don't get me wrong: I would've thought that the initiative that you've got the group to look at that to report back by July of next year would be the perfect group to have a look at it. Some of the results from this election will no doubt help them come back with recommendations and reviews to you for July of next year. I would have thought that would have been one of the easiest ways - to get that group to have a look. That might colour some of the recommendations that they have.

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**Mr STREET** - Yes. It's a fair point, Mr Gaffney. The only thing I can't commit to is that I don't know what level of analysis will occur beyond the TEC's normal reporting procedures. But like I said, I'll make the TEC Commissioner aware that I've been asked about this. And again, like I said -

**Ms WEBB** - Can I encourage you to think about it not from a TEC point of view but from a policy evaluation point of view? It's your policy that you've brought forward.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm just encouraging you to think about a structured way that that could occur.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Given that you've brought it in, it has been quick and it's all come crashing through, it would be respectable, I think.

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely.

### **DIVISION 12 (b)**

#### **Department of State Growth**

#### **Minister for Hospitality and Events**

### **Output Group 5 - Cultural and Tourism Development (b)**

#### **5.4 Events and Hospitality (b)**

**CHAIR** - Thanks, minister. I'll get you to introduce the other members of your team at the table and then invite you to make an opening comment.

**Mr STREET** - Thanks, Chair. To my left is Angela Conway, Acting Deputy Secretary, Culture and Tourism Development, and to my right is Adam Sproule from Events Tasmania.

Tasmania is renowned for its natural beauty and enviable lifestyle. It's because of this that more and more people want to travel and live here. We celebrate the stories and experiences that make our island so special through exceptional hospitality and our unique calendar of events.

Of course, our hospitality and events businesses and workers have been some of the hardest hit by the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Government has provided unprecedented support to these sectors during this time, and our strategic focus in future budget allocation has been set to continue sustainable recovery and growth.

Our reputation for excellence in our hospitality and events industries has continued to grow and strengthen over time. Both industries are key contributors to our economy, supporting tens of thousands of jobs, small businesses and attracting visitors to our state, while importantly inspiring Tasmanians to travel intrastate and to connect and engage with their community.

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Our hospitality sector showcases Tasmania's world-renowned local produce, wine and spirits. The reputation of the industry has been enriched by the partnerships and collaborations between our growers, distillers, artisans and those who bring our incredible Tasmanian produce to plates and glasses. Of course, the hospitality industry wouldn't exist if it weren't for the people behind our pubs, restaurants, clubs and hotels, the businesses that are the lifeblood of our regional communities.

At the end of June 2021, Tasmania's hospitality sector consisted of 2417 operating businesses that invested \$557 million through salaries and more than \$723 million to the Tasmanian economy, and employed more than 8 per cent of Tasmania's workforce.

As part of our support for this industry, our Government has invested an additional \$8 million to support the sector over the next four years to develop new and extend existing initiatives, including women in leadership programs.

Our events program is still navigating challenges. As we know, many of the events scheduled in the 2021-22 financial year were cancelled or postponed or, indeed, attracted lower numbers than they would've prior to COVID-19. As we transition into a post-COVID-19 world, we're certainly seeing confidence return to the sector. In 2022, we're seeing many of our favourite events return, with many supported by government. In April, for instance, we saw tickets for the Festival of Voices go on sale, and we have Dark Mofa commencing outside right now.

Throughout 2021-22, 80 events have been supported through Events Tasmania programs. Events Tasmania have facilitated entry into a number of partnerships that have paid dividends to our economy and events calendar. Our support to the events sector is ongoing. Our commitment to the sector was demonstrated in our recent Budget. Our economy is thriving and our hospitality and events industries are recovering well, but we know the vulnerability of these industries.

Our future budgets will continue to build the capacity of our events, hospitality and other key sectors, and ensure employers are well positioned to weather further impacts. The spotlight is well and truly on Tasmania, and the work done by our hospitality and events sectors ensures that we remain centre stage. I look forward to the questions from the committee.

**CHAIR** - I'll hand straight to some friendly questions from Mr Duigan.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you, minister. As you have acknowledged, the last couple of years have been a very difficult time for those involved in hospitality and events. I'm wondering if you could perhaps outline the Government's strategic direction when it comes to events investment in this state.

**Mr STREET** - I can, Mr Duigan. I have here a copy of the 2015- 2022 Event Strategy, which I will come to in a second. When the Tasmanian Liberals came to government in 2014 we developed and published the state's first ever whole-of-government event strategy. The strategy set up the subsequent five years and aligned our investment into events of all types and sizes so that we were clear on our funding rationale. It included all areas of state event funding including business events, leisure events, arts events, sport and community events. All events have significant intrinsic value to their participants in the state, from the impact on the visitor economy through to it being celebrations of excellence in the arts, sport and culture.

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Our strategy acknowledged this value and set a very solid foundation for the support we've provided since, and it's important to note that the five years covered by this strategy concluded in 2020. That conclusion would normally trigger the review process and begin the work to renew and revise. However, COVID-19 changed the immediate needs of the sector and we have spent the last two years working hard to ensure that Tasmanian events stayed afloat.

Events are quite unique in that they generally only have one relatively narrow shot at making their income for a particular year. They can have the best plans and have invested their money wisely in the lead-up but if something stops the event at the last minute it becomes a perfect storm, and Chair, you and I have discussed one event in particular.

**CHAIR** - We have. And I do declare my interest in Unconformity.

**Mr STREET** - We saw with the Unconformity last year the timing of the snap three-day lockdown in southern Tasmania couldn't have been worse for them. Much like in other situations we have and continue to support the Unconformity and west coast business impacted by the lockdown.

This is a good example of why the time hasn't been right to devise a new strategy for our future event investment. We've been busy ensuring that these iconic events are able to continue, and I think you'll all agree that we're now at a place for where planning for the next half decade feels about right. I'm pleased to be able to announce that I've tasked Events Tasmania with reviewing and establishing a new whole-of-government event strategy. They will lead the five-year strategy development in conjunction with other event funding bodies within government and within Business Events Tasmania.

The work will include a body of research and consultation with the tourism, cultural, and hospitality sectors, local councils, and talking with our existing iconic events. They will also work closely with our four regional tourism organisation partners to ensure that there is a strong focus on creating even more reasons for people to travel outside of the major cities. Our strategy will continue to focus on the visitor economy and supporting our communities through a variety of channels across government, and importantly, it will ensure we have a strong return on the investment we make into all events, which might be financial, or the positive impact on the relevant community, and that we're aligned to broader government priorities as well going forward. There is so much to be proud of when we look at our existing events portfolio and I'm pleased to be working towards a future that continues to foster that pride. Thank you for the question, Mr Duigan.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you, minister.

**CHAIR** - Have you got a follow-up on that one, or are you going somewhere else?

**Mr DUIGAN** - No, if you've got something particularly -

**CHAIR** - Just on that if I might, Nic.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes, sure.

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**CHAIR** - Just, yes, absolutely, I can see why you might not have embarked on a new strategy just as COVID-19 was unfolding. That makes sense really. Who knows what we're going to be facing. We had a fair idea what we're going to face and we did.

With review of the strategy, I'm pleased to see it's going to be kicked off if you like. I'm interested in the process that you're going to take. You talked about some of the participants that'll be taking part in that. Will there be an opportunity for members of the public to comment? If so, how and when? Are you also looking in that strategy at the conference market as well? Is that part of it?

**Mr STREET** - So I would imagine that absolutely it is, but I'll pass to Adam Sproule from Events Tasmania to talk you through the process that they'll undertake.

**CHAIR** - Sure. Thanks for that.

**Mr SPROULE** - Yes, as the minister outlined in his statement, we will definitely be taking a consultation process with our existing stakeholders, the regional tourism organisations, local tourism groups and also our existing iconic events. All the relevant people who link into those groups will have access to this. The other important stakeholders through this will be councils. We already work with a number of councils in some of their events and their event strategies, so that'll be very good input into it as well.

Our approach to this in the past has been to talk broadly with anyone who wants to talk to us. We're open to all those conversations. But it will be through the lens of ultimately developing something that's going to support the visitor economy and those types of things. We're quite upfront about that.

Your specific question about the conference market, yes, that's in scope for this. We'll be working with Business Events Tasmania too. We won't be guiding there. They're their own organisation so they have their own strategic direction. But we understand they're part of the ecosystem, which is the word that's used, for events in the state and we will certainly be reflecting any more work that we're doing.

**CHAIR** - So this is slightly off that, Nic. We know how hard it was for some of the lighting, the sound, all those guys - mostly men in that field, but not all. A lot of those people in that sector were really struggling, and they seemed to miss the avenues of support because they weren't directly recipients of a grant. How did you support those organisations, individuals and small businesses a lot?

**Mr STREET** - Yesterday I actually talked about the gentlemen who came and spoke to the Public Accounts Committee, the restaurateur who raised his mental health issues. As part of the Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Package there was actually \$125 000 that was provided to the THA to deliver specific mental health programs to support those workers as well.

**CHAIR** - Which is a little bit different to what I'm talking about.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. You're talking about -

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**CHAIR** - I'm talking about the people who do the lighting, the sound, the mixing, the sets for major events. If the event gets cancelled they have no income.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. They would've been able to access the small business grants.

**CHAIR** - Not all of them as I understand it. Well not some of the people I spoke to.

**Mr STREET** - Right. I don't know whether Ang Conway has anything to add in this?

**Ms CONWAY** - No, I'm just sort of thinking, I guess they may have been able access - sorry, Chair.

**CHAIR** - That's all right.

**Ms CONWAY** - They may have been able to access the federal government support through JobKeeper if they were employed.

**CHAIR** - A lot of them work for themselves though.

**Ms CONWAY** - Yes. They may have been eligible for some small business grants but I'm not 100 per cent sure which ones would and wouldn't have been.

**CHAIR** - There was - not a demonstration - a gathering out on the Parliament Lawn sometime in the winter last year.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. Yes, it was last year.

**CHAIR** - It was last year. They put some lights on and I went and talked to them because I'm very connected with this area. They really were struggling, so I'd be interested to know if there was any other avenue of support for them.

**Mr STREET** - If you want to add to the answer through me, Adam.

**Mr SPROULE** - I can add a little bit to that. I attended that as well and met with a lot of those people who were impacted. They ranged from sole traders right through to quite well known and large staging -

**CHAIR** - Staging productions.

**Mr SPROULE** - Yes. Very important part of the events ecosystem. The government at the time did run a bespoke program for that group of people. It's not covered in this output group because it was funded out of the broader government business support package. But Events Tasmania actually ran the program so I'm sure we can provide some more detail to the committee.

**CHAIR** - If you could provide some detail that the role of Events Tasmania had in that, only because it was a bit of a niche area that, a little bit overlooked. We certainly didn't hear from them even during the Public Accounts Committee inquiry, this particular group, who are integral to the events. You can't put on an event without staging.

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**Mr STREET** - In terms of the process for taking questions on notice here -

**CHAIR** - I will write to you if you agree to take me on notice. If you find it comes to you during the time that you're here we can take it then, otherwise we'll write to you.

**Mr STREET** - There were hardship grants as well that were provided, so we might be able to provide some high-level information. We can't provide who they went to, but we can provide some -

**CHAIR** - No, I'm not asking for that. I'm just asking whether there was a support for this pretty bespoke area that seemed to miss out. Nick, back to you.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thanks, Chair. Yes, so I've a question about a less niche area. Could the minister provide an update on current hotel occupancy in the state, and the impact the hospitality sector has on our economy, given the challenges they face coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Mr STREET** - I can, Mr Duigan, and we've had some very good advice just recently. We all know that hotel occupancy is a key measure of how well our visitor economy is tracking at any point in time. I'm pleased to advise the committee that the most recent occupancy data that was released by the Tasmanian Hospitality Association today. This data shows that April was another huge month for the sector.

In March, we saw 88.15 per cent of available hotel rooms filled, and April is an equally strong 81.57 per cent. That's the strongest April figure that we've seen by about 5 per cent. Obviously around 75 or 76 per cent was the best April we'd had before this one. It comes too as there is more hotel inventory in the market with the opening of the Tasman Hotel in Hobart late last year, along with the likes of the Crowne Plaza, also in Hobart, and the Verge Hotel in Launceston opening in the years prior.

The occupancy figures for the quarter of 2022 are also up compared to last year, which is a strong signal of confidence in the industry and confidence in tourists returning to our island. It's worth noting that April signals the start of the non-peak tourism period, and so I'm very confident the whole winter period will be strong. I certainly hope that it will be.

We have made considered decisions to reopen our borders and ease restrictions to bring back visitors to our state and encourage locals to get out and about. The changes to close contact requirements and the use of the Check in TAS app at hospitality venues recently were yet another step in the right direction as we continue to get back to normal. It's clear from these figures that our plan's working.

In 2021, the Tasmanian hospitality industry contributed \$723 million into the Tasmanian economy. So, I'm really pleased to see that occupancy rates are up and that we're on a strong path forward. The industry, as I said in my opening statement, employs 8.1 per cent of the Tasmanian workforce, with females making up 60 per cent of hospitality employees. This workforce, like so many others, was heavily impacted by COVID 19.

We're continuing our support of the industry by joining with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association which have invested \$125 000 into a mental health support package that I just mentioned for the hospitality sector, which forms part of a broader \$1 million package across



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small business. I want to congratulate the Tasmanian Hospitality Association on their fantastic work over the last few years to support this important sector and for helping grow confidence in the industry. We'll continue to work with them on industry challenges and ensure that we have a hospitality sector that is strong, growing, and one that fits with Tasmania's high quality brand moving forward.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you. You mentioned industry challenges and I suspect skills -

**CHAIR** - Just before you go there, Nic, if I might.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Was the love equally shared? Have you the figures for regional breakdown for occupancy?

**Mr STREET** - I don't have any breakdown between regions or between metropolitan and rural either.

**CHAIR** - It would be helpful to have that; I think it's all well and good to say that Hobart and Launceston are doing okay.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Isn't it through the THA? It was the THA figures, so they would do it across the board.

**CHAIR** - They do. I just wondered if he had the figures with him. That's what I was asking.

**Mr STREET** - I don't have them with me, but if we can locate any further breakdown outside of the overall high-level percentage, we're more than happy to provide that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms LOVELL** - Minister, if I could follow on from what you were saying about expecting a strong winter period and continuing to work with the sector on challenges, we're seeing increasing costs of living for people. We've got interest rate rises happening this week and further rises expected in the future.

What is the sector telling you about, firstly, the additional cost pressures that this is placing on their businesses, and secondly, any expected impact on discretionary spending for consumers or customers, and whether they're expecting that to impact on patronage of hospitality venues? People have less money to spend. They're going to be going out less. What are we expecting to see there? What are you hearing from the sector?

**Mr STREET** - I haven't had a specific conversation with anybody in the sector about that. I'm very new to the portfolio. I don't want to agree with everything that's being said, but it will be a concern for an industry, that as you said, relies on discretionary income. As interest rates go up and discretionary income comes down, there will be industries that will be affected. That is the nature of movements in the economy; they have different effects across different sectors.

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I acknowledge that every sector of the Tasmanian economy and the Australian economy, and from what I can see, the world economy, is going to be under pressure. All we can do is continue to provide support to these sectors and deal with situations as they arise, just like we did with the pandemic, to be honest, where we put in place support packages to help people get through it. We will respond to those challenges as they occur.

**Ms LOVELL** - Further to that, hospitality businesses are typically big users of electricity and gas. They've got accommodation or a kitchen in their venues. Have you had any discussions with the sector about the growing cost pressures around energy costs? Have you advocated on their behalf to your colleagues, particularly the energy minister, ahead of his participation in the joint ministers' meeting this week?

**Mr STREET** - I believe that meeting occurred yesterday. I think everybody understands that one of the major cost pressures for businesses is electricity, which is why we want to ensure our electricity supply and keeping prices as low as possible. There are concessions and rebates built into the system as well to help people with the cost of electricity.

I understand that they probably aren't available for all businesses. Again, that is one of the cost pressures that the industry is going to have to deal with if prices go up. But I am confident that electricity prices in Tasmania will stay at the relatively affordable levels that they are at, and that they have been at for a considerable amount of time, Ms Lovell.

**Ms LOVELL** - Just one further question and then I'm happy to move on. Have you had any discussions with hospitality businesses about costs of their insurance? I understand some businesses are seeing significant insurance cost increases. Again, what work is your Government undertaking to assist businesses that are struggling to secure insurance?

**Mr STREET** - Without being able to talk about specifics, I know that there is a body of work that is being progressed on insurance costs. I don't know whether that relates specifically to this particular industry. But as a backbencher I visited a number of tourism and hospitality businesses, particularly those in the adventure tourism side of the sector that were having real struggles, not just with the cost of insurance, but getting insurance at all.

Yes, I understand that those pressures exist. I can't say today that the Government is in a position to be able to step in and fill the void that's been left by the private sector, but we are aware that it is getting increasingly difficult and expensive for businesses to get insurance.

**Ms LOVELL** - So that body of work is not something that's being undertaken by your department?

**Mr STREET** - Not by me specifically.

**Ms LOVELL** - Which Department is undertaking it?

**Mr STREET** - I couldn't tell you off the top of my head; I am aware through conversations that I've had with members of the Government, but I couldn't tell you which department is undertaking that work.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes. Thanks, Chair. Just in the realm of challenges, particularly the migration of skills out of hospitality over the last couple of years, can the minister outline how

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the Government is partnering with the hospitality industry to futureproof workforce needs, especially in key skill areas in the hospitality sector?

**Mr STREET** - Yes. It's a problem for a number of industries, but obviously we're here talking about hospitality and events. As a government we're committed to growing the industry by building the skills and capabilities that are needed to support recovery and meet current and future industry needs.

The Government has invested \$3 million over the previous four years to see the continued implementation of the Tasmanian Hospitality Association's strategic plan and workforce development activities. Further to this, an additional \$2.25 million is to be delivered over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to work with the THA to develop Hospitality 2030, which is a long-term plan for the hospitality industry and to continue to support workforce development across the sector.

A key strategic priority in workforce development is engaging young people to pursue careers in hospitality. Among key actions over the last financial year, the THA signed an MOU with the National Institute of Education and Technology. The initial focus of these partnerships is to support the industry placement of students with rural and remote businesses.

In addition to this, the THA is collaborating with UTAS through Career Connect and with international students to offer introductory skillset sessions and promotion of internships. The workforce planning aims to increase investment and jobs across the state, develop a sustainable and appropriately skilled workforce, increase the profitability of hospitality enterprise and ensure Tasmania is recognised for service excellence. The workforce development component of the program is currently centred on building workforce capability in regional areas, apprenticeship and traineeship strategies, as well as working collaboratively with key stakeholders across the sector.

In 2021, the THA ran a total of 62 hospitality awareness sessions, reaching more than 1000 students in Tasmanian high schools and colleges. Through the THA's apprenticeship pathway program, 88 Tasmanian hospitality venues have registered to support the association's work experience program across the state. The THA has reported that 70 per cent of all government and 69 per cent of all Catholic and independent schools and colleges across Tasmania have connected with a THA program in the past 18 months.

I think we can all agree that's a terrific uptake of that program. It's critically important in developing the workforce and the skills that are necessary in encouraging young people into the hospitality sector as well as it continues to grow and needs more and more people to fill the jobs that are available. And, Chair, I've got an answer.

**CHAIR** - You've got an answer.

**Mr STREET** - By region, April 2022, south, 89.5 per cent; north, 88.14 per cent - that's including the east; and north-west, 78.46 per cent. The percentage is the number of available rooms that were booked in April.

**CHAIR** - Pretty good for north-west at that time.

**Mr STREET** - Yes, it is. And Ms Conway's got some information to add to an answer.

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**Ms CONWAY** - All right. Chair, I thought I might provide a little bit further information in relation to your question about the support that might have been available for those, you know, sole traders and staging people.

**CHAIR** - Staging, yes.

**Ms CONWAY** - There was a Micro and Small Business Border Closure Critical Support Grant, and there was also a COVID-19 Business Impact Support program, and that had four rounds. To be able to access funding under that program, you just had to have a turnover greater than \$25 000 a year and you had to be able to demonstrate a 30 per cent decline at a point in time compared to a pre COVID-19 point in time. It would've been available to all of those individuals, even if they were self-employed.

**CHAIR** - When was that made available?

**Ms CONWAY** - I think that there were a number of rounds. It was made available particularly from when the borders closed, but there were multiple rounds through the lockdown and the stages of the pandemic.

**Mr STREET** - Sorry, Adam's got some information as well in relation to it.

**Mr SPROULE** - In relation to that specific event, we both attended the - in addition to the program that has just been outlined, there was a specific program called the Event Infrastructure and Critical Support program, which was aimed at small traders under the \$25 000 turnover mark. We recognised that some of the sole traders are operating in that space. Through that program, we supported 39 of those suppliers and the funding was provided in the last financial year. The total of the funding was \$1.25 million that went to those 39 event suppliers.

Again, that was a tiered system, so we had tiers 1, 2, 3 and 4. There were some larger businesses. As you would know in the event world, it's actually - you know, 39 businesses, it's actually a fairly small cohort of people and they tend to work around -

**CHAIR** - Yeah, well, they obviously move around.

**Mr SPROULE** - So we were very on top of this issue, and I worked very hard to ensure that we got support to those people through that period.

**CHAIR** - You need them around still in business when you open up again.

**Mr STREET** - Exactly right. We've had issues raised with us in terms of infrastructure for events as well that's been shipped interstate during the shutdown as well that we're now trying to have to pull back to Tasmania so that we can actually facilitate the events.

**CHAIR** - You can hear the event going on outside, which is good.

**Mr SPROULE** - You can indeed.

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**CHAIR** - Just on that first, if I might, you did talk about \$8 million of new funding to support events.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Could you give me a breakdown of all the events that are supported under this line, and also whether that \$8 million is for new events or whether it's increased funding for the events that we currently support? There are two parts to that.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - A list of events and the funding they get, and particular reference to the \$8 million in new funding.

**Mr STREET** - So have you got specific information about the \$8 million that I referred to, Adam?

**Mr SPROULE** - I would have.

**Mr STREET** - What I've got in front of me is - yes, I've got a breakdown of one-offs, the event attraction fund for 2021 and what that's been spent on. I've got the list of all the major events in terms of support as well, which I can table. Major events subtotal of \$30 million. I've got the special partnerships as well, which include deals like the AFLW with North Melbourne but also the Hawthorn deal, and then I've got the Regional Event Recovery Fund money as well.

**CHAIR** - If you're happy to table that, that'd be really helpful.

**Mr STREET** - I'm more than happy to table it.

**CHAIR** - With regard to that \$8 million - sorry.

**Mr STREET** - Yes, to how it's broken down, absolutely.

**Mr SPROULE** - The \$8 million was part of the election commitment.

**CHAIR** - Just make sure you're near your microphone, Adam, just so that Hansard can hear you.

**Mr SPROULE** - Out of that election commitment of \$8 million, \$4 million of it was moved into an attractions fund, which the minister mentioned, which was -

**CHAIR** - And they're in that list?

**Mr SPROULE** - They're in that list.

**CHAIR** - Yes, sure.

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**Mr SPROULE** - And then the residual of those funds was pooled into our major partners program for events to apply for Unconformity and other events that have in fact now applied for those funds and been successful as well.

**CHAIR** - So is the \$4 million all allocated for that?

**Mr SPROULE** - Yes, it's fully allocated.

**CHAIR** - Are they listed in this?

**Mr SPROULE** - They are listed in that.

**Mr STREET** - They are. The Event Attraction Fund for 2021 is listed here and also the major events totalling just over \$30 million is here, plus all of the special partnerships, which are basically the sports deals.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - Then there's also the list of the Regional Event Recovery Fund as well, with the total contract amount and the event years as well.

**CHAIR** - Okay, thank you, Minister. Do you have figures for each of those sections about the return on the investment?

**Mr SPROULE** - So we do - through you, minister.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr SPROULE** - We do have that information. It's not contained here. But an amount, I guess, will - they're assessed based on their return on investment.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SPROULE** - As you'll appreciate, some events rate higher and some are less.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SPROULE** - We don't tend to put it by event. We obviously know that internally from a benchmarking perspective, but that's -

**CHAIR** - So what is the average return on event for, say, the funding for Dark Mofo? What do you expect will be the return on investment there?

**Mr SPROULE** - Over the course of the whole program, pre-COVID-19 we were about 8:1 for every dollar spent. During COVID-19, that's moved down to 2:1.

**CHAIR** - With borders open, Dark Mofo would expect a fairly good turnout.

**Mr SPROULE** - Dark Mofo returns very well. It's around about 5:1, 6:1. But it's a reasonably large investment as well.

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**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr SPROULE** - This was our whole premise through COVID-19, that we could go one of two ways. We could go to claw back or we could go, 'Actually, we have to invest in our events to ensure they're here in the future'.

**CHAIR** - Sure.

**Mr SPROULE** - We have to work on the assumption that in the future, the world will return and people will return to the state and that return on investment will compound any of that.

**Mr STREET** - It was also made clear to me coming into the portfolio that even when events had a poor return on investment for the last couple of years, it's been important to keep them going, because if they -

**CHAIR** - Exactly. This is economic return on investment. What about the social wellbeing return on investment? Do you actually measure that?

**Mr STREET** - I think it'd be fair to say that there are some intangibles in the return on investment that aren't just dollar-related as well. There are events that attract eyeballs on TV through broadcast and what have you as well. You know, it's hard to measure the rate of return on that. As you said, like with The Unconformity, there is a value to the west coast in having that festival that goes beyond just the dollars that might be spent in businesses in terms of lifting morale on the west coast and having something for them to volunteer their time towards and work towards as well. There's obviously no official measure of that.

**CHAIR** - But it is a consideration, Minister, in your funding decisions?

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely.

**Mr SPROULE** - So, one of our criteria for assessment is known as organisational effectiveness, and it's 25 per cent of our assessment, and it allows us to go in and look at how the organisation is running itself, has it got a good government structure in place, all those sorts of things. But it also allows us to look at some of these other aspects of benefit that they're bringing either to a region or to a particular pursuit of interest, depending on what it is. And within that, we've been able to value - and I mean, I hate to keep using The Unconformity, but that's an example.

But I would say, if you don't mind, Minister, I mean, what we've seen - we measure based on visitation, and we measure based on dispersal around the state, and we also measure based on share of voice, so the ability of an event to promote Tasmania outside of Tasmania. If you can bring all those elements together, which is quite rare, you'll often be doing something that is actually very unique to Tasmania, and we do have a test internally about can this be done anywhere else or can it only be done in Tasmania. And if it can only be done in Tasmania, then -

**CHAIR** - Such as with The Unconformity. Yes.

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**Mr STREET** - One of the best things about Events Tasmania is that if we get approached by an event organiser as a member of parliament, we're able to send them straight to Events Tasmania to discuss their idea. And Events Tasmania don't just analyse proposals, they actually help organisations put proposals together as well, and so they can almost help shape what the - the organiser might come to within a basic idea and Events Tasmania are able to say, 'Look, if you're able to do this, this and this in the context of your event, then it more fits the funding profile as well,' and those decisions and assessments are made by Events Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - One of the other assessments I would like to ask you about is - and particularly where there may be an organisation that perhaps needs a bit of guidance, a bit of help perhaps around their governance, whatever - do you look at their gender diversity frameworks as well and how they deal with that?

**Mr STREET** - In terms of the makeup of the organising committee or -?

**CHAIR** - Well, not only that, but how they engage in inclusive process, particularly with gender and other measures of diversity. Because we know the arts is a very creative space and they actually do tend to attract a diverse people, but is that part of the consideration? You don't want just a very monogamous group of people who just don't provide any perhaps engagement with the broader community.

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely. Take your mask off, and through me again.

**Mr SPROULE** - Through you, Minister. Yes, we do. Under that organisational effectiveness criteria. We look at gender diversity as well as diversity. We also look at an event's capacity to be an accessible event. We also look at the event's ability to recognise in an authentic and real way the Tasmanian Aboriginal story and people. So, all those elements come to that, and I mean, you know, different events will come out in different places, and we don't try to be prescriptive about how they should do it, but we certainly look to ensure that we are doing -

**CHAIR** - So, you're asking them to ensure -

**Mr SPROULE** - They're being meaningful about what they're doing.

**CHAIR** - Yes, and that's part of the assessment process, sure.

**Mr SPROULE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Do you have another one? You did. Never any -

**Mr DUIGAN** - Beg your pardon?

**CHAIR** - Carry on, carry on.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Minister, I think I heard you say previously that 60 per cent of people employed in hospitality are women.

**Mr STREET** - Hospitality.



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**Mr DUIGAN** - I'm wondering if you could provide an update to the committee on how the government is partnering with the hospital industry to support more of those women attain leadership positions.

**CHAIR** - Can you just table that table before we do that, too, the grants ones. Yes. Sorry, just so we don't forget to do that.

**Mr STREET** - I'll just see if we got it in for -

**CHAIR** - A copy, yes, sure.

**Mr STREET** - A blank copy of just the stats. That's the one. We'll get that and come back to it and make sure it is tabled.

**CHAIR** - I'll come back to Nic's answer.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. I appreciate that you were paying attention when I talked about the 60 per cent, Mr Duigan. As part of the \$8 million hospitality commitment during last year's election, we committed \$600 000 over four years to 2024-25 to support women in leadership initiatives. And as we outlined in the gender budget statement, funding will be provided to the THA to develop programs that will include activities like mentoring, coaching events, and scholarships focused on supporting leadership skills and development.

The Tasmanian government is firmly committed to continuing its work towards achieving gender equality, and our draft Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022 27 outlines key goals that women and girls are empowered in participating in all aspects of society, and that women's experiences, achievements and successes are acknowledged and recognised. This work with the THA helps deliver those goals in the industry where, as you pointed out in your question, Mr Duigan, 60 per cent of hospitality workers identify as female. That equates to about 4.8 per cent of the Tasmanian workforce, obviously, referring to the 8 per cent of the Tasmanian workforce that works in hospitality.

It's an industry that can support many different employment choices to fit with different lifestyles, and we need to make sure that it continues to be an industry of choice for Tasmanians with clear career pathways, which we were obviously talking before about the workforce development programs as well. We know that employment figures in the sector dipped through COVID-19, but I am pleased to say that they are bouncing back, and the grant deed for this program is currently being finalised with the THA and will commence in the first quarter of the next financial year. And I certainly look forward to seeing the positive outcomes from that particular program, which I think is money really well targeted and committed. I'll hand it to you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, yes. Thank you, Minister.

**Mr STREET** - No problem at all.

**Ms LOVELL** - Minister, just a follow up on that question from Nick. Was it 60 per cent or 66 per cent? Sixty per cent, isn't it?

**Mr STREET** - Sixty per cent of the hospitality workforce are women. Sorry, go on.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Do you have a breakdown of - I mean, understanding there has obviously been a recognition that that's not necessarily reflective in leadership positions.

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely.

**Ms LOVELL** - Do you have a breakdown currently of the, I guess, spread of women in leadership positions and other positions in the hospitality sector? Yes?

**Mr STREET** - I don't believe I do, but I don't think it would be a step to say that we wouldn't be investing \$600 000 over the next four years if the figure wasn't less than 50 per cent, which is obviously where we were.

**Ms LOVELL** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - And look, if 60 per cent of the hospitality workforce is female, then I would be very disappointed if we don't get to a position where 50 per cent of the leadership positions within that sector are female.

**Ms LOVELL** - Well, that would be my next - yes.

**Mr STREET** - Well, I was going to say, it ought to be 60. I concede that it ought to be 60 per cent if that is the makeup of the workforce

**Ms LOVELL** - That was my next question actually. What targets are there within the program?

**Mr STREET** - That's a reasonable question as well. Ms Conway?

**Ms CONWAY** - Those are actually being developed at the moment, so we haven't actually executed a grant deed, but that's certainly something we try to build into all our arrangements that we have some performance measures and some outcome measures.

**Ms LOVELL** - Yes, it's important to know where you're starting from and what your aims are and how - yes, so you know whether it's successful or not.

**Mr STREET** - And where you want to get to. Absolutely. Apparently, existing research hasn't broken it down in terms of women or females in leadership positions. There is new research coming in the next few months that is doing that work. I would hope, like Ms Conway said, that if we don't have that research in time for the grant deed, that there is an ability to make that information available to the THA so that they know what they're working towards as well. I absolutely agree.

**Ms LOVELL** - It's disappointing it hasn't been done already, actually. I'm quite surprised.

**Mr STREET** - But it is interesting that research has identified the percentage of females in the workforce, but nobody has thought to drill down any further than that and say, well, is this reflective across the entire -

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**Ms LOVELL** - Exactly. I mean, it's one thing to say the workforce is 60 per cent women, but if it's 60 per cent in junior positions, then -

**CHAIR** - And this is why people don't understand the gender pay gap. Because they say, well, you know, all the - they just don't get it. So that's why this work's really important.

**Ms LOVELL** - I look forward to seeing what comes of that. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Nick, did you have another one?

**Mr DUIGAN** - I think we are done.

**CHAIR** - You haven't?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Well, I do, but I think it has been covered nicely.

**Ms LOVELL** - You think it is enough?

**CHAIR** - You did not have another one?

**Ms LOVELL** - Let me just have a quick look, sorry.

**CHAIR** - You are okay.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Well, if we are looking to fill time, I can certainly ask the minister about the events portfolio and -

**CHAIR** - Men's portfolio?

**Mr DUIGAN** - The events portfolio.

**Mr STREET** - Did you say the men's portfolio?

**Mr DUIGAN** - I want to talk about the events portfolio and if there are any new events we can talk about here at the committee. And you may have well tabled that information.

**Mr STREET** - That information is in the table I have just -

**CHAIR** - Tabled.

**Mr DUIGAN** - You might wish to spruik them.

**Mr STREET** - There are any number of events I can spruik, as he puts a piece of paper in front of me. There are events that have obviously had to cancel in the last couple of years have included the Cygnet Folk Festival, Hobart International Tennis Tournament, Tasmanian Chamber of Music Festival, and as we have talked about, tragically on a couple of occasions, The Unconformity. One of the new events we have been able to attract to Hobart is the Iron Man 70.3 for next February.

**CHAIR** - That is the men's portfolio.

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**Mr STREET** - I do not believe it is.

**CHAIR** - It has women too?

**Mr STREET** - I believe it is men and women.

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Ms WEBB** - Poorly named.

**Mr STREET** - It is. 'Iron Person' doesn't sound quite right though.

**CHAIR** - Why not?

**Mr STREET** - Okay. The Iron Person - I will have to ring them and tell them after this that I have renamed their event for them - is coming to Hobart. Event organisers estimate the Hobart event will attract about 1100 competitors in the first year and they are expecting that will grow over the five years. Registration numbers for the event have been strong since they opened at the end of March. I am told there are more registration numbers for our event in Hobart than there are for comparable events they run in other parts of the country.

**CHAIR** - When is it on?

**Mr STREET** - It is on in 5 February next year.

**CHAIR** - The weather is all right then.

**Mr STREET** - Iron Man 70.3 and I was a bit confused about the title to start with and thought it was a beach event. But it is actually an iron man triathlon event. Prince's Wharf 1 will be used as the transition area with swim leg first, off the end of the pier out into the Derwent for 1.5 - do not hold me to the actual figures.

**CHAIR** - I hope you fix the Macquarie Point issue by then.

**Ms WEBB** - I was going to say, look out for Macquarie Point. No heavy rains beforehand.

**Mr STREET** - I think we will send them south from PW1.

**CHAIR** - It depends which way the river is running really? Yes.

**Mr STREET** - It is a 1.5k swim and they come out of the water back through the transition area. Then a 90k bike ride that at the minute is planning to head out towards the north towards Mona and follow the river up and turn around. Then they come back and complete -

**CHAIR** - Ninety k?

**Mr STREET** - Ninety k bike ride.

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**CHAIR** - They will have to go further than Mona.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, they probably do it so it -

**Mr STREET** - No, well I think it is a circuit,

**Ms WEBB** - Circuit maybe.

**CHAIR** - Circuit, right, okay.

**Mr STREET** - They will go out and loop back.

**CHAIR** - They would be going further than MONA if they're going to do 90ks.

**Mr STREET** - And do it twice, then they do a 20k run to finish, which again will go out and loop back I think is how they do it. In terms of creating an event, we were talking about eyeballs before - that showcases -

**CHAIR** - Tassie.

**Mr STREET** - Tassie, we are incredibly excited about this.

**Mr HARRISS** - Have you registered, minister?

**Mr STREET** - I haven't registered, Mr Harriss.

**Mr HARRISS** - It sounds good.

**CHAIR** - He is in training, I reckon.

**Mr STREET** - Have I enthused you to take part? My brother-in-law used to do the full iron man triathlon, which is 3.5k swim, 180k bike ride and then a full marathon run at the end. He did a couple in Victoria when he lived in Melbourne.

**CHAIR** - You are taking after him?

**Mr STREET** - He wants to do this event and said that myself and my two brothers should split it and do a leg each.

**Ms WEBB** - Team approach.

**Mr STREET** - It would be fair to say that 5 February is coming up fast for me in terms of preparing myself for that particular event, so I think I will just be a spectator. But the organisers, when I met with them, were very quick to say I ought to join in. But I do not think anybody needs to see me in a wet suit, much less anything less than that.

One of the things about the event is that iron man participants typically travel to attend races and will extend their stay post-event. The organisers anticipate the event in Tasmania

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will attract a greater audience from interstate and overseas relative to other events across Australia, due to the appeal of the destination and the fact it is the first time here.

In terms of other new events, the fund which is detailed in the table, we also attracted the National Highland Dancing Championships held in Launceston in April this year - another event I would not be partaking in, Mr Duigan. And the Hockey Australia Championship Series and secured events over five years for underage championships to come to Tasmania. The Under 13 National Carnival will be played in Hobart during September and October. Those events, because of the age of the participants generally bring at least one parent, sometimes two and multiply the effect.

Attracting new events like this is great news for our state, as they demonstrate to the visitors they bring and the impact that they can have on the visitor economy. And we invest in new events, while at the same time ensuring our iconic events go from strength to strength, like Agfest and agriCULTURED, which promote the agriculture industry and promote our journey towards reaching our goal of \$10 billion in farmgate value by 2050. I said \$10 million in the House of Assembly yesterday and was corrected by the shadow treasurer. I made sure I have \$10 billion by 2050 as the farmgate target.

**CHAIR** - We have got to \$10 billion already in that?

**Mr STREET** - I do not believe so. Not from the agriculture industry alone.

**CHAIR** - I thought that was what the minister said this morning. Anyway.

**Mr STREET** - Anyway. I will check *Hansard* for that.

**CHAIR** - I could be wrong.

**Mr STREET** - But, look, we've been clear with Events Tasmania we will continue to seek out new events, but they will be events that fit within the new strategy we are developing. And like Adam said before they will be events that promote Tasmania and fit within what we are looking to promote, and fit within the strategy we are developing. I look forward to being able to announce next year's Estimates when I am still the Hospitality and Events Minister we have attracted a number of more new events to Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - I think it was \$2 billion for the agriculture sector.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Just a question on that. Something like the Tasmanian Masters Games, being reintroduced in Devonport, would not actually fit the event one. It would be a more sport and rec. At this first year it is just looking at getting people from Hobart and Launceston to go to Devonport or the north-west coast.

**Mr STREET** - I met with Steve Martin a couple of weeks back to talk about it, because I was a bit confused around the Tasmanian Masters Games versus the Australian Masters Games. The Australian Masters Games was actually on the north-west coast a couple of years back and the first time it had come to Tasmania. It was normally in Geelong or Adelaide, Steve was saying.

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**Mr GAFFNEY** - Every second year it is in Alice Springs and then every other year it goes another place.

**Mr STREET** - The idea behind the Tas Masters Games is to try to attract some of the people involved in the Australian Masters Games once every two years in the off year to come to Tasmania, particularly the north-west coast. In funding for it, I do not know whether you have any more details, but the request from Steve was not a large amount of money because all the Tas Masters Games organising committee does is sort of an umbrella approach to the whole thing. Each individual sport within the Masters Games organises their own sport and competition. It is really about having an umbrella organisation that controls the overall presentation and promotion of the event.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - What I like about this event is it is not just for the north-west coast, they are actually trying to make it a bundle and next year King Island might run it, or the year after Stanley might run it. It would rotate around Tasmania and you have all the different sports and there are 24 or 25 sports interested at the moment. That is unique in itself in the fact it is not just trying to get it to Alice Springs. It is trying to rotate like the Australian Masters Games does and from that point of view it is quite attractive.

**Mr STREET** - To be honest, Steve said you would be surprised by the number of people in the off year who were looking for something to do in terms of getting together with potentially the same group of people. They are reasonably confident of the success of getting people to the north-west coast, not just from across Tasmania but also from interstate.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I think that's the appeal factor. If you think of somebody living in Queensland or somewhere else thinking, 'Well, this year I'll go to Devonport, two years time I'll go to St Helens'.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Two years after that - so they actually get to see the state, playing sport with their friends that they may not see for every two years. The concept, I think, is quite good, and it would give all Tasmanians a bite of the pie from accommodation, restaurants.

**Mr STREET** - Potentially, yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I think the concept is very good. Any seed funding would be greatly appreciated so that they could get in line for the next group.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I will put a plug in for that. Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - Done.

**CHAIR** - All right. We might wrap it up there then, minister.

**Mr STREET** - No worries.

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**CHAIR** - I think it's a 15 minute break we've scheduled. We'll come back at 5.45 p.m. for Community Services and Development and then Sport and Rec last. There's a cup of tea out here if you need in the antechamber.

**Mr STREET** - I thank Ang Conway and Adam Sproule. They have been excellent.

**The Committee suspended from 5.30 p.m. to 5.46 p.m.**

### **DIVISION 2 (b)**

**Department of Communities Tasmania**

**Minister for Community Services and Development**

### **Output Group 4 - Disability Services and Community Development (b)**

#### **4.1 Community Services (b)**

**CHAIR** - Welcome back, Minister.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming back. If you would introduce your team at the table. I know they have been at the table earlier, but for the purpose of *Hansard*.

**Mr STREET** - That's okay.

**CHAIR** - And then I'll invite you to make an opening comment.

**Mr STREET** - To my left I've got the Deputy Secretary of Communities Tasmania, Kate Kent. To my right, I've got Ingrid Ganley, who is the Director of Community and Disability Services.

**Ms GANLEY** - That's correct.

**Mr STREET** - Good. I remembered. As minister for this portfolio, I am committed to continuing the work of this Government in ensuring a strong relationship with our community services sector to support and enhance the wellbeing of the Tasmanian community. We're backing this commitment with further funding for food security, active ageing and volunteering in this Budget. We're building on the investment across our community services sector to support children, individuals, families and communities.

Recognising the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19, we've provided additional funding to support people impacted by family and sexual violence. We've also funded community sector organisations to increase their capacity and implement new practices. We've invested in our communities through programs to upgrade neighbourhood houses and appoint specialist community care advisers to better link people to support and we're continuing to work with the community to invest in elder abuse awareness education and prevention; prevent and reduce gambling harm; implement the recommendations of our informal kinship care review; and provide a range of family support services.

As we move to a new stage of the pandemic, I place on record my thanks for the support of our many community partners who've worked with us in ensuring the needs of the



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Tasmanian community and the community sector have been met. I particularly welcome the work with TasCOSS and their regular forums with the community sector and service providers such as the Tasmania Salvation Army, Red Cross, Foodbank, Loaves and Fishes, Volunteering Tasmania, COTA and many more like men's sheds and neighbourhood houses who have been there every day to help each other.

This past year has also reminded us of the fragility of international relations in other parts of the world. We know that crises such as those we've seen in Afghanistan and Ukraine have been felt keenly by our multicultural communities here in Tasmania. We continue to work closely with organisations such as the Multicultural Council of Tasmania and the Migrant Resource Centres to ensure that we support families and individuals. It really is a pleasure to have this Community Services and Community Development portfolio. I look forward to questions on this portfolio.

**CHAIR** - Thanks. I'll go to straight to you, Meg.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. I will start with some of the numbers in the table on - which one am I looking at? I've lost my page now.

**CHAIR** - Page 42 are you looking for there?

**Ms WEBB** - There it is, back there. On page 42 in this line item, Community Services, regarding the different areas that you just outlined as being the responsibilities of this line item.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - The allocations, if we were to look at this year's allocation in 2022-23, how does that break up across those different functions?

**Mr STREET** - If I'm on the right line, we have moved from \$37.4 million in 2021-22 to \$39.7 million in 2022-23.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm looking at the revenue from appropriation. I think you're probably looking at the expense table instead.

**Mr STREET** - Right.

**Ms WEBB** - We generally look at revenue appropriation from appropriation outputs in this. The figures you provide might relate to expense. That's fine if that's the breakdown you'd like to provide.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Just so we can see in an indicative sense across the functions how the money's allocated.

**Mr STREET** - I'm looking at Neighbourhood Houses, recurrent funding of \$8.763 million. We've got \$1 million from the 2018 election commitment in terms of the capital improvement program, \$100 000 election commitment on capacity building, which is

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to do with improving governance within the Neighbourhood House network, particularly with the boards that control them as that's been identified as an issue at some houses.

There's also a 2021 election commitment on the capital improvement program, and there's a 2021 election commitment on family and community support workers, which is the pilot program. That has got \$2.8 million across the next two years.

**Ms WEBB** - So 2022 23, those two last ones you mentioned are what numbers, sorry?

**Mr STREET** - Sorry, it is \$1 million in terms of the capital improvement program.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I got that one and I got capacity building and then -

**Mr STREET** - And \$1.4 million for the Community Care Advisor pilot.

**Ms WEBB** - Over four years?

**Mr STREET** - No, over two years; \$1.4 million a year for two years as a pilot program and then we will look at it at the end of the two years.

**Ms WEBB** - And this is the second year for that?

**Mr STREET** - Sorry, this financial year is the second year.

**Ms WEBB** - It's 2022 23, yes, sorry.

**Mr STREET** - Sorry, this financial year is the second year, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - The one we're looking at for the Budget.

**Mr STREET** - In terms of family support, we've got integrated family support services, \$7.633 million, and other family support at \$3.11 million. In community-based sexual violence support services, we've got Laurel House in the north and north-west for \$1.66 million this year in the Budget; \$1.824 million for Sexual Assault Support Service in the south; and then in the Community-Based Family Violence Support Program, we've got Anglicare, \$250 000.

**CHAIR** - We got these figures from the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence.

**Mr STREET** - Right, okay.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay. But this is still in the Community Services line item that the allocation.

**Mr STREET** - I believe so.

**CHAIR** - But there's additional funding, then. If it's additional -

**Mr STREET** - No, it's the same.

**Ms WEBB** - So the family violence amount you mentioned

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**Mr STREET** - In the Family Violence Support Program, there's \$250 000 for Anglicare, RAIN; Yemaya, \$220 000; and Engender Equality, \$318 000; Huon Domestic Violence Services of \$229 000.

**Ms WEBB** - This is the nine different organisations that we heard about?

**Mr STREET** - No, I've got

**CHAIR** - No, they're different numbers.

**Ms WEBB** - Different, okay, different numbers.

**Mr STREET** - I've got four here

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - That's more their base funding rather than the uplift, isn't it?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And the other figures were the uplift.

**Ms WEBB** - Was the 37 per cent uplift, yes.

**Mr STREET** - This is the breakdown I've got of the Community Services section. And then TasCOSS, there's information, advice and referral. Community Sector Development Unit, \$572 000; peak body funding of \$465 000; peak body strengthening governance, \$50 000. Then in the NILS loan area, there's \$735 000 in this year's Budget.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - If I might just interrupt for a moment

**Mr STREET** - I beg your pardon. I've got the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy. So there's Prevention of Elder Abuse 2019-20.

The 2022-23 Budget, though, is \$359 000, and then there's a Prevention of Elder Abuse election commitment from last year of \$880 000 as well.

**CHAIR** - Just in terms of peak body funding, I noticed from reading the media, not from reading the *Hansard*, that there was some comment about having a peak for the LGBTIQ+ community.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Would that fit under this category?

**Mr STREET** - No, I would imagine that that would sit within the Community Development Sector.

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**Ms WEBB** - The next line item, because this isn't peak body funding.

**Mr STREET** - No.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - So the peak bodies sit within Community Development like COTA, Carers, YNOT. Actually, YNOT now sits with Mr Jaensch.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - Yeah, Volunteering Tas. The conversation we had yesterday was around that.

**CHAIR** - Right, okay. We can come back to that, that's all right.

**Ms WEBB** - Come to that in the next line.

**Mr STREET** - I made the point yesterday - just to finish that thought - that the whole-of-government working group, I think, is working well in terms of providing what a peak body might provide in terms of bringing together the organisations that would sit beneath the peak body. I think it was in response to Dr Woodruff I said that I was more than happy to have the conversation at the next whole-of-government working group meeting.

**Ms WEBB** - Sure.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Sorry, Meg.

**Ms WEBB** - That's okay. Can I ask about the Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy? Did you say that that's coming to an end? The period of time that you described it covering sounded like we were coming to the close of that.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - So what is the plan with that? Is there to be a new iteration of that strategy?

**Mr STREET** - We committed \$1.76 million over two years; like I said, \$880 000 a year through the 2021-22 Budget.

In terms of the new strategy, the new Active Ageing Strategy and the Elder Abuse Strategy, I'm told that the consultations have commenced. I don't know whether Ingrid wants to add anything further in terms of the process that's underway.

**Ms GANLEY** - So through you, minister, the Elder Abuse Prevention Advisory Committees held a facilitated planning session to look at the current plan, where we're at, and what we want to put in a future plan. So that's in development to be finalised in the next six months.

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**Ms WEBB** - Minister, is there any expectation that we would back away from the areas covered that have been covered by that prevention strategy, like the helpline and the different referral services and things like that, and also the community advertising and awareness-raising?

**Mr STREET** - No, I've got to be honest; I haven't been involved in the consultation process, but I wouldn't think that we would be backing away from any of the work that we've been doing.

In the meetings I've had with COTA, it's clear that elder abuse is a continuing problem. It's not something that's been solved over the last two years with the budget allocation that we've made. There's going to have to be continuing work in that area.

**Ms WEBB** - There's good coordination across services generally that has built up in that area. It'd be a shame to see it drop away. Is the helpline still sitting with Advocacy Tasmania?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - And there was always a good connection with Legal Aid as well in that space for legal advice when required.

**Mr STREET** - One of the things I was naïve about was the breadth of situations categorised as elder abuse. I think people hear about elder abuse and they think physical abuse, but we're talking about mental abuse, financial coercion and taking advantage of old people.

**Ms WEBB** - It's a very similar profile to domestic abuse. I think in some ways it is a different iteration around domestic abuse. Different circumstances but similar. It's good to hear that you're becoming educated about it.

**Mr STREET** - I'm getting there.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm very interested in this area. I was part of advocacy for it to be done in the first instance when I was back in the sector, and it's been lovely to see it come to fruition. I'd love to see it continue. Take that as a comment, though. Can I ask about NILS funding?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - There's no additional funding for any particular NILS initiatives in this Budget, or did I miss it?

**Mr STREET** - I'm not sure that it was specific to this Budget or not.

**Ms WEBB** - Given the cost of living situation that we are in, the services provided through NILS are incredibly important.

**Mr STREET** - They are. One of the things that we are continuing to fund from 2021-2025 is the NILS micro-business loan scheme. There's \$75 000 a year for four years for that. We've doubled the commitment for the Energy Saver Subsidy Program to \$2 million over four years from last year's budget to 2024-25, which is administered by the Department of State Growth though, so it would not necessarily fit or sit within there. Through the COVID-19

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stimulus funding, NILS set a goal of 60 per cent increase over two years from 2500 to 4000 loans per annum and they have increased the monthly average to 300 loans.

In March 2022, NILS celebrated their 30 000th loan issue and over the first six months from 1 July to 31 December, NILS issued 1768 micro finance loans compared to 1446 for the same time in the previous year. I did note in the Budget there was a drop off because there was a \$500 000 extra commitment was made during COVID-19 and why it is now back to the \$700 000. Outside of the core business of NILS, there are other programs that NILS are running that have ongoing funding across this Budget.

**Ms WEBB** - Did I miss the Gambling Support Program funding or did you not mention it because it is funded through the CSLs and comes in from a different source?

**Mr STREET** - I believe that it is because it comes from a different source.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - But I am more than happy -

**Ms WEBB** - I wouldn't have been surprised if I had missed it.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. If you want to know about the amount of the Community Support Levy and the Gambling Support Program -

**Ms WEBB** - It is the funding that comes into the Gambling Support Program which, yes, is originating from the Community Support Levy.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. Gambling support expenditure in the 2022 23 Budget is \$3.11 million. \$3 113 877, to be exact.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - Which is 50 per cent of the support levy.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes. And then there is some involvement from the Gambling Support Program with the allocation that goes to charity organisations too, separate to that amount we are talking about?

**Mr STREET** - Another 25 per cent.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. That's all.

**Ms WEBB** - So the 3.11 is both those?

**Mr STREET** - Is the 75 per cent of the -

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, that comes to us.

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**Mr STREET** - Right, that comes through the CSL.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Before I go and drill down into that, I am going to move on from these numbers, if anyone wants to follow up on any of these before we move on? Okay, I will keep going. Could you could talk us through what will occur as Department of Communities Tasmania is disbanded and these functions get transferred to a different department? What consultation has occurred with these different areas funded in this area to help inform the thinking around that?

**Mr STREET** - Yes. I will talk from my perspective as the minister for this portfolio in saying that as I have met stakeholders since I came to the portfolio, one of the questions they have asked is about the restructure and what is going to happen to particularly, the face-to-face people they deal with as stakeholders.

The commitment I have given them is there will be no reduction in services, nor a reduction in focus on the vital stakeholders that exist. It is a concern across not just Communities Services and Development, but also my Sport and Rec portfolio, because the staff for that sit within Communities Tasmania.

**Ms WEBB** - No doubt we will talk about that, yes.

**Mr STREET** - We will. In terms of the consultation and the work that has been done with the stakeholders and the staff. I will probably pass to Kate Kent as the Deputy Secretary and she can provide some more detail on the actual process itself.

**Ms KENT** - Since the announcement by the Government, we have obviously identified the range of stakeholders we work with across all of these portfolios, including in community services and community development. As the minister said, we have assured them all of the programs of work that we are working on continue and they continue unabated.

We are keen to make sure there is no sort of delays in any of our programs we are delivering, and we have kept them updated. Take TasCOSS as an example, the minister referred to those regular forums they have every two to three weeks, with over 60 to 80 organisations that attend those. The Secretary of DPAC, Jenny Gale, our secretary, Michael Pervan, Rob Williams as the Transition Project Director have all spoken and presented at those forums online to explain the transition to our new agencies and the thinking behind it by the Government.

There has been regular contact. Michael Pervan wrote to a number of our stakeholders, Ingrid Van der Mei and others recently to explain and to continue that discussion and consultation. As I explained earlier today, these areas will be moving into Department of Premier and Cabinet and coming under a division headed up by Mel Gray as the Deputy Secretary.

**Ms WEBB** - And what is that division called in DPAC this moves into?

**Ms KENT** - It does not have a name yet. It is yet to be named.

**CHAIR** - The yet-to-be-named department.

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**Ms KENT** - And that will commence from 31 July, 1 August.

**Ms WEBB** - While these introduced mixes of things has been grouped together in Department of Communities Tas of fairly recent years, what consideration was given to whether there is an appropriate movement for any of them to areas other than just as a whole lot to DPAC. I am particularly interested on the Gambling Support Program.

**Mr STREET** - Of course.

**Ms WEBB** - Because I would have seen this as an opportune moment to consider where that might fit as a suite of services. I have already put in the public domain talking to the Premier my view that it fits well into a public health area, given we have a public health approach there. Was any consideration given to where the location might fit best?

**Mr STREET** - I do not want to absolve myself of responsibility, but the decision about the restructure of the Department happened before I came into the portfolio and I am happy to pass to Kate Kent to know if any discussions of that sort happened at a department level. I have not been involved in any of those discussions at this stage.

**Ms KENT** - And I can probably also get Ingrid to share in some of the discussions. Really, once the decision was made by the Government and we certainly then were able to talk about how best the different areas could work together. Ingrid's and mine, for example, have often had this discussion even within the Department of Communities Tasmania as it existed, as to whether we should look at how we structured ourselves more effectively, just as we do for individual components.

So individual bits of my division, I have had that discussion on different areas and I am sure Ingrid's area has probably had the same. I probably cannot talk on behalf of the gambling work area. But certainly, when it came to other areas within my division, such as we manage grants right across the agency and for others, we did talk about what would be the best way to manage that.

**Ms GANLEY** - It is the same thing. We looked at keeping the like community sector funded programs together and bringing them across to join up with Community Development. We see that gambling still fits within our suite of services of providing prevention, early intervention and counselling across a range of programs and the linkages we have there. Obviously, there are referral pathways into the health sector for a number of our programs. We felt, in terms of the changes, everything could sit together. Not to say that things cannot be reviewed over time, but that was our thinking.

**Ms WEBB** - What consideration had been given, and if there was a distinct consideration of options to fit a public health approach to what is a diagnosable medical issue and putting that into that same similar area.

**CHAIR** - That is a comment. I will get onto the next question.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. As the Gambling Support Program framework exists now, 2019-2023 and will expire within this financial year we are moving into with this Budget. Does the allocation provided for the Gambling Support Program within this financial year



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2022-23 include the development of the next iteration of the Gambling Support Program strategic framework?

**Mr STREET** - Yes, it does.

**Ms WEBB** - And will it be undertaken with a view to designing a different framework that takes into account the future gambling markets changes that will be coming into play in July 2023?

**Mr STREET** - I would imagine the answer to that question is yes. I know that there's been some work done with Youth Network of Tasmania YNOT on gambling harm and focusing on youth as well, which would feed into that as well. As the reforms are primarily aimed at introducing new regulatory and financial model for the Tasmanian gambling industry, changes for Tasmanian gamblers are not anticipated.

However, the reforms will enhance harm minimisation through doubling the current level of available CSL funding, which I'm sure you're aware of. In parallel, the Gambling Support Program will work with service providers and stakeholders to monitor and address any changes in gambling harms or service demand resulting from the reforms as well. I know that Treasury are doing a body of work on that as well.

**Ms WEBB** - I've got some more questions on that too and the connections across. But in terms of the development in this next financial year of the next iteration of the Gambling Support Program Strategic Framework, what will that process look like?

**Ms GANLEY** - We're actually setting up our own departmental advisory group with some key stakeholders from the sector so that we can work with them as we start to look at what a new strategy would look like. Again, we're taking the learnings from this current one and moving forward and some of the research that we've done on some of our awareness raising campaigns.

**Ms WEBB** - From the answer the minister just gave a moment ago, it wasn't clear that there's an anticipation that there will be necessarily a change of configuration for the Gambling Support Program Framework under the new model?

**Ms GANLEY** - I think that is what we want to consult about and look at and consult about. There's consultation going on at the moment about how the funding will flow.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, indeed, and I was going to look into that and ask about involvement with that. One of the things that I noted was a couple of bits of work occurring in this space. One is consultation about the regulations relating to the new Community Support Fund, which will replace the CSL under the new model. The second one is that the Gaming Commission is undertaking a review of the mandatory code as well. So, I'm interested to hear about how the Gambling Support Program area has interacted with both those processes.

Before we get to that, I noted in the review of the mandatory code that's been undertaken as a consultation paper out right now from the Gaming Commission. It notes that the background research done for this paper and the commission itself has raised concerns that the individual venue licensing model under future gaming markets - I quote from the page 5 of this consultation paper - 'the individual venue licensing is likely to create a more competitive

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environment which could result in'. Then they describe a range of things that are about attracting gambling customers.

Further down the page, they say that the Stenning report, the background research, raises concerns the new individual venue licensing model and resulting increased competitive gambling environment may lead to increased promotion and gambling on gaming machines. Increased gambling promotion could be detrimental to the welfare of players and also threaten the sustainability of each gambling business. So, they're looking to the new model to potentially be generating an increased level of harm to the welfare of players, which is something that's discussed in relation to those reforms as it came through.

**CHAIR** - What is the question?

**Ms WEBB** - My question is that in light of that, has that been noted when plans have been made for the Gambling Support Program, its funding and its development of a new framework with an assumption that that would be part of the new environment?

**Ms GANLEY** - Understanding your question, I believe, certainly, the Gambling Support Program has been involved with any surveys or questionnaires that come out in relation to future gambling. We've also been looking at what we can do to review our current services and systems. We've done the review of the Know Your Odds campaign, and the Give Change a Chance campaign. We have invited members to join our advisory group that we can engage stakeholders. We have engaged YNOT to consult with young people so we can get some feedback on young people. We have engaged Anglicare to review the gambling assist online training module for general practitioners.

We are looking at 2021-22, which continues to target gambling harm prevention grants program and we are looking at innovation projects to provide new and effective ways to address. So, that's the work we're doing now that we want to feed into any of these reviews and the questionnaires.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, that's useful. But my question related to, has there been a shared understanding, as there has been from the commission in this consultation paper on the mandatory code, that the competitive environment of the new model could well drive up harms and impact on the welfare of clients? This would be relevant to need in this space. Has that been an assumption to feed into the next framework and to how it might be configured?

**Ms GANLEY** - Well, it's certainly a consideration. Our emphasis is always on harm minimisation. Yes.

**Mr STREET** - Who produced that particular -

**Ms WEBB** - It's the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission. They're doing the second review of the mandatory code currently. It's the consultation paper just out in May this financial year.

**CHAIR** - I think that question has been answered. Have you got others?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes but if others would like to jump in, I'm happy to. Okay, thank you. Regarding the process that the commission is undertaking, was there a formal way that the

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Gambling Support Program could feed into this review of the mandatory code so far or is it anticipated to as it plays out?

**Ms GANLEY** - We certainly have participated and provided advice. I will need to double check about this paper that you're mentioning. We are anticipating to put in a submission to the other paper that was circulated about the Community Support Program.

**Ms WEBB** - Community support fund that replaces the CSL?

**Ms GANLEY** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Because in terms of -

**Mr STREET** - I just want to point out as well that any member of the public can make a submission to that process as well until 6 July.

**Ms WEBB** - Also, the regulations that have been consulted on is an open consultation too, I believe?

**Mr STREET** - It is.

**Ms WEBB** - So, that's available too. Regarding the consultation that is occurring on the new regulations to be created, the Community Services Fund to replace the CSL, the allocation that has been in place, the 50 per cent of CSL that comes and the 25 per cent, that obviously disappears because the proposed new model no longer has that same set divvying up?

**Mr STREET** - Potentially.

**Ms WEBB** - Exactly, potentially. There's not a proposal in those draft regulations that there be fixed amounts or fixed proportions, I should say. What's the expectation for how that then flows through to funding for the Gambling Support Program? Is there an expectation that a proportion of the new fund would flow in that direction or a particular amount would be derived rather than a proportion? Are we also then expecting a continuity of level of funding or variations to that?

**Mr STREET** - I don't believe that I am in a position to answer that question. That is a decision for Treasury and the minister for Finance, once the consultation period has ended.

**Ms WEBB** - All right.

**Mr STREET** - It will be informed by the submissions they receive but the decision won't be mine, as the minister for -

**Ms WEBB** - I'm not necessarily asking you if it's your decision.

**Mr STREET** - No.

**Ms WEBB** - Has there been an understanding at this end of the Gambling Support Program end of things which is funded? That's a funding source for the program -

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - to expect that there will be a continuity of funding level available through whatever iteration of the regulations comes through as a final version?

**Mr STREET** - Like I said, Ms Webb, it's an open consultation process. I haven't come with or fed into the process an expectation about amounts. Rest assured that the Department of Communities or the people who work within the Department of Communities will be making it clear in their submission, I would imagine, that the Gambling Support Program still needs a considerable level of support. The need for the GSP is ongoing.

**Ms WEBB** - Indeed. Potentially elevated if we are understanding the Gaming Commission's views.

**CHAIR** - All right, another question?

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Again, I'm happy for others to jump in while I move to my next set of questions.

**Mr DUIGAN** - I'm happy to jump in but I would be taking us away from this particular area.

**Ms WEBB** - That's okay. We can return to it, or return to a different one.

**CHAIR** - So jump in.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you very much, Chair. Economic and social participation is important for all Tasmanians. And migrants are an important part of our community and our economy. What is included in the Budget to support multiculturalism here in this state?

**CHAIR** - I think we're in the next line item with that one, aren't we? We haven't moved to that one yet. But I will come back to you.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you, Chair. And I apologise for that.

**CHAIR** - Yes. You'll be first up when we get to that line. I'll just get Meg to try and get the -we haven't got a lot of time left.

**Ms WEBB** - Would be happy to move to the next line item if you would like to.

**CHAIR** - We'll move to the next item and we'll go to Nick. Did you hear the question, minister?

#### **4.3 Community Development - Policy Advice and Ongoing Community Development (b)**

**Mr STREET** - I did. I'm more than happy to take that question that Mr Duigan just asked.

**CHAIR** - We're in 4.3 now, Community Development.

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**Mr STREET** - One of the genuine benefits of this portfolio has been getting out to meet some of these stakeholders. I've met with MCOT, the Migrant Resource Centre and also the MRC North in the very early days of having this portfolio. The trip out to MRC at Moonah was a bonus for my office in terms of the platter of food that was purchased.

**CHAIR** - That's why you've got to get in training for the Iron Man event.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. I was well enough looked after out there before I took the platter back. The platter was for the office specifically, who knew that the facility existed and requested that it come back to them.

I think everybody would agree that our state is stronger and more prosperous because of our multiculturalism and because of the valuable contribution of those who've chosen to call this state home. We're committed to supporting and enabling our migrants to take up opportunities for economic participation and to respond to what communities tell us about their needs for places to meet, learn, share their faith and celebrate their culture.

This year's Budget included an additional \$100 000 to the Glenorchy City Council to continue operating the Moonah Multicultural Hub across two years. We're also investing in consultations for a new Tasmanian Multicultural Policy and Action Plan. Working with our funded peak, the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, as well as the MRC Tasmania and MRC North that I've just mentioned.

We're also providing \$20 000 to continue our partnership with the Devonport City Council to provide multicultural services in the north-west through MRC North, as well as providing \$30 000 to MCOT to produce a multicultural Tasmania report for the Government. To continue supporting young adult migrants, funding of \$20 000 has been provided to the Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania for their My Transitions program to support year 11 and 12 students to transition into post-compulsory education, training, or employment.

These build on our ongoing 2020-21 commitments, which included funding of \$350 000 to the Migrant Resource Centre northern Tasmania over two years towards the redevelopment of the Haig Street Community Centre into a new northern multicultural hub. I acknowledge their successful securing of funding from the federal government to progress this important initiative.

There's funding of \$300 000 for 2022 23 to enable Catholic Care Tasmania to deliver the Safe Haven Hub services to find work or a pathway to employment for refugees and other migrants through education and training. There is also \$20 000 to enable RMIT University to continue to provide interpreter training scholarships to increase the number of interpreters credentialled by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. Across the two funding there are 20 interpreters or bicultural workers who graduated from the RMIT online course and for the NAATI certification.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, with the overseas crisis of Afghanistan and now Ukraine, it's vitally important that we continue to support a culturally diverse, inclusive and socially cohesive state. That's exactly what those investments are doing. It's been my pleasure to meet with members of that community but also to make it clear to them that the Government's ongoing support will be there as well.

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**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Another one?

**Mr DUIGAN** - I'm happy if you'd like to address on this line.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I've got a question on it so I'm happy to jump in. Or you had one that was going to be carrying over. Did you want to revisit that or not? The LGBTIQ+ peak body was the issue we were going talk about here.

**CHAIR** - You go with yours, I'll come back. All right.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay. So in a similar way to the question I asked last time in terms of a breakdown around the total amount into those different functions broadly, is that something you can either table for us to have a look at, or if it's not too long read through?

**Mr STREET** - I don't appear to have the same level of detail around this particular output, although here we go. As per the 2022-23 Budget output group expense summary, this output has decreased by \$15 million from \$44 million to \$28 million, which is primarily reflected through the cessation of and funding profile changes of various 2020-21 election commitments, offset by rollovers from 2021-22 of \$4.6 million, and Budget decisions of \$4.5 million in 2022-23.

**Ms WEBB** - Are you able to provide the details on what ceased?

**Mr STREET** - I don't believe I've got - We're happy to table that information.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - We'll get a clean copy for you.

**Ms WEBB** - I had a question about carers. I'm not sure if this is the right line item to talk about that. I think Carers Tas is funded through this area?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - I believe that you're progressing plans to develop a carer recognition legislation.

**Mr STREET** - We are.

**Ms WEBB** - Which is very welcomed by the sector, I believe. Feedback has been sought on a draft bill. Can you provide an update on the progress of that process and when we might expect to see that bill tabled?

**Mr STREET** - At present all states and territories except Tasmania and the ACT have carer recognition legislation, and the ACT has a draft bill before the ACT parliament as well. So without the work that we're progressing, we'd be the only one. The carer recognition legislation consultation commenced in July 2021 with the carer issues reference group and regional face to face consultations held around the state during November of last year. Written,

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video or audio submissions and an online survey were held from October to December 2021. It says here that an anticipated draft carer recognition bill following the consultation period will be introduced to parliament. There is a date there but it's contingent upon Cabinet support which I can't talk about.

**Ms WEBB** - Potentially this year some time?

**Mr STREET** - Potentially in the next couple of weeks. Or the next week, Ms Webb, the legislation will be introduced.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. And the other thing I'm interested in, because I believe - and please correct me if I'm wrong - I don't think there's anything additional in terms of funding for carers, for initiatives to support carers apart from that legislation progressing in this Budget. I did note commentary from Carers Tasmania CEO David Brennan, who said: 'Whilst Tasmania's 80 000 family and friend carers will soon be recognised by legislation, they continue to be left out of medical support through the Budget.' They put in successive budget priority statements for support for different initiatives but haven't had that supported. Are you able to make a commitment that, as well as the legislation, we will actually see further support in a tangible way to carers in this state?

**Mr STREET** - There is \$60 000 over three years for community grants in support of Carers Week in the Budget. There's obviously the peak body funding for Carers Tasmania and indexation, which we -

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, which is all just core things rolling over.

**Mr STREET** - I understand that. But we are the first government that's indexed that funding as well, so they'd still be on \$110 000 as opposed to the increase they - I think they're up around \$125 000 a year now.

**Ms WEBB** - All I can give you is a golf clap for that one because it's minimal.

**Mr STREET** - In fact, it's \$120 240 in 2022-23 with the annual indexation of 2.25 per cent.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm happy to celebrate not a cut, but there's not actually tangible extra support, I think is fair to say.

**CHAIR** - Have you got anything further to say, minister?

**Mr STREET** - Carers Tas also received funding from the Commonwealth.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I am sure they are very grateful for it.

**Mr STREET** - I am sure they are as well, Ms Webb. We are proud of the support we provide to Carers Tasmania. I have met with Mr Brennan I recall at least once since I came into the role. I am aware of the contribution the 80 000 unpaid and informal carers make to the community. I will continue to meet with them as a peak body and a key stakeholder and have made it clear to all of the stakeholders in this portfolio my door is open in terms of suggestions;

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not just peak funding, but if they have programs they want to present to us as well, that they are -

**Ms WEBB** - I am sure you will see them again in the BPS next year.

**Mr STREET** - I am sure I will, like every other stakeholder in this portfolio and every other portfolio.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - All I can do is commit to look at them and do as much as I can to advocate for this portfolio, which I will.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, I appreciate that.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay. I am interested to understand more about the Seniors Week and Active Ageing Plans and the funding there for COTA.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - The Seniors Week funding is a regular amount of funding provided to Council of the Ageing to do that, is that the same level of funding but indexed or are we anticipating any additional funding? Do you have a breakdown about what's Seniors Week funding and what is for the other component, which I think it implementation of the Active Ageing Plan?

**Mr STREET** - I have the Active Ageing information in front of me. It is the peak body funding that is indexed, as I said before, for COTA, the same as it was for Carers Tasmania. There is also funding of \$125 000 to COTA to commence consultation on the review of the Active Ageing strategy to develop the new Active Ageing Plan. That process is already in place and consultation and work has started on that with that funding.

Seniors Week, additional funding has been brought forward to support COTA as it prepares for Seniors Week 2022 of \$79 000. COTA's peak body funding was \$117 000 rising to \$120 000. COTA Tasmania receives funding to deliver actions under the current Active Ageing Plan and to undertake consultation for the new Active Ageing Plan. \$125 000 for both activities.

The Government committed \$125 000 to commence consultation on the review of the strategy. It is \$120 000 for Seniors Week activities, \$40 000 for a mature-age project, which is a new initiative, and \$100 000 for the Active Ageing strategy.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. And the Seniors Week funding, which is funding they receive regularly each year, what was that funding for the last financial year?

**Ms KENT** - It has been consistently that same \$125 000.

**Ms WEBB** - Oh, not indexed? You expect them to deliver Seniors Week on a cut each year without indexation?



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**Ms KENT** - We have also worked with them to ensure they have funding in advance, because the calendar year of the event happens. But, yes -

**Ms WEBB** - But unindexed funding across each year for Seniors Week. When was the last time it was provided an uplift?

**Ms KENT** - I can take that on notice, because I am sure they got an increase in the last years. We can check.

**Ms WEBB** - And would we adjust what we expect them to deliver in Seniors Week under that funding as less each year, given that it is a cut through not being indexed?

**Mr STREET** - It would be up to COTA to make a decision around what they provide in Seniors Week with the funding they are provided, Ms Webb.

**Ms WEBB** - Well, I am sure there are requirements for what they do need to deliver for that funding. We would not give them funding and not have KPIs or expected outcomes.

**Mr STREET** - I have just been told there is an uptick in funding for the Active Ageing strategy to \$195 000 next year.

**Ms WEBB** - Excellent, good to hear. Might be a good one to look at Seniors Week funding upticks and regular indexation.

**CHAIR** - I will take that as a comment. Any other questions?

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. I know you spoke a little bit about some youth-focused funding already, but I am not sure if we have got more information about the funding that has been provided - Actually, this is to YNOT, which might not be your area anymore then in that sense. It is not the same area.

**Mr STREET** - It now sits with minister Jaensch.

**Ms WEBB** - Sure. In terms of the multicultural policy and the action plan, the funding for that for the next iteration, the development, you spoke about that broadly before, but I am not sure we drilled down into the numbers.

**Mr STREET** - There is one-off money in this year's Budget to fund Multicultural Council of Tasmania and Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania and MRC North in terms of the development of that strategy.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, and those amounts were?

**Mr STREET** - Yes. There is \$75 000 provided to MCOT and MRC in terms of funding the consultation and work on assisting with the development of the next strategy and action plan. And as I was about to say, one of my tasks as the Community Services and Development Minister is going to be to advocate for ongoing funding for the action plan when it is developed and the implementation.

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The reason the funding sits there for just the one year is we wanted to fund the organisations to help us develop the strategy. Once the strategy and the action plan has been put together and we have identified the actions out of it, I will be going back to advocate for the funding to make sure the action plan gets put in place and funded appropriately.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. The \$75 000 for MCOT and MRC, is it each or joint funding and they are doing a project together?

**Mr STREET** - No, that is between them to work together with their respective cohorts.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - Yes

**CHAIR** - Yes, any other questions on that one, Nick?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Minister, the PESRAC report had several recommendations which fall into the Community Services and Development portfolio. Could you please outline the progress regarding those?

**Mr STREET** - Yes, I can, Mr Duigan. We have responded to each recommendation in the Community Services and Development portfolio, consistent with the commitment to deliver on the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's interim and final reports. We have released our Food Relief to Food Resilience Tasmanian Food Security Strategy 2021-22 to 2023-24 in August of last year as part of our election commitment. Our Food Relief to Food Resilience action plan is underway in terms of development and will focus on community-driven solutions, because we believe and understand that local people understand local needs best.

There is further strengthening of our commitment to food security in 2022-23 in this year's Budget of \$300 000 to support place-based food solutions identified in this action plan, which focuses on supporting community food resilience solutions in a collaborative partnership by connecting the Tasmanian food sector. Initiatives will include, we hope, community gardens and programs, school lunch programs and education and awareness campaigns.

That money is in addition to the increased funding for emergency food relief to \$3 million over three years, which was in last year's budget. This included increased base funding for critical food distributors Loaves and Fishes Tasmania and Food Bank Tasmania together with an additional commitment to increase funding for the essential services of Gran's Van, Louis' Van, and Mission Beat. We have also invested \$1.4 million over two years to expand the school lunch program on a pilot basis to 30 schools, after which time it will be evaluated to better understand its potential impact, particularly for the most vulnerable students it is going to serve.

We are working closely with Volunteering Tas to support the re-engagement of volunteers and building our future volunteering workforce through the development of a Youth Volunteer Army and also the extension of the Safeguarding Volunteering Project. We have supported and continue to support organisations to provide face-to-face service delivery, particularly for our essential services. And we also remain ready to adjust our service delivery

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to the possible impacts of COVID-19 in the future and ensure we can support those who need our help most.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Have you got a list of the schools the breakfast plan is going to be rolled out on you could perhaps table?

**Ms WEBB** - It is a lunch program.

**Mr STREET** - Lunch.

**CHAIR** - What did I say?

**Mr STREET** - Breakfast.

**CHAIR** - Did I? Sorry. They probably need breakfast and lunch, some of these poor children.

**Mr STREET** - Seniors Week was previously \$106 000, Ms Webb, and we increased it to \$120 000 in the 2019-20 Budget.

**Ms WEBB** - In 2019-20?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - And it has stayed at level now, okay. Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - I'd prefer to see the glass half full and concentrate on the rise from \$106 000 to \$120 000 rather than -

**Ms WEBB** - I'm sure you would, minister.

**Mr STREET** - So, the 15 schools selected to commence the pilot in 2022 are Gagebrook Primary, Herdsman's Cove Primary, Rokeby Primary, East Devonport Primary, Smitton High School, Mountain Heights School, Rosebery District School, New Norfolk High School, Triabunna District School, Oatlands District School, Austins Ferry Primary, Beaconsfield Primary, Sorell School, Warrane Primary and Yolla District School. I believe that there will be another 15 added to bring it to 30 next calendar year. Is it term 1 or term 2 in 2023?

**Ms KENT** - This year they started in term 2.

**Ms WEBB** - And was that an opt-in? Did the schools put themselves forward to be selected for the two tranches?

**Ms KENT** - Yes. I mean, it needs to be school-led. They need to be ready and be prepared to invest a lot of their energy as well. So, yes, definitely they would.

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**Ms WEBB** - And were there schools that put themselves forward that we didn't fit into this lot, that will have as a waiting list hopefully for the third tranche?

**Ms KENT** - Certainly, the Department of Education is working closely with all the schools that indicated an interest and they just needed to do a bit more preparation.

**CHAIR** - There are some schools in very vulnerable communities on that list.

**Mr STREET** - There are indeed. The improvement in educational outcomes that have been seen from these programs is phenomenal.

**Ms WEBB** - And in rural Tasmania, wonderful.

**Mr STREET** - I mean, you don't need me to explain to you how much better a child will learn during the day if they get a decent breakfast and a decent lunch. I've got to say - again, I don't want to keep saying how naïve I was, but before coming into this job, I hadn't visited any school's breakfast programs. To see kids turning up to school without having had breakfast was a bit of an eyeopener to me, to be honest. It happens far too frequently, and you can only imagine how difficult it is for a kid to sit in class and learn, having not had anything to eat since the previous evening.

**CHAIR** - If they had anything then.

**Mr STREET** - I was going to say, if they ate then as well.

**CHAIR** - So, minister, those are the first tranche of schools to go in?

**Mr STREET** - Those are the schools that have started in term 2 this year.

**CHAIR** - This year, yes. Have you got the list of the next ones to go in, or is that not finalised yet?

**Mr STREET** - I don't know whether the 15 schools have been selected for tranche 2 yet or not. I don't believe they have, but my adviser just put a note in front of me to say that I'm meeting with Julie, who runs that program, next week, I believe.

**Ms WEBB** - There was a pilot program that was proof of concept for the schools that were involved in that, I can't remember off the top of my head.

**Mr STREET** - I can't either.

**Ms WEBB** - They're added into the mix. I presume they're continuing on with theirs as well?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Was that yours then? All good. Do you have another one there in this? I think the minister answered my question broadly in that previous line item so, I don't need to re-prosecute that one. We can move on.

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**Ms WEBB** - Yes, we can. We've only got five minutes.

**CHAIR** - Okay, we'll move on. These are the COVID-19 ones that are acknowledging that there aren't any appropriations this year, but there may be questions related to the expenditure from last year.

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - This is Nick, sorry, no -

**Mr STREET** - Sorry, not me.

### **Output Group 90 - COVID-19 Responses and Recovery 90.2 Community Support Fund**

**Mr DUIGAN** - Noting, as you say, Chair, that there is no appropriation, but if the minister could provide some details about the Community Support Fund.

**Mr STREET** - I can.

**CHAIR** - And is the money all spent from the allocation?

**Mr STREET** - So, there was \$6.73 million for the 2021 22 COVID-19 Output 90.2 - Community Support Fund. This was comprised of \$6.5 million for domestic hotel quarantine support and recovering network partners for \$230 000. Final costs for this output will exceed the original budget of \$6.73 million, primarily due to the agreement by the former premier to extend hotel quarantine services from October 2021 to the end of March 2022 this year.

Since inception, approximately 17 500 people were accommodated through our hotel quarantine program. Notably, Tasmania's program was the only program in all Australian jurisdictions that did not result in the transfer of infection from a hotel quarantine setting into the broader community.

As all Tasmanian state border restrictions have now been removed, the emergency management arrangements established in late 2020 to quarantine people travelling to Tasmania are no longer required. Five of the eight facilities engaged by Communities Tasmania for use as quarantine hotels were released back to the private sector management at the expiry of their terms of engagement on or before 31 March this year.

Operational and administrative responsibility for the remaining three hotels - one in each region - transitioned to the Department of Health on 1 April 2022. While this is no longer under this portfolio, as the new minister, I put on record my thanks and gratitude to all the staff who worked so hard throughout the quarantine hotel program to keep people safe, often in quite challenging circumstances.

I note the presence of the secretary of the department, Mr Pervan, who was integral in that program. These supplement arrangements to isolate and care for COVID-19 positive people and to accommodate those who do not have suitable premises in which to quarantine

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have been funded. In 2020-21, there was \$150 000 to the Australian Red Cross and \$20 000 to the Salvation Army. In 2021-22, there was \$20 000 to the Salvation Army, \$121 000 to Red Cross and then an additional payment of \$20 000 to the Salvation Army and an additional payment of \$60 174 to Red Cross.

The Tasmanian government has and continues to provide a range of supports to Tasmanians facing economic and other hardships as a consequence of the pandemic. As at 29 May 2022, more than \$2.6 million in direct financial assistance has been provided by over 7000 grants to Tasmanians through a range of assistance measures. I put on the record my thanks to the service providers who looked after people who were quarantining at home because I know that all of those charity organisations, - whilst we provided funding - they went over and above the funding that the government provided. They stretched themselves and their own resources in order to provide the services that were required. As a government, we will always be eternally thankful to them for doing that.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you.

90.4 Emergency Accommodation Support

**Ms LOVELL** - Thank you, Chair. This year marks the completion of these COVID-19-related measures and you've spoken about that a little already. This particular line item, can you just speak a bit more to what was achieved with this expenditure over the last year?

**CHAIR** - And was all the money used?

**Mr STREET** - Kate, are you able to speak to that?

**Ms KENT** - Not really.

**Mr STREET** - Not really?

**Ms KENT** - Sorry.

**Mr STREET** - I don't have that detail in front of me.

**Ms KENT** - I am going to have to take it on notice.

**CHAIR** - Can you speak up please, Kate, for Hansard?

**Ms KENT** - Sorry, it's actually emergency accommodation support is through the -

**Mr STREET** - We can bring Mike to the table.

**Ms WEBB** - I imagine it was provided through Housing Connect as extra brokerage funds to get people into caravan parks and things like that, I imagine. How about that?

**Ms KENT** - Yes, that's right.

**Mr STREET** - I think I can sit down again.

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**Ms LOVELL** - Was all of that funding expended last year?

**Mr STREET** - The secretary of Communities Tas, Mike Pervan.

**Mr PERVAN** - Thank you, minister. Yes, the expenditure as listed there has all been expended and managed through Housing Connect and other services. The only thing I would add to it is that the Safe Spaces are an ongoing function through the Housing group and are subject to increased funding and some expansion in this budget. It was one of the quite successful experiments that we got underway very early during the COVID-19 response. This provided ongoing support to homeless people and people in accommodation crisis that we did somewhat differently to the approaches in other states with the hotels at the heart that came to a sudden and awful halt with a few thousand homeless people being discharged back onto the street. Over the next year - sorry, minister, it's your portfolio -

**Mr STREET** - You're right.

**Mr PERVAN** - We're continuing to connect the Safe Spaces with the ongoing work through Housing Connect and brokerage to get people into longer term, more secure accommodation from Safe Spaces, which are really an emergency response.

**CHAIR** - The north-west are doing well with that.

**Ms LOVELL** - So, this was primarily for accommodation for people who needed to quarantine, essentially, or who were homeless but needed somewhere they were able isolate?

**Mr PERVAN** - Yes. Although, at one point during the last year, we started using the quarantine hotels to provide that isolation component. That's why Health have taken two of the hotels on, to use them for that purpose. Where people don't have somewhere they can safely isolate, they now get quarantined in a hotel.

**Ms LOVELL** - Thank you. I'm pleased to hear about the continuation of funding for Safe Spaces, knowing that it's another portfolio.

**CHAIR** - We'll move on. 90.15, TasCOSS, at \$175 000 last year.

**Ms WEBB** - I don't have questions about that.

**CHAIR** - We'll move on. 90.16, Emergency Food Relief Providers. That's you, Sarah.

**Mr STREET** - I don't want to do your job for you, Chair, but have we gone past time for this?

**CHAIR** - We have but we're just going to wrap this up.

### **90.16 Emergency Food Relief Providers**

**CHAIR** - Sarah, do you have anything on 90.16?

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**Ms LOVELL** - I do. Just one quick question. Obviously, we've talked a bit about how these were COVID-19 measures but there's still an ongoing demand in many of these areas. I'd suggest emergency food relief is one of the areas where there is still significant demand. Was there consideration into continuing increased funding, or has there been increased funding for food relief in other

**Mr STREET** - The \$3 million commitment in last year's Budget was \$1 million a year for the next three years so we're in the second year of that increased funding for emergency food relief. I've met with Foodbank and Loaves and Fishes since coming into the role. They've made it clear that there's ongoing demand for their services.

One of the things I've done in the last week is write to the new federal Minister for Community Services because Foodbank receives Commonwealth support because of their national footprint that Loaves and Fishes don't have access to. I know it's something that's been raised before. I've raised it with the new minister because it would be a very small contribution in terms of their overall Commonwealth budget that would be very much appreciated by Loaves and Fishes in terms of that ongoing support.

This isn't a Tasmania-specific problem. Loaves and Fishes, when they last met with me, made me aware of the fact that they speak to other organisations in other states that are either specific to a state or have only got a footprint across two states that can't access that Commonwealth funding as well. I know it's another stretch on the Commonwealth budget but it's an issue in every state in terms of food relief.

**Ms LOVELL** - I can't imagine demand is going to decrease any time soon.

**Mr STREET** - Exactly right. And most of these organisations are local organisations. That's how they start. They start in their local area, much like Loaves and Fishes did in Devonport, and are now providing a statewide service. They need support, and they need Commonwealth support as well as state government support.

We're not asking for matching funding from the Commonwealth but Loaves and Fishes have made it clear that they could continue to expand the range of services they provide if they receive additional funding. The letter was only sent a couple of days ago. I'm looking forward to meeting the new minister and having that conversation.

**Ms LOVELL** - Hopefully that will be successful. If not, if there is no forthcoming Commonwealth funding, is there scope for increased state funding?

**Mr STREET** - Much like the multicultural funding is one year, the reason we put \$300 000 in this year's Budget with no forward Estimates is that we are still developing the action plan that that \$300 000 is going to go towards. It hasn't been released yet. It's still out for consultation with the providers across the state and key stakeholders.

Once that action plan is in place, again much like the multicultural action plan, my job as Community Services minister is going to be securing ongoing funding across the forward Estimates for that action plan. In speaking to Loaves and Fishes, a lot of what they're doing fits with the strategy that we've developed and released in terms of the social enterprise work they're doing. They use excess produce to make products that they then sell into the market.



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They're looking to establish a kitchen in the south where they bring youth in. Is Rokeby in your electorate?

**Ms LOVELL** - It is, yes.

**Mr STREET** - So the potential for that kitchen in your electorate, bringing youth without the skills necessary into that kitchen and upskilling them is one of the range of initiatives we're looking at. There will always be a need for emergency food relief, and we understand that. But the more we can educate the community about what good food is versus what bad food is, and give people the skills to look after themselves, we think that that's an addition to emergency food relief that can be really valuable for Tasmania as well.

**CHAIR** - We might wrap it up there and close that line item off. Thanks, minister, and we'll move to Sport and Recreation. Do you need to change the people at the table?

**Mr STREET** - I need to change one person at the table.

### 4.7 Sport and Recreation

**CHAIR** - We don't need to reintroduce - or you can for purposes of *Hansard* and this new line.

**Mr STREET** - I've got deputy secretary, Communities Tasmania, Kate Kent, to my left. manager, Sport and Recreation, Helen Langenberg to my right.

**CHAIR** - We might have a brief opening statement, minister.

**Mr STREET** - I'll keep it very brief, Chair. It's an honour to serve the Tasmanian community, and I was pleased to be appointed to the role of Sport and Rec earlier this year. I haven't hidden the fact that it's a bit of a passion area for me. We've all enjoyed, over the past year, watching our Tasmanian teams perform in national competitions, from the JackJumpers making the NBL finals to the standout success of the Tasmanian Tigers winning their first ever women's National Cricket League final. I do have to point out that my sports minister's partner was a member of that winning Tasmanian team.

Some of our junior teams have performed well in recent months as well, with two national championship bronze medals in April 2022: one to the Ivor Berge basketball team in Mackay; and the other to the Tasmanian under 18 women's hockey team in Cairns. The Tasmanian Tridents have competed in the National Bowls Premier League and eight Tasmanians were recently picked in Hockey Australia's 2022 Australian future squad. One Tasmanian was selected in the Netball Australia under 19 and under squad and two others into the Australian 17 and under squad.

We're incredibly proud as a government of some of our key programs, like Ticket to Play, which has gone from strength to strength. And through the last four years of funding for Levelling the Playing Field and Improving the Playing Field, there's been almost \$25 million of state Government money allocated to projects to upgrade and develop facilities throughout the state.

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This 2022-23 Budget also includes \$300 000 to maintain the funding for state sporting organisations to support their continued capacity and growth of the sector and ongoing provision of safe, fair and inclusive sport. We're also investing in women and girls for the development and implementation of a Women and Girls in Sport strategy over the next four years. The strategy will consider all aspects of sporting participation, including coaching, officiating, leadership, administration, player support and participation.

I'm proud of the way the Government has responded to the needs of the Sport and Recreation sector since the start of the pandemic and I'm looking forward to working in this portfolio to ensure as many Tasmanians as possible can participate in and enjoy the benefits of an active sport and recreation lifestyle, which I believe is critically important for the future of Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - Absolutely. Grace Gaby was selected for the national team in gymnastics, a young woman from the north-west, a baby I delivered.

**Mr STREET** - Excellent. When was she selected?

**CHAIR** - A few weeks ago.

**Mr STREET** - Very good.

**CHAIR** - She's done an amazing job.

**Mr STREET** - Not a sport we're known for in Tasmania generally, gymnastics, so that's great.

**Mr HARRISS** - Thank you, Chair. Minister, I'd just like to get an understanding on some of the outcomes that you might seek to deliver in the Women and Girls in Sport strategy, noting that it's a four-year commitment.

**Mr STREET** - As I turn to the page, it's \$185 000 a year for the next four years to deliver that strategy. It was a policy position championed by the previous Minister for Sport and Recreation. In the 2022-23 state Budget, there is \$740 000 over the next four years for this particular strategy.

Community Sport and Rec has delivered initiatives aimed at increasing female participation in sport and active recreation already in recent years, including a requirement for gender-balanced board representation in state sporting organisations. If you apply as a state sporting organisation for funding from the Government, organisations need to have a minimum of 40 per cent representation of both males and females on their boards now to qualify for that funding. We are developing our understanding of the enablers and the barriers of girls' participation in three action sports through a grant to Women's Sport and Recreation in Tasmania. That research is going into mountain biking, surfing and skateboarding with the Girls in Action Sports report.

We are also providing an annual Women in Sport Coaching scholarship worth \$5000 to enable women to access quality coach learning and development opportunities. That is a partnership between the Tasmanian Institute of Sport and Womensport and Recreation Tasmania. This scholarship program supports progression along the coach development

pathway. In terms of what we want to achieve from the Women and Girls in Sport strategy, I am more than happy to pass to Ms Langenberg, if she wants to detail some of the extra work going to be done with the money we are providing.

**Ms LANGENBERG** - Certainly, the participation in sport and recreation is quite high, but we are finding women and girls particularly are underrepresented in coaching, officiating and in positions of leadership. Whilst there are a lot of resources, part of the emphasis of this funding is to provide a resource that can handhold, for want of a better word, a lot of the sporting organisations through the processes they need to do to really make the cultural change within their environments to encourage women and girls to participate fully.

It's really about what does a young woman in particular see when she looks on a website of a state sporting organisation? What do you see when you walk into club rooms? Is it a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment? It is an attitudinal shift. The awareness at a state sporting organisation level is now relatively high, but effecting that change, particularly in volunteer-run regional and local clubs, really requires that level of support.

**Mr STREET** - The money will also fund a dedicated project manager for Women and Girls in Sport for the four years. The plan is for them to work with the state sporting organisations, but also then the clubs and organisations, like Helen said, beneath that. They will develop an annual action plan of activities to upskill female participants, develop and monitor and evaluate the framework for the strategy. They will design and deliver programs to support and upskill female participants.

And like Helen said, female participation in sport is relatively high, but much like we were talking about with the hospitality sector in terms of 60 per cent of workers in that sector being female, but they are not represented in leadership positions. In terms of coaching, administration and leadership roles within sport, we need to be promoting more women, but we also need to be upskilling them so they can take up those opportunities when they are presented to them.

It is a really important investment and I have made the point numerous times the more diverse an organisation is - not just sporting, but any organisation - the better it is. The perfect example for me in my own personal experience is the cricket club I played at, which was male-only for the first 15 years I played for it. And it was infinitely better club once women's teams were introduced and there was more female participation around the club, not just playing but in the leadership and administration of the club.

**Mr HARRISS** - With the sport development funding for state organisations of \$300 000, is there a cap on any single application on that?

**Mr STREET** - The cap is \$60 000. The \$300 000 is in addition to the \$850 000 that is a standing commitment to that program. The \$300 000 brings it up to the \$1.15 million it has been for a number of years now. Organisations have to apply for that annually and they can get up to \$60 000, but there are a lot of organisations that do not qualify for that much.

One of the common complaints when I was an advisor to the Minister for Sport and Recreation and I have had from state sporting organisations I have dealt with as a backbencher and now as the minister is they would like more certainty around that funding. Like any

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organisation that operates in this area, they are required to come back and basically provide the paperwork and - exactly right, and ask for the handout.

**CHAIR** - Begging bowl out.

**Mr STREET** - There is generally no issue with the continuity of funding for these organisations. It is the fact it is an annual process for them. One of the things I have already talked to the Premier about in the community development area and also with these state sporting organisations is can we get longer-term contracts in place for these organisations to remove some of the administrative burden for them.

There will obviously have to be KPIs put into the contract that they will need to be able to meet every 12 months, but they will have some certainty and hopefully less administrative burden of applying for the money they receive. Which I have to say, whilst important to them, is not the largest contributing factor to their budgets each year as well. They have to do considerable work outside of what we give them to run these state sporting organisations.

**CHAIR** - Dean?

**Mr HARRISS** - No, that was all. I had a bit on the Iron Man series, but we covered that in previous lines.

**CHAIR** - Are you sure you are right?

**Mr HARRISS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Minister, the description of this output talks about providing the best possible opportunities for Tasmania's elite athletes in support of their performance at international events with a focus on sports that compete - Olympic and Paralympic, Commonwealth and World Championships. I do not know if you've had the privilege of meeting Chris Symonds yet, a parasailer from Wynyard. He is an international champion and overseas at the moment competing again and bringing home golf every time he hops out on the water.

**Mr STREET** - Right.

**CHAIR** - An incredible man. He is leading with others a bid to have parasailing included in the Paralympics in 2028.

**Mr STREET** - Right.

**CHAIR** - He has made numerous representations to previous ministers and premiers. You may not have had the opportunity yet, but I am interested in where even former ministers might have had in supporting this bid. We have an international champion in our state.

**Mr STREET** - We have got more than one, I was fortunate enough to play intrastate hockey as a 12 or 13-year-old with a kid named Matt Bugg, who then had a terrible accident that meant he has been in a wheelchair since then. He actually won silver at the last Paralympics that had sailing as an event. I met him in the Premier's reception room when we had all of the athletes back after that and said to him, 'Oh, are you going again in four years'

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time?' and he said, 'No point.' And I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'Oh, they've discontinued sailing at the Paralympics.'

**CHAIR** - That is right.

**Mr STREET** - Honestly, I could not believe it. With all of the sports that get added to the Olympic program, I couldn't believe they were removing sailing. I understand the former premier, Peter Gutwein, wrote to the former prime minister, Scott Morrison, in December 2020 seeking his support and representation to the International Paralympics Committee, to reinstate sailing as a Paralympic sport.

Mr Gutwein received a reply from the former prime minister in February 2021, indicating he had made a representation to the IPC President Andrew Parsons requesting sailing is considered for inclusion in the Paralympic Games in time for Los Angeles in 2028. This information was passed on to Mr Symons. I am advised that inclusion into the Paralympics is based on meeting set International Paralympic Committee criteria and parasailing was excluded due to the low number of countries competing in 2016.

I am also advised the International Federation of World Sailing's bid to have the sport reinstated needs to meet the International Paralympic Committee eligibility and they have made positive progress towards achieving this for 2028. The decision on which sports will be included in the 2028 Paralympic Games will be made by the end of January next year, so January 2023. I am happy to seek further advice as to where the bid to have parasailing reinstated in the Paralympics is currently at. It goes without saying I am more than happy to meet with Mr Symonds if he thinks there is anything we can do as a government.

**CHAIR** - I know they did lose because of that fall away, but I think they are getting pretty close to getting the numbers of countries competing again now.

**Mr STREET** - Okay.

**CHAIR** - I am not sure. But when you look at his Facebook feed, you will see there are a lot of countries really pushing for this.

**Mr STREET** - You know, it goes without saying, I couldn't be more supportive.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr STREET** - Why would we be limiting the number of sports at the Paralympics? As much as the Olympics was about amateur athletics it has moved past that but the Paralympics have still managed to retain a lot of that. I don't know why we'd be limiting the number of sports.

**CHAIR** - When you look at the physical capability of Mr Simons, who has Kennedy disease, it staggers me that he can even get out on a boat. I couldn't do what he does. I appreciate that response. Do you have a question Sarah?

**Ms LOVELL** - Yes. Thank you, Chair. Minister, I understand Tasmania is the only state not to be sending under 12 and under 15 girls and boys' teams to the School Sport

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Australian Football Championships. Is it too late to fix this given that it's taking place in August?

**Mr STREET** - So I'm told that, through the department, we're looking at a range of different options for potential funding for that. I saw the story as well, and I've been contacted by a couple of different lots of parents as well who are disappointed in it. The advice we got from AFL Tasmania is that School Sport Australia Championships aren't part of the AFL Talent Pathway. That is their official position.

AFL Tasmania provides development championships under 16, and AFL national championships under 18 as part of their Talent Pathway Program. AFL Tasmania have said that they're not the only state sporting organisation in the state to elect not to send teams to School Sport Australia events in 2022 for a number of reasons. Cricket Tasmania, Basketball Tasmania, Football Tasmania, Golf Tasmania, softball, volleyball, baseball and bowls have all made the same choice.

However, our Government understands the importance of providing children with the opportunity to participate, and we're exploring any options that may allow Tasmanian Australian rules teams to continue participating. I don't know whether you have anything further to add to the work that's going on, Ms Langenberg?

**Ms LANGENBERG** - Not at this stage. It's an interesting topic in terms of the opportunities provided, and whether, in fact, it's additional opportunities for the same children who compete in other championships or whether it's different opportunities for people. We're still working through the issues and exploring it. And there is also the matter of the costs to the parents involved, as well as the costs of competing.

**Ms LOVELL** - Which I'm sure we all get approaches all the time for fundraising for those types of things that can be very expensive. Is it likely that there'll be a solution before this year's competition, or are we looking more likely at next year?

**Mr STREET** - I believe it's probably too late for this year. That's not to say that the work won't continue in looking forward as well. I don't want to devolve responsibility for this, but it's not as cut and dried an issue as 'we're just not sending Tasmanian teams interstate anymore'. There are some issues and there's a reason that these sports have chosen to not participate in this particular School Sports Australia program. They're issues that we're working through as well. It's not a problem with the School Sports Australia program, it's just a decision that's been made by these organisations to not participate.

**Ms LOVELL** - Okay, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Michael, do you have a follow-up on that?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, just a question on that too. How does the Government decide where it puts its money for sport and recreation? I take onboard there are some sports that go under 10, under 11, under 12, under 13 Australian teams. And then we went through a period about two years - no, just before COVID-19 - where there were Australian teams playing and junior teams being selected. But it wasn't so much on ability and talent, it was whether they could afford to go. And I think that's -

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**Mr STREET** - To be honest, now that -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - So how do you manage that? We need to get all of our kids off the couches and onto the sports field, not just a few who might go to Melbourne or Sydney for a week or two.

**Mr STREET** - Absolutely. And look, quite frankly, now that you've put that issue on the table, that is one of the issues with the School Sports Australia program. These sports were finding that it wasn't necessarily about a talent pathway, it was about which kids' parents could afford to send them to these championships as well. So the state sporting organisations started to have to make decisions about whether they would support those teams as well because of that issue. We've got different funding options within the department for athletes who are chosen in these programs in the support that we can provide if they're going to accredited national and international championships, though I take on board your point about getting kids off the couch as well.

That's why the Ticket to Play program has been so important in being able to provide two \$100 vouchers to children of parents who qualify, because cost is one barrier that we can do something about in getting kids participating in sport. That's not to say that there aren't barriers that we can't necessarily fix as well. I read a story today about Tasmania's AFL team and they were talking about declining participation. They said one of the problems is the seven-day work schedule that people have now, and the fact that parents are not available to take their kids to weekend sport as they used to.

**Ms LOVELL** - It's a big juggle. Training through the week and everything.

**Mr STREET** - Training and games on the weekend.

**CHAIR** - It's the kids who rule here.

**Ms LOVELL** - Kid's schedule.

**Mr STREET** - Yes. And so, look, we're helping to address the cost barriers, but there are other barriers that are much harder to fix that need some long-term thinking as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Has sport and rec done any work on - I feel sad for the parents who feel guilty that they can't send their kids away. They do everything they can, and it's really an unfair pressure that we put on the family, because they want the best for their kids. Is any work being done through the university or through some process about the pressures we are putting on the family because they do have the expectation from their kid they should go everywhere.

**Mr STREET** - I'm happy to pass to Helen if she's got a -

**Ms LANGENBERG** - This is certainly something the major sports in particular are well aware of as well. It's about not only the opportunities for children but then the number of opportunities and those competing priorities. So through our conversations with the COs and others of the state sporting organisations, whilst we're encouraging people to participate in sport and recreation it's not about overloading them either. If they've got club training, then regional training and then state training, it's tending to get a bit absurd, not only for the parents who've got to then bear the cost of getting the children to and from, but it's also the time impost, not to

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mention the overloading of the children as well. It's something that we're working through with them to try to make sure.

The sports themselves are looking at what their pathways are which the minister alluded to in AFL Tasmania and its own pathway for players. They feel that they offer opportunities through regional development opportunities, and then come together to those - through the state. It's arguable whether it's appropriate for under 12s to travel interstate to represent the state anyway. If you look at the evidence for the level of participation and what we should be encouraging, it is actually about it remaining fun and keeping people participating at a junior level and allowing for the talent development pathway to take its course at a later age in those sports.

**Mr STREET** - It's a fair point that Helen raises as well. We can put programs in place in cost barriers, but it's also about state sporting organisations and sports potentially ratcheting down their expectations of these kids as well. AFL football is the one that I'm most familiar with. The number of kids that get spat out of the system at 15, 16, and 17 when they should be playing football until they're in their mid-30s or later, their enjoyment of the sport is destroyed because there's so much pressure put on these kids to reach the elite level. When it doesn't look like it's going to happen for them, we lose them from sport entirely as well. I think it's a massive issue and there are -

**CHAIR** - We see the fallout, don't we?

**Mr STREET** - You do, and there are separate issues about making sure that girls keep participating in sport going forward as well. I think that's a massive one in terms of the expectations that we put on kids with these sports. It was the same with hockey when I was growing up as well. Helen was talking about, I played school hockey, I played club hockey and then if I was lucky to get picked in intrastate teams I was away doing that as well, sometimes playing four, five, and six games of hockey in a weekend. Quite frankly, I burnt out at 16 or 17 as well. I fell victim to exactly what I'm talking about.

**CHAIR** - Nick, did you have a D.D. on this one?

**Mr STREET** - That's a bit blatant, isn't it, Chair?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Do I have a question? Yes, I do have a question. Minister, I wonder if you could outline how the Government is helping organisations to support disadvantaged Tasmanians by creating socially inclusive and life-changing opportunities?

**Mr STREET** - Yes, I can indeed. One of the things that's funded in this year's Budget is additional funding for Reclink, which is an organisation I've only really come into contact with in the last two or three years. But the work they've done in mainland states, particularly Victoria, has been extensive. And the fact that it's now well-established in Tasmania is terrific, because we were very fortunate, in terms of establishing Reclink in Tasmania, that Reclink Victoria and the national body provided funding to get it started up, which doesn't always happen. They basically took money away from Victoria and a couple of other states to put it towards establishing Reclink in Tasmania.

This organisation provides evidence-based, innovative community sport and recreation programs that engage some of our most at risk and disadvantaged community members,



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including those with mental health illness, alcohol and drug addiction, domestic violence, homelessness, long term unemployment, social isolation, and socio-economic disadvantage. They deliver more than 23 sport and recreation programs in partnership with its members in Tasmania. There are clubs and state sporting organisations that have joined up as members of Reclink as well to make their facilities available, tenpin bowling being one example.

Centre for Sport and Social Impact research in 2017 found that every dollar invested in one of Reclink's programs generated almost \$9 in social value, including improved physical and mental health, better employment outcomes, lower crime rates and reduced risk of suicide.

There's \$75 000 a year for two years to Reclink in this year's Budget which allows them to expand delivery of their services in the north of the state. They started in the south, expanded to the north and now they're going to be able to expand to the north west as well.

From 2021-22, we're providing \$500 000 in total over three years to Reclink to support the delivery of sport and recreation programs for disadvantaged Tasmanians. Reclink have said they'll use that funding to help transform the lives of Tasmania's most disadvantaged people aged between 16 and 65 through innovative sport and recreation programs in Hobart, Glenorchy, Launceston, Georgetown, Burnie and Devonport.

We're absolutely committed to making these opportunities available for as many people as possible, and the \$75 000 to be able to expand those services to the north west coast so that they're truly statewide is not just a sensible investment but a really good one as well.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Nick, all done?

**Mr DUIGAN** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Okay. If there's no other questions, we'll wrap it up. Thank you, minister.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Oh, sorry, there was one.

**Mr STREET** - Oh, I beg your pardon. No, sorry.

**Ms KENT** - We tabled the information that was from the last question about the ceasing funding, to explain that change in the Budget from the -

**CHAIR** - Did you want to table this?

**Mr STREET** - Yes.

**Ms KENT** - We can table it.

**CHAIR** - Minister, there was one other question I wanted to ask. With your stated passion for sport and everything, when we're looking at sporting clubs and other organisations

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getting grants, how do you manage your conflict of interest, if there is one? And broadly, how are these grant processes assessed?

**Mr STREET** - The grant processes themselves, my only job is to sign the letters to the successful applicants. The guidelines for the grant funds are released publicly. We announce the opening of applications then all of the applications are assessed at arm's length from me. I've declared my conflict of interest in terms of my membership of the Kingston Beach Golf Club, the only sporting organisation that I'm currently a member of, besides the Brisbane Lions, and we're not funding them to come here in the near future. I've declared that in writing.

But it's really inconsequential that I'm a member of that golf club because the applications are assessed by the department. The first time I see who's applied and who's been successful is when the department send the list over of successful and unsuccessful grant applicants, and I sign the letters to the successful ones, which is one of the bonuses of being the minister. The unsuccessful ones get a letter from the department to say that they've been unsuccessful on this occasion.

**CHAIR** - And you don't sign those ones?

**Ms WEBB** - You should sign those too.

**Mr STREET** - I don't sign those ones.

**CHAIR** - That's a bit gutless.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, cut it out. Good decision.

**Mr DUIGAN** - Good decision.

**Mr STREET** - I get enough angry emails without signing letters to unsuccessful grant applicants, Chair.

**CHAIR** - All right. Thanks, minister, for that, and thanks for your time today.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you very much to the committee. Thanks to Kate and Helen, and to Mike and Paul Austen, the director of the TEC. He wasn't called to the table today. And Jackie Honey, who's hiding up the very back there, who's the manager of grant services in the department.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr STREET** - Thank you very much. Cheers.

**The Committee adjourned at 7.26 p.m**