



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

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**REVISED EDITION**



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**Wednesday 29 March 2023**

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

**ABSENCE OF MEMBER**

**Member for Franklin - Mr Street**

[10.01 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I inform the House that minister Street will be absent from Question Time today due to illness. Therefore I will be taking questions in his absence for the ministerial portfolios of Community Services and Development, Hospitality and Events, Local Government and Sport and Recreation.

**QUESTIONS**

**TasNetworks - Reading of Electricity Meters**

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

[10.02 a.m.]

Joan Yaxley is a retiree living on Hobart's eastern shore. She is here in the Chamber with us today. She has been paying hundreds of dollars extra on her power bills in recent months. The reason for this is that on top of being hit with power price hikes, she is unable to get her meter read. This means her bills are being estimated and they are being estimated incorrectly.

Joan lives alone. She has told me she feels frightened that if she does not pay her estimated bill, even though it is hundreds of dollars more than it normally would be, her power will be disconnected. She has been told there is not enough staff to conduct a meter reading at her house.

Another retiree living on Hobart's eastern shore with the same issue has told us that they have tried calling on numerous occasions to get the situation rectified, but her calls have gone unanswered.

Last year your Government admitted that 300 jobs were being cut from TasNetworks. Now your Government's cuts and outsourcing mean you cannot read Ms Yaxley's meter or even answer calls. Tasmanians are already paying high prices thanks to your broken promise. Why should Tasmanians like Joan Yaxley also pay hundreds of dollars extra, with no information about whether that money will be credited to future accounts because of job cuts at TasNetworks?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I acknowledge Ms Yaxley in the Chamber today and empathise with her concerns.

More broadly to TasNetworks, my understanding is that the reprioritisation means there is going to be a greater emphasis on grassroots on-the-ground staff so it concerns me greatly to hear the details of Ms Yaxley's experience. I am sure it is also a concern to the minister for Energy as well. We will, of course, follow up any concerns immediately to ensure that Ms Yaxley does not feel insecure around paying power bills. Regarding the estimated price, we will follow that up immediately.

I thank Ms Yaxley for being in the Chamber today and detailing her concerns. No doubt, there may well be others, as alluded to by the Leader for the Opposition, and we will ensure that this is addressed immediately.

TasNetworks is undertaking a transformation process, based on improving customer service, keeping prices affordable and preparing for Tasmania's clean energy future. I know the CEO of TasNetworks has provided numerous public updates on that process.

I am very interested to understand customer satisfaction when it comes to the service of TasNetworks. My understanding is that ratings for safety, reliability and customer satisfaction have all been steadily improving over a period of time and the transformation will help keep the business sustainable. Of course we want to keep our energy prices as low as possible and we also want to keep connection fees for homes and businesses down, while improving connection time frames and customer service.

We will follow up Ms Yaxley's concerns immediately in an effort to get to the bottom of the circumstances that have created unease and uncertainty. I well appreciate the concerns that Ms Yaxley has and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for coming into the Chamber and for her advocacy.

### **Racing Industry Allegations - Identification of Whistleblowers**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.06 a.m.]

Ms Yaxley has already written to you, minister, and I urge you to follow that up.

My question is to the Minister for Racing. In September last year, serious allegations of race fixing and complaints about the Director of Racing, including allegations of intimidating behaviour, were raised directly with you in writing. In your response four months later, you revealed you had passed the complaint, including the names of the people making the complaint, to the Director of Racing himself for assessment. Yesterday, in this place, serious allegations were made about industry whistleblowers facing retribution after making complaints to the Office of Racing Integrity. Your Government has a shocking record when it comes to the treatment of whistleblowers. How do you explain your own actions whereby you have disclosed the identity of brave people who have spoken out about serious integrity issues in Tasmanian harness racing, exposing them to retribution?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Before I answer that specific question, I have an announcement to make and now is an appropriate time to do it. The Rockliff Liberal

Government remains absolutely committed to upholding the integrity of Tasmania's racing industry and, as you know, I have spoken in this Chamber many times on this matter this week. This is an industry that employs hundreds of good, hardworking people, people who love their sport and love their animals. Does that mean that each and every one of them will do the right thing at all times? Of course it does not; we understand that. That is no different from any other industry, any community or any family. Make no mistake: we have and we will always call out bad behaviour. If we need to do more we will. That is why I announced the independent review process and we are doing that today. We will always stand up for the 99 per cent of hardworking men and women who are doing the right thing day in and day out - people who are up before dawn -

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. I ask you to draw the minister's attention to my very serious question that goes to her conduct, rather than giving a speech.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I will remind the minister of relevance. The minister indicated that before she answered the question she would make some comments.

**Ms White** - That is not how Question Time works.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I will allow leniency and allow the minister the opportunity to fully answer the question.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Thank you. These people are up before dawn, putting their hearts and souls into their passion, their jobs and livelihoods. That is why, when it comes to complaints and complaint processes, we commenced a review of the act and that work is under way. Today I am able to announce some more details of the independent investigation we are delivering.

**Ms White** - Do it as a DD. How about you answer the actual question? It is a serious question.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - We take allegations of integrity and animal welfare incredibly seriously. I am pleased to announce that Mr Ray Murrehy, who has a long and distinguished -

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek your guidance on this. The minister was not asked anything in relation to what she was talking about. It is a specific question from the Leader of the Opposition. The minister should not be allowed to just read from a prepared brief.

**Mr SPEAKER** - First of all, it is not a point of order to argue whether the minister is answering the question or not. I do not know what the answer to the question is. Therefore I have to allow the minister an appropriate amount of time to get to that answer. I will do that. If the House wishes to hear the answer instead of debating whether or not some specific points do not relate to it, we should allow the minister the opportunity to answer the question. If she goes too long I will pull her up again.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - On the point of order, Mr Speaker, with the greatest of respect, it is quite clear that the matter that the minister is speaking about bears no relationship to the significant concerns of the treatment of whistleblowers.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is not a point of order. Standing order 45 refers to relevance. I will remind the minister of that but that is the limitation of what I can do. I cannot put words into any minister's mouth.

On the point of relevance, minister, if you could be relevant to the question.

**Ms OGILVIE** - I will. The point of relevance is that the independent investigation will look at matters relating to the specifics of what you have mentioned today.

We are announcing that the highly regarded racing and national integrity expert, Mr Ray Murrphy, will be appointed as an independent expert to undertake our review. He has a long and distinguished career providing independent expert integrity advice services to government sporting codes and law enforcement bodies.

As previous chairman of the National Chairman of Stewards Group, an advisory subcommittee to Racing Australia -

**Ms White** - What about the question I asked you?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - on integrity and safety matters, Mr Murrphy is suitably qualified to lead this important review. His experience includes working as Manager of Integrity for Racing NSW. He has a comprehensive understanding of the Tasmanian racing -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker; it goes to standing order 45, relevance. The minister has gone nowhere near even acknowledging the question that was asked of her. It is in no way relevant to the way she has conducted herself when serious complaints have been made.

**Mr SPEAKER** - On the point of order, as I said previously, I can remind the minister of standing order 45, of relevance. I cannot put words into the minister's mouth.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker, in relation to your ruling. With previous Speakers, when ministers have blatantly and flagrantly tried to not answer a question, they have been sat down rather than waste the parliament's time. The minister does not want to answer the question; that is a matter for her, but the House's time should not be wasted by this kind of abuse of the system.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is very interesting that you raise the House wasting time on points of order. The sooner I allow the minister to conclude her answer, the sooner we can move on to another question. If she continues to go on and, in my view, not answer the question, I will sit her down.



**Ms OGILVIE** - Thank you. Mr Murrihy, Racing NSW chief executive -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Racing NSW chief executive, Mr Peter V'landys, as you would be aware, announced on Monday the retirement of Racing NSW Chairman of Stewards, Ray Murrihy. I am quoting from words he said at that time, 2016:

Ray Murrihy has made an outstanding contribution to thoroughbred racing throughout Australia. Ray has been a racing administrator of the highest calibre and he has done an exceptional job.

**Ms White** - Now you are quoting someone else. Why not answer the question.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Mr Speaker, it is absolutely my understanding and intention - because we are developing the terms of reference now, and they are comprehensive - that our independent investigator will have a full suite of capacity to look at all of the issues, including concerns of people who may feel worried that if they have raised a concern there might be some problem with that; this matters to me.

**Mr SPEAKER** - If you could wind up, please, minister.

**Ms OGILVIE** - I have said in my media statements that if anybody is concerned, please bring forward that information, get behind the investigation, and try to work with us to bring this new role forward.

**Ms White** - They do - and then you disclose their identity to the people they are complaining about. You should resign.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Leader of the Opposition.

### **Racing Industry - Animal Welfare Concerns**

**Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.15 a.m.]

As you know, harness racing trainer Ben Yole has a very similar business model to the notorious greyhound trainer, Anthony Bullock. Both men are, unsurprisingly, very close friends. They are mates. Just like his mate, Yole, who seems to have the favour of the Office of Racing Integrity, when Bullock was found not to have a kennel licence last year, ORI refused to stand him down from racing.

Are you listening to the question, minister? You just walked over to the adviser's box and had a chat with your adviser.

Once Yole's neglected horses reach their use-by date, he sends them down the road to Bullock to kill, butcher and feed to his dogs. Such is the Tasmanian racing circle of death.

If you would like to see the revolting truth of the nexus between Ben Yole and Anthony Bullock, we have pictures here of horses strung up, of horses being dragged to their death. I am very happy to pass them on to you, minister.

Are these images of horses being led to their death, of strung-up carcasses, of butchered bodies and entrails, what you would call 'an industry that has never been in better shape'?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. It is very concerning that there are issues in animal welfare. I cannot tell you how much I care about animal welfare. To address that, we have been working hard, over many years, to reform the regulatory structures of this industry. We have developed the Monteith report. We have given a detailed response to that and we are developing new legislation.

Today, I was able to announce the name of the investigator who will do that full review, and we want that to occur. Anybody who has information like that, which you have held up in the Chamber this morning - and I hope you have reported whatever you have to the appropriate authority -

**Ms O'Connor** - It has been reported, do not worry about that.

**Ms OGILVIE** - to the RSPCA, who I know has visited those sites a number of times, because they have had those conversations. I am obviously concerned about that. However, let me say again, this industry is incredibly important to Tasmania, and regional and rural areas in particular. We have families who live and breathe the racing industry, who put their hearts and souls into it, who love their animals and who love their jobs. They are passionate about it. This is their livelihoods and these are their jobs. It is incumbent upon us, here in Government, to make sure we have the best industry we can.

That is why the reform process has commenced. That is why I am pleased to be leading the reform process. The work is occurring -

**Dr Woodruff** - Is it going to investigate you? That is the point - you need to be investigated.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - What I get from those opposite - and we saw this yesterday - is a relentless attack on me personally. Let that not continue to taint the extraordinary work being done every day by good, hardworking men and women of the racing community, of their families, their kids, their local communities and the grassroots communities around them.

## **Racing Industry - Burnie Cup Day Allegations**

**Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.19 a.m.]

The ABC recently aired claims about the integrity of race 9 on Burnie Cup Day in January. Are you aware of allegations that the owner of the winning horse was Anthony Bullock? He placed a substantial bet on the race at the on-track TAB, which contributed to the odds of that horse coming in from \$26 to \$11. Are you aware that this effectively tripled the winner's prize money?

Given the well-established relationship between the owner and the trainer, the suspicious conduct of the race itself, the fact the race-caller twice noted the incredible betting plunge in the call - why is it that you think ORI was unable to identify anything to investigate?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I am very pleased to again reiterate - because I am not sure they are listening on that side of the Chamber - that our independent investigator will have the purview across those issues. That is how we are going to address this thing. We have been very fortunate, to secure the services of Mr Ray Murrihy, who -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - You ought to listen because he is an expert in these matters. He has a comprehensive understanding of the Tasmanian racing industry. He has also previously undertaken specific integrity investigations in Tasmania. I would have thought you would get behind it.

We will always stand up for the racing industry. The matters you have raised today in this Chamber should be brought forward to the independent investigator. I am certain he will be pleased to hear that. Bring those issues forward. I am imploring you.

We did hear a disturbing allegation yesterday of a participant who Mr Winter said had to be escorted from a race track, who had received death threats. Has that been reported? Have you taken that to the police? You need to bring these things forward and report it or, if you cannot, let us know and we will report it. These matters are serious.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. It is not an opportunity to have a two-way discussion. There has been a question put to the minister. I am allowing the minister to answer that question. There should be no interjections from the Opposition.

**Mr WINTER** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek a personal explanation at the conclusion of question time.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Have I got that wrong?

**Mr Winter** - Yes.

**Ms OGILVIE** - I thought that is what you said yesterday.

**Mr Winter** - I cannot interject at this point. I am happy to clear it up under the standing orders.

**Ms OGILVIE** - We will always stand up for the racing industry. We will take action on anyone who is not doing the right thing. It is right and proper to protect the welfare of the animals that the vast majority of the racing community love and cherish.

**Ms O'Connor** - The circle of death.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor.

**Ms OGILVIE** - Under this Government, the racing industry is in far better shape than it ever was under Labor. As for the Greens, I know you want to shut it down. I respect your position. It is very different from ours and I respect that.

**Ms O'Connor** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, please.

**Ms OGILVIE** - I ask you again: if you have information, please bring it forward to the investigator who we have now announced.

### **Greyhound Adoption Program - Euthanasia Rates**

**Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.22 a.m.]

It is well known that the new Tasracing vet, Dr Martin Lenz, introduced a feeder program in Queensland whereby a quarter of all existing greyhounds were weeded out before they entered the state's greyhound program if it was clear it would take too long for them to become adoptable. This was done so that the more difficult dogs did not affect Queensland Greyhound Adoption Program's (GAP) quick turnaround requirement.

Welfare advocates in Tasmania are concerned that similarly, under Tasracing's new proposed GAP policy, disgraced trainer and former GAP manager Susan Gittus will be brought in as a first point of assessment to decide whether greyhounds will die, and which ones will progress to GAP. This will mean that euthanasia rates will be off the GAP's books, and only the easiest of dogs will be processed through GAP and ultimately rehomed. These concerns are well-founded, as Ms Gittis, who had her training licence suspended for some time for a prohibited substance being found in one of her dogs, is also, highly inappropriately, on the Tasracing greyhound adoption program working group.

Minister, you are also aware of allegations made by a former staff member of the Office of Racing Integrity that ORI directed that dogs be euthanised off-track rather than on-track where statistics and data are recorded. You have made a song and dance about euthanasia rates

going down. Rather, is it not the case that you, Tasracing, and ORI are deliberately trying to hide the real situation, thereby hiding the cruelty that underpins this industry?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As I have said, as recently as last week, Tasracing has recently released a draft GAP working group paper. I emphasise the point 'draft'. The draft paper is undergoing consultation. Until that consultation is concluded, it would be inappropriate to provide wider commentary. The Government and Tasracing want to increase the number of greyhounds that are rehomed, while also reducing the time taken to achieve rehoming.

A recent review by the GAP program by Tasracing senior management and chief veterinary and animal welfare officer, Martin Lenz, identified a need to make strategic and operational changes to the GAP program. This will see more greyhounds rehomed in a shorter time. I believe that this House would support that.

We have had a range of issues raised in this place: various claims. I have previously pointed out those that have been erroneous. I do not intend to run through all those again today. The concern around the future of the GAP program is inextricably entwined in the reforms that we are doing to make sure that we have the best industry. We are open to and will always listen to proposals for improvement and reform and looking at what we can do to improve our circumstances here.

The draft paper that we refer to is a working paper. It is a working paper that was an internal document. I think it was distributed to the advisory group and fairly orderly. It shows that we are looking at what we can do better. I encourage everybody who has proposals in relation to that to make them known.

## **Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy - Update**

### **Mrs ALEXANDER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.26 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the implementation of the Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, specifically I would like to hear more about the Kids Care Clinics?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and interest in this very important matter. There is nothing more important than the wellbeing of our children and young people. The Government is investing \$100 million over four years as part of our Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. It provides a blueprint to deliver the services and supports that children, young people and their families need, so they and our state can thrive into the future.

The strategy focuses on the first 1000 days of a young Tasmanian's life. There is very clear evidence that a good start is vitally important to a child's ongoing development. As part of this strategy, today the Minister for Education, Children and Youth and I will be launching the Tasmanian Government's Kids Care Clinics. This community-based paediatric service

forms a key part of our Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and will provide targeted health care and support to Tasmania's most vulnerable children and their families, with a focus on early identification of health and wellbeing concerns.

Kids Care Clinics will offer infants, children and young people comprehensive health assessments within local communities, including checks of their medical, developmental and emotional wellbeing. The clinics will prioritise children who are most in need and reduce barriers to care by supporting families to access appropriate early interventions located closer to the child's home and community.

We know that it takes a village to support our children, to support them and their families to reach their potential, which is why we want to make sure that no child falls through the cracks and that every Tasmanian child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

By opening these clinics in accessible locations like neighbourhood houses, child and family learning centres and outreach health service sites, we are removing barriers to accessing health care by providing those early interventions closer to their home and in their community.

All children seen through Kids Care Clinics will have an initial wellbeing appointment with a paediatrician to discuss all aspects of their health and development and to develop recommendations and goals with the child's family. If paediatric issues involving health, development or behaviour are established, then the young person will continue for further assessment and intervention. This may include involvement of a paediatrician, clinical nurse consultant or allied health professionals.

Children can be referred to the service through multiple sources where vulnerability is identified, such as the Strong Family Safe Kids advice and referral line, maternity services and from Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations.

We know that students who have greater wellbeing are more likely to have better educational outcomes and a better quality of life, which is why we are investing in this key initiative. Kids Care Clinics are currently being piloted in the south of the state before being rolled out across the rest of Tasmania over the next year. These clinics add to the many other positive actions in the strategy already underway, including the Little Tasmanian project, which provides Tasmanian baby packs for all babies born in Tasmania from 1 January this year. While we have made significant progress during the first year of the strategy, we know there is still much more to be done and I look forward to showing that progress in the second annual report tabled in parliament later this year.

### **TasTAFE Reforms - Issues**

#### **Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for SKILLS, TRAINING and WORKFORCE GROWTH, Mr ELLIS**

[10.30 a.m.]

Industry employers have come out and said that your Government's corporatised model of TasTAFE is failing apprentices and failing the next generation of Tasmanian workers. They are saying that under your watch TAFE is getting worse, not better. Yesterday, I stood with a building and construction industry employer who told me they are considering sending their

apprentices interstate for training. The Fair Work Commission just slapped you down over your divisive wages approach for TasTAFE and we are hearing the dropout rate in some courses is at least 50 per cent and often much higher.

You said yesterday that your Government's controversial TasTAFE reforms were about 'putting learners at the centre', but rather than these controversial reforms putting learners at the centre, your Government's management of TasTAFE is putting these learners on the mainland. It is our businesses and industry that support and invest in our apprentices, whereas all your Government needs to do is to provide adequate training. Industry is doing their job, minister. Why are you not doing yours?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I note the decision from the Fair Work Commission. The Government is committed to securing a strong future for TasTAFE. The TasTAFE Act commenced on 1 July 2022. It established a new business model for TasTAFE that has been designed from the ground up to best suit the roles and functions of TasTAFE. The Government is aware of the recent Fair Work decision regarding terms and conditions for employees who have commenced at TasTAFE since 1 July 2022. TasTAFE is carefully reviewing the decision and considering its options. The Fair Work Act framework covers TasTAFE employees and is communicating with staff.

We want to make sure that when people want to train up as an apprentice they have those opportunities. A big part of what we are trying to achieve with our TasTAFE reforms is to give our training system the flexibility it needs to meet the needs of learners wherever they are and whatever age and stage they are at, to give our trainers the capacity to act in a manner that reflects the vagaries of life so, whether you live in a remote area or whether you are working fulltime, TasTAFE has the flexibility and capability to meet that.

We are also wrapping a range of different services around our learners at the moment because there are a lot of people who are stepping forward who want a hands-on practical vocation and also need a little bit of additional support. We are wrapping around supports in terms of tutors and trainers to make sure that every student has the best opportunity to succeed at TasTAFE, regardless of their schooling history. We want to make sure that when they walk into the doors of TasTAFE they have the support they need. We know that we have a growing economy and that has meant more opportunities for our young people, more training opportunities for people and the capacity to respond.

I do not know if Mr O'Byrne told the people he has been speaking with that his model would actually mean less training. I do not know if he told them that his plan was actually for our trainers to do less training and to get paid less. We want our trainers to get paid more and do more training, to give people the capacity to work in industry and to work in TasTAFE so they have that industry currency, so when they stand up in front of a classroom they can speak with knowledge about the experiences they have had just this week, delivering on the needs that their customers have, that businesses have and delivering that training in a contemporary manner.

Mr O'Byrne opposed our TasTAFE reforms every step of the way when he was a member of the Labor caucus and -

**Mr O'Byrne** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, member for Franklin.

**Mr ELLIS** - yet at the same time, the Labor caucus told us as well that TasTAFE is broken. They identified the problem that we identified, that there is a problem with TasTAFE, that we want to improve it and that we want to provide more training for people.

We want to do something about it. You do not want to do anything because you are shackled -

**Mr O'Byrne** - No you don't. You want to put them on a plane, mate.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ELLIS** - to an ideological approach that says that you do not want more training coming out of TasTAFE. We want to give that flexibility and we are also making the investments in TasTAFE that will enable us to provide even more training.

The Water and Energy Trades Centre of Excellence is going to give us space to double the amount of training that we have in the electrical industry, the plumbing industry and the gasfitting industry, industries I know well and want to see succeed. Investments such as Freer Farm to create an agricultural centre of excellence in Burnie is a \$5 million investment that is going to do wonderful things for farmers, farm technicians and apprentices across this state. We are making those investments because we believe in our people and in TasTAFE's important mission to make sure that the future has the skills that it needs and that those young people have the opportunities.

Mr O'Byrne mentioned the industry. The industry resoundingly endorsed our plan to modernise and reform TasTAFE. You were opposed to the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry when they said Tasmanian industry and the business community is united in its full support of the full set of PESRAC recommendations relating to TasTAFE.

We want TasTAFE to have the flexibility to deliver training. What we need is a transformed TasTAFE that looks and acts more like the businesses and industries that it serves, not like the backwards brainchild of Mr O'Byrne when he was once part of the Labor caucus. He is opposed to people like Phil Duthoit, a man who I know well from AJL Group in Burnie. The Government's approach for a transition is desperately needed to assist industry not only to survive, but to thrive.

You are opposed to the Tasmanian Minerals Manufacturing Energy Council. TMMEC is seeking a TasTAFE which is better synchronised to both the core technical training traditional apprenticeships and traineeships as well as the emerging technical training needs being driven by new industries such as defence, renewables and new technology and materials. You are opposed to the Tasmanian Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania. The TITC supports this legislation as a critical opportunity to revitalise public vocational education and training for the tourism and hospitality sectors in Tasmania.

We believe legislative reforms are necessary to enable TasTAFE to be more industry focused. The Master Builders, Tasmanian Hospitality Association, Carers Tasmania, Housing



Industry Association - you oppose what they wanted but we are delivering. This is not as good as TasTAFE gets because we are transforming it for the future because we believe in these young apprentices.

### **AFL Licence - Conditions**

#### **Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.37 a.m.]

Repeatedly during your discussions with us over the state's AFL bid and indeed to this parliament, you stated the AFL bid was not contingent on a brand-new stadium. That was the basis on which we, the Greens, signed the tripartisan licence agreement. In the Public Accounts Committee last Friday, State Growth secretary Kim Evans belled the cat big-time. He said the AFL made the new stadium a prerequisite for any licence approval from day one. Why did you not tell us the truth about this billion-dollar nod and a wink between your Government and the AFL?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. Our Government is committed to delivering an AFL and an AFLW licence for Tasmania once and for all. Tasmania is the heartland state for AFL and we have been committed to this dream as a state for over three decades. Our bid for the AFL and AFLW licences has not happened overnight. It has taken months and months of negotiations to achieve the best deal for Tasmania and the best deal for the Tasmanian club.

**Ms O'Connor** - Answer the question. Why did you lie to us?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am answering the question. The Tasmanian AFL team task force and the AFL have both made it clear that high-quality infrastructure will be required to support the viability of AFL and AFLW teams in Tasmania.

**Ms O'Connor** - No, you are misrepresenting the task force report.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It also supports our ability to recruit and retain high-quality players, coaches, support staff and administrators.

**Ms O'Connor** - Why didn't you tell us the truth?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor. You will not yell over the top of the Premier. You have asked the question and if you wish to listen to the answer you can stay in your seat. If you yell out across the Chamber again I will ask you to leave.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The subsequent 2021 Carter review reiterated the importance of suitable infrastructure to the success of an AFL club in our state. The review found that a

stadium strategy will be needed. The review did not address the stadium in detail because it was assumed that the state will address the stadium requirements, as other governments have done in every other state.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Standing order 45, relevance. I draw your attention to the question. There was one question, which is why did the Premier not tell us the truth? Why did the Premier not tell us the truth?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, there is no point of order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I advised the House of Assembly in September 2022, the bid we put forward to the AFL for an AFL and AFLW team did not include a stadium. However, the Tasmanian Government recognised that a Tasmanian team competing in the AFL and AFLW competitions needed a suitable modern stadium in which to play. I can go into that.

What we have today, though, is Tasmanian business leaders in Canberra advocating their support for a Macquarie Point stadium. Travelling to Canberra, they will meet with senior cabinet ministers, as well as the Prime Minister's office, in my understanding. The delegation includes representatives of the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, the Master Builders Tasmania, the Tasmanian Hospitality Association and the Property Council.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order. Mr Speaker, we did not ask about the top end of town in their suits in Canberra. We asked about why we were lied to in order to secure our support for the AFL bid.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, as you know, it is not an opportunity to stand up and repeat the question or extend the question. The Premier is answering the question, and I take it from the points of order. I have asked you to be quiet and listen to the answer.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I utterly reject your accusation. We have been fighting for this AFL team for decades and we are passionate about Macquarie Point precinct.

**Ms O'Connor** - No, you are conflating them.

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### **Member Suspended**

### **Member for Clark - Ms O'Connor**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, you can leave the Chamber until after Question Time.

**Ms O'Connor withdrew.**

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The member, Mr Speaker, once again reverts to personal attacks of people going to Canberra to advocate for Tasmanians and Tasmanian jobs, advocating for Tasmanian jobs: our tradies and funding for the stadium and the Macquarie Point precinct. Those opposite are going to Canberra to argue against funding for Tasmania. I will always stand up for Tasmania. I will always advocate for more funding to come to Tasmania to support

jobs and growth and our economy, so we can fund those essential services that Tasmanians talk about.

**Dr Woodruff** - Stand up for people without a house.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, just because your co-worker has been asked to leave the Chamber does not mean that you have to take over the responsibility of continually interjecting on the Premier. Unless you wish to join her, I would not say any more while the Premier is answering the question.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. On that ruling. While I do not usually jump to my feet to defend the Member for Franklin, I do not understand why the same rules do not apply to the member for Clark, Ms Archer, who has been yelling for quite some time.

**Mr SPEAKER** - That is not a point of order. You will sit down. The Premier is answering the question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Frankly, I am appalled when you have representatives of organisations representing hard-working Tasmanians going to Canberra, like the Tasmanian Liberal Government does, advocating for more funding for key infrastructure to grow our economy so we can fund those essential services such as health, education, public safety, and housing, we have those opposite going to Canberra to argue against funding for Tasmania.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have the Leader of the Opposition saying 'All that \$7 billion or \$3 billion of government funding can go to Queensland, but we do not want a single dollar here in Tasmania'. Frankly, that is anti-Tasmanian.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is un-Tasmanian, anti-Tasmanian in fact, advocating to Canberra for money not to come to Tasmania to secure an AFL team and thousands of jobs for hard-working Tasmanians.

### **Tasmanian Dairy Industry**

**Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER**

[10.44 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Rockliff Liberal Government is supporting our dairy farmers to improve water quality, stock management and animal welfare through an innovative program designed to preserve Tasmania's unique environment?

## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Rockliff Liberal Government is working with our primary producers to foster sustainable growth, job creation and a strong vibrant future for our agricultural industry and our regional communities. As part of this plan, we are proud to work with the agricultural sector to improve the health of Tasmania's waterways.

The Cows out of Creeks program, delivered by Dairy Tas, is providing further grants to assist landholders to protect and improve water quality by removing cattle from waterways. As part of the ninth round, the Government has made available \$100 000 through Dairy Tas, enabling them to offer 25 grants valued at up to \$5000 each to approved projects.

Our Government recognises the importance of Tasmania's waterways. That is why we are co-investing with the dairy industry to further protect the environment. Our farmers are achieving this through the installation of fencing, stock crossings, off-stream watering and riparian planting where fencing work is also undertaken. This funding helps ensure farmers are sustainably growing their businesses while protecting Tasmanian waterways. Additionally, getting cows out of creeks also leads to improved animal welfare and human health outcomes.

So far, this program has helped build more than 111 kilometres of fencing and 150 water troughs on 37 dairy and beef farms in Circular Head, meaning 240 000 cattle are limited from accessing waterways, providing a win-win for stock health and the creeks and the rivers in the region.

With applications for the latest round closing tomorrow, we are urging landholders who want to be involved in this program to apply now through Dairy Tas.

Work to improve the health and sediment in the Tamar Estuary is also underway through the \$11.5 million catchment management program. This major program of work involves fencing 336.9 kilometres to exclude stock from waterways, regenerating 1489 hectares of riparian areas and improving effluent management across the 1317 hectares of dairy farms. These actions reduce effluent entering our waterways upstream, improving the health of the Tamar Estuary.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has an ambitious target to grow the annual farm gate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050. The dairy industry is a key contributor to progress towards this goal. The 2020-21 Tasmanian Agri-Food ScoreCard highlighted record milk production of 961 million litres of milk on the back of excellent seasonal conditions. Dairy was also the highest value agricultural category, with an overall value of milk at \$490 million dollars and a dairy process value of \$841 million.

I have been fortunate in recent weeks to meet with some of our dedicated dairy farmers in the Meander region and see first-hand their commitment and their passion for this sector. I have also been buoyed by the positivity coming from the next generation of dairy farmers, which I am proud to say includes many young women. This Government is proud to be supporting the future leaders of this sector through investment in the Dairy Farm Manager/2IC Program, which recently received \$60 000 through the latest round of funding under the Strategic Industry Partnerships Program.

We are also proud to have contributed \$3 million towards an upgrade of the Elliott dairy research facility, which I was pleased to be able to unveil last year. This new high tech 50-unit rotary milking parlour supports the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture to deliver world-class research, development and extension programs that assist the state's dairy industry. The investment has allowed the facility to convert to sustainable, manageable, accessible, rural technologies known as smart farms, with displays that allow farmers, community and researchers to better understand how farm modernisation can be adopted to improve management and productivity of cows and pastures, and ultimately profitability.

This is just another way that the Rockliff Liberal Government is getting things done.

### **Office of Racing Integrity - Position of Director for Racing during Review**

**Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.50 a.m.]

Your Director of Racing, Justin Helmich, will be at the centre of the Premier's independent review of the Office of Racing Integrity. How is it possibly tenable that he remains in this position while that investigation takes place? Why have you not stood him down?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is important that due process is provided to people who make complaints, provided to those who manage complaints, and that things are done properly according to due process, our laws and our regulations. We will always adopt that approach.

I will turn back to what is at the heart of this matter and that is that we are acting. We are acting decisively. We are reforming. We have appointed the independent investigator today who has such substance, such capacity, and has done that work here before to address these issues.

I will also take a little moment to talk about what is happening in this Chamber at the moment. We have a Government that is robust, unified and committed to this reform process and we are well under way with that work. Our draft bill is in progress and we will have that out for consultation.

It is very evident to me that the ministry for insults over there and those who would shut down the industry over there do not have their act together. One lot just wants to complain and one lot wants to close the industry. It is unfair to the working people of Tasmania, unfair to people who have businesses in this area and unfair to regional and rural communities to listen to some of the insults that have been thrown across this Chamber.

**Dr Woodruff** - Nice cartoon in the paper this morning.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Franklin, order.

**Ms OGILVIE** - This Government will continue to build. We will build this industry, we will support the men and women, the mums and dads and kids and everybody involved in

this industry - the 99 per cent of people who are doing the right thing - and we will not be distracted by the stunts, slurs and insults of those who may pretend to champion the industry but are not really doing so.

### **Racing Industry Employees - Safety Concerns**

**Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.52 a.m.]

Two months ago today, five very young racing industry participants were injured. Some of them were seriously and permanently injured after a horror horse-float crash at Rowella. Four horses were also killed in that crash. The crash occurred at 1.45 a.m. and involved workers who, by that time, had been working since the morning before. At the time, concerns were raised about the working hours and safety controls in place for workers in the racing industry. The industry itself has been calling for changes, and there are actions that you could take immediately to improve safety for these important workers. Why have you not done anything to reduce risks since this serious incident occurred?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, what a serious and heartbreaking incident that was. It emotionally affected very many people. It is an important issue, of course.

The Government, as I have said, is a strong supporter of the industry. We know it makes a vital contribution to our economy and employment, particularly in regional Tasmania. We also recognise the extraordinary care and diligence with which participants undertake their work in the industry. We also understand how close-knit the racing community is.

The transport accident at Rowella resulting in injuries to five young industry participants and the tragic death of four horses is nothing short of heartbreaking. The Government wishes all involved a speedy recovery and we trust Tasmania Police will undertake their full and thorough investigation.

We know there are issues surrounding this matter. I am advised that Tasmania Police is responsible for investigating the road safety aspects of that crash and that WorkSafe is the relevant regulator in relation to the workplace aspect of this incident.

As it is currently the subject of an active investigation, it is inappropriate for me to comment more but I will certainly be interested in outcomes.

### **Racing Industry Allegations - Identification of Whistleblowers**

**Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.55 a.m.]

In September last year, serious allegations of race fixing and complaints about the Director of Racing, including allegations of intimidating behaviour, were raised directly with

you in writing. You passed that complaint - including the names of the complainant - to the person who the complaint was about, the Director of Racing.

How do you explain your own actions whereby you have disclosed the names of people who bravely raised concerns about the Director of Racing, and inadvertently exposed them to retribution? How can you explain and defend that conduct?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, of course I follow processes. As I have said, we will always stand up for people in the racing sector. Complaints regularly come forward. Many complaints come forward. Those complaints are managed according to the proper processes.

I have said and I will say again, we will not tolerate any unfair behaviour toward whistleblowers. We will not tolerate it. It is not acceptable. If anybody feels there is unfair behaviour directed towards them, we will not brook that.

## **St Marys Pass Closure - Business Recovery**

### **Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for SMALL BUSINESS, Ms OGILVIE**

[10.56 a.m.]

Can you update the House on what work is being done to support businesses on the east coast impacted by the closure of St Marys Pass last year?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons, and the advocacy which has delivered this outcome.

There is no greater supporter of Tasmania's 39 000 small businesses than this Government. They are, as we know, the engine room of our economy and are critical to our plan to build Tasmania's future. We have demonstrated that when our businesses are faced with challenges or difficulties, this Government is there to assist them. During the pandemic, our small businesses received more than \$165 million worth of COVID-19-specific support programs. This assistance supported them to get through the pandemic and return even stronger.

The Tasmanian Government is cognisant of the impact the October weather event of last year has had on many businesses, including those directly impacted by the closure of St Marys Pass. Members in this place will recall the heavy rains that resulted in damage to, and the closure of, St Marys Pass. The necessary road closure that occurred to repair this damage reduced the St Marys through-traffic that would normally have been visiting the area.

Members of the Government reached out to and visited businesses in St Marys, including the local bakery, cafe, hotel and supermarket, to understand how the lack of through-traffic and road closure had impacted them. These conversations with the people and businesses in the area led the Tasmanian Government, through the Department of State Growth's small business unit, to develop an expression of interest (EOI) process, which opened on 16 March 2023.

The EOI processes were for businesses impacted by the rain event in October 2022 that resulted in the full closure of St Marys Pass from 26 October to 19 December 2022, and the Sideling as well from 13 October to 27 February 2023. The information provided by affected businesses will assist in the development of a support package based on specific and identified needs. Businesses that registered the impact would be eligible to go to the next stage of grant, where they will be asked to provide evidence to support their claims in that EOI process. Grant amounts would be calculated according to the information provided.

The Rockliff Liberal Government values and recognises the contributions small businesses make to our wonderful Tasmanian economy and our local communities and we know that these businesses are most vulnerable when unfortunate events occur. We are also very mindful that over the past few years there have been exceptionally difficult COVID-19 circumstances, forcing the closure of borders and keeping patrons and tourists away and we are still recovering. I encourage all eligible businesses to please register their impacts through the EOI process which is open now until 2 p.m. on 5 April 2023.

In closing, I will say that I am proud of the resilience, the fortitude and the flexibility that this sector has seen over the past few years. They continue to rise and keep doing the great jobs they are doing in their local communities. Our Government is building a strong economy and a safe and caring community. This EOI process is just one example of how we are doing that to ensure our small businesses can remain resilient to continue to do what they do best. The Business Tasmania team is doing a great job in facilitating this and, as always, I encourage any Tasmanian business that might need support to contact Business Tasmania or receive some free business advice from Enterprise Centres Tasmania.

### **Racing Industry - Role of Minister**

#### **Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.01 a.m.]

You must realise by now that this is not going to just blow over. The harness racing industry is in crisis. The northern papers are questioning the entire industry's future. The flood of serious allegations about integrity and animal welfare continues to rise. It is all because your minister has failed to do her job over the past year.

The new north-west racetrack development has been a debacle from start to finish and she has done almost nothing to progress the Monteith report, which investigated a matter in 2020 and was released more than two years ago. The Office of Racing Integrity has been shown to be completely incapable of doing its job, complaints made to the minister have not been investigated, while others have been improperly handled. She clearly would have continued with this negligence if these claims had not been aired in the media. She has consistently misled this parliament and misled the Tasmanian people since July and you have been too weak to do anything about it.

Madeline Ogilvie, the Minister for Racing, is doing irreparable harm to the racing industry. How can you say that you support the racing industry if you allow this minister to continue in her role?



## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I do support the racing industry. The racing industry is by far made up of a majority of people who work very hard day in and day out. They love their sport, they care for their animals and they go to work every day and are part of the \$185 million a year racing economy.

I reject the assertions around the Monteith report because we are drafting the legislation now. Yesterday I spoke about the review and the changes to integrity functions, greater input from the RSPCA to strengthen integrity provisions, strengthen probity, strengthen integrity and strengthen animal welfare provisions. Where there are other deficiencies and improvements to be made, we will do that. That is what we expect to find in terms of better processes, potentially as a result of the independent review we announced earlier this week, and our Racing minister gave greater detail on the terms of reference and the person leading that independent review, Mr Ray Murrphy, as well.

I reiterate my support for the racing industry and how important integrity, probity and animal welfare provisions are.

**Ms White** - What about the Racing minister?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Our Minister for Racing, Ms Ogilvie, is part of our team and a contributor to a number of positives when it comes to the racing industry. When it comes to stakes increases, we have exceeded the 2018-21 election commitment for stakes increases. The construction of the Elwick thoroughbred track redevelopment -

**Ms White** - I don't think she was a member of your team then.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This is important, Mr Speaker. We have opened the state's first dedicated greyhound rehoming facility with the Greyhound Adoption Program at Mangalore; we have removed the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled in public; there is funding for the thoroughbred and harness breeding schemes of \$2.4 million over seven years; we have established new steward cadetship positions in the Office of Racing Integrity; implemented a new point of consumption tax from 1 January 2020, with 80 per cent -

**Ms White** - Oh, that was Madeleine Ogilvie, was it?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Leader of the Opposition, if you continually interrupt I will also ask you to leave.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have provided certainty and confidence when it comes to the changes with regard to the track in the north-west with an \$8 million commitment; more than \$1 million provided to projects across the state under the Tasmanian community racing club infrastructure grants; we completed a review into the Mowbray and Elwick tracks in late 2020 and implemented the recommendations of the Monteith track report; and in October 2020

announced additional funding to enable greyhound owners and trainers to access funding to have their dogs desexed before the greyhound is rehomed.

We also undertook an independent review into the Racing Regulation Act and strengthened the integrity and animal welfare position within the racing industry. There has been a long line of key achievements since 2014 when the Exeter racing industry was reeling as a result of the Labor Party's broken promise not to sell the Tote. They set up a -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Labor Party sold the Tote and the racing industry has not forgotten that. It took a Liberal Government to ensure the financial stability and sustainability of the racing industry. Year in, year out there were losses of millions of dollars topped up from funding from Health and Education effectively - taking out of Consolidated Revenue to bridge that gap. The reset of stakes under my time was a difficult decision that we made to ensure the sustainability of Tasracing.

It is important that we continue to support our racing industry based on continuous improvement. Of course I support our Racing minister who has worked through the Monteith report and the review. We expect the legislation to be delivered in the parliament this year. The independent review we announced this week will further highlight areas that need improvement so that we can move forward positively and strengthen the racing industry in terms of integrity, probity and animal welfare for the benefit of the many thousands of participants.

### **Corrections - Rehabilitation Programs**

**Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS and REHABILITATION, Ms ARCHER**

[11.09 a.m.]

Could you update the House on the delivery of rehabilitation programs in our corrections system?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question and his ongoing interest in this important issue. Our Government is, and has always been, committed to reducing the rates of reoffending by providing the safest possible custodial environment with opportunities for rehabilitation. We are getting on with increasing rehabilitation opportunities for offenders by investing in our infrastructure as well as recruiting and training record numbers of correctional staff.

Whilst our Government has committed significant investment to our infrastructure and recruitment activities, in contrast I note that Labor seems determined to keep trashing our corrections system and our hard working correctional officers. Under our corrections system, the guiding principles set out in the Corrections Act 1997 are based on the fact that individuals

are capable of change, a principle which is at the heart of providing opportunities for rehabilitation to our inmates and offenders.

An effective corrections system must ensure that where a custodial sentence is warranted, serious offenders have access to opportunities to address their offending behaviour before they inevitably return to the community, through intervention and reintegration programs. That is why I am pleased to announce that the Tasmanian Prison Service will establish facility based and multi-disciplinary rehabilitation teams at each of our correctional facilities.

These facility based teams will focus on intervention and reintegration, and each team will include program facilitators, case managers, a senior case manager, and a senior clinician. These teams will work together with our correctional officers to provide a holistic, individualised service to inmates in their assigned facility. The proposed structural change aims to further improve the TPS rehabilitative culture by embedding small, dedicated rehabilitation teams in each correctional facility to contribute to a more therapeutic environment.

Our Government has made significant improvements in rehabilitation programs, staff recruitment and infrastructure after years of under expenditure by former Labor governments, all of which have resulted in a better corrections system now. Evidence in correction facility sittings shows that positive social climates are associated with better rehabilitative outcomes and engagement from inmates, better completion rates and a safer workplace for our correctional officers and staff.

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms ARCHER** - Sorry, I can hear a lot of mumbling over there, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms ARCHER** - It is what I expect from members opposite because they just trash our corrections system at every opportunity, as I said.

Intervention in our correction facilities is focused on the drivers of crime, including treatments for sex offending, drug and alcohol, family and general violence prevention and programs to establish resilience and coping skills. In 2022, the Friends Resilience program was rolled out to maximum security classified inmates. This program is focused on the prevention and early intervention of anxiety and depression, addressing attachment, physiological, cognitive and learning processes which interact in the development, experience and maintenance of anxiety.

I am quite staggered that those opposite are not interested in this really important reform that we are undertaking in rehabilitation. This important reform will continue-

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, the Attorney-General has the call and there should be no interruptions to the member who is on the floor.

**Ms HADDAD** - Point of order, Mr Speaker, the Attorney-General is inciting interjections by criticising us for speaking and then criticising us for sitting quietly and listening.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I am sure we are all big enough in this Chamber not to allow reprisals. If somebody makes a comment that does not automatically mean you have to respond. I am sure we are all mature enough to allow the statements to happen and not interject on any member, whether it is Opposition or a member of Government.

**Ms ARCHER** - That was really interesting, Mr Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition is very good at calling out people who interject and make comments around the Chamber but not when she does it herself.

This important program will continue to be delivered primarily to maximum security classified inmates in 2023, which is really important reform for that classification. The TPS also receives the support and assistance of a number of community organisations in the delivery of rehabilitation and personal development programs. Currently, this includes the Holyoake Gottawanna program, specifically targeting addiction. I am very proud of the improvements made to our corrections system through the delivery of evidence-based intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration programs and the enormous benefit they provide to our community.

There is always more we can do in our corrections system. I acknowledge the significant work done to date, each and every day by our correctional officers, as well as the TPS management, our therapeutic and support staff, probation officers and all community correction staff who diligently work in our community. It is these valuable staff members who deliver the services that rehabilitate and support offenders in Tasmania, both in custody and non-custodial settings, ensuring a safer community for Tasmanians. I am sure that these new intervention and reintegration teams, as well as our Government's significant investment in rehabilitation programs, will continue to have a positive impact for our corrections system and the safety of the Tasmanian community.

## **ANSWER TO QUESTION**

### **TasNetworks - Reading of Electricity Meters**

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - On indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to add to an answer provided by the Premier in response to the Leader for the Opposition in relation to Ms Yaxley.

Ms Yaxley wrote to me late last year in relation to the difficulties she was experiencing in having her electricity meter read by TasNetworks due to a security gate on her property. I wrote back to Ms Yaxley on 20 December 2022. Following this contact, Aurora Energy offered a smart meter to Ms Yaxley, which would enable remote meter reading for her electricity usage that does not require a meter reader to access the property. I am advised Ms Yaxley declined the offer of the smart meter, advising that she did not believe she was a suitable candidate for this technology.

I encourage Ms Yaxley to reconsider and to take up this offer as it is at no cost to her and does not require any action from her, other than to pay her electricity bill. It will also allow a

true reading of her account rather than an estimate, which the Leader of the Opposition advises is a concern to her. Aurora can provide more information and I am happy to arrange that, given that Ms Yaxley was in the Chamber today. I am also happy to speak to her directly.

Advanced meters are a relatively recent offering to customers and are very popular for those who have properties where access to meter readers is limited or impossible, for example, where there are security gates, high fences or dogs loose in the yard. We do not expect TasNetworks meter readers to put themselves in danger in order to read a customer's meter. Employee safety is a high priority. Advanced meters work for the benefit of both meter readers and customers.

### **PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**Mr SPEAKER** - On indulgence for personal explanations, personal explanations should be succinct and without argument.

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, I asked the minister about a report that I had received that morning, that a young woman had been escorted from the race track in Tasmania. I note the minister has not denied that. This morning, the minister attempted to argue that I should have reported a young woman being escorted from a race track. Obviously, that is not something that anyone should report to the police.

**A member** - A threat to someone's life though, that is what you said.

**Mr WINTER** - The incident that I argued was just that there had been a security guard walking someone from the track. It is obviously not appropriate to report that to the police.

**Time expired.**

### **CARER RECOGNITION BILL 2022 (No. 33)**

**Bill returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.**

### **POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL AND GESTURE PROHIBITION) BILL 2023 (No. 2)**

#### **First Reading**

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

## MOTION

### Leave to Move Motion without Notice - Negatived

[11.21 a.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion without notice for the purpose of moving the suspension of standing orders to debate the following motion:

That the House has no confidence in the Minister for Racing, the Honourable Madeline Ogilvie MP for the following reasons -

- (1) The minister breached section 9.6 of the code of conduct for ministers by issuing a false statement that the CEO of Tasracing had moved to Sydney to spend more time with his family. The real reason he left was that he had been sacked.
- (2) The minister repeated these mistruths before a parliamentary committee.
- (3) The minister ignored serious allegations in relation to harness racing integrity for months and did nothing until they were public.
- (4) The minister, in reaction to media attention about the failures of the Office of Racing Integrity, in investigating such allegations tasked it to investigate itself.
- (5) The minister made no changes to ensure racing is a safe workplace since the crash that claimed the lives of four horses and injured five young Tasmanians.
- (6) Massive failures of integrity, including evidence of race fixing on her watch, means the minister has lost the confidence of the Tasmanian racing industry.

Mr Speaker, we should be allowed to have this debate. We were not allowed to have this debate yesterday because the Government stubbornly thought it might go away. I can tell you that unlike this minister - who has fled the Chamber - this issue will not go away. We must be allowed to have the debate today.

As I said yesterday, racing - maybe unbeknownst to members opposite - happens almost every day in Tasmania. A thoroughbred race meet in Launceston is commencing this evening. The Office of Racing Integrity and this minister will be overseeing that - and this minister is the responsible Minister for Racing, at least for the moment.

What we heard from the Premier was a premier who was not prepared to back in his minister. It was very telling - the language has changed. I wonder how close they are to finally putting this minister out of the role once and for all.

It is not just this side of the House arguing this. The industry is saying, 'please give us a minister who cares, please give us a minister who knows what they are doing'. They do not

have a minister like that at the moment. They have a minister who has no idea how governments work, no idea how racing works, and no interest in racing. That is what we are dealing with.

The issue is urgent because 1500 jobs - 1515 according to the latest report - rely on this industry, and on the performance of that minister. Many of them will be at work today doing the important work they do for their animals. The vast majority care for their animals and want to look after them but they need to have an industry that has integrity and is properly overseen. They need to have one today. They do not have a minister that is overseeing this industry properly today. It is deeply disappointing.

Mr Speaker, the way this minister has handled allegations that have been put to her are deeply concerning. I will read the concerns that have been raised by Shaun Kennedy. His name is Shaun Kennedy - not Steve, as the minister thought. Shaun Kennedy is a vital cog in our harness racing industry; he is the president of BOTRA. He has been unfairly treated by the Office of Racing Integrity, in my view. Yesterday he put out a statement publicly through BOTRA, through Facebook, talking about what happened after he went public with criticisms of the minister and criticisms of the Office of Racing Integrity. I will quote him:

I fronted a licensing panel via phone made up of Mr Helmich, Mr Neal and Mrs Purdon on a Thursday morning. Following my interview with that panel, another participant in the same circumstances had an interview for the same reason.

In comparison to that participant, I had one more race drive in the preceding three years. They had a couple more trial drives in the preceding three years. I am a licensed trainer and they are not, but they do work trackwork.

Mr Speaker, he went on to say:

The other participant had a decision on their licence made on the spot at the end of the interview. The decision was that they would retain their Driver B licence. I was advised I would receive a decision on mine in due course at the end of the interview.

Mr Speaker, he did not get his licence renewed. Amazingly so. After he made a complaint about the Office of Racing Integrity, he was treated differently from his colleagues.

This goes to the heart of the matter. The Office of Racing Integrity does not have the confidence of the industry and this minister does not have the confidence of this industry.

This is the minister that hanged the people of BOTRA and the complainant whose details were provided back to the Office of Racing Integrity, even though the complainant was actually making a complaint about the Office of Racing Integrity. It is very poor governance.

The Premier today stood up and his defence of her was to talk about the North West Track - the greatest let-down of his racing community you could possibly imagine - 'the North West Track Debacle', he should have said, overseen by this minister for than a year, with no progress towards a new track happening for that racing community. He did not back her today.

Then he talked about the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) - a program established well before this minister was in place. To my knowledge, nothing has changed, apart from those draft reforms that have raised concerns in this place.

He talked about the Monteith Track Report. That was overseen by Jane Howlett, the former racing minister - nothing to do with this minister.

Mr Speaker, these issues with whistleblowers, with governance - the fact that the minister thought it was a good idea for ORI to investigate itself - demonstrates a severe failure from this minister. Everyone can see it. I do not know why this Premier is doing it. I am concerned that this minister has threatened to leave his ministry; threatened to leave his Government. Has she threatened to leave his Government if he stands her down from this ministry? Is he only doing this so that he can stop his Government from losing majority, or him from losing his leadership?

That is the concern I have because nothing else explains why you would hold on to a minister who is so obviously incompetent, so obviously not up to the job. Nothing else can explain it. A minister the industry does not want. A minister who has shown scant regard for, and scant interest in, the industry over her year in the role. She is not up to the job. We should be allowed to have this debate today.

[11.28 a.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, to satisfy Mr Winter's wishes, he can have this debate today, because he tabled the no-confidence motion yesterday. It has matured overnight and he has private members' time.

I had a good look at the new motion from the Labor Party; it is almost the same as yesterday. It has an extra dot point, but it is essentially the same motion. In substance it is the same motion. It is a want of confidence motion in minister Ogilvie. I thought it was interesting because I said yesterday to the House, in debating the seeking of leave motion, that leave will not be needed on the Wednesday because you have private members' time.

It is as if the Labor Party took that and thought, 'Gee, we cannot do that because we do not want to have to take the private members' time. We will do a new motion. We will just make an extra few word changes and an extra dot point.' It is the same motion, in substance.

The Government does not support this stunt tactic from the Labor Party. I was as surprised as anyone this morning when the Labor Party provided the courtesy notice of their notice of motion to go on the blue, which is motion number 101 - which is of course to do with the stadium. By the way, just so the House is in no doubt, if you look at the notice of motion and orders of the day for today, number 31, and you find motion number 101, this is not a wedge motion for the Government moved by Ms White. That motion is all about Mr O'Byrne. It is all about Ms White trying to hold onto the little power base because she knows Mr O'Byrne supports the stadium.

**Dr BROAD** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. This is a seeking of leave motion and now we have the acting Leader of the House pre-empting an order of the day.

**Mr SPEAKER** - We have been through this yesterday. I allowed considerable leeway for the acting Leader of the House to wander around in this space and I will allow the same today until I have heard the full debate.



**Mr FERGUSON** - Mr Speaker, I am arguing against the urgency of this particular matter. To Mr Winter's claim that he does not get an opportunity to move his motion of no confidence today, he does. What I am explaining for Dr Broad's benefit, who was like a jack-in-a-box just now, is that the Labor Party wants to prioritise wedging Mr O'Byrne over moving no confidence in Ms Ogilvie. That is what is happening, Mr Speaker. For those who might be wondering what on Earth the Labor Party is up to today, that is what is happening.

It surprises me, I have to say, that having had the opportunity that they say they desperately want to be able to move their motion of no confidence in Ms Ogilvie today, they have that opportunity but they are going to walk past it.

It really surprised me in Opposition members' time 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. today, notice of motion 101, the wedging motion for her own ex-colleague who she is trying to keep out of the party. Of course the Greens will definitely support this stuff because the two leaders of the Labor and Greens parties are both looking for maximum disruption and chaos. The Greens have given notice of motion number 102, which is again really interesting given yesterday they sought leave for and tabled a motion of want of confidence in the Premier and they have walked past it now that they have leave today. They begged for leave yesterday but do not want to take up their opportunity today.

Yesterday I made the point that they got a day ahead of themselves with their escalation of stunts when Ms O'Connor forced the Labor Party - yet again a Greens-tailed Labor dog - into jumping a day early on their escalation of motions. The Labor Party is in a mess yet again. It is stunt after stunt.

Mr Winter, obviously a man with no self-respect, brings in a virtually identical motion. The question before us is, should we upend the day again today? What is occurring is that the members are arguing that everything else on the blue, including their own private members' time, should be set aside to deal with a motion of no confidence. That is what the mover is seeking, yet he has that opportunity later today and in fact it is in his own name. It is his own motion, so he has wedged himself. Talk about wedge Wednesday - you have managed to wedge yourselves.

Thank you for your contribution today, Ms Dow, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party. I have stolen your line and I apologise for not giving you credit for that. This is just about the Labor Party wanting to bring their toxic party and their toxic brand and the recognised chaos that they have within their party onto the Floor on the House. They are in administration because Ms White leads a toxic party. Her own former health shadow called it out. He left the party in disgust because he said he could not abide this party, it is toxic and it is riven. It is divided. They sit in three groups. This is a consequence of their Leader pulling rank this afternoon to isolate Mr Winter from being able to move on his motion of no confidence and to truly lock out the real rival for the leadership, who is not Mr Winter at all, it is Mr O'Byrne, so that they can pull rank and have their stadium motion because they know Mr O'Byrne supports the stadium proposal. They want him to vote against the caucus because if he votes against the caucus they can keep him out of the caucus. That is what is going on here today. We will have none of it. Labor is toxic and we have business to get on with today.

[11.35 a.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, that was a paranoid, delusional rant, the likes of which I have never seen from Mr Ferguson. All of it was about

politics, every word of it. It was this convoluted, twisted attempt not to deal with the substance of the issue here, which is a minister whose integrity is in question not just in this place but in the wider community, certainly within the racing industry and amongst animal welfare advocates. Every word that dropped out of Mr Ferguson's mouth then was all about the politics: a twisted, convoluted attempt to deflect from the fact that this is a visionless and stressed government.

It knows its days are numbered and sitting up the back there, although she has fled the Chamber, is a minister who has been demonstrated to be incompetent, incapable of doing her job, overseeing an industry which is falling further and further into disrepute, where you have whistleblowers who are terrified of speaking up. Again I want to warmly thank and give my great respect to whistleblowers who have spoken to the ABC, who have spoken to Labor and who have spoken to us, knowing there are potentially consequences because of the way this industry has been allowed to fall into a corrupted state as a result of the decline of standards in the Office of Racing Integrity and far too cosy relationships between the stewards and people like Ben Yole and Anthony Bullock.

If Mr Ferguson cannot recognise that this issue is not going to go away, I am sure that until the House is able to fully test confidence in this minister, this issue and this question will not go away. I know some people in here have short memories. It seems Mr Ferguson has a very short memory. For the four years we were in government between 2010 and 2014 I do not know how many countless hours were given to debates on confidence or censure and we always allowed the debate to proceed. That is the convention. If there is a question of confidence in a minister before the House, the convention is that the debate be allowed to proceed but this Government is scared of having the debate, this visionless, tired, freaked-out excuse for a government. They have watched what happened in New South Wales at the weekend and are pooping themselves because they know their days are numbered. They know they are a dud government and we believe they are being held to ransom by the Minister for Racing, whose only loyalty is to herself. This question of confidence will not be resolved until the debate is had.

I do not know who is organising strategy in the Liberal Party but whoever it is should be sacked. We must have this debate. These motions will keep coming up until the debate is had and it is frankly insulting for Mr Ferguson to say Labor can do it in their private members' time. You should not time constrain on want of confidence. Again, short memories. We sometimes debated no confidence between 2010-14 for five, six and seven hours because the convention was respected that if there is a question of confidence the House be allowed to debate it and resolve it through a vote.

So many questions around integrity and the welfare of animals in this industry have not been answered by this hopeless minister. She thinks she can hide behind this independent investigation. That is where we are at now. Every time a question comes to her it is all 'Get on board for the path forward'. We are quite concerned that the minister only wants to look forward and that the minister and the terms of reference will not allow a review, an examination of events that have led to this place and led to the ABC's investigative report. In the nine years of this lot in Government, as far as I can remember, they have never allowed past the seeking of leave. Am I wrong?

**Ms White** - No - remember we moved a no confidence motion in Mr Ferguson and then he was sacked from the Health portfolio.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Okay, so we had one in nine years. You were a highly problematic Health minister. The question of integrity, of the minister, of the Office of Racing Integrity, is a huge outstanding question. Mr Ferguson should get out more. This is a major topic on people's lips. People are very concerned about the state of the racing industry, the way animals are treated and the corruption inside ORI.

I was reminded by Gavin Kelly, for example, that the stewards' panel fined him \$1000 for refusing to carry a whip and they gave a \$200 fine to the Cottons for flogging a horse with a piece of poly pipe. Why did they pick on Gavin Kelly? They picked on him because he did not fall into line.

There is corruption inside the Office of Racing Integrity. That is why the industry is in the state that it is in. That is why people who love this industry - obviously the Greens do not love the industry, we love the animals - are so distressed right now because there is clear corruption inside the Office of Racing Integrity. Clear corruption. This is on this minister's watch who does not even have the grace now to sit in the Chamber while we are seeking leave on a question of confidence in her.

**Mr Ferguson** - You are full of grace.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Thank you. That is very kind of you to say that. Thank you very much.

I am surprised that Mr Ferguson does not get this. The best he can do is talk about the politics. We do not have confidence in this minister and the House should be allowed to test it.

**Time expired.**

[11.42 a.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, the Government will not be supporting leave for a whole range of reasons. It has been outlined very well by the Treasurer on behalf of the Government. We know that the other side are stunt monkeys, and they are at it again today -

**Ms O'Connor** - You say that to the whistleblowers who spoke to the ABC.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms O'Connor** - The people who had the guts to stand up -

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, order.

**Mr BARNETT** - They said yesterday that the matter was urgent. They argued up hill and down dale. Yesterday it was urgent. They could have brought it in. They could be debating it this afternoon in their own time. You have an hour-and-a-half this afternoon and you have brought on another motion. The motion relates to the stadium - as in the Labor Party position opposed to that, isolating and identifying their own David O'Byrne, member for Franklin. They have been caught out. You have been caught out. You are a party of chaos, a

party of division. You have been caught out. You said yesterday what you were arguing was urgent and then you come in here today -

**Ms O'Connor** - You are a tired Government.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - and you are trying to muzzle David O'Byrne, the member for Franklin.

They have been caught out. They know they are working in cahoots with the Greens, yet again. We know there is only one party here that wants to kill off the racing industry. It is the Greens. The only party that that could ever happen under is a Labor-Greens government. We do not ever want a Labor-Greens government again in Tasmania. We have been there, done that. It tanked our economy - 10 000 jobs disappeared.

Labor is simply toxic; the culture is toxic; the former shadow minister for health called it out publicly. You are in administration. You are divided. You are trying to identify Mr O'Byrne to try to stop him coming back into the Labor Party. We know the perilous nature of the leadership of the Opposition Leader. That is what this is all about. That is what you are trying to do. You have been called out.

The Premier has made it very clear, the minister has made it very clear, that the top priority is integrity, probity, and animal welfare. That is why the minister announced that the terms of reference would be released very soon. There will be an inquiry. Today, despite the Opposition not really being interested in Ray Murrehy, who is a previous chair of the stewards group and advisory sub-committee to Racing Australia on integrity and safety matters, Mr Murrehy is suitably qualified to lead this important review. You seem to be not interested when the Minister for Racing was trying outline this very important announcement. You were interjecting and making personal attacks and criticisms on the minister. We stand behind our minister and we highlight the shameful approach. That is why we have acted in standing up for integrity and standing up in the racing industry.

**Ms White** - If the minister is so confident, where is she?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - We are standing up for all of those in the racing industry and the rural and regional parts of Tasmania. My electorate of Lyons is reliant on those jobs in the rural and regional areas. We are backing those jobs and we are backing those families who are involved. We do not want to let them down. That is why this inquiry has been announced. It is very important to get on the front foot and be proactive to ensure that we have the opportunity for feedback.

The Minister for Racing has asked for your feedback. Please have input to the inquiry. She has welcomed that, she wants that. She has made it clear on behalf of the Government. The details of the terms of reference will be out shortly. To have a distinguished national figure from out of state, who will undertake this inquiry, is what we want. We want to deliver confidence. That is where the Government is at.

The Premier is a former racing minister. You have seen the commitment. You have seen the toughening of penalties and laws regarding animal welfare under his stewardship when he was the minister for Primary Industries and Water: toughened the laws and increased the penalties when it came to animal welfare. Nothing can be more important.

The minister made it clear this morning, as she did yesterday, if there are areas for improvement, we want to ensure that that can occur.

In conclusion, we will not be supporting this motion for very good reasons. It is another publicity stunt. The stunt monkeys are at it again. You have been doing it all summer. You are bringing it into the Chamber. You have time this afternoon and you have pulled on another motion, motion 101. You have been called out because it was the Labor Party on 21 April 2021 that tabled plans for a rectangular stadium, 10 000 to 15 000 people. No costings, no budget, no sight, no team. One-and-half pages. I have the media release; it is very clear. That is the rectangular stadium that state Labor proposed. You were criticising us and saying 'no stadium' despite the hundreds of pages of feasibility studies and hard work and negotiations led by our Premier to deliver the jobs, growth, development and opportunities for Tasmania. Right now those leaders are in Canberra lobbying for more money for Tasmania.

We back those industry groups. We say thank you for their work and advocacy. They are in Canberra right now arguing for Tasmania, as opposed to state Labor arguing against Tasmania.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The Premier.

**Ms White** - Are you kidding? They get two speakers in a row?

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the member, Ms White, be now heard.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Are you reflecting -

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Deputy Speaker, a standing order does allow that I can move that the member be now heard, which is a vote that needs to be taken immediately. We believe you gave the call erroneously.

**Ms Archer** - You do not just stand. You actually call Mr Speaker to get the attention.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I do understand the standing order, actually.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The question is that the Leader of the Opposition be heard.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 11**

Dr Broad  
Ms Butler  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad

**NOES 11**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson

Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms White  
Mr Winter (Teller)  
Dr Woodruff

Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Mr Wood  
Mr Young (Teller)

**PAIRS**

Ms O'Byrne

Mr Street

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The results of the division being Ayes 11 and Noes 11, in accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Motion negatived.**

[11.55 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the fact that I got the call highlights that the other side do not have their hearts in it - no enthusiasm; it is all about the stunts. They could be here this afternoon debating their motion of no confidence, as articulated by minister Ferguson, but no, it is all about the politics and the stunts for Labor. They do not have their hearts in it as evidenced by the fact that the Leader of the Opposition failed to get the jump and also failed to put on their agenda the motion here for this afternoon.

I say clearly that we will always be strong supporters of our Tasmanian racing industry and every single participant who works so hard day in and day out doing the right thing for the industry, employing thousands.

**Time expired.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**- The question is that leave be granted.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 11**

Dr Broad  
Ms Butler (Teller)  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms White  
Mr Winter  
Dr Woodruff

**NOES 11**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Mr Wood  
Mr Young (Teller)

**PAIRS**

Ms O'Byrne

Mr Street

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The result of the division being Ayes 11 and Noes 11, in accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Motion negatived.**

## **MOTION**

### **E-Cigarettes**

[12.00 p.m.]

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

That the House -

- (1) Agrees that e-cigarettes are not safe.
- (2) Acknowledges the conclusive evidence that e-cigarettes can cause -
  - (a) addiction
  - (b) burns and injuries
  - (c) poisoning
  - (d) acute nicotine toxicity
  - (e) seizures
  - (f) acute respiratory diseases, including illness requiring hospitalisation and intubation.
- (3) Notes the substantial evidence -
  - (a) of addiction to e-cigarettes among non-smokers
  - (b) that non-smokers who use e-cigarettes are three times more likely than non-users to go on to smoke combustible tobacco cigarettes
  - (c) of the alarming increase in use by young people
  - (d) that most e-cigarette use, even among smokers, is not for smoking cessation
  - (e) of the poor enforcement of the legal prescription pathway for e-cigarettes.
- (4) Acknowledges -
  - (a) that mainstream retailers in Australia, including convenience stores, tobacconists and others are a major source of nicotine e-cigarette products in breach of federal and state/territory legislation, including in Tasmania (e.g. Public Health Act 1997 (Tas), Federal Poisons Standard); and
  - (b) the proliferation and availability of e-cigarette devices and liquids not labelled as containing nicotine or claiming to be nicotine-free undermines efforts to enforce the legal prescription pathway.
- (5) Expresses alarm about the rapid increase in use by young people of e-cigarettes in Tasmania.

- (6) Condemns targeted marketing to young people.
- (7) Calls on the Government to make it an offence to supply e-cigarette products, regardless of whether they contain nicotine, outside of the existing Therapeutic Goods Administration prescription avenues.

Mr Speaker, you do not have to go far outside this place to see the proliferation of e-cigarettes in the community. A quick stroll through Salamanca, through the bus mall or, sadly, a visit to a primary school, high school or college, will see just how far these e-cigarettes have reached. If you are a parent of teenage children - like I am, and I know many in this place are - this is a worry you face every day. I know conversations are being held on a daily basis throughout thousands of Tasmanian households about the risks of e-cigarettes, and concerns from parents, grandparents and loved ones about the impact of e-cigarettes.

Before I commence my substantive contribution to this motion, I will take a moment to talk about language. I refer to them as e-cigarettes, rather than vapes. I know they are commonly referred to in the community as vapes, because 'vapes' is a marketing term the industry uses to try to distinguish their product from traditional cigarettes, to try to remove themselves from the harmful connotations and associations with cigarettes. We know just how well the campaign has been to raise awareness about the harm that cigarettes cause. Obviously e-cigarette owners and producers want to remove themselves from any connotations that their product is linked to harmful cigarettes.

Vapes are marketed as the latest trend and you see the marketing material, which is deliberately targeted at young people - the colourful advertisements, employing the same kind of tactics that the cigarette and tobacco companies did decades ago. I will not buy into their marketing tactics, so I will call them e-cigarettes rather than vapes.

As it currently stands, e-cigarettes that contain nicotine can only be purchased through licensed pharmacies with a prescription across Australia. However, e-cigarettes that are not labelled as containing nicotine are widely available from tobacconists, corner stores and of course online.

It is very clear from investigations such as the *Four Corners* 'Vape Haze' report in June last year, testing data around compliance that most e-cigarettes labelled as 'non-nicotine' have been found to contain nicotine when tested.

You go to your local corner store or tobacconist and you buy an e-cigarette product - whether an e-cigarette itself, or the e-liquid to refill your e-cigarette - and it is likely that particular e-liquid will contain nicotine - as much nicotine as potentially 12 packets of cigarettes in one particular e-liquid capsule. It is safest, therefore, for the consumer and public health advocates to assume that all e-liquids do contain nicotine which is addictive and, if ingested, toxic.

What is the harm caused by e-cigarettes? Whether they are prescribed or bought over the counter at a corner store and consumed by some unsuspecting consumer, the evidence is quite clear. I refer members to the Cancer Council's many documents on this, well supported by medical research. They say that the most up-to-date, comprehensive systemic review of the global evidence undertaken recently by the Australian National University found conclusive



evidence that e-cigarettes can cause burns and injuries, including severe injuries, serious enough to cause death:

- conclusive evidence that intentional or accidental exposure to nicotine e-liquids can lead to poisoning, which can result in severe consequences and can result in death.
- conclusive evidence that the use of e-cigarettes can result in acute nicotine toxicity.
- conclusive evidence that the use of e-cigarettes can lead to seizures.
- documented cases of interference with cardiac devices.
- conclusive evidence of acute, serious respiratory diseases among both smokers and non-smokers, including illnesses serious enough to require hospitalisation and intubation.
- conclusive evidence that the use of e-cigarettes resulted in increased airborne particulate matters in indoor environments.
- substantial evidence that e-cigarettes can cause fires and environmental waste.
- substantial evidence of dependence on e-cigarettes among non-smokers.

In addition, the review could provide no reassurance - that is, that there is no available evidence - that e-cigarette use by non-smokers does not also increase the risk of cardiovascular conditions, cancer, diabetes or other as yet unidentifiable health problems.

Finally, there is strong evidence that non-smokers who use e-cigarettes are three times as likely to go on to smoke combustible tobacco cigarettes as non-users, supportive of a gateway effect.

Mr Speaker, these are very serious consequences of e-cigarette use. Again, this is from a document produced by the Cancer Council. I will make available to the House the people who signed off on that particular document - the Lung Foundation, Minderoo Foundation, Public Health Association, Tobacco Free, Heart Foundation, Cancer Council Australia, Kidney Health Australia, Diabetes Australia, Stroke Foundation, Healthway, Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, Vic Health. It causes harm. It is very clear. The evidence speaks for itself.

This is a public health disaster and despite the best efforts of law enforcers, it is currently too easy to get around the law. Consumers are being duped into buying products that contain nicotine - and even if they do not contain nicotine, the chemicals used in e-liquids are very dangerous.

It is easy to get around the law as it currently stands, because thousands upon thousands of different products are available in the market. Regularly testing them all, or even a small sample of them, is a hugely onerous task on any compliance authority. They are constantly also changing the product. You will go into a tobacconist one day and see a range of products and then a whole new range of products will be available the next day.

The products themselves are not always easily identifiable. I am sure if you spoke to school principals or teachers at the moment, they will say how easy it is to disguise an e-cigarette. They can look like a USB port. There are reports of e-cigarettes looking like Ventolin inhalers, pens, keyrings, all sorts of things that are not necessarily easily identifiable as an e-cigarette. It is very hard to pick up what is an e-cigarette, let alone be able to test the e-liquid contained in that e-cigarette for nicotine. Our consumer laws cannot keep up with the deception that the e-cigarette industry is portraying.

E-cigarettes is a big business and that is exactly why the tobacco industry is buying it up big-time and employing their marketing skills, the same that saw a huge uptake in cigarette smoking, making more and more money at the expense of our young people in particular. I have no doubt that many in this House would have heard some of the distressing stories about the use of e-cigarettes, particularly by our young people. I regularly hear from my children, other children and people from sporting groups and clubs, that at school the toilets are no longer toilets but have become 'vape rooms'. I hear about young people not being able to play sport because of their use of e-cigarettes they have purchased online or have got others to purchase through tobacconists or corner stores, in the belief that they are non-nicotine products. They become addicted to these and the impact on their lungs is so great that they cannot participate in their athletics carnivals like they used to be able to because the effect of those e-cigarettes is so immediate and detrimental on their young bodies.

I have heard stories about how children have been burned by e-cigarettes. It is very concerning. We know that this is being voiced not only in our schools and homes but publicly. We have seen widespread concern over the last few weeks and months, with the CWA raising concerns about this; and parents with concerns about New Norfolk High School and the actions they took there, whether that was appropriate, because of the trouble e-cigarettes are causing in our schools. We know that public health authorities are calling out for action. I acknowledge the state Government has been calling for action in its recent submission to the Therapeutic Goods Administration. It was an excellent submission, highlighting the concerns about e-cigarettes.

Whilst there is no denying that this is a public health crisis across the nation and the world because of the proliferation of e-cigarettes, we can do something here in our jurisdiction. We can ban the sale of all e-cigarettes in Tasmania without a prescription. That way we can be assured there is some quality control over the product the public is using and a level of medical supervision over its use. We would also eliminate the harm caused to the public by a deliberately deceptive product and reduce the compliance burden on government and authorities. If we banned the sale of e-cigarettes, there should be no-one, apart from those with a valid prescription, using e-cigarettes. It is much easier to police than the current situation. We would then be able to have some control over whether they contain nicotine which is incredibly addictive, but also some control over the other harmful chemicals in the e-liquid or that are created by the heating of those e-liquids.

Mr Speaker, we cannot afford to wait with this issue. I do not want us to take as long as it took with cigarettes to realise the harmful consequences for our communities and the consequences for our public health system. We need to act swiftly. The proliferation of e-cigarettes is so great in Tasmania it cannot be denied and the uptake of e-cigarette use amongst young people is so prevalent that we are on the brink, if not in the midst of, a public health crisis.

I know that the time for this debate is quite limited so I will conclude my contribution here because I want to hear from other speakers in this place about their concerns about the use of e-cigarettes, particularly the impact on young people. It is my hope that we can come together with one voice on this very concerning public health issue and stand with organisations such as the Cancer Council and say we must act and do better for our communities and particularly for young Tasmanians.

[12.14 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her motion to the House, and for using private members time for a very good discussion on e-cigarettes.

I agree with her first point that e-cigarettes are not safe. I certainly agree with the intent of the entirety of the motion to do with increasing concerns around e-cigarettes; I know all health ministers across the country are. It was recently discussed at a national meeting of federal and state health ministers. I will come to that in a moment.

I have circulated an amendment to part 7. That amendment I can move at some point - now, maybe? - to delete part 7 and replace it with a new part 7. It is not necessarily saying that I do not agree with part 7. We just need the policy time for that work to be done.

**Mr O'Byrne** - I do not have a copy of the amendment.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My apologies. It was circulated to everyone else in the Chamber. Mr Speaker, I move the following amendment:

*Leave out paragraph (7).*

*Insert instead:*

"(7) Notes the Federal Health Ministers Meeting on 24 February, 2023 and resolutions of that meeting which endorsed the *National Tobacco Strategy 2022-2030* and to establish an E-Cigarette Working Group, and calls on the State Government to continue advocating for a national approach around the serious issue of vaping and e-cigarette use, including consideration to make it an offence to supply e-cigarette products regardless of whether they contain nicotine, outside of the existing Therapeutic Goods Administration prescription avenues."

I do not disagree with the intent of Ms Johnston's part 7 but wanted to highlight some work going on, the need for a national approach and for Ms Johnston's idea to be absolutely seriously considered.

We have been taking a very practical approach to addressing the rapid increase in the use of e-cigarettes, particularly by young people. The Tasmanian Government understands that smoking has a significant impact on people's health, their loved ones, as well as the community more broadly - and, indeed, on our state's health system. Our state has one of the highest smoking rates in the nation, killing more than 550 Tasmanians every year. These are 550 Tasmanian families that lose a loved one.

Tasmania can boast some of the tightest regulation around e-cigarettes, initiated as part of our first healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan, launched in 2016 by then health minister, Michael Ferguson. I commend minister Ferguson on his very proactive approach to this issue.

Here we are seven years later, still grappling with the issues of e-cigarettes, but the action our Government has taken goes back some way. This has put our state in a very good position to limit the use of e-cigarettes - and in turn, the impact on Tasmanians and our health system but we must do more. Reducing the smoking rate continues to be a priority for this Government.

We are increasing our efforts to help people who smoke to quit, while continuing to encourage young people to remain smoke-free. While we have made some progress to address smoking rates, we are seeing attempts to renormalise smoking within our communities through the use of e-cigarettes or vaping targeted at young people. I recognise the growing concern around the surge in e-cigarette use particularly in our schools by children and young people.

I would not go a week without parents or people within school communities talking about this very serious issue. I recognise the growing concern around the surge in e-cigarette use, particularly in our schools. I am continually shocked by what I hear.

As a community, we must work together to address this growing problem. To be very clear, e-cigarettes are illegal for anyone under the age of 18.

Our Tasmanian Tobacco Action Plan 2022-26, which I had the pleasure of launching at the Campania District School last July, has a continued focus on reducing tobacco use and acknowledges the need to address e-cigarette use, as well as reduce its access to children and young people.

It is our first Tobacco Action Plan to have a dual focus on reducing smoking as well as related smoking products like e-cigarettes, acknowledging the need for strong action in this fast-changing space. The action plan is supported by our investment of \$1 million for a smoking prevention package for young people which is being developed by the Department of Health and the Department of Education, Children, and Young People and informed by a number of key stakeholders. The work is focused on students in year 6 and up and we are developing teacher and parent resources, peer-led initiatives, messages to prevent e-cigarette use and supporting young people who smoke to quit.

Tasmanian government schools are implementing the drug education and drug management in schools policy and schools proactively educate students about the dangers of smoking and are responsible in their efforts to prevent smoking on school grounds. Our school nurses do a fantastic job and work closely with public health and the Drug Education Network to provide smoking prevention and cessation information to students and families.

E-cigarettes are addictive and have been associated with immediate harms, including respiratory illness and burns, while the health effects of longer-term use remain unclear. There have been numerous scientific reports to support our position. The National Health and Medical Research Council CEO's statement on e-cigarettes released in July last year highlights that health risks include addiction, poisoning, seizures, burns and lung injury. People are more likely to take up smoking if they use e-cigarettes and e-cigarettes are not proven safe and effective cessation aids.

A report released by the Australian National University for the federal Department of Health in April last year, *Electronic Cigarettes and Health Outcomes: A Systemic Review of Global Evidence*, demonstrates that global evidence shows the use of e-cigarettes can be harmful to health, particularly for non-smokers and youth. Nicotine is highly addictive and exposure during adolescence can change the structure and function of the brain. There are hundreds of chemicals in e-cigarettes, including formaldehyde, heavy metals, solvents and volatile organic compounds. The impacts include poisoning, seizures, burns and lung disease, and e-cigarettes contain single-use plastics and lithium batteries, adding to pollution, and can start fires.

At the Health ministers meeting in February I endorsed the National Tobacco Strategy 2022-30 to be publicly released. The strategy includes targets to reduce daily smoking prevalence in Australia to below 10 per cent by 2025 and to 5 per cent or less by 2030. Importantly, the strategy also includes a number of actions to address e-cigarettes and ministers right across the country agreed to support the establishment of a national e-cigarette working group. This working group would be aimed at reviewing and advising on measures to protect young people from the harms of e-cigarettes by addressing the increasing availability, appeal and uptake of vaping products.

The Tasmanian Government also provided a submission to the work underway at the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Our submission to the TGA consultation on the regulation of nicotine vaping products supports the regulation for the TGA's Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods and that they be subject to stricter imports and quality and safety control. Last week the TGA released a summary of the review consultation submissions and the federal government is now considering this work.

We will certainly continue to advocate for a national approach around the very serious issue of vaping and e-cigarettes, notwithstanding the strides and the actions we have taken since 2016 and that will include consideration to make it an offence to supply both non-nicotine and nicotine e-cigarettes outside of the existing TGA prescription process. I made it very clear at the Health ministers meeting that if we as a nation are serious on addressing this issue, we need to act and take a very strong national approach.

I recognise the private member's time of Ms Johnston's finishes at 1 p.m. I have moved my amendment to her very good motion and I look forward to others making a contribution.

[12.25 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to thank Ms Johnston for bringing this on. This is a very important issue and the Greens welcome being able to have more considered public conversation about this matter.

We are concerned where we have got to in Australia and the fact is that with the increase in vaping and the creation of the black market that has happened in Australia, which is different from many other countries' approach, we have effectively created a black market by so throttling the supply of vaping products to be prescription-only by a GP. Only 1 per cent of GPs in Australia are registered as prescribers for these smoking cessation products. That is a problem, so what has happened is that smokers who want to get off smoking - long-term, rusted-on smokers who have tried and tried - they find it difficult to access a GP and it is extremely cumbersome so they buy them on the black market.

It has obviously dramatically spread out now into our whole community and there are reasonable concerns and questions about what is happening with young people and the uptake of vaping amongst them. However, we have a problem with looking at the evidence clearly and without going to an extreme attitude of all vapes are bad. The fact is that, of the evidence presented, a lot of it is highly unbelievable and there is a lot of cherry-picking, but worse than that, there is false information circulating about the reputed harms from some e-cigarettes. I do not have time to go into it now but I would really like the Government to create more opportunities for us to have a considered conversation about this very important issue.

There is not a lot of time to speak but I am speaking on the minister's amendment. I note, first, that the amendment does not really change anything. All it is doing in addition to what Ms Johnston has is to note that the federal ministers' meeting in February endorsed the National Tobacco Strategy and will establish an e-cigarette working group. Then it calls on the Government to continue doing what it is already doing, including to do what Ms Johnston has called for: to consider making it an offence to supply e-cigarette products regardless of what they contain, whether they contain nicotine outside the current TGA prescription avenues.

That is the problem; it is not changing anything. We cannot continue to put our heads in the sand on this. We have to recognise that internationally we are out of step with most other countries, including the United Kingdom and New Zealand. New Zealand has just brought in regulations to regulate the use of e-cigarettes so that they are only available to people over the age of 18. They are treating it like we treat tobacco.

Why would we have a product like tobacco on sale everywhere in Tasmania and have a standard where that is available? We know it causes a far greater number of deaths; it is a fact that two out of three people who smoke cigarettes will die from a smoking-related disease, but we do not have that evidence about e-cigarettes. I am not saying they may not cause harm. Clearly there are cases where they may cause harm. Clearly there are cases where people think they do not have nicotine and that is why they bought them, but they do. Clearly there are concerns with the unknown products in there.

However, there is no doubt at all that they are an effective smoking cessation aid because they are cool on the lungs. When you are drawing in, it is not hot combusted air. That is the biggest risk and one of the greatest reasons why there is strong evidence that amongst people who have been long-term smokers, randomised clinical controlled trials show that people who switch to e-cigarettes have short- to medium-term improvements in asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, blood pressure, mucociliary clearance, respiratory infections, lung function, respiratory systems, cardiovascular markers and gum disease. These are just some of the issues. It is a really complex matter.

Again I thank Ms Johnston for bringing it on. I really counsel us to continue with the restrictive process we have in place at the moment, which is what both of these things do. They say, 'Oh look at the situation, we've created a black-market supply, let us keep doing what we are doing'. It will not work, so we need to change what we are doing.

It is a complicated world. There are dangerous things and we use them every day. Alcohol is number one, top of the list; a very dangerous thing and we use it every day. I am not saying that we should not take really strong measures. We should but they should be considered. We should ask why Australia has taken a different approach from other jurisdictions. Why is the Cancer Council of Australia out of step with the Cancer Council of the UK? Why are the health foundations in Australia out of step with their sister organisations in the UK? Why are we out of step with the medical association in New Zealand?

I think it is because at the federal level we have been so successful in leading the charge against tobacco corporations. The Labor Party was to be strongly commended for world-first legislation around plain packaging on tobacco. That has got us into a particular space where anything with the word 'nicotine' on its package is such a demon that we have done everything we can to shut it down. I am in no way an apologist for what happens in the tobacco industry or any of the nefarious money-making activities to go into creating harm in people's lives. We need to regulate this. There is a very strong case for licensing and regulations. That is why I do not support the current approach, because it is continuing what we are already doing. It is obviously a problem.

We strongly recommend that the Minister for Health talks to people in New Zealand about what they have done there. Is that the gold standard we should be heading to? It certainly has a lot of evidence behind it. We need to be looking at the data about the reduction in smoking among young people that has been recorded in the United States by the Centres for Disease Control, which collects this information. The National Youth Tobacco Surveys have shown among US high schoolers, the exact category that we are talking about, an overall long-term trend reduction in smoking from 22 per cent in 2004, down to, in their figures, 2 per cent at the moment.

In that long-term decline, in 2011 vapes started taking off among young people at high schools. In 2013 there was an increase in the use of vaping among young people at high schools. That went up to a high of 27 per cent. One in four or more of young people at high schools were vaping in the US four years ago. That is a similar pattern to what is happening here in Australia. Nonetheless, the decline in smoking continued.

The concerns about vaping being a gateway drug to cigarettes is not being demonstrated in the data that we have at the moment. It is showing that people who are risk takers are likely to go down the path of continuing to take risks. They are people we need to work with. We need to educate those people. We cannot educate in a prohibition mindset. We cannot have conversations when there is an attitude that this is a topic that we cannot talk about. That is exactly the problem when you have a society-wide ban on a product.

We know that the prescription-only model has failed, when less than 10 per cent of vapers have a nicotine prescription. It is obviously not working. I have circulated an amendment that I will speak to if there is time after we have dealt with the Government's amendment.

We do not support Ms Johnston's part (1) that says e-cigarettes are not safe. That is not the evidence of the National Health and Medical Research Council. Its words, and I have used them in the amendment, are that e-cigarettes can be harmful.

We do not support that list of things in part (2) that Ms Johnston has quoted. Unfortunately, that is false information. The evidence behind some of those claims has been proven to be false. I do not have time to go into it but it is on the public record. We can talk about it later. It is true, and we accept the evidence, that it is e-cigarettes containing nicotine that can cause addiction.

We cannot agree with parts (3) and (4), not because there is nothing in there that we might agree with, but there is such extreme generalisations in that information. Some of it is utterly false - that most e-cigarette use among smokers is not for smoking cessation. These are statements that have contested evidence behind them. I have two papers, one to the Australian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs, in their journal *Drug and Alcohol Review*, and another one that was published in the *AMJA* in relation to the federal government's review on e-cigarettes, which was done by Emily Banks at the ANU.

Both of those are rebuttal papers and they contain some very important people who have high credibility in the drug and alcohol research area. Some of these statements, unfortunately, have been rebutted and the evidence has found to be untrue.

With part (5), we do not agree with the statement about the alarm about the rapid increase in use by young people. We would amend that to 'concern about the rapid increase in use by people under the age of 18'. We are talking about a vulnerable cohort of young people, we are talking about predatory marketing, and we are talking about the use of sponsorship to encourage the uptake of vapes among young people. That is our serious concern here.

Finally, we would make the very important point that e-cigarettes can be an effective smoking cessation tool for some people. We would also call upon the Government to regulate the sale of e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco. We do not support the amendment that the Government has put because it is continuing the situation as it is. We hope to have time to move our amendment when we can.

[12.38 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak about this important issue that Ms Johnston has brought forward. I congratulate her on that.

The debate that has occurred across the Chamber today around the differing thoughts and perspectives that have been shared by members on this particular issue highlights to me the need for there to be national leadership on this issue.

The Labor Party in Tasmania has a proud history of reform, creating legislation to reduce smoking, to make environments safer and reduce the impacts of smoking across our community. We are very proud of that. Dr Woodruff referred to other countries around the world and what they have put in place. There has been a lack of leadership on this issue at a national level over a significant period of time, until the current Labor Government. An issue of this significance demands national leadership.



The federal health minister, Mark Butler, has been very clear about his position on this. As recently as last week, we saw the results of the consultation process that took place right across the country by the Therapeutic Goods Administration on some of the key changes they would like to see implemented. Reams of information are now publicly available since that was published last week, in detail; each of the submissions that were provided on this issue. It also looks at those key things we are looking at.

I want to put a couple of those on the record - important changes to border controls, pre-market TGA assessment of nicotine vaping products against product standards, strengthening quality standards for NVPs, and clarifying the status of NVPs as therapeutic goods. There are some really important points there, if you go on and read these.

The federal government is taking this very seriously. The Premier, himself, as the Health minister, has also mentioned the commitment of state ministers around the country to work with the federal government on this issue, which is really refreshing because you would not have seen that years ago with the previous federal government.

Some important work is going on nationally and we wholeheartedly support that work.

I was interested in listening to the debate across the Chamber because we, too, had some concerns about the wording of the motion. I indicate that we will be supporting the Government's amendment today.

I note what Dr Woodruff has said. The details within that amendment talk about considering that last point in part (7), which does not mean that you are locking into it or determining it. You are looking at it as part of a due process that is currently happening at a federal level which I think is only the right thing to do.

Tasmanian Labor strongly opposes the normalisation of smoking. As has been said, we do have some of the highest smoking rates in the country. We recognise the health risks associated with vaping and the current increased use of vapings in our schools. We find that incredibly concerning.

I want to acknowledge the importance of this issue and put on the record our concerns. It is a public health issue that demands federal leadership, working with the states, to take some strong action. That is what we will see shortly across the country. We think there should be a nationally consistent approach to this - whether that be around regulation, advertising, access and education. Education is a fundamentally important part of this process.

I also want to put on record that perhaps the state government has not been as proactive when it comes to public health information campaigns about vaping. If you look across the country at the amount of information provided in other states, they have run strong public health education campaigns on this issue. We have been lacking in that sense.

Coming out of COVID-19, across our state and across the country, I think this issue has been left to simmer and get a lot worse, and we know public health efforts were focused on other very serious matters at that time.

Nonetheless, we want to see the Government and Public Health working more closely with our school communities. As others have said, we hear every day from teachers in our

schools, from parents and from students. I hear from my own children about these things. There really does need to be much better support for school communities and a much better way of working together to address this growing issue among our young people.

Mr Speaker, I know other members want to make further contributions. I thank Ms Johnston for bringing this forward. We think there needs to be national leadership on this issue. We will support the Government's amendment and we look forward to learning more about what actions will be taken at a federal level to address this issue.

I encourage my colleagues in the House to read the good work the TGA has done around this issue in recent times.

[12.44 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I will be brief. I know that the mover of the motion will seek to wrap up the debate and talk about the amendments.

I commend the member for bringing this debate forward because the issue of e-cigarettes and their regulation is front of mind for many parents and families across Tasmania. The rise and the predatory nature of those engaged in the sale of e-cigarettes is a concern for all Tasmanians, and the regulation in this space - both at a state and federal level - is behind the needs of the community and community expectations.

I support the intent of the motion. I support the intent of the amendment moved by the Premier to allow a national position. I support and endorse some of the comments made by Dr Woodruff, the member for the Greens. I am not convinced that it is a definitive position that e-cigarettes can be effective smoking-cessation tools for some people but I believe in stronger regulation of e-cigarettes.

I am always concerned when you have companies linked to big tobacco companies that are behind the sale of something. I have had experience with them. For a number of years, I was the chair of SmokeFree Tasmania. I will make it clear: I am not a prohibitionist. I am in support of a regulated approach to what is a harmful product. I do not believe that banning a substance is necessarily a way to deal with some of the issues that are created by that substance.

The member for Franklin referred to alcohol. We find ways to manage that, and it is quite dangerous for people - but we find ways to manage it in a modern contemporary society.

When I was chair of SmokeFree Tasmania - which seems not that long ago to me - we could smoke in pubs and clubs; we could smoke in workplaces. As secretary of the Hospitality Union we were campaigning hard for safe workplaces. We had to come up against big tobacco companies that spent big money. They flew in PR consultants to film bar workers in regional pubs in Tasmania and every upper House member got a videotape from their electorate from someone working in their bar where they said, 'Please, please don't ban smoking in pubs and clubs because it will cost me my job, and if you ban smoking, pubs will close down from one length of Tasmania to the other.'

We know when the ban on smoking did come into pubs and clubs, pubs did not close down. Yes, there was a change in their model in terms of how they built a market but the insidious approach taken by big tobacco - who are behind companies that own and manufacture

e-cigarettes - always sets off my alarm bells because if they are involved, you know it is not good for the community, and you know they are not telling the truth.

What inspired our union's campaign to get involved in banning smoking in pubs and clubs was a hospitality worker - a single mum who worked in a pub in the northern suburbs of Hobart, who came to me and said, 'I have been diagnosed with breast cancer.' She had gone through treatment and the diagnosis was good, but she had worked in pubs and clubs all her life. That was her job, but she was effectively told by her doctor, if you want to get yourself into a safe environment, do not work in these smoky environments in pubs and clubs. That single mum, who had to put food on the table for her family, had an intolerable choice - either her health, or feeding her family. That is a choice workers should not have to make.

When you have big tobacco involved in spreading mistruth and lies around their products, I am always concerned about the ultimate outcome for the community.

While I absolutely support the intent, and the amendments moved by the Premier in attempting to come up with a national approach on this is important because you can regulate it in one state in a certain way but then there is a black market that can be opened up. If there are holes in the net, you can actually undermine what you are trying to do, and you put money into the pockets of people who do not deserve it.

I support some of the arguments raised by the Tasmanian Greens in terms of regulating e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco, although I think more research needs to be done to fully appreciate the danger e-cigarettes present to those users. I reiterate I am not convinced that the jury is completely in on e-cigarettes being an effective smoking-cessation tool for some people.

In summary, I support the intent behind the motion. I support the amendments to try to improve it and to have a national position. Regulation is always a better way to manage a product such as this. I look forward to the debate as it concludes.

[12.50 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I will be supporting the Government's amendment and thank the Premier for moving it. My intention with the entire motion is to try to raise public awareness about the harms that e-cigarettes cause in our community.

I had hoped that the parliament would speak as one on this, particularly to young Tasmanians. There is no doubt there is support for families who are having this conversation regularly around the kitchen table that e-cigarettes do cause harm. I appreciate the update from the Premier as Health minister about the outcomes of the meeting of 24 February. It is a sensible approach to take. I also hope, and the Premier has given his undertaking, to push this issue further at the national table and make sure that we do have consensus from the national table about our approach. I will be supporting the amendment.

**Amendment agreed to.**

[12.51 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I will not take up time so that Ms Johnston can finish up but I have an amendment to the amended motion. I move -

That the amended motion be amended by -

- (1) Omitting the words 'are not safe' from paragraph (1) and substituting with the words 'can be harmful'.
- (2) Leave out paragraph (2) and insert instead:  
  
'Acknowledges the evidence that e-cigarettes containing nicotine can cause addiction.'
- (3) Leave out paragraphs (3) and (4).
- (4) Leave out the words 'alarm about the rapid increase in use by young people' in paragraph (5) and insert instead the words 'concern about the rapid increase in use by people under the age of 18'.
- (5) Leave out paragraph 7 and insert instead:  
  
'(7) Recognises e-cigarettes can be an effective smoking cessation tool for some people.'
- (8) Calls on the Government to regulate the sale of e-cigarettes in the same way as tobacco.'

That effectively deals with the many concerns about the vulnerability of young people, recognising those under the age of 18 where there has been such a large increase in vaping demonstrated in Tasmania would not be able to legally purchase vaping products, and that the use of vapes for people over the age of 18 would be appropriately regulated and licensed in the manner in which we do so for tobacco and with the many conditions and caveats around that in relation to the place of purchase, the proof of identity, of age, and the training and the other requirements that a place of sale must adhere to.

There would be a conversation with the Government about the sort of approach taken by New Zealand where they have stipulated particular points of sale. Tobacconists need to have a higher level of licensing so that they can sell a whole range of flavours. Other places in New Zealand, such as a local tobacconist or the other places where you buy tobacco would only be able to sell a minimum number of flavoured vapes.

We all have our views about flavoured vapes. It is a concern when you hear 12- and 13-year-olds being marketed to bubble gum vapes. There is no doubt this is a very concerning space. We are moving for regulation as we do for tobacco. In that process the Government would undertake a thorough investigation of the evidence. There is good evidence that unless vapes are flavoured then people who are long-term smokers are much more inclined to go back to smoking cigarettes, which are more harmful. This is a harm-reduction measure. The world is not perfect and we do have and continue to expose ourselves to legal products which harm ourselves every single time. We go to the shops, we buy things that have demonstrated harm. We need to have governments that regulate for that, that educate for that. That is what we are calling for the same practice with vaping products as for the other harmful products we can legally purchase.

[12.55 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I do not support Dr Woodruff's amendments to the motion.

As I said earlier, my wish in bringing forward this motion was that we could speak as one with regard to the harm that e-cigarettes cause and we can send a clear message to Tasmanians and families about the harm.

The amendment moved by Dr Woodruff waters down the impact of e-cigarettes in our community. The amendment seeks to substitute the words, 'are not safe' for, 'can be harmful'. I think the evidence, as outlined by the ANU which was a report for the Australian Department of Health and National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, April 2022, is very clear that harm can be caused by the use of e-cigarettes, whether or not they contain nicotine. Obviously, nicotine in itself is a dangerous product, but even where e-cigarette products do not contain nicotine, there are significant risks of poisoning from the dangerous chemicals contained within that e-liquid.

There is harm caused. They are not safe. There are reports, for instance, because these e-liquids are so poorly labelled, that small children have got hold of the e-liquid cannisters and if you touch nicotine contained in those e-liquid cannisters, then it burns. It can cause death if ingested. They are dangerous. They are not safe products.

I am also concerned with regard to omitting part (2) which outlines the scientific medical evidence about what e-cigarettes can cause, as well as part (3).

I am concerned and I am aware, and I am sure other members have received an email from two doctors, their names escape me now, but they did feature on the *Four Corners* report last year, who are proponents of vapes or e-cigarettes. They said they are great for cessation programs. These two doctors, as the *Four Corners* Report highlighted, have taken donations from the e-cigarette industry. That brings into question their independence and their ability to independently assess the effectiveness of e-cigarettes.

I also note, that no, as far as I am aware, e-cigarette companies or manufacturers have submitted their e-cigarette product to the TGA for approval as an approved cessation method. They have not been willing to have their product tested to be proven to be an effective cessation method. That raises a number of concerns.

For those reasons, I cannot support the amendments put forward by Dr Woodruff. I understand the caution that she expresses around how we tackle e-cigarette use in relation to other harmful products. I recognise that alcohol is harmful. There are other harmful products that are lawfully circulating in our community. We have an important opportunity here to really do some good, to send a clear message on an issue which is discussed on a daily basis in Tasmanian households, to an issue that is talked about in schools on a daily basis.

I regularly hear of disturbing stories about children in grades 3, 4 and 5 using e-cigarettes because they think it is safe to do so and it is cool. That is not a message this House wants to send. We want to send a clear message that it is not safe, that e-cigarettes can cause harm, whether or not they contain nicotine, and that we must do more to protect Tasmanians, in particular young people, from these incredibly harmful products.

I cannot support Dr Woodruff's amendments. They water down the very clear medical and scientific evidence that has been put forward by the ANU to the federal Department of Health. The Deputy Opposition Leader said the federal minister is very keen to move on this issue. It is a public health crisis facing us nationally. We must do more. I support the amended motion by the Premier, and ask that the House does too.

**Time expired.**

**Mr SPEAKER** - The question is that the amendments moved by Dr Woodruff be agreed to.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 2**

Ms O'Connor  
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

**NOES 20**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Dr Broad  
Ms Butler  
Ms Dow  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Byrne  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Tucker  
Ms White  
Mr Wood (Teller)  
Mr Young

**Amendments moved by Dr Woodruff negatived.**

**Motion, as amended, agreed to.**

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

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, before we start, I welcome the Deloraine Primary School students to Hobart and to parliament.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## **MOTION**

### **Illicit Drugs Control**

[2.31 p.m.]

**Mr YOUNG** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes that trafficking and dealing in illicit drugs has devastating impacts in our communities.
- (2) Further notes measures that the Government is taking to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs in Tasmania to protect our communities, including:
  - (a) investing over \$730 million in additional funding to Tasmania Police since coming into Government;
  - (b) increasing our police numbers by 31%; and
  - (c) establishing the Crime and Intelligence Command to coordinate drug investigation.
- (3) Further notes:
  - (a) that as a result of this Government's support of Tasmania Police, over the past 12 months police operations have removed millions of dollars of illegal drugs from our community;
  - (b) the Government is committed to reducing the harms associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, having developed the Reform Agenda for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Sector in Tasmania, with an investment of \$12.4 million to build an integrated and coordinated alcohol and other drugs service system to ensure Tasmanians can get the help they need; and
  - (c) the Government is committed to supporting and investing in the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) community sector organisations through a variety of means, such as rehabilitation beds, support and education programs in the community and our schools.
- (4) Agrees not to adopt any measures that soften our drug laws, including decriminalising illicit drugs and the extreme measures recently adopted by the Queensland Labor government to allow users three chances before they face court.

Mr Speaker, it is no secret that the Tasmanian Rockliff Liberal Government is committed to tackling the scourge of illicit drug dealers on our communities across Tasmania. We know that illicit drugs can have a devastating impact on our families, friends and colleagues. To protect our community, the Tasmanian Rockliff Liberal Government is working hard to support our police to crack down on illegal and dangerous drug trafficking and criminal networks. We are increasing our numbers by 31 per cent in Tasmania, following the days when Labor sacked 10 per cent of the police service and 25 per cent of departmental staff. By 2026, we will have a record number of 1449 police in Tasmania's police force. This will see 329 new police officers in Tasmania. Already today we have recruited 250 of these police, meaning we are well on our way to meet our 2026 goal.

There have never been more police than there are today and we are recruiting to record levels. The largest-ever recruiting training course in the history of Tasmania Police started in January this year, with 80 starting their careers in the police force. I wish them well. I already thank them for their service in what will be a hard job. Good luck to them.

We know that with more police, we have more opportunities to implement diverse initiatives to keep Tasmania safe. This has included establishing new policing roles, new policing commands and a new rostering reform initiative. Included in that, in 2020 we were able to establish a dedicated Crime and Intelligence Command. This is the first time such a command has been established in Tasmania, thanks to the investment by this Government in police numbers. This command has provided effective criminal intelligence services and combats child exploitation material, drug trafficking and other serious crimes. The command and its highly skilled employees expose criminals and bring them to account for their crimes against Tasmanians. This includes over 30 officers dedicated to drug investigation and investigating drug dealers and traffickers, and the success of this command has been seen in recent times.

In March 2022, the Tasmanian police conducted one of its largest seizures of cocaine in Tasmanian history. This resulted in 1.4 kg of cocaine, 4.6 kg of cannabis and 392 grams of methylamphetamine being seized, two men being charged with trafficking and harmful illicit drugs being removed from our streets.

In August 2022, the command undertook Operation Junction, which resulted in the arrest of an offender in Queensland for the alleged importation of 1 kg of methylamphetamine, or ice, worth approximately \$1 million into Australia that was very likely destined for Tasmania. This was a joint operation involving the Australian Federal Police and Queensland Police. This command also undertook Operation Usher, which resulted in the arrest of an alleged drug dealer from New South Wales who was involved in the importation of \$8 million of illicit drugs into Tasmania.

In late 2022 police seized over \$400 000 in illicit drugs and drug manufacturing equipment as part of a drug seizure. This year in February, the command completed Operation Bold, with searches conducted in Mole Creek and the seizure of firearms, ammunition, methylamphetamine and ecstasy. The seized drugs had an estimated street value of \$1 million.

We have seen the effectiveness of our drug response even in the last week. On Monday night, Tasmania Police and the Australian Federal Police intercepted an alleged drug trafficker at Hobart Airport and seized over \$5.5 million worth of ice and cocaine. Over the last weekend,



Devonport Police intercepted a vehicle at the *Spirit of Tasmania* terminal with 20 kg of cannabis concealed, estimated to be worth \$150 000.

Tasmania Police works closely with stakeholders and partner agencies such as the Australian Federal Police and other interstate police services, Australia Post, TT-Line, airports and the Australian Border Force in the investigation of illicit drug distributions.

Our police dogs are incredibly valuable in our drug response and were integral contributors to Monday night's drug bust. Tasmania Police has six detector dogs and six full-time handlers. Here are four drug detector dogs, two in Hobart, one in Launceston and one in Devonport and two firearms and explosive detector dogs, one in Devonport and one in Hobart. The explosive detector dogs have been trained to also detect firearms and related items such as firearm parts and ammunition.

We are also investing heavily into our Special Operations Group which is here to support Tasmania Police to respond to serious criminal activity. The Special Operations Group is highly trained and equipped to respond to a wide range of security situations and can be deployed in high-risk incidents. The Tasmanian Rockliff Liberal Government is making the Special Operations Group full time, with 20 additional police officers by mid-2024. To support our Special Operations Group, this Government has also invested \$1 million for a northern Special Operations Group facility which was opened early last year. The Government has also committed \$3.6 million for a southern Special Operations Group facility which the minister opened in December 2022.

Mr Speaker, that list of drug busts and success by the police is astounding and I cannot thank them enough for doing it and on behalf of my kids, thank you very much.

We know that the Tasmanian Greens are already trying to soften our laws on illegal drugs. Their draft Decriminalising Personal Drug Use Bill 2023 calls for decriminalising the possession of up to 1.5 grams of MDMA, 1.5 grams of cocaine, 1 gram of heroin and 1.5 grams of ice, just to name a few. The Greens want to decriminalise the use of these drugs. However, it would remain illegal to sell or supply, so basically someone still has to sell these drugs. This will do nothing to reduce the illegal drug traffickers and their black market. This policy will not discourage any individual from using drugs and it will not discourage the manufacture and trade of illicit drugs.

The Greens seem confused about whether these drugs should be legal or not or if they are safe or not. The answer is that illicit drugs are not safe and they will not be made legal by this Government. Illicit drugs only benefit those who traffic and trade in these harmful products.

On the other side, the Rockliff Liberal Government has taken strong measures to keep Tasmanians safe from drug trafficking and other criminal networks. We are also committed to reducing the harms associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on individuals who are affected by drug and alcohol use.

The Government has developed a reform agenda for alcohol and other drugs in Tasmania. This is a 10-year plan to ensure Tasmanians affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug use can access appropriate, timely, effective and quality alcohol, tobacco and other drug services supports and treatments. The reform agenda builds on an integrated service system that

provides better coordination, collaboration and communication between the systems. We have invested \$12.4 million for this initiative. This Government is also committed to supporting and investing in alcohol and other drug community sector organisations through a variety of means such as rehabilitation beds, support and education programs in the community and our schools.

Under this Government, we led the country in calling for a national evidence-based response to provide safe access to medical cannabis. The opening of Tasmania's Controlled Access Scheme in 2017 marked a significant step forward in this policy area. As noted at the time of the launch, the scheme was not restricted by age or disease which allowed broader access to other areas. On 1 July 2021, changes to the Controlled Access Scheme came into effect to increase access to medicinal cannabis products in Tasmania. This includes authorising Tasmanian general practitioners to prescribe medicinal cannabis products and allowing more pharmacies across the state to dispense these products.

Regarding enforcement, Tasmania Police will divert minor drug offenders away from the criminal justice system. The Tasmania Police Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative is a health-based diversion program that enables adult minor drug offenders to receive counselling and drug treatment for their drug use. It involves a drug caution or diversion notice which is issued under the Diversion Initiative at the discretion of a police officer for a low-level and/or first-time user of cannabis and other illicit drugs. A diversion results in a referral to the Alcohol and Drug Service for the provision of an assessment and brief intervention or treatment.

We have seen these drug busts. These drugs are not safe and they will not be made legal by this Government. However, we are a Government of heart and compassion. We do not make any apologies for being tough on hardened criminals who traffic drugs in Tasmania. The impact of hard drugs on our families and our communities is devastating and it benefits only those who go to great lengths to break our laws to traffic these drugs in our state. Illicit drugs only benefit criminals who want to line their own pockets.

Those who supply these drugs into Tasmania will be targeted by police and brought to justice accordingly, as has been seen through the large-scale operations completed by police as well as covert operations using community intelligence, as I have outlined before.

Businesses and members of the public are always encouraged to report all matters of criminal activity to Tasmania Police at the time of offending by calling 131 444 or anonymously to Crime Stoppers Tasmania on 1800 333 000. I encourage anyone to take the chance if they can. Crime Stoppers is an anonymous service. Please report as many people as you can because we want our communities to stay safe and drug free. Not only does this allow Tasmania Police to respond in a timely manner but it also provides intelligence that guides future targeted operations and identifies recidivous offenders.

In conclusion, we are a Government committed to tackling crime. We will not be softening our drug laws for the benefit of criminals.

[2.43 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, in his acting role as Leader of Government Business, Mr Ferguson belled the cat this morning when he called this afternoon's private members' time - a time meant for backbenchers to be able to bring forward issues of significant importance to them - Wedge Wednesday. If you are in any doubt as to why we are here today

having this debate, Mr Ferguson made that very clear. It is a base use of parliamentary processes for political gain.

It is disappointing that the Government chose to act this way but hardly surprising. What surprised me was that the Government chose not to use the time it had allocated for private members today to debate Mrs Alexander's Notice of Motion. That motion was important and one that all members of this House would like to support. It is one that members of a national body have come down to hear us talk about today. It was a motion of compassion, of solidarity, of inclusion and support - one of those rare times in this House that we can join together and agree. I am sorry that you have been so - I was going to say unceremoniously bumped - neglected in this way, Mrs Alexander, just so Mr Ferguson can play Wedge Wednesday the way he likes to. I know this issue is of great importance to you. Perhaps when Mr Street is back we might see a slightly more collaborative approach to getting some of these motions forward. I am sure Mrs Alexander is as distressed as any other member of the community by her party's decision to prioritise politics after what was something that we all could have agreed to.

Our visitors from our twinning nation of Samoa - it is wonderful to have you back in the House today - would have liked to see us agreeing on something in one of their visits to the lower House. So far, they have only been to Question Time, which did not show a great deal of collaboration.

There are times that we can work together. However, Mr Ferguson and Mr Ellis have decided not to do that. The motion Mr Young named is fundamentally not about that is it, Mr Young?

Before I get onto that, I will reference the comments by Ms Archer today in an answer to a question on notice, a Dorothy Dixier from her own side, regarding investing in those things within our prison system that recognise that people have the capacity to change, that people can be helped. If you put a really appropriate program around addiction management, wellbeing, anxiety and depression and psychological disorders then we can do so much to decrease recidivism, so much to ensure that those people participate in society in a structured and positive way.

That is something this Government also seeks to politicise in this motion before us. I was pleased that the Attorney-General made those comments because they were fundamentally an understanding that the solution to crime is not as simplistic as a law and order approach. It has to be much greater than that. For those who have, at any stage, worked in this sector, we know that to be the truth and we know people can change. If we support people we can do the right thing.

The motion in Mr Young's name, presumably prepared by Mr Ellis, who is also with us, is a clumsy tool. While I greatly respect our Queensland colleagues as they respond to issues in their state in the most appropriate way for them, we are not planning to bring in similar legislation. Unless you really just wanted to hear us say those words, Mr Young, you have wasted the parliament's time today and humiliated Mrs Alexander in front of people who have come from interstate to hear a significant debate. I hope that you, Mr Ellis and Mr Ferguson are proud of yourselves for that.

We will always look for harm-minimisation models, finding mechanisms for people with addictions to change the course of their lives with appropriate, targeted and funded support similar to those that were outlined by the Attorney-General today. She said they would provide those for people in jail and I imagine we would want to provide them for people in the community as well. It is interesting that while two of your ministers want to play a game with these issues, one other does not. That is a matter for you to resolve on your side of the House.

The motion, however, does include references to police resourcing. I am more than happy to have an opportunity to talk about this, to discuss this and share with Mr Young some of the realities that serving police officers have identified, have raised time and time again with this Government and are concerned about. The reality is that most of us do not put our lives on the line just turning up to work every day. Most of us do not face ongoing trauma just doing our jobs. These are things police and other emergency service workers face every time they respond to an incident.

We are all reminded of the shocking events in Queensland just before Christmas and the tragic loss of two young police officers. That was a stark reminder of the risks that all our police officers face and emergency service workers face and the courage they show serving the community to keep the rest of us safe. We can only imagine, as non-emergency service workers in this place, the shock, grief and trauma of police across Australia as they came to terms with the news that two of their own had been struck down while serving and protecting the public.

The effect on those who have experienced their own trauma on the job, particularly those with post-traumatic stress disorder of which the numbers are vast, would have been deep. We were reminded of the far-reaching effects of trauma on police and first responders with the recent anniversary of the devastating Hillcrest tragedy. As shocking as that was for Tasmanians, the trauma of dealing with it had an impact on police and paramedics and others who attended, and we all talked about it.

Some of this information has come from Ms White's address to the Police Association, which talked about that image that will be imprinted on all of our minds forever of those two police officers sitting on the ground comforting themselves on that most horrific of days. It went around the world and is a reminder for all of us about what our serving police officers and emergency service workers go through when they deal with heartbreaking events.

Post-traumatic stress disorder rates are higher among police and people who respond to these types of tragedies. We know more Australian police officers are dying by suicide than they did two decades ago. The Western Australia Police Association has done some research along with South Australia, which showed that Tasmania and South Australia have recorded a highly disproportionate number of suicide deaths amongst serving officers based on the size of the cohort of officers we have. We have had a coronial inquest in Tasmania into the deaths of four officers by suicide, shining a light on the issue and underlying the need to do something to prevent such tragedies. In no way do I wish to pre-empt the findings of that inquest. That would be entirely inappropriate for any of us here to do.

It is no secret that police have been calling for some time for better care, better workplace support and better training, not just for these major events but in the day-to-day policing that they do every single day. In fact, the association and the workers have been calling for an investment into research about why their job is so dangerous and why so many of them are off work with psychological issues for some time. They have produced report after report for

government asking for an investment into some research. Whilst the health and wellbeing that has been set up is fantastic, and I applaud the Government on that - the work done by the former minister Petrusma was absolutely commendable - it responds to people once they have been hurt. What we really want is to work out what is going wrong. What are we fundamentally doing wrong in our workplace, in our safety structures, in our rostering, in whatever it is that means that so many of our police officers are going off on workers compensation? I will talk a little bit about that in a minute.

In day-to-day policing there is risk and trauma and that is being increased by the failure of this Government to meet its own bare minimum safe staffing levels. The Government's own data, released last year, shows a quarter of police shifts are not meeting staffing levels in one of our largest stations, and that police officers in Hobart are now frequently working below safe levels with the station often left critically understaffed and under-resourced. More than 25 per cent of shifts at the Hobart station consistently failed to meet their bare minimum safe staffing levels since the introduction of mandatory safe staffing levels last July. During that period, 47 of the 168 shift snapshots failed to comply with agreed staffing levels. The other six 24-hour police stations are battling to maintain a safe staffing level.

In fact, the minister will remember that at the last conference he was taken to task quite firmly by serving police officers about the inability of this Government to adhere to its own country station relief policy. There was an additional \$2.5 million per year put into funding. That should be enough to fund it. That was a good budgetary decision. I am not going to criticise that at all but that was there to ensure that there were not going to be absences from our 28 most remote stations, which leaves regional communities unprotected and puts officers from other stations at risk as they cover greater areas.

I wonder, Mr Young, whether you have had any conversations with the minister to find out how many of your stations in your electorate have been understaffed or have been closed. Certainly the Swansea Police Station was without an officer for four months from 24 September last year. The position was not backfilled until police staff had to take the extreme action of submitting a hazard notice to get the basic number of people on the job that the Government promised would be there. Despite this being raised directly with the minister at the conference, and in the media since then, the Triabunna station has been without a police officer since 21 November last year.

The Government has funded \$2.5 million for the policy. It has to be an operational decision or a ministerial decision that means that that money is being absorbed somewhere else into the department. The failure to adhere to the policy on so many bits of evidence should indicate that the resourcing should be allocated to a dedicated relief station pool because obviously what you are doing is not working.

Yesterday, our 24/7 stations were down 31 staff. I cannot give you today's figure but I can probably get it for you later on, Mr Young, if you are so passionate about this issue. Last month, across all police districts, there were 42 vacancies: 8 per cent of positions of the seven 24-hour stations were vacant. I think it is higher at the moment, but I do not have the up-to-date data. I am happy to bring that in any time you would like, Mr Young. That is 37 officers and that does not include our officers who are incapacitated. As well as the immediate risk to police officers by failing to meet safe staffing levels, there is also the undeniable effect of the workers compensation figures, which are unimaginably high.

Last year we talked about the figures being around about 9.7 per cent to 9.8 per cent and we all said, 'That's horrific. If somebody does not do something it is going to get worse'. It is now 12.1 per cent, so I guess it did get worse because nobody did anything. There are 162 officers on a current workers compensation claim, with 5.1 per cent of those fully incapacitated, which means we may never see them back on the job again. That is the reality of their working life. Of the ones who are back at work, they are on reduced duties and certainly not on operational duties. They are in safe environments to try to manage their wellbeing.

Not only are they getting sick and not being able to turn up to work, they are leaving in droves. Last year, some 78 police left the service altogether, the highest number of separations ever, and referring back to the member's comment before about the amount of police officers that were let go during the global financial crisis, it is more than that. You are separating at least seven officers a month and you have lost 23 this year already. Of the people who left last year, 66 resigned to take on other roles. They did not resign to retire. They did not resign because their age profile required it. They resigned to take on other roles where they are probably better cared for, where they are better respected, with better conditions, where someone might actually care about investing into a workplace study that the Police Association have been calling for for years to understand why they are at risk and why they are increasingly being hurt. You would think they would care but, as this minister says, it is all about a police force, not a police service. Quite frankly, our police service deserves better than that kind of lip service.

Another thing happens when they go. When we bring in new police officers it is absolutely wonderful to bring new people into the role, but we lose that level of experience that comes with those serving officers who have been around for a while and who can provide that mentoring, fill those supervision roles and those senior roles.

Recruitment is simply not keeping pace with government commitments. A total 140 officers need to be recruited this year simply to meet the commitment this Government made at the last election and to replace those who left the service. There have been 80 so far according to my latest data, and I am sure the minister can jump in if there are additional ones, but there is still a significant shortfall -

**Mr Ellis** - There are more than 80 at the academy right now, more than 100 at the academy.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Speaker, you threw me out yesterday -

**Mr Ellis** - Didn't you ask for an interjection?

**Ms O'BYRNE** - The member is now saying that I asked for an interjection. Mr Speaker, just today you said that we were all supposed to be grown up enough to ignore that. You can continue to have that view or hold it only in Question Time; that is a matter for you.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, do not challenge the Chair.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - The Government has committed to 1449 police by July of next year but they are simply not going to make it on these current rates of attrition and recruitment.

A couple of other issues were raised by the member. I want to leave some time for other members to speak and I appreciate that you would like to do that, Dr Woodruff.

We are the only state without a dedicated full-time Special Operations Group. The member was talking very glowingly about how we were going to have 20 full-time Soggies by 2024. That was a commitment from the 2020 Budget. Whilst I absolutely love the new building where the Soggies will be - it is leaving your electorate, Mr Shelton - and it is great we have a building that will house them but it would be really nice to have them on the ground.

Going back to that other issue, we need to act on the recommendations made by the Winter review into workers compensation and wellbeing from 2021 as well as the Wise Lord Fergus Review into Work Health and Safety 2020 ensuring that not only are they implemented, they are actually assessed to see whether they are working. This Government does a lot of things around press releases and very little about how things work on the ground.

We do need to understand research to better understand the workload in our urban areas because that is becoming overwhelming. Make sure those commitments are delivered that effective recruitment and retention policies are devised to follow. That seems to be the biggest concern amongst most serving officers - sorry, two things - not only is there no commitment to that research that the association has called for, for some time - it does not cost much, by the way. I think it was going to be \$150 000 a year; it was a very small amount of money. Not something that you would normally sniff at if you were going to invest in workplace safety ensuring our workplace is safe.

Not only is there not that, but there is no effective retention strategy; it is really hard to get any understanding from the police service at the moment about what they are going to do to keep people. The only strategy seems to be to bring more recruits in.

They do have the shorter recruiting program coming in. I would be happy to be proven wrong but I reckon that one is possibly going to have some challenges longer term because if you are doing that shorter course, the skills you gain will be reduced because of the 14-week course - and that will impact on your ability to go through the different levels of the police service later. There is a longer-term issue that will impact on your ability to fill senior roles later on.

We need to have a much clearer outcome time line and accountability process around all of the Government's commitments. Police should not have to fight for up-to-date and effective advice - and they should not have to fight for up-to-date and effective data, because this is the first time Tasmania Police no longer report on victimisation rates based on police divisions.

We can get larger data that covers larger cohorts but specifically it now does not allow you to look at victimised crimes in a police district. A victimised crime is any crime in which an individual has an impact, so quite a vast range of things would be covered within that - from a burglary to a sexual assault.

Mrs Alexander and the other members for Bass would know that Launceston has recorded the highest victimised crime rates continually, yet we do not see a significant investment into changing the resourcing of the police station there that responds to some particular challenges there.

I need to mention the dogs. I was not going to, but Mr Young did. In 2018, the commitment was to increase the number of drug-detection dogs across the state from five to seven. There was a promise of three additional drug-detection dogs. Prior to 2018, there were five dogs - four drug detection dogs and one explosives-detection dog.

At the 2021 election, the Government promised to provide three general-purpose police dogs, which they failed to follow through on. Back in 2018 we had five dogs. Since then, we have had a commitment for an additional two - one of which was met - and then an additional three. We still do not have the seven that were promised in 2018. There are still six dogs and no sign of the additional three that were promised last year. We have four drug-detection dogs, and then two dogs that have explosives and firearms cross-detection capacity.

That still leaves Tasmania as the only state without general-purpose police dogs, even though they are crucial across a range of important policing areas.

Mr Speaker, this Government is nowhere near being able to meet the staffing targets that it has promised. It is nowhere near being able to meet its mandated safe staffing levels across the broad number of stations. It is failing to meet its own Country Police Station Relief Policy.

They are not investing in keeping workers safe. They are watching highly trained people - who we do not want to lose- leaving in droves to do anything other than this job, because this Government has not demonstrated a commitment to keeping them safe and responding to their needs. They are not coming through with their much-lauded commitments.

Police are now asked to do so much more than we historically understood the traditional frontline work of policing to be.

They are heavily invested in community development and education. They are heavily trying to make remarkable differences with our young people. Some of the engagement programs that our police are running are just incredible. It is wonderful to watch. I am sure each of us in our own electorate have seen those works, but they are also called to do tasks that they were never trained for.

One of the big shortfalls the Government has to deal with - because it was part of the Government's own workforce capacity audit - was to invest in experts in cybercrime. The recommendation was to look at bringing people in with those skills: or, heaven forbid, doing an audit of the police we currently have who have come from other careers, and say, wow, you are an accountant and you are a police officer - how about we link you up into cybercrime, in deep investigative work? They may say no.

I am not sure if it was under you, Mr Speaker, as minister for police, but when new applicants came in to graduate through the college, work was done to look at all their skills, all the things they could do, so we would get the best out of these people who were putting their hand up to serve our community. Nothing happened with that; nothing happens now. There are things we could do better.

Police should not be the first responder to a triple 000 call for an ambulance because no ambulance is available. The need to respond to growing demands and challenges across our community is a massive pressure that our police are now experiencing.



There are always ways we can reduce this pressure but it does require a government that actually invests in the core services the Government is responsible for delivering: health, education and housing.

We need a government that is fundamentally committed to looking at those issues that drive inequality, that leave people living in poverty, that send people into the type of despair where drugs are the only things that they can take up. These are not all bad people. Some of them do bad things but we cannot give up on people altogether.

We have to invest everywhere we can. If you do not have a safe place to live, if it is too hard for you to get your kids to school, if it is too hard for you to pay a doctor's bill and you do not have the time wait in the emergency department for hours, how on earth can you make the rest of the world work for you?

Tackling those issues driving poverty and inequality in our community will make a significant difference to the crime rates in our community. We do need to assist with long-term behavioural change to see a reduction in crime. That in no way reduces the work the police do day by day - I appreciate that. We should be looking at evidence to understand how we can tackle those drivers of crime. We need to look at early intervention, diversion programs; anything we can.

The motion before us was a grotty little attempt not to genuinely have a conversation about increase in crime and diversion and strategies we need at both an investment and a policing level. It was a political stunt on a day when I think we could have been better.

We will support it because there is nothing particularly horrific in it. However, I am disappointed that this House's time has been wasted this way - that we play a game with our police officers this way and with people who expect us to be better.

[3.07 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, it is disappointing that this is the second time we have heard from the member for Franklin, Mr Young, and that he has used himself for populist effect by the Government. He has never stood in this place and spoken about an issue for his own electorate. The people in Franklin are yet to hear from the member for Franklin, Mr Young. Instead, he gets wheeled out with the sort of cynical and hypocritical rubbish that we have in this motion today.

Yes, there is a lot of stuff in here that is noted, but fundamentally, this is only a motion that calls on the House to agree not to adopt any measures that soften our drug laws.

Mr Jaensch's Youth Justice Blueprint 2022 aims to reform the legislative framework for youth justice to emphasise diversion programs and to provide improved diversion options. One of Mr Jaensch's existing police diversion programs is the illicit drugs diversion initiative. Mr Jaensch's paper acknowledges drug use is a significant factor behind youth offending behaviour.

It is obvious that increased drug reforms will be an essential plank of the reforms that he announced. The Attorney-General, Elise Archer, has expanded the program cap for the mandated drug diversion program. She has extended its application to Supreme Court cases.

Both of those things the Greens, and the legal community and youth advocates have long fought for and we strongly support.

This motion today is that the House does not support this program, or any policies like it. That is what we have before us. It is insincere, it is puerile and it undermines the work of ministers Archer and Jaensch. It is pathetic that the Government would bring on a motion that calls for the House not to support its own reforms. It is even more pathetic that they clearly recognise punitive responses to drugs do not work, but they still want to virtue-signal to sections of their voters that they are tough on crime, and that is what this is all about.

It is all about the Government's performance in the last fortnight. It is all about the devastating front-page stories of ministers' failures, the lack of confidence in minister Ogilvie for the appalling damage she is overseeing to the racing industry in Tasmania and animal welfare, and no confidence in the Premier for his weakness and complete incapacity to do anything about ministers who will do anything to flout a regulation or the good name of industries and especially the impacts on animals and people suffering from want of housing. He will do nothing, of course he will not. This is about wheeling out a 'tough on crime' statement because it has always worked for them before, or so they thought.

That is what they thought in 2014 - come in, do what Liberals always do, be tough on crime - it works. Maybe it worked then but times have changed and that is what the Liberals are not listening to and they are the last Liberals in government to learn the lesson. Australians do not want this anymore. Tasmanians do not want it. They are not going to stand for it. The Liberals in Victoria tried to get back in on a 'tough on crime' stance. They beat up hate in the community about refugees and migrants big-time. It was vile and odious and it was called out. You have Liberal members of parliament who have been given succour by the Liberal opposition member to stay in the party room after her vile comments and support for the transphobic Posie Parker and the goose-stepping and Nazi salute on the steps of the Victorian parliament. That is what the Liberals are doing.

Learn: Australians are sick to their back teeth of it and they are voting you out everywhere, federally, in Queensland, Victoria, the ACT and New South Wales - hello, did you read what happened last weekend? You got so trounced in Western Australia I think you only have two members left. You nearly did not have a Liberal MP sitting on the bench in parliament and you still will not learn the lesson. Your policies damage people. That is why it is so offensive: it damages people who are the most vulnerable in our community. People who are trans and are most vulnerable: their lives are under threat by hate language. People who preach hate need to be very careful because it can kill people, as do people who bring on rubbish motions like this to whip up a bit of hatred for people who use drugs in our community instead of actually looking at how to help people when they need it and how to have a health-based approach to drug use instead of the 'lock them up and throw them away' attitude.

Look what it has done to Tasmania's prison system. Look at Risdon Prison, under Liberal, after Liberal, after cruel Liberal Justice ministers. It is bursting at the seams. It is an appalling place for people to work. It contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Cruelty and Torture, yet still minister Archer continues on with demonising people. Still the Premier and Minister for Health fails to do what he needs to do to make this island safer and to reduce harm. That is the first order of any premier.

It is pathetic that you clearly recognise punitive responses to drugs do not work but you still want to virtue-signal to those people. If you think throwing people in jail cures addiction, you are frankly a fool. All of the evidence says otherwise. If you think morally that someone should be criminalised and sent to jail for smoking a joint then you are immoral. Around 36 per cent of have used cannabis in their lifetime and almost half of our community, 43 per cent, have used some kind of illicit drug in their lives. Chances are several government members have done it too. Do you think they should go to court?

Let us move on to pill testing. The Government's holding line on this has been that it is 'quality control for drug pushers'. Disgraceful. Even if it was true, which the evidence has shown time and again it is not, just imagine a situation, Mr Young - who has brought this on and does not want us to be soft on crime - where a drug dealer, or what you would call a pusher, used a pill testing service to check if their drugs were potentially harmful or fatal. What if they found that they were? What if they found that they could kill or harm a person and they decided not to sell those drugs? Would that be such a bad outcome? In your mind, you think it is a bad thing.

**Mr Wood** - If they sell them.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You talk about it being used as quality control but you cannot have it both ways. You cannot talk about using it as quality control and then say they would not care what the outcome is. You would only do a test if you wanted to know what you were doing. This ludicrous idea has never been proven or even been shown to potentially be used. It is used is by young, smiling, happy people who go to a music festival and might have some drugs that someone has given them. They might know nothing about them and they walk into a service that has police on the outside but inside has people with counselling skills in drugs, it has qualified medical professionals, it has paramedics, and they have a conversation, and when they walk out of there, after finding out what is in their pills and whether or not they are deadly, a huge number of people bin their drugs. Otherwise they would have taken them. It saves lives.

The Government's position is that it should be illegal to test illicit drugs to see if they will harm or potentially kill people. That is it in a nutshell and that is utterly immoral. Pill testing saves lives and this is just populist dogma at the expense of people's lives.

We have two options here. If the Government's holding line on quality control for drug pushers is sincere, which we believe it is, then the Government is more interested and concerned with virtue-signalling than it is with saving lives. If they are genuine, then the Government believes that stopping the use of deadly illicit drugs is a bad thing. Do you actively want people to die as a deterrent to drug use? That seems to be the angle you are taking.

I bring to mind the reality that we are talking about actual people's lives here. Perhaps Mr Young should read the New South Wales coroner's report from 2019. It makes very sad reading. Six people died at summer festivals in the year before that coroner's investigation. They were Callum Brosnan, Alexandra Ross-King, Hoang 'Nathan' Tran, Joseph Pham, Joshua Tam and Diana Nguyen. We do not know what would have happened if there had been a pill-testing service there but the New South Wales coroner strongly recommended that every music festival have one, because the evidence was very clear that in all likelihood those young people's lives would have been saved. Those children would have gone home to their families.

You can have whatever opinion you like about how you want to use drugs in your life, but to actually put a person's life ahead of your political dogma and your party's voting position, I find that reprehensible. I remind you again that this is about health, not punishment. This is about focusing on the traffickers. I want to look at Mr Young's comments. He did not say it directly, I do not believe, but the implicit argument he makes is that the Greens do not want to do anything about drug trafficking. That is fine. Just tell lies again.

For the last 40 years we have been demonised for this BS, this complete and utter rubbish. Of course we do. That is exactly what our draft bill to decriminalise drug use is. It is to put the energy and resources of Tasmania Police into going after drug traffickers, instead of spending their time rounding up individuals who might have a joint in their hand. It is about focusing our resources and attention as a society, criminalising the people who are pushing it. People who are using personal levels of drugs are not the criminals.

Mr Young is advocating against saving lives as a political point scoring exercise. There are very few things in this world more utterly devoid of empathy, of an emotional response to the suffering of other people, more deviant and antisocial and psychopathic than that. We utterly reject the Liberals' current attempts to do this because it is damaging. It is up to you if you refuse to read the tea leaves and see what is coming your way if you do not change.

Tasmanians reject your nasty attacks on the most vulnerable people in the community. They will not put up with it any longer. We are not going to stand for it and we are going to continue to speak out for a health focus on the use of drugs, for support and therapeutic restorative counselling and support for people who want to access it, or who need it as part of a drug diversion program, for more drug treatment centres. The money spent chasing people, filling up the courts with personal drug users, the time of our justice system, is all wasted. Those resources should be helping and supporting people who are addicted, who have a drug dependency that is getting in the way of them having a functional life.

This is what other jurisdictions are doing. This is what is happening around the world. Mr Young, you can smirk all you like, but get out a bit more and read about what is happening around the rest of the world. Look at what the US is doing in so many states -

**Members** interjecting.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - That is right, Minister for Police, San Francisco. Are you sure we are not talking about Mardi Gras or something? Some inherent transphobia there, gayphobia, just phobia of people who are not like you? You get to stand in this place and represent everyone, not just people like you.

**Mr ELLIS** - Mr Speaker, point of order. I take personal offence to those remarks about transphobia and homophobia. I ask that the member withdraw them without qualification.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I will withdraw. There was no intention to slur the minister, just the Government's policies.

[3.24 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, in the time remaining, I thank Mr Young for bringing on this very important matter. I want to point out how unbelievably out of touch the Greens are on this matter. I think

this has been widely canvassed in our community. The push to legalise heroin and ice is not compassionate. There is nothing compassionate about throwing those people to the wolves who would try to profit from their misery. There is absolutely nothing compassionate about that. There is nothing compassionate about the impact that ice has on families, on the children of those people. There is nothing compassionate about the families around our communities who suffer from the elevated rates of crime where there is ice and heroin in our communities. There is nothing compassionate about the devastating health impacts of these kinds of drugs on the human body. What that does to people's mental and psychological wellbeing, there is nothing compassionate about that. That is why we will always take a tough-on-crime approach, a tough-on-drugs approach, particularly drug dealers because these are the people who traffic in human misery.

This debate has been interesting. I have watched it closely and it has been interesting to see how little the other mainstream party in this place has engaged in this question of whether we should legalise illicit drugs such as heroin and ice. We all know that the Greens have an out-of-touch position that does not reflect our community's desire to see heroin and ice taken away from our communities. They do not want to see quality assurance from drug dealers. Even Daniel Andrews has come out in recent weeks, that right-wing bastion Daniel Andrews, has come out against pill testing. The Greens are completely out of touch on this matter.

**Ms O'Connor** - Can you respond to the substance of what Dr Woodruff was saying?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor.

**Ms O'Connor** - Because you cannot.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, thank you.

**Mr ELLIS** - I expect a little bit better from the Labor Party because they do try to put themselves as a legitimate opposition and a legitimate party of government, certainly in other states. Here they seem to be wedded to the Greens. Yesterday we heard that Ms White would try to do a dirty deal and not honour a pair for a member who is sick so that she could form a government with the Greens.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I draw members' attention to standing order 2 which requires that he does not say anything that he knows to be untrue.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - I will ask the minister to retract that.

**Mr ELLIS** - Retract what, Mr Deputy Speaker?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The comments and allegation that you made.

**Mr ELLIS** - About?

**Ms O'Byrne** - That there was a deal done.

**Mr ELLIS** - I did not say there was a deal done. To form government you would need to form a deal because I can only count eight of you.

**Ms O'Byrne** - Mr Deputy Speaker, he cannot behave that way in the House. He knows it to not be true. He is playing a game.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - It is a debating point, thank you.

**Mr ELLIS** - I stood with Tasmanian police officers, federal police officers, yesterday on an important drug bust: \$5.5 million worth of cocaine and ice that had been taken off our streets. The untold misery, the untold harm that could have happened if that was allowed to get in our community means we will always be tough on drugs because that is the best way to make sure that we keep the community safe. It was good to stand with the federal Labor Government which stood side by side with Crime Stoppers as part of a national campaign to keep Australians safe from drug crime.

Federal Labor is providing \$3.5 million this year for Crime Stoppers' campaign because it knows that keeping people safe from drug trafficking is important and something we should all stand by. It is yet to be seen where Tasmanian Labor stands. I do not know how it is voting on this motion -

**Ms O'Byrne** - You should have listened because I told you twice.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ELLIS** - It supports the decriminalisation of illicit drugs -

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker, he was in the Chamber. He heard me say it twice. Other members certainly did.

**Mr ELLIS** - I am interested to see how you vote on this because we know Labor's party platform supports the decriminalisation of illicit drugs.

They tried to muddy the waters yesterday by saying there may be some sort of difference between a party platform and a future government policy, but their constitution says it. They are bound by their constitution. All members of the Labor Party elected to the Tasmanian Parliament as endorsed by party candidates shall form and compromise the Tasmanian Labor Party, and every member of the Tasmanian parliamentary Labor Party shall be bound by the platform and the rules of the party. I have right here what the platform says to remind the Labor Opposition on their party's endorsed position.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The standing orders require that he address the motion before us. I know he is fascinated with us. I know he really loves to play in this place because politics is all he does.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - That is not a point of order, thank you.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - It is a point of order in that the standing orders require that he address the motion before the House. He is significantly transgressing on the motion before the House. Labor Party platform documents are not listed in the motion.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Ms O'Byrne, there has been quite a spread across the debate today.

**Time expired.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 20**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Dr Broad  
Ms Butler (Teller)  
Ms Dow  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Mr Jaensch  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Byrne  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Ms White  
Mr Winter  
Mr Wood  
Mr Young

**NOES 3**

Ms Johnston  
Ms O'Connor  
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**

**Macquarie Point Stadium - Negatived**

[3.36 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House does not support building a new stadium at Macquarie Point.

Mr Speaker, this is a very straightforward motion. We all understand how contentious the decision for the Government to build a stadium has been across the state. Broadly speaking, I would say the majority of Tasmanians are confused by the Government prioritising this project - and are against it.

The opportunity today is for the parliament to express its view - because one of the concerns the community has raised is that they were never asked. This was not a commitment that was taken to the last election. It is not a project that the Government explained to the community in a way that engaged them or offered them an opportunity for input or asked their

position. They have never been asked. They have simply been told by the Government that they will build a stadium - and they will pay for it out of their pocket.

Tasmania has a very long history with football. I want to put very clearly on the record that the Labor Party supports Tasmania getting its own team, both for the men's and the women's competition.

I will reference some of the remarks made in Colin Carter's review, in which he outlined some of this history, talking about how for the most part of the 20th century, the pinnacle of our game was the state team playing interstate competition. For a very long time, as part of its history of involvement with football in this country, Tasmania had a state team playing in the interstate competition. We were always included but as the Colin Carter report goes on to say, interstate football was replaced in the 1980s by the club-based national competition.

Thus, the issue of Tasmanian non-representation has been with us only for the past 35 years out of our 150-year history. It is relatively new in that context, but of course many Tasmanians - particularly those of us here and across the community who are younger - know that for most of our lifetime we have not had a team in the AFL. We have certainly never had a team in the AFL; never had a state-based team playing in that national competition.

The Colin Carter report also points out that Tasmania's contribution to our game has been substantial, with around 400 Tasmanians having played in the VFL/AFL teams. Some famous players came from Tasmania. For example, there are 24 player legends in the AFL Hall of Fame and four are Tasmanian: Darrel Baldock, Royce Hart, Peter Hudson and Ian Stewart.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is important for context, as we begin this debate, to make it very clear that the Labor Party supports a team for Tasmania both in the men's and the women's team, that Tasmania has had a long history of involvement competing nationally when it comes to football, and that there is a fairness issue here, where we see it as our right to be able to have a team in the national competition. There has been a unity ticket on that. I believe Tasmanians have been unified too in their support for a Tassie team. The challenge and the problem we have seen emerge in recent time is the stadium. It has divided the state. It is divided along political lines, except of course in the Liberal Party, where the federal Liberal Party has a very different position from the state Liberal Party, and it has really undone a lot of the good work where we had such goodwill for a Tasmanian team.

I will talk about the PAC and the evidence that was given to the committee on Friday. Members would have seen that the Public Accounts Committee has taken submissions and is now taking evidence, and I understand they have another hearing this Friday. The evidence provided last Friday was from the Minister for State Growth, Guy Barnett. There is a particular reference he made in his evidence which I think points to the problems we all have with the Government's stadium. The Chair said:

We need to start from the premise that there is or there is not a condition that requires a new stadium.

For a very long time the Tasmanian Government, including Premier Jeremy Rockliff, has maintained that a stadium was not a condition of the licence. As recently as September last year the Premier was saying that in this place. The Chair asked whether they could see the first link to the requirement for a new nineteenth licence for an AFL Tasmanian team to have a



stadium - a fair question. Mr Barnett in his evidence in response to this said - and I will quote him, because it was very revealing:

It goes back to the AFL task force report 2019. It was released in 2019 that a new stadium would be required to support the viability of an AFL team.

That is interesting. I will stop there just for a minute, because I think that is not true. It is important to note that the minister was giving evidence under sworn oath. He said, and I will quote again:

It was released in 2019 that a new stadium would be required to support the viability of an AFL team.

He went on to say:

There were three things that were noted. It found that without the stadium the team would not be profitable or competitive and it would be far more reliant on ongoing government funding, and it would be very hard to attract and retain players.

Those were the three things he pointed to: profitability, reliance on government funding and difficulty in attracting and retaining players.

At that point, and rightfully so, the Chair asked, 'Can you point us to that in the task force report?'. Dr Broad asked, 'Where in the task force report does it actually say that?'. Mr Willie said, 'Where is the recommendation in the task force report for a new stadium?' They were all very valid questions.

Mr Evans interjected and said:

I cannot find the page. It is a very long report, but I can take you on the journey about how all this has unfolded.

Not terrific evidence to support the statements made by the minister.

Then Dr Broad said:

In your submission, you have said that the team would not be profitable without a new stadium. I cannot find that in the AFL task force report.

The Chair said, 'Colin Carter said it would not be necessary in his report', Mr Willie said, 'There is a discussion about a stadium but there is no recommendation for a stadium', and Dr Broad said:

I cannot find anywhere that says it will not be profitable or work without a new stadium.

That is the recording and the transcript of that evidence given on Friday, where the minister, Mr Barnett, said that the stadium would be required to support the viability of the

team, and it was released in 2019 that it would not be profitable or competitive without a stadium as well as other things that he raised in his contribution.

Nowhere through the course of the evidence given that morning could he back up his claims with evidence, because there is not any. That in and of itself is a big problem for this Government. They are hoodwinking us. They have lied to us about the condition for there to be a stadium built for Tasmania to get a team. It was never part of the bid. It was never discussed when the government of the day led by Peter Gutwein brought me and Ms O'Connor, Leader of the Greens, in to be briefed by the task force to ask for our tripartite support. We gave it, Mr Deputy Speaker, but the stadium was never discussed; it was never a condition and it was never part of the bid and yet here we have in sworn evidence from Mr Barnett to the committee last Friday, where he said it goes back to 2019 in the task force report. That is not true.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the evidence from the Public Accounts Committee gets more concerning. Effectively we have a situation now where the truthfulness of the statements made by the Premier in this place in September last year have been compromised by the evidence given by the secretary of the department, Mr Kim Evans, because they both cannot be telling the truth. It is not possible for the Premier to have told us in September that a stadium was not a condition of the licence while Mr Evans, under sworn oath to the Public Accounts Committee, essentially said that it always was, but he could not provide any evidence of that to the committee. He could not table any documents because it was all a conversation, but he could talk to us about the journey.

How on Earth are important decisions like this made in this Liberal Government? The Premier of the day should be the one making these key decisions, but it seemed to me as though decisions are being made by key bureaucrats within government departments or the AFL and the Premier is just then rolling over and implementing them.

There was a lot of concerning evidence presented to the Public Accounts Committee, but I want to talk about some of the other evidence that we do have before us - and I am mindful of the time - to demonstrate why we do not support a stadium. Not only was there never any open conversation with the Tasmanian community about the Government's desire to build a stadium before the last election, which you would think they would do if they knew that this was going to be something so important for them, particularly after Peter Gutwein had announced in his state of the state address that he would be talking about a stadium, it was a floating stadium at that point in time but it certainly was not a precondition for us getting a team. That was never linked in those remarks and up until September last year it was still denied by the now Premier, Jeremy Rockcliff.

I want to talk about the reports we have commissioned: the 2019 report, the Tasmanian Task Force Business Plan, but also the evidence from Colin Carter, who assessed that business plan and provided that document to the AFL. In his assessment he talked about a couple of things that go directly to remarks that were made by Mr Barnett. First I would like to address the profitability issue that was raised. He said that without a stadium the team would not be profitable. They were the words of Mr Barnett.

I draw members' attention to page 8 of Colin Carter's report where he said that there are several ways to test the new clubs' viability but concluded that:

The task force forecasts the new club will be profitable if it receives an AFL distribution of \$17 million plus government support of \$7.3 million each year.

He goes on to say that:

In the last 12 months, the AFL and clubs have reduced costs and consequently Distributions have reduced. Adjusting the Task Force numbers to today's finances, the new club will be profitable if it receives an AFL Distribution of around \$15 million plus the government support.

Remember that at this point in time the Government support was just \$7.3 million. We now know the Government has increased that to \$12 million. There can be no question based on either the business case presented by the task force or the assessment by Colin Carter that the team was already determined to be profitable. One of the key underpinnings of the arguments for why we should get a team is that it stacked up. We have all said it. Not only do we deserve a team as a principle of fairness, but it stacks up economically that we should get an AFL and an AFLW team.

Never had it ever been questioned that it would not be profitable without a stadium until Mr Barnett linked the two things in his sworn testimony to the Public Accounts Committee on Friday. That is not true.

It is really important that this House be aware of what was said on Friday by the minister. It is also important to note that the assumptions that underpin the argument for the Tassie team are done on the basis that the club membership is estimated by the task force to be at around 38 000, which is very plausible. Mr Carter says:

Of the 14 AFL clubs in our traditional markets, the lowest membership club now has 39 000 and most have more than 50 000.

Therefore, for Tasmania to get 38 000 is incredibly plausible. That underpins the profitability. The model again calls into question what the minister was on about in his defence of why there needs to be a stadium built. A defence on why there needs to be a stadium built as without it the team would not be profitable has been refuted by the task force report and by Colin Carter's report.

If the Government has new information, it should have shared it with the Public Accounts Committee but it did not and it could not. When the minister was specifically asked to provide evidence of that, he could not provide it. He was asked on multiple occasions by the chair, Ruth Forrest, Dr Broad and Mr Willie.

Colin Carter concludes that for the team the numbers work. It is one of the reasons we were so confident in giving our support for Tasmania's bid to get an AFL team. Not only did we support it as a principle of fairness but we knew that we could make it stack up financially.

One of the other things that Mr Barnett relied on in the evidence he gave to the committee was that he had been a part of the 2019 task force report. I have taken a careful look at the task force report. Nowhere does it say that we need to have a new stadium before we can get a team: not in the findings and not in the recommendations. Neither Mr Barnett or Mr Evans

could produce evidence about how they were linked. They could not because it has never been the case that we needed to build a stadium before we could have a team, according to the task force report of Colin Carter's assessment of that report.

In its core recommendations to government, recommendation 5, the task force report says:

Launceston would host and benefit from blockbuster matches being played at an enhanced 27 500-seat UTAS stadium.

Due to its apparent limitations, Blundstone Arena would host smaller-drawing AFL clubs or games.

Upon proof of concept, a longer-term aspiration should be a roofed CBD-based Adelaide Oval multipurpose facility development for Hobart to share all AFL content opportunities with Launceston.

Not a condition of us getting a team or a condition of the licence.

We do not even have a team and yet Government ministers and the Premier are talking about the need for us to build a stadium first. That is never what the task force report said. It is never what Colin Carter's report identified in its assessment of the task force report. It is certainly not what the Premier said as recently as September last year when we asked specific questions to him about this in parliament.

There may be a point in the future where we do build a stadium, but it is not the right priority for Tasmania right now. It is simply not the right priority in a cost-of-living crisis, in the middle of a health and housing crisis for us to build a stadium right now.

There are serious questions about who is telling the truth regarding the evidence that has been given by the Premier, the minister and the secretary. I hope that the Public Accounts Committee can get to the bottom of this because there has been a severe lack of transparency from this Government at a time when Tasmanians are watching what is going on and wondering why the Government's obsessed with building a stadium when we have people sleeping rough in our streets, people who cannot access housing, people who cannot get health care and people who are struggling to pay their household bills.

We are not running out of seats in stadiums. We do not need to be building more stadiums. We certainly need more beds in our hospitals. We certainly need more homes for people to sleep in. It is important to note that in the task force report they spoke about the attendance that can be expected at games.

On page 15 of the report they said the average attendances over 11 home games was going to be approximately 18 400 per match. We can accommodate that kind of attendance in our existing stadiums. We do not have people spilling out of stadiums because they cannot get in to go to watch an AFL game.

I watched the Geelong Cats play at Bellerive Oval last year. They went on to win the premiership. About 8000 people were there with me that day. That is the top club in the competition playing here in Hobart and 8000 people went. There was not so much demand

that people were spilling out of the stadium. They did not need a new stadium to fit them all in.

Hospitals like the Royal or Launceston certainly need more beds for patients. That should be the priority for this Government, not building a new stadium. One of the most outrageous claims this Government has been making is that the stadium will pay for our health system. It will pay for our hospitals, it will pay for the services we see increased demand for that this Government has not been able to get on top of. That is not true either. If you look at the Hobart stadium cost benefit analysis report, the final full report, that was released on 11 November, 2022, it is there in black and white.

I would love the Government to produce documents and evidence to back up its claims. It cannot because the only document that has been produced is this Hobart stadium cost-benefit analysis report. It was heavily redacted when it was released. We got hold of an un-redacted copy. There is no wonder it was heavily redacted and the Government was being secretive about this because on page 18 it says that the estimated benefits for Government payroll surplus is \$300 000.

How on earth is that going to pay for hospitals and schools? It might pay for three teachers. Just think about this: you have to sink \$750 million to get three teachers. Pay the interest, which is \$20 million per year. The Government has an appalling record in delivering any infrastructure project on time or on budget. It is likely that the cost will blow out to in excess of \$1 billion by the time it gets its act together. That is not including the associated infrastructure required so people can get to the stadium. Right now there is no road infrastructure, there is nowhere to park your car, and there is no public transport that connects to Macquarie Point. There is nothing.

The Premier likes to call it a waste land. That is pretty disrespectful to the 28 small businesses that are currently operating from Macquarie Point. The fact is there is no budget for the associated infrastructure. The Government has not talked about the development of the entire precinct. They just tore up the master plan that had been developed by Macquarie Point including, you would assume, backing out of a contract they have entered into with Milieu for the escarpment. That was over \$100 million worth of investment for that site to deliver retail and housing.

In evidence given to the Public Accounts Committee it remains unclear how much has been spent. We know money has been spent but they could not give evidence about how much. We will probably find out at the end of the financial year whether compensation will be paid because they have until the end of this financial year before further decisions have to be made.

The Government is going to be paying someone to not build houses. Talk about wrong priorities. There has been an enormous amount of money already spent by this Government on its stadium obsession, whether it is feasibility reports, consultants, junkets, or to try to weave together some narrative that this is in the state's interest. That is money that could have been spent paying teachers, paying nurses, putting a roof over people's heads.

We know the claims that the stadium will pay for health and hospitals are not true. It does not stack up. In reality, this stadium will cost the taxpayer, at current count, \$460 million, because that is what the Government has already committed to it - and that is at a minimum.

We know that the state of the Budget, led by Michael Ferguson, is in a parlous state, with record debt and deficit, so how the Government can justify loading the Budget up with more debt to pay for a stadium is beyond me and beyond the majority of Tasmanians I speak with.

The interest on the stadium to pay off that debt is estimated at \$20 million a year - \$20 million that could be paying for 200 nurses. I prefer 200 more nurses or 200 more teachers, not paying off interest and debt for a stadium that Tasmania does not need and is certainly not a priority right now. It is a burden on taxpayers that does not stack up financially. It is a massive waste of time and money, and it was never part of the bid.

We are a proud AFL state. We deserve a team in our own right, both men's and women, because footy in Tasmania right now is not in good shape. It certainly would provide an injection in the arm of footy locally for there to be an AFL team, for there to be pathways, for there to be investments in grassroots footy, in the clubs and facilities where our young people are playing. That is not the priority of this Government and that is the problem. They are squandering our opportunity to enter the AFL because of this obsession with building a stadium.

There is overwhelming community concern, both generally and from community groups - and from within the Liberal Party itself - that the Macquarie Point stadium is not the right priority for our state.

I want to reflect on that, because if the Government is not listening to us, why did they not listen to their own members? You have Senators Jon Duniam, Wendy Askew, Claire Chandler, and Bridget Archer, the member for Bass and Gavin Pearce, the member for Braddon. They are all speaking up against the stadium - and according to the Premier, by doing so they are anti-Tasmanian.

He is calling his own colleagues anti-Tasmanian. This is how warped things are. In trying to defend his indefensible stadium obsession, the Premier is causing an enormous rift within his own party. I have no doubt there are members of the Government's own team who do not support the stadium. We have all seen the comments that Mrs Alexander made publicly, questioning the stadium, after her federal colleagues spoke up. She asked the same questions. I am sure she is not alone in questioning the priority of the Government to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a stadium in Hobart when there are far more pressing priorities for the state.

Two of the most important groups speaking up against the stadium are the RSL and the Vietnam Veterans Association. I have no doubt it took an enormous amount of thoughtful, considered discussion among branch members for them to arrive at that position, but they have done so because they believe that a stadium will impact on the cultural amenity of the Cenotaph - an icon of remembrance to all who have served. They have done that as well because they have not been listened to by this Government. They tried to understand the detail of the proposal the Government is continuing to talk about when they talk about a stadium in Hobart. They have tried to get answers.

Anyone who listened to the interviews with Mr John Hardy, the CEO of the RSL, could hear that he is a very reasonable man. He joined with Barry Quinn and wrote jointly to the Premier on 27 February to voice their opposition to the stadium at Macquarie Point due to the environmental and cultural impact on our world-class Cenotaph. They are concerned it will

infringe upon the Cenotaph. All 49 sub-branches of RSL Tasmania stand in opposition to the building of a stadium so close to the Hobart Cenotaph, a solemn and historic location that should not be encroached upon.

I suppose it is not surprising because we have seen it too often repeated by this Government, but one of the worrying trends we are seeing by this Government is that, despite the fact that concerns were raised about encroachment on the Cenotaph last year - in this place, in fact, questions were asked by the Labor Party about the location of the stadium and what it might mean for the Cenotaph.

At that time, the commitment from the Government was that they would work closely with the RSL to deal with any concerns they may have. Despite that statement in this place, what we discovered is that those concerns were not addressed, that those meetings did not provide the information that they were asking for answers to. In fact, we now see that on 27 February they issued a statement outlining their opposition to the stadium, in a large part because they feel sidelined by this Government when it comes to consultation around the stadium.

That is a pattern of behaviour we see repeated by this Government time and time again. Their failure to consult. Their failure to work closely with the most affected stakeholders, to ensure they have the answers to the questions they need. That they are listened to, and that their feedback is heard and used in a constructive way - not just used to tick a box and flick them away and say, 'We have ticked that consultation box, but we are still going to do what we want, because in fact we are not interested in listening to you, we are going to tell you what we are doing, get out of the way.'

We have heard the Premier say exactly that: those who oppose it, get out of the way. Whether they are their Liberal counterparts in Canberra, the RSL, or members of our community, the bulldozer approach by the Premier when it comes to the stadium and his obsession with building it is at the expense of any community member across this state who has a genuine concern. We have seen where that gets Liberal governments. You just have to look at Scott Morrison to see an example of how badly that turned out for him.

The final points I will make are that after nearly a decade, we have a situation now where the Government is searching for an agenda. They have grasped hold of the stadium, trying to latch onto that as though it might be a panacea for all the woes they are facing as a government.

They are in the dying days of what many Tasmanians hoped would be a good government for this state. The ballot box reflects that. They have been given a fair go, this Government, but they are letting Tasmanians down now. They are tired. They are out of touch. They have the wrong priorities and the stadium is the clearest example of that.

It is not the right priority for our state at a time when too many Tasmanians are doing it tough. We already have our own stadiums that could host AFL-quality content; they do right now. A lot of people question why you would spend so much money and so much time talking about a stadium when we already have two: one in the north and one in the south. They would like their Government to be tackling some of the more pressing challenges that our state is facing.

We have seen that - despite what Mr Barnett says - the task force report shows that a Tassie team stacks up without a stadium. It does. It stacks up without a stadium. We were promised a licence decision in August last year, and here we are, nearly in April - nearly a year later - and still no decision. Still no decision.

**Ms O'Connor** - They are waiting for the federal budget from your federal colleague. That is what they are waiting for.

**Ms WHITE** - Perhaps they are, but at the end of the day, whether we get a team will be whether Mr Rockliff made the right decision on his call to build a stadium. That is going to be the killer here. Whether we get a team is whether you pulled the right rein on this one.

To be honest, I feel we were very close to getting a team. In fact, reports in *The Examiner* about what discussions were taking place in February last year indicate to us that we were very close to getting our own team. Then the stadium bombshell was dropped on the table and everything has just turned to custard for the AFL bid and for your Government. It is not a very popular project.

We do not support the stadium. It is the wrong priority for the state. It could potentially jeopardise our chances of getting a team because of the way Mr Gutwin announced it and of course, the Premier Jeremy Rockliff has continued on with this inane narrative that we need a stadium to get a team, when there is no evidence to support that.

I urge other members to support this motion, particularly those members who have expressed private concerns. Now is your time to put your vote on the record and demonstrate to your local community where you stand on this issue. It is a straightforward motion. It simply says that this parliament does not support a stadium. We all know what stadium we are talking about, it is the one here in Hobart, the one proposed by the Government to be built at Macquarie Point. Let your community know that you stand with them and you do not think that building a stadium is a priority. This is an opportunity for the member for Bass, Mrs Alexander, to demonstrate to her community that she is hearing and listening to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are many members on your side who I am sure have genuine reservations about the Government progressing with the agenda to build a stadium in Hobart. It is not popular and now is the time to show the communities you represent that you agree it is not the right priority for the state. *Hansard* does not catch facial expressions Mr Rockliff, but I wish that it did. There is no doubt that this cannot be easy for you as the Health minister. Let us face it. I am pretty confident you would like to be able to announce you are going to invest \$750 million, \$460 million, whichever figure you would like to choose in other things in your portfolio that require attention.

**Ms O'Connor** - He still could.

**Ms WHITE** - You still can, but instead you have now put yourself in a position where you are the front person championing a stadium in Hobart as the Premier, the Minister for Health and the member for Braddon. That is not an easy position for you to be in, but you have a choice that you could make because you are the leader of your party and you are the leader of this state. You can stand up to the AFL and you can stand up for Tasmanians. I reckon you would get a rousing standing ovation. People would jump to your defense and just cheer you



if you made that decision. They would be grateful for your courage in demonstrating to the AFL that we will not stand for this.

I am pretty confident some of your colleagues would feel relieved too. They would be wiping their brows and thanking you. They will be in a better position come the next election. I think your member colleagues have a few hurdles to overcome yet before you can really launch this one as a winner.

Today is an opportunity just to put on the record for those members who are feeling uncertain where you stand. I know where I stand, I know where the Labor Party stands and we do not support a stadium. It is not the right priority for the state and it is not a requirement for us to get a team. I encourage members to express their views clearly and demonstrate to your community you have your priorities right.

[4.13 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for her contribution today. The Government will not be supporting the member's motion today. I know for all discussion that this is about me and my focus on the stadium. This is a classic example of the Leader of the Opposition once again who cannot stop talking about the stadium. There were plenty of opportunities the member could have put on the notice paper today: health, education, public housing, many opportunities to talk about some of the matters concerning Tasmanians, the priorities the Leader of the Opposition refers to and certainly, I refer to on many occasions.

The motion on the table I think is about the Labor Party and whilst the member for Franklin may well do or say or vote on when it comes to this particular motion, it is about Labor Party politics and not about the real needs and concerns of the Tasmanian community. The Labor Party could have chosen a whole array of issues that people out there, or across rural and regional Tasmania, the major urban centres, do care about. They do care about health; they do care about housing; they do care about cost-of-living increases, energy prices and public safety. These are areas that our Government is well and truly focused on. As well, we are providing new infrastructure for Tasmanians to experience, infrastructure that creates jobs, that brings private investment to it and that, in turn, grows the economy and allows Tasmanians and governments to fund those essential services that the member, I would expect, desires.

This is about the Labor Party and their politics but also a demonstration of the lack of vision, the lack of opportunity foreseen by Labor and the Greens when it comes to opportunities to grow our economy, create jobs and provide new opportunities for Tasmania. That is no surprise; no surprise at all given what we saw when both the Labor and Greens were in power between 2010 and 2014. We saw 10 000 jobs lost in our economy, our economy went into recession, business confidence was decimated and people left the state in droves. As a result, our economy was weak, hospitals were starved of funding, public housing was sold off and 20 schools were proposed for closure.

This is not what our Government stands for. We stand for opportunity. We stand for growth and we do so for a very good reason because a growing economy can provide for a caring community. Under this Government, our economy is nation leading, and it will give me the opportunity to talk about that. We have the most confident businesses in the country, a record low unemployment rate of about 4 per cent down from 7.4 per cent when we took office and more than 54 000 jobs have been created.

It is a record that I am very proud of and I know our Government members are very proud of as well. It is a record that is built on seizing opportunities, seeing what is possible. I speak of the business confidence. We have a number of people representing organisations such as the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, the THA and the Property Council, which is visiting Canberra today, in fact. They are lobbying the federal government to bring that investment here in Tasmania. That is not what Mr Wilkie is doing, which is lobbying not to have investment in Tasmania, and that is anti-Tasmanian. I will say it very clearly: how anyone who is a federal member of parliament could actually lobby a federal government to not invest in Tasmania is extraordinary, or any state member for that matter.

The Leader of the Opposition, is more than happy for state and federal governments to invest some \$3.5 billion into stadia in Queensland for the Olympic Games, which will last two weeks - the Olympic Games last for two weeks. What we are about is ensuring that we can have an AFL team which we have celebrated, asked for and fought for, for over three decades. We will get there. I am confident we will get there. The reason I am confident we will get there is because we have had the fortitude and the backbone to make difficult decisions. Yes, the member reflects that this is a difficult decision, and it is - it is - but when you have the chance to seize the opportunity of having our own AFL team and create enabling infrastructure, why would you say 'no' to that? I understand the politics but sometimes you have to rise above the politics for the long-term gain.

Our bid for the AFL and AFL licence has not happened overnight. It has taken months and months of negotiations to achieve the best deal for Tasmania and the best deal for a Tasmanian club. A Tasmanian AFL team will bring opportunities - an economic opportunity of some \$120 million a year. We want to make sure with such a significant investment that Tasmania will be making and, no doubt, others as well - including the AFL - that when we make this investment it is for the long haul, and we set up our team to be sustainable and not an example of other newer teams we have seen across the nation. We do not want to start this competition with one hand tied behind our backs, and that is where that enabling infrastructure comes in. We are talking about the AFL; but the stadium and all the surrounding investment is far more than just an AFL team.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the stadium and the associated infrastructure will bring that opportunity, which is why there is significant support from businesses across the state and from those representing business across the state. What is clear, and the AFL is now unequivocal in its requirements for a stadium - and they have said - 'No stadium, no licence'.

**Ms O'Connor** - Who is running this state? You are running this state.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I want it. I want that opportunity.

**Ms O'Connor** - Why?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Because it creates opportunity. It brings investments to Tasmania.

**Ms O'Connor** - Spend a billion dollars on social housing and create real opportunity.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It creates economic activity and bring in private investment which is far broader than AFL. It allows that other associated infrastructure, such as public transport - whether you are talking about the ferry network or utilisation of the Northern Rail Corridor - it creates those opportunities to facilitate that. We want to make sure that we get the right calibre of players, coaches, administration staff and, of course, spectators and fans.

Other states of Australia have taken up this opportunity and they have all, at various times, had challenges for the respective states and governments. I will talk about Perth's Optus Stadium, the Adelaide Oval, Townsville - they have all been challenging decisions made by governments of a variety of colours at the particular time, if my memory serves me correctly. With that, there is \$8 billion nationwide in stadium economy that other states are participating in and we are not, so why would you not seize an opportunity? The AFL is part of that, but the added entertainment investment that will come creates those jobs outside of the seasons of the AFL - such as conventions, conferences and many other opportunities.

**Ms O'Connor** - It will be the biggest political own-goal of your lifetime.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will see but I am prepared to at least seize an opportunity when I see it - an opportunity that every other state of Australia is getting. Yes, we can get an AFL team at the same time but also \$2.2 billion worth of economic activity over a longer period. Why would you not seize that opportunity?

**Dr Woodruff** - Because the economics have said it is not going to happen that way.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Woodruff.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The economic impacts are significant - \$300 million in additional economic activity; 4200 jobs during construction -

**Ms O'Connor** - We lose \$300 million over 20 years.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - \$85 million in additional activity; 950 jobs per year during the stadium operations; 6200 jobs in the surrounding precinct; a further \$162 million per year in additional consumption based on attracting 420 000 attendees with 350 000 bed nights. I know you yawn in some sort of non-interest, but I am interested -

**Ms O'Connor** - Hooray, good on you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am interested in creating jobs, Ms O'Connor. I can understand the Greens but I cannot understand the Labor Party, the party of jobs, of workers.

**Dr Broad** - We have read your report.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Dr Broad.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The party of workers does not want work for those workers. We have many contractors employed right now -

**Ms O'Connor** - Working on building new homes for people.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - on the Bridgewater bridge, which I know you are embarrassed about because you mucked around with that for years.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order. Can we have the Premier heard in silence, please?

**Ms O'Connor** - Just on your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, I might say the Premier was inciting interjections.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, on your point of order, I did not point out which part of it was but I am just asking that he be heard in silence. Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Local events such as Dark Mofo can grow and expand using this precinct for their festival calendar and Tasmania would finally be able to attract international and national artists, bands, concerts and events on a scale we have never seen before. Other states get that opportunity.

In addition to the economic and job benefits already outlined, it is expected that at least 44 events could be hosted at the new stadium, seeing 580 000 attend per year, 123 500 overseas and interstate visitors, and indeed the opportunities around the AFL team itself. PwC have also estimated that commercial activity from developments around the stadium and Macquarie Point precinct could generate up to 6700 jobs during operations, excluding construction.

I was talking about the Bridgewater bridge. I know the Labor Party is sensitive about this because you mucked around with that and stalled it and put it in the too-hard basket. We grabbed hold of it, saw an opportunity, and the Bridgewater bridge is now under construction. You must hate it every time you drive past, Dr Broad, back to the north-west coast, seeing all those jobs. Your party could not make the call on it. Cars will be driving across it in 2025 and tradies will be moving to the next big thing. The workers that you represent will be moving to the next big thing, and that will be Macquarie Point, in my view, building the stadium and all the associated infrastructure.

Of course, Richie Hassett - do you know Richie? He is the CFMEU Tasmanian secretary. He said:

If you could build an international sporting hub that future-proofs Tasmanian's sporting capabilities for generations why would you pass that opportunity up? Building a new stadium will have a positive effect.

**Ms White** - He actually does not support Macquarie Point.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Ms White.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Richie understands the fact that we are supporting workers by creating infrastructure opportunities for them.

Regarding the AFL licence itself, they will invest some \$360 million in Tasmania to support football and a Tasmanian team representing all parts of the state, the north, the south, the east and the west, from grassroots sport to elite sport as well. The Leader of the Opposition said herself that the AFL code is dying in Tasmania, or words to that effect. This is an opportunity to reinvigorate AFL and football across rural and regional Tasmania. I know the benefits of it and I know Ms Ogilvie knows the benefits of it with her former role as SFL president.

I have seen what AFL can do to local and regional communities in my experience getting young men and women out there on the training field two or three times a week, on game day on Saturday or Sunday for the women's team that I am associated with, the Latrobe Football Club who we have been sponsoring for a number of years. I understand the community benefit and the wraparound support the clubs provide young people outside of the physical and mental health and wellbeing activity that team sports brings.

We have seen with the JackJumpers the benefits of having a national team and the grassroots participation, with young kids putting down their iPads and picking up a basketball and becoming enthused about a national team, which is fantastic. That is what we will see with the AFL team which will have that sustainable future created not only by the investment we are putting in but by modern infrastructure, which I know we will all be very proud of once it is built and constructed.

People often talk about the fact that investments should be going into health or other areas. I want to make it very clear that this is a government that is investing more in those essential services than any government ever before. Education, health, public housing - we are making those investments. We are committing \$375 million to this project. We spend that in Tasmania on health every 51 days. What we are proposing is to spend that \$375 million on a project that will deliver our own AFL team and AFLW team, attract events, enable infrastructure delivery and urban renewal and deliver more than \$2 billion in economic activity. Good governments can do both, as the independent Labor member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, has rightly pointed out.

This is a very short motion. We could be debating many things in this House today but the Leader of the Opposition has decided once again to focus on the stadium. I was pleased to be able to incorporate in my contribution the matters that I really care about and they are health, public housing, public safety, police on the beat, cost of living, good services for Tasmanians and those essential services that Tasmanians thoroughly deserve and would expect governments to invest in, but you cannot invest in those critical areas by saying no to opportunity.

I understand why the Greens would do this but I do not understand why the Labor Party would be so against the opportunity for tradies, workers, and small or large businesses that will benefit from such an infrastructure investment as the benefits, as no doubt Mr Wood would agree, for our investment we are making into UTAS stadium at York Park, some \$65 million, and we have kicked it off. There is investment in the Dial Range and Penguin as well, investing in those important areas of community infrastructure.

This motion is less about me and the Government, frankly, and more about the politicking on the other side. We can tell that by the way the motion was written. This is about playing politics with the member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, rather than anything to do with our

Government who have been very committed to an AFL licence and seeing opportunity for all Tasmanians. These are difficult decisions. It is intergenerational infrastructure. It is an enabler. It is not resoundingly popular, I get it, but it is important that governments do not shy away from important decisions and say no to opportunities because it is a bit hard. It is hard but it is important that we do not say no to opportunity. We seize those opportunities. We secure an AFL licence where we can have our own team, as we have been fighting for for decades. Our own team, our own colours, our own song. Tasmania can be very proud of that for generations to come.

We will not be supporting the motion.

[4.36 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Goodness me, what a performance.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we will be supporting the motion because we do not support a \$1 billion stadium for our beautiful city. We believe Tasmania cannot afford it. Our constituents overwhelmingly do not support it. The island certainly cannot afford it. I am not going to make an extensive contribution on this private members time as our private members time is on a very similar subject, although we affirm in our notice of motion for private members time that this House supports Tasmania having an AFL and an AFLW licence.

It is disappointing that the Premier cannot see why debating the stadium is an important debate. He does not seem to understand that the stadium and that misplaced priority is the lens through which Tasmanians see that this Government is failing them across multiple social, economic and environmental metrics. It is farcical to suggest that the only way we can keep people in work and tradies in work is to build a \$1 billion stadium.

How about spending the half a billion dollars we would have to borrow in order to construct that stadium on new homes for people? You want to talk about intergenerational opportunity, Mr Deputy Speaker. Give every Tasmanian kid a secure home. Make sure Tasmanians are not leaving this island because they cannot find somewhere to live. There is no question that we deserve a team. Of course, we deserve a team. We have been sending some of the best and brightest to the AFL for decades.

We had a strong and unarguable case for a licence without a stadium. Then something happened early last year and the then premier, Peter Gutwein, folded to Gill McLachlan. It is like Gill McLachlan is running this state. Instead of having the backbone, once he became Premier, to say to Gill McLachlan, 'Actually no, you will look at our case on its merits', Jeremy Rockliff folded.

From the Greens' point of view, one of the most disheartening aspects of this debate and this issue is that we feel we were misled. We feel that our trust has been betrayed. We made it really clear in our discussions with the Premier, we made it really clear when we were talking to the chair of the AFL Taskforce, Brett Godfrey, that we did not support a stadium. We wanted to get behind an AFL and AFLW teams in 2027 but we were not going to sign up to a stadium because we are here for people who want a decent home, who want a health system that serves them and who want schools that are properly resourced with teachers who are supported.

We were crystal clear with the Premier that our support for the tripartisan push was not based on a stadium being a prerequisite. What did we get from Kim Evans in the Public

Accounts Committee last Friday? He certainly belled the cat. It was an unusually unguarded response from Mr Evans, who has been around for decades and I have always thought was one of the more unctuous senior bureaucrats in his capacity to get around the questions, but this was surprisingly straight-talking from Mr Evans. He said in our discussions:

Both through directly with the Government and the taskforce to the AFL, it's fair to say the AFL has said that a new stadium, through discussion, through negotiations, is a prerequisite. They have not changed the rules. They were their rules from day one.

A couple of things have come out of that, of course. We have a Premier and a Government that is letting the AFL and Gill McLachlan set the rules.

We also have a Premier who was not truthful with the Greens or the Opposition in securing our support for a tripartisan bid. The reason that the AFL task force said the bid needed tripartisan support was so that there was no sovereign risk to the deal. We have been lured into supporting something we feel passionately about: Tasmania's right to join the National League, in order to minimise sovereign risk. Now we discover that we were misled by the Premier through those negotiations, in the exchange of letters, in the question that Ms White asked in parliament last September where the Premier said the stadium is not part of the bid. It was, according to Kim Evans, part of the bid from day one.

We would like to understand why this state has allowed itself to be treated differently from, for example, teams that got licences, most recently the Gold Coast and Greater Western Sydney. There was no requirement on those teams to build a brand new stadium. They upgraded existing facilities. We have existing facilities. We have Bellerive and York Park. In the AFL task force report they are very clear. You can upgrade your existing facilities. They flag the potential for a new stadium down the track but they certainly do not say it should be a prerequisite.

This is the biggest own-goal of Jeremy Rockliff's political life. He had an opportunity when he became Premier to say no to Gill McLachlan and to the AFL's bullying. He caved in because he is a pleaser, because he was not brave enough to take them on. It is going to cost him and it is going to cost the Government he leads at the next election. I have no doubt about that at all. In the last year or so since this brand spanking new stadium first reared its ugly head, I reckon I have two emails now from people who are calling on the Greens to support a new stadium. Two. We do know, overwhelmingly, in north, south, east, west and central Tasmania, people do not want this stadium. They think it is a waste of money. They see the crying need in our public health system. They recognise that family and friends, people they care about, cannot afford the rent. It is a folly.

The other thing that really strikes me is the lack of pride on this Premier's part, that he lets Gill McLachlan swank into town and tell him how it is going to be. Is he the Premier of Tasmania, or not? He asks us: why would you not support this opportunity? Maybe because you could work with the federal government to spend \$1 billion lifting Tasmanians out of poverty. You could spend \$1 billion making sure everyone has a home. You could make sure teachers have the support they need in all our classrooms. You could make sure our public hospitals were places that were not losing healthcare professionals but attracting them, and attracting the best.

It was an extraordinary answer to the question we asked the Premier this morning about the lie that was told to us, where he accused those opposed to this stadium of being anti-Tasmanian. Well, we have here the statement signed onto by Bridget Archer, MP, Senator Jonno Duniam, Senator Tammy Tyrrell, Senator Wendy Askew, Senator Jacquie Lambie, Gavin Pearce, MP, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson, Senator Claire Chandler, Senator Nick McKim and Andrew Wilkie, MP, all of whom are opposed to this stadium. We can debate their politics, we can agree to disagree on many issues, but to call that group of people anti-Tasmanian is wrong and stupid. It is insulting.

I note that there are no federal Labor members who have signed up to this statement, which is quite telling. The statement says:

Hey Gillon, here's an idea. Give Tasmania the team without making us build a stadium. Tasmania is one of the founding football states and has a long history of making rich contributions to the national game. That's why we deserve a team of our own without having to make taxpayers pay for a stadium - something no other state has had to do to get a team. We are putting politics to make this plea: give Tasmania a licence, let us have our dream, do the right thing by Tasmania, Gill.

If only Gill McLachlan was listening but he is not.

Again, I note that federal Labor members have not signed on to this plea to Gill McLachlan to allow us to join the national league. We are concerned that Prime Minister Albanese will fund some part of this stadium. Of course, that is why the AFL board has not made the decision yet. They are waiting to see how much money can be poured out of the public trough in the federal Budget. They are waiting for an announcement from a Labor prime minister. We are very worried that the Albanese Government is not listening to their colleagues down here in Rebecca White's Opposition and is prepared to pour money into that stadium at Macquarie Point.

We understand that the Prime Minister may be making a visit to Hobart in coming days. We are worried about what that visit portends. I imagine Ms White is pretty worried, too.

**Ms White** - He is coming to celebrate our birthday.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Is he coming to celebrate your birthday?

**Ms White** - Yes, 120 years of the Labor movement.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - That is pretty good. That is a big birthday. Hopefully, you can corner him, Ms White, and tell him you do not want a stadium for your birthday present, that what you would like to see is for his government to invest in lifting Tasmanians out of poverty and providing homes to our people.

Just before I sit down, because I am sure there is another Labor member who wants to speak to this, and we have our private members time coming up, the Premier talked about the work of Pricewaterhouse Cooper in the business case. Well, PwC is the private agency that worked on the Robodebt scam and disgraced itself when it appeared before the Robodebt Royal Commission. I would not trust PwC on the numbers or on its ethics at this stage. I am thankful



to have parliamentary privilege to be able to say that. PwC disgraced itself before the Robodebt Royal Commission, could not produce documents, could not point to clear numbers, no transparency, and no accountability. We do not care what PwC says about this stadium, its business case or the merits of the project. We do not support a stadium at Macquarie Point.

To be absolutely clear, the Greens passionately believe that this island deserves to be in the national league, we deserve to have an AFL team and an AFLW team running out on the field in 2027. Our case to join the league is unarguable. We have earned it. We have waited so long, we have been ignored, neglected and now bullied by the AFL. We deserve our own teams and we deserve not to be saddled with a billion-dollar stadium, a half-a-billion-dollar debt, an eyesore on the waterfront and two existing, perfectly good stadiums that become white elephants.

What else do we deserve? We deserve, as an island and a people, to have a premier with backbone, a premier who could stand up to the likes of Gill McLachlan and the AFL and say: 'Give us what we are entitled to, you know we've earned it, you know we can't afford a brand-new stadium, you know we could invest in Bellerive and York Park and bring them up to scratch.' We do not have that premier with courage to take on Gill McLachlan. As Kim Evans admitted in the Public Accounts Committee: 'The AFL is making the rules here.' That is a damning indictment on Premier Jeremy Rockliff and his Government.

[4.53 p.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this afternoon to support the Tasmanian Labor motion that the House does not support building a new stadium at Macquarie Point.

What concerns me, not just about this issue for Tasmanians but most being presented by the Government at this time, is that it is not possible to trust anything this Government says or anything it says it will do. That is not just in terms of the elements being projected to Tasmanians why this is a good idea. All the Tasmanians we speak to clearly articulate their concerns and know it is not the right priority for Tasmania at this time. The information given to the few members of the community that do support it is so far from the truth that it is not fair; those Tasmanians are expecting an outcome that will not be delivered.

It also concerns me that the Premier, a northern premier, supported by members for northern electorates, is backing this ridiculous notion that a stadium in Tasmania will support outcomes of greater hospitals, education, health services and housing for Tasmanians when it simply is not true.

In my own and member for Bass Mr Wood's time at the Launceston City Council, we were intimately involved with the processes and getting briefings on the task force report. This included both the benefits and potential detriments for not only the northern community but the Tasmanian community subject to certain outcomes. We know that the elements of the task force report did not recommend the immediate construction of a stadium and not an immediate construction of a roofed stadium in Tasmania because we already had two facilities significantly great enough to host - as we so proudly know in the north - AFL finals. We have a facility in the north that is regarded not only by the community, but by the sporting code itself, as having a surface - proudly worked on by local Launcestonians - that is one of the best in the league.

We know it is not the right time and it is not the right priority to develop this third stadium in Tasmania at Macquarie Point.

One of the things that really concerns me - and I am not sure whether it is the incompetence, or the weakness, or just the plain inability of this Government to tell the truth. There are two behaviours that I see in this Government. One behaviour is: 'Oh my goodness, we have a problem, kick it down the road.' The other is: 'Oh my goodness, we said this, but just dig our heels in because we do not know how to backtrack out of it.'

I cannot tell in this moment whether this Premier, who was handed a hot potato - and could have immediately laid it down and said: 'This is not for me. I understand the northern Tasmanian community. I understand the needs of the Tasmanian community and I get that this is not the right priority.' However, holding on to this and remaining obsessed about delivering this stadium for Tasmanians that people do not want, and that we cannot afford, is doing not just his Government a disservice, but the Tasmanian people a disservice.

We have heard much said about the evidence in the Public Accounts Committee last week, and ministers of this place clearly not telling with the responses given, but also inconsistencies between the presentation of this Government on facts to do with this stadium - the documentation and elements included in financial assessments of this proposed stadium - and then things that were put on record at PAC last week.

The Premier just this afternoon said:

One of the reasons I am backing this is in is because it can help build health services, it can help build education facilities. It can help with the things that are important to Tasmania.

Well, we know that the costs, for instance - and again, I defer to fellow member for Bass, Mr Wood, and ask him what he thinks about this. In a recent election promise, \$580 million was promised for the second stage of the master plan of the Launceston General Hospital. That is a significant need in our community. We know that facility is under-resourced and underdeveloped to provide great healthcare to this community - and the Premier says, 'Well, we will build a stadium and that will help Tasmanians get better healthcare.'

In the report the Government commissioned on the Hobart stadium by MI Global Partners, the cost-benefit analysis report, full financial report - if the Premier is looking for the information, it is under the quantification of project benefits - there is a statement about the overall incremental tourism benefit for the Hobart stadium, projected to be about \$16.3 million per year - of which only \$300 000 is allocated to Government payroll tax surplus.

Just \$300 000, when the second-stage master plan of the LGH alone, at the time of the announcement, was \$580 million - and we know delays and real-time costs of things into the future will be far more than that. That is not going to build a hospital for the northern Tasmanian community. It is not going to build multiple homes or support capital upgrades at educational facilities.

It is just not true to lead Tasmanians down the path of expecting that his obsession with this stadium will somehow improve the lives of Tasmanians.

At the Public Accounts Committee hearing last week, Mr Willie specifically asked minister Barnett a question about this matter. Mr Willie had asked questions repeatedly, and it got to the point where, under frustration, he said:

I want to go back to my previous question, which is: can the minister provide the revenues and the projections that led to the statement that the stadium will help pay for schools, hospitals and social housing.

The Chair reinforced the question from Mr Willie. The minister, Mr Barnett, could not answer the question, deferring to his deputy secretary. Asked consistent questions from the Chair and Mr Willie, in response to the Chair's question, 'So, there is no more modelling that would show that?', the deputy secretary said: 'No, not that I am aware of.'

The one thing that is clear - through Question Time today, and through contributions in this place this week, last week and last year - is that there are no values in this Government. The behaviours are kick the can down the road, dig your heels in, and whatever you do, do not tell the truth.

We know that, under pressure, this Government is presenting something to the Tasmanian people that is not true and not in their best interests.

If this Government actually got out of their bubble of Hobart in Tasmania and connected with people right across the state - initially, people were saying maybe it is just people from the north, and it is a bit parochial, who do not want this stadium, and recognise that it is not a priority - but it is people from right across Tasmania.

**Time expired.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 11**

Dr Broad  
Ms Butler (Teller)  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms White  
Mr Winter  
Dr Woodruff

**NOES 11**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Mr Wood (Teller)  
Mr Young

**PAIRS**

Ms O'Byrne

Mr Street

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. In accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Motion negatived.**

## **MOTION**

### **Tasmanian AFL Team - Motion Negatived**

[5.05 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I was very much hoping that you would use your casting vote to save Hobart and Tasmania from the stadium, but no such luck.

**Mr Ferguson** - You are reflecting on the Chair, and that is disorderly.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Yes, I am reflecting on the Chair. It is also disorderly, I might point out to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the Deputy Premier to be wandering around the House heckling.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - I am dealing with the matter that I am speaking to you about that is very disorderly - reflecting on the Chair.

**Mr Ferguson** - It is very poor. The Chair cannot defend themselves.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order, Mr Ferguson. Thank you.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Mr Deputy Speaker, I can indicate that we will be seeking a vote on our notice of motion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Supports an AFL and AFLW team for Tasmania.
- (2) Does not support any deal for a Tasmanian AFL and AFLW team that requires State or Federal money to be spent on a new stadium.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you are about to hear many of the arguments you already have heard against a billion-dollar stadium on Hobart's waterfront. I like to think - and I am sure it is the case - that many Government members agree with the Greens on this issue. This island does not need, does not want and cannot afford a brand-new stadium at Macquarie Point.

There are some very interesting politics here. Something happened early last year, when we went from being in a strong position, where we had an unarguable case to be granted the 19th AFL licence, with no prerequisite attached other than that we make a funding contribution - to a situation where suddenly, as Gill McLachlan said, 'No stadium, No team'.

What happened? There was an excellent article in *The Examiner* newspaper on 17 January this year by Mr Rob Shaw. Outstanding journalism. I would like to read some of it into the parliamentary record:

March 1, 2022 will go down as the date that Tasmania dealt the AFL a 'get out of jail free' card. Before then, the state looked on course to land the competition's 19th licence with no strings attached, but in the stand-off between Peter Gutwein and Gillon McLachlan, the Tasmanian blinked first and the mainlander seized his chance.

Possession of public support changed hands and the wily McLachlan has not looked like handing it back since.

Prior to that date, Gutwein was playing hard ball, refusing to entertain renegotiating the lucrative Hawthorn and North Melbourne deals until the AFL gave a guarantee that a Tasmanian licence was forthcoming.

The majority of Tasmania and even the big island appeared to support his standpoint, delighted to see someone with a rare upper hand over the all-powerful AFL.

However, on Tuesday March 1, while holding all the aces, Gutwein handed McLachlan the trump card. In his state of the state Address, Gutwein said:

This has been an incredible 30-year pursuit for our own AFL licence and I have never been more confident that Tasmania will ultimately be successful.

Then came the bombshell announcement that his Government was proposing to build a \$750 million 'major entertainment sporting and events stadium with 27 000 seats and a retractable roof in Hobart'. He explained that a new southern stadium was first proposed by the AFL taskforce in 2019, but the change of tack surprised many - not least, Greg Hall and Ivan Dean, former members of the upper House. Since leaving parliament, the pair were part of a working group which examined Tasmania's long overdue case for a team in the AFL. I will end on this quote:

Never in any of our deliberations and agreed positions was a new stadium ever discussed.

Paul explained:

We thoroughly support former Geelong president and AFL consultant, Colin Carter's public statement, 'I don't think a licence should be contingent on a new stadium which is why in my report I didn't actually say that it was'.

Who would have thought someone could push around Peter Gutwein, but Gill McLachlan did and Peter Gutwein folded. Then when he left and we had a new premier who had an opportunity for a reset, we had another premier fold to the AFL. That was in April of last year.

Then the negotiations began with the Labor Opposition and with the Greens. It was made very clear to us that our support was a pre-requisite for Tasmania to be considered for the 19th

AFL licence. The Labor Party support was a pre-requisite and the Greens support was a pre-requisite because the AFL wanted there to be tripartisan support and no sovereign risk.

At no point during any of the discussions that Dr Woodruff and I had with the Premier was it made clear to us that a stadium was a locked-on part of the bid. We were not told that the AFL had said, according to Kim Evans, from day one, that a new stadium was a pre-requisite of being granted an AFL licence. No other team that has been given a licence has been treated so poorly, with such contempt by the AFL.

GWS and Gold Coast got their licences without a demand for a \$1 billion stadium. We have stadiums. Everyone in this House has been to games and events at Bellerive or York Park: publicly funded, high-quality sporting facilities that have hosted Hawthorn and North Melbourne games going back many years. With a bit of investment, it would create jobs too. We could refurbish, do whatever needs to be done to those two stadiums to make them match-ready for when our AFL and AFLW teams run out onto the field in 2027 but no, we have blokes in suits telling us how it is going to be. We have Gill McLachlan swanning into town and saying, 'No stadium, no team'. We have a delegation of blokes in suits up in Canberra today, as I understand it, the top-end of town, the same faces, we all know who they are, up there lobbying the Albanese government, snouts in the trough for public money for a stadium we do not want and we do not need.

The hide of Gill McLachlan and the AFL to come into this town, drive past people sleeping in tents at the Domain and tell us we must have a new \$1 billion stadium in order to be even considered for what we deserve, what we have deserved for decades. We have given the AFL some of our best and brightest. We deserve to join the national league. The case stood on its own, yet the former premier shafted us on the stadium. His successor has done no better. They both have let the AFL dictate terms when our case stood on its own merits. It demeans us all.

Most of all, decisions like this demean people who are struggling to find an affordable home: people who cannot afford to pay the rent whose kids are going into classrooms with stressed-out teachers who cannot get the support they need; who are turning up at overcrowded emergency departments, waiting in pain for hours and hours and hours to be seen; who are waiting seven hours and then dying for an ambulance; who are waiting, ramped at the Royal, sick, needing medical help.

That is what a decision like this is all about. That is why we bring this on for debate. It is about choices. Poverty is a political choice. Homelessness is also a political choice. Kids who cannot get the education they deserve is the political choice of Government. Allowing ambulances to ramp for hours outside our public hospitals: that too, is a political choice.

We had a debate in here last week on a supplementary appropriation bill for almost one-third of a billion dollars in extra spending, while our Budget is bottoming out because we borrowed money during COVID-19 when it was basically free to borrow and now the interest payments are kicking our Budget in the guts. We have a parlous financial situation and a Government that is prepared to go into even more debt to build a flash new stadium because the AFL demanded it. At some level the AFL does not want to give us a team. Why do they not just admit that, instead of treating us like dirt, moving the goalposts again and again?

The hide of this Premier to say that we need this stadium. Who pays for this? The Tasmanian people pay for this. Who would pay for the Albanese Government's contribution? The Australian taxpayers. And who will benefit? The AFL, Foxtel and Murdoch. If you want to know why the *Mercury* newspaper has been so gushingly supportive of this new stadium, look no further than Rupert Murdoch and Foxtel.

This is not about delivering benefits to the people of Tasmania. It is simply not. You could lift so many people out of poverty with half a billion dollars. You could build so many homes. It is shameful. That disgusting lunch at PW1 a couple of weeks ago. The top end of town, there they were again, snorting antibiotic-soaked salmon, swilling champagne, and being told by Gill McLachlan of his vision of an island where there is a footy in every hand, a footy in every home. This from a guy who sold his last home for \$8 million. So out of touch with this island and its people who deserve so much better.

We did not know how grievously and deviously we had been misled until the secretary of State Growth appeared before the Public Accounts Committee last Friday. What a performance. Sort of slithered around a bit, on the AFL Taskforce report, which, at page 15, says:

A clean stadium changes the game. Redeveloping UTAS Stadium as the initial primary football venue but seeking a longer-term Hobart CBD-based roofed stadium in an appropriate entertainment precinct would mitigate much of the financial risk of government modelling, and precedence suggests the potential elimination of the need for any state support post-implementation.

There was no recommendation that we require a new stadium.

If we want to talk about public money, I will get to the business case shortly but we heard very clearly from Kim Evans last Friday. He said:

We were very fortunate to get a very high-calibre group of people to put their minds to the business case for an AFL licence. They have gone straight to the need for adequate infrastructure, they have established the need for a new stadium. That is there in their report.

No it was not in their report, as the chair, Ruth Forrest, pointed out. Then Mr Barnett said, 'It's a prerequisite'. It is only a prerequisite because our former premier and then his successor caved in to Gill McLachlan.

I hear you huffing and puffing over there, failed Racing minister. What I said just then is a statement of fact.

Then after Ms Webb, the member for Nelson, said, 'No, it is not a prerequisite', Mr Evans, further belling the cat, said:

To be fair, it's irrelevant. The taskforce is laying out their business case for a successful team. They don't make the rules. The Government and the AFL make the rules. The AFL taskforce gives us advice.

A bit of backtracking there. The AFL taskforce did not say a new stadium was necessary. Then Mr Evans said:

In our discussions both through directly with the Government and the taskforce to the AFL, I think it's fair to say that the AFL has said that a new stadium, through discussion, through negotiations, is a prerequisite. They haven't changed the rules - they were their rules from day one.

Again, it begs the question: why are we letting ourselves be bullied by the AFL? They know we have a case and deserve to be in the national league.

The business case is nauseating, shallow and it would be laughable if it was not so serious what they are seeking to impose on this island. However, the case makes clear that the stadium would lose \$306 million over 20 years. That is not money the AFL loses, it is not money Rupert Murdoch loses - it is money the people of Tasmania lose. We would be stumping for the cost of the stadium then our budget would be haemorrhaging \$306 million over 20 years. It is a net negative benefit, pretty clearly a loss of \$306 million.

In defence of this, the business case report analysis claims that social infrastructure such as stadiums rarely return a benefit cost ratio above one. For a start, it is arguable that a stadium is social infrastructure. Affordable housing is social infrastructure. We cannot find any comprehensive list of stadium business cost ratios but there have been a number of business cases for stadiums that had business cost ratios around the one mark. Therefore, we think it is a forgone conclusion that it is actually a worse picture than that painted in the business case.

The assessment of social benefits is really something else. They claim that a three to four per cent increase in the price of housing in the immediate area is a social benefit. I do not know what planet these people are on but it is not Planet Tasmania, where we have 5000 people on the public housing waiting list, rent is up 50 per cent in the past five-years and we have the highest increase in homelessness in the country. To argue that an increase in house prices is a social benefit when young people have basically given up on owning a home tells you that this is about elitism. It is psychopathic.

They claim health benefits because, 'those who attend sporting events are 33 per cent more likely to indicate a higher level of self-rated health.'. As well as ignoring the rule of correlation not being causation, it is also a self-rated score from one study in Japan. It ignores the fact that sporting event attendance is not contingent on a stadium and attending a sporting event does not make you healthier because you are not actually playing sport.

They also talk about local pride in a stadium as a benefit. I am not hearing from people who like, support or would be proud of a stadium on Macquarie Point. This is a site where the people of nipaluna/Hobart and, more broadly Tasmania, have been made many promises over many years of a public space; a shared scientific and cultural precinct; and, most importantly, a truth and reconciliation art park for the palawa pakana people. The first they heard about their space being pushed to the sidelines was after the stadium appeared on the front page of the *Mercury*. That is insulting.

Also in the report, where they talk up alleged benefits, they discuss psychological benefits of sports viewership despite, again, sports viewership being widely available. You do



not need to have a stadium at Macquarie Point to watch the Hawks playing at the MCG or anywhere else. You can turn your TV on, or you can turn the screen on.

There is also a claim that the stadium will address disadvantage by creating jobs. Anyone who would count increased property prices as a social benefit does not know anything about disadvantage. It also ignores the impact that increased visitation is likely to have on rental prices. This is in the context of a story on the ABC at the moment, where one landlord has an application in to Hobart City Council to put six terrace homes onto short-stay accommodation, and the first the tenants knew about it was when there was a notice put on their fence.

**Ms Haddad** - Shame.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Shame, that is right, Ms Haddad. We already have a huge problem with short-stay accommodation because this Government refuses to rein it in and give councils the capacity to prevent whole homes from going onto the short-stay market. Why is that? Two reasons: First of all, we have a Deputy Premier and a Premier who own short-stay accommodation properties. Second, Font PR, owned by the Brads - among them Brad Stansfield, former chief of staff to then-premier Will Hodgman - is the PR company for Airbnb in Tasmania. It stinks.

There is no reasonable discussion about alternatives. The notion of investing in Bellerive and York Park has just been dismissed out of hand by this Government. They have set up a brand-new stadiums authority which is a make-work scheme for former premier, Peter Gutwein's former chief of staff, Andrew Finch, who has just slid over into that job. That is one thing this Government is very good at: giving well-paying significant jobs to former staffers. It is a specialty. We have a former staffer of Mr Jaensch currently in charge of the rotten-to-its-core and failed Office of Racing Integrity. Another staffer has been given a sweet job as the head of the Stadiums Authority. It all stinks and the people of Tasmania are the poorer for it.

How Jeremy Rockliff could look at this proposal and think it was good for Tasmania befuddles me. It also confuses and clearly annoys his federal colleagues Bridget Archer, Senator Jonno Duniam, Senator Wendy Askew, Gavin Pearce, MP, and Senator Claire Chandler, and, of course, the other Tasmanian representatives who signed onto this, Senator Tammy Tyrrell, Senator Jacquie Lambie, Senator Peter Whish-Wilson, Senator Nick McKim and Andrew Wilkie, MP. All have put aside politics and signed onto a plea to the AFL to just give us the team we deserve. These federal Liberals are the ones our Premier this morning called anti-Tasmanian. He is insulting his own colleagues in a desperate attempt to stand by this stadium.

I would love to know - all of us on this side of the House would love to know - how many people in the Rockliff parliamentary party room support the stadium. I would be surprised if it is more than half but you are locked in now. Your federal colleagues have seen it and, for the record, I will read into the *Hansard* again their plea to the AFL:

Hey Gillon, here's an idea: give Tasmania the team without making us build a stadium. Tasmania is one of the founding football states and has a long history of making rich contributions to the national game. That's why we deserve a team of our own without having to make taxpayers pay for a stadium - something no other state has had to do to get a team. We are putting

politics aside to make this plea. Give Tasmania a licence. Let us have our dream. Do the right thing by Tasmania, Gill.

I wonder if there has been a response. I do not believe so.

Jeremy Rockliff has an opportunity here. It is not too late. He has Opposition parties who are feeling bruised and misled, really cheesed-off about the way we were manipulated into signing onto a tripartisan push. He knows everyone in this House wants an AFL and an AFLW team with lutruwita/Tasmania on its chest, not an expensive, wealthy, imported team but our own team. He knows that the Labor Opposition and the Greens heard very clearly what Kim Evans said to the Public Accounts Committee last Friday, that this stadium has apparently been a prerequisite from day one. That is not what we were told. We sought assurances and Jeremy Rockliff looked me in the eye and said, 'Don't worry, Cas, a stadium is not part of the bid'. I remember. Dr Woodruff remembers the first meeting we had when we talked about the AFL bid and we made it clear we do not support a stadium. This is Jeremy Rockliff's chance because he has some very edgy participants in that tripartisan pitch. We are furious, I will tell you that. The Greens are furious. We do not like being treated like fools because we are not. What we are, probably to our own detriment, is quite trusting. When the Premier looks you in the eye and makes an assurance, the Greens are inclined to believe him. What we got from Kim Evans the other day was proof that we were manipulated and we were misled.

Jeremy Rockliff has an opportunity here to save his political skin, to save Tasmania from decades of debt that would be attached to that stadium and to save his pride so Tasmanians do not think he gets his running orders from Gill McLachlan. It is an opportunity to save some of his colleagues' seats at the next election because there will be a political price. There will be if this Premier does not walk away from this toxic unnecessary, unaffordable, brand spanking new stadium at Macquarie Point. It is well past time Jeremy Rockliff grew a backbone and got on the phone to Gill McLachlan and said, 'No stadium. You treat us like every other team that has been granted a licence. Treat us with respect. Treat us fairly and give us the AFL and AFLW teams you well know we deserve'.

[5.37 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the Government will not be supporting this motion, which is obviously no surprise to the Leader of the Greens and others in this place. I listened carefully during this debate and the earlier debate regarding the Labor Party's push to not support building a new stadium at Macquarie Point. I listened in silence and I note that for the record as we progress the debate and the time available.

I will try to leave time for the Labor Party to make a contribution because that is where I will start, with the headline-hunting rank hypocrisy of state Labor. Labor released a media release a little over a page long on 23 April 2021, prior to the election titled, 'A majority Labor Government commits to a boutique rectangular stadium in Hobart'.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the House.

**Quorum formed.**

**Mr BARNETT** - Madam Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, I was quoting from the Labor Party media release. The next line says, 'Stadium to hold 10 000-15 000 people. Labor is working for Tasmanians to deliver better sporting outcomes'.

It goes on and on. It is a joint release between Rebecca White, the Labor Leader, and David O'Byrne, at the time shadow treasurer and shadow minister for sport. I am quoting from a public document. It is a state Labor media release prior to the election, a commitment of one-and-a-half pages. The gall of Labor members coming in here criticising the Premier and the Government and others for the lack of research, for the lack of a business case and for the lack of feasibility studies which go into the hundreds and hundreds of pages.

Let us just clarify what state Labor had available at the time to make that commitment with one-and-a-half pages. There were no costings in that media release. There was no business case. There was no site that they had identified for which they wanted to expend taxpayer's money. They had no team to secure for Tasmania. It was simply a one-and-a-half page media release committing the government and the taxpayers of Tasmania to a rectangular stadium for 10 000 to 15 000 people. The stadium proposed at Macquarie Point, as the Premier has outlined, is a 23 000-seat stadium, with 7000 standing and 23 000 sitting.

This is just rank hypocrisy. Now they are going uphill and down dale expressing their views. At the time, the media release said:

The stadium would be suitable to host professional football and rugby, along with helping attract other sporting and live music events to the state.

It does sound very much like an arts, entertainment and sporting precinct. It sounds very much like they wanted sport and live music events in this rectangular stadium, which would also have football - I think they were referring to the round ball, as in soccer, and rugby. The release says:

This stadium will be based in Hobart. It will be capable of hosting events across a number of sports, along with potential for hosting large capacity concerts and events.

State Labor, week in, week out, month in, month out, is expressing the opposite view to what they proposed on 23 April 2021. I am very keen to hear from state Labor to explain how they stand behind this policy announcement, this commitment, because it has no plan, no costings, not a business case, no cost-benefit analysis - we have been debating that this afternoon - no market, no identified location and, most importantly, no team. It will be fascinating to hear from the Labor colleagues as they share their reasoning behind their policy position, their commitment to a rectangular stadium, and then now, their position here and now as it has been for some time.

It is interesting that the co-author of that commitment was David O'Byrne. The SFL does support a stadium. That is noted and acknowledged.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, are you sure about that? Mr O'Byrne voted on the last motion against the stadium.

**Mr BARNETT** - I am just making the point.

**Ms O'Connor** - But do not mislead the House.

**Mr BARNETT** - I made the point that the SFL supports the stadium and that is on the public record.

**Ms O'Connor** - I am making the point that Mr O'Byrne voted against the stadium not more than 45 minutes ago.

**Mr BARNETT** - Madam Deputy Speaker, I had an opportunity and I said at the beginning that I listened in silence and with respect. Now the exact opposite is happening from the Leader of the Greens.

**Ms O'Connor** - I am trying to make sure you are telling the truth.

**Mr BARNETT** - I am making the point that the Tasmanian Government has made it clear. The federal government is spending billions of dollars at the Gabba, spending billions on new stadiums and facilities in Victoria. Tasmania, as the Premier said very clearly, wants to get its fair share. It is no wonder state Labor is under administration.

There is a delegation in Canberra today. We have made that very clear. It is on the public record. Luke Martin, Master Builders and many others are campaigning for Tasmania. They are promoting and supporting Tasmania's best interests and they represent, according to Luke Martin, some 60 000 Tasmanians. They are putting through that view.

As the minister for the Antarctic, I want to highlight the importance of the Antarctic and science precinct in the few minutes I have left, and a few other comments around urban renewal and housing because I see opportunities there.

The Antarctic and science precinct will inject hundreds of millions of dollars into not just Hobart but Tasmania. Elphinstone Engineering at Triabunna, for example, make the sleds for the Antarctic. We can lock in Hobart and Tasmania as the gateway to the Antarctic. That is an objective. We have just released our five-year Antarctic strategy for the future and the Antarctic science precinct is a key part of that plan. I am delighted with that strategy and I am committed with those key players, the Tasmanian Antarctic Group, TAG, and so many others. Using the Antarctic science precinct investment will be huge.

In terms of urban renewal and opportunities on the Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor, and providing housing opportunities for development off that transit corridor is fantastic. In terms of housing opportunities and urban renewal development, it is terrific. There is serious opportunity and we want to grasp that with both hands. The relationship I have at the federal level, my department is working with them already with respect to not just the Antarctic science precinct but more generally. That is progressing and I thank the federal government for that.

It is on the public record that TasPorts has been working with the AAD in providing upgrades to the wharf. Those discussions are ongoing and that is encouraging.

I make clear, as Minister for Veterans' Affairs, that we want to recognise and support the importance of the Cenotaph to our veterans and their families, and all Tasmanians. It is one of the most beautiful locations in all of Australia, in my view. I have seen many of them. I have been around the world. It is a sacred place to commemorate and recognise the service of our veterans who fought for our country's freedom and justice.

The early design and site planning indicate that the views to and from the Cenotaph will not be impacted such as to and from Macquarie Street, which is particularly associated with Anzac Day and the march on Anzac Day. Discussions between my department and RSL Tasmania are ongoing. The Premier and I treat that relationship with great honour and respect, and I know it is two ways, for which I am very grateful. We want, in fact, to enhance the opportunity for our veterans and their families at the Cenotaph.

It is a host of opportunities, as I say, and we will not be supporting this motion. It is not the right one to support.

In conclusion, I note the third-party support for the efforts of the Government, and the Premier in particular. As I said the other day, he is like a dog with a bone in those negotiations, and that positive collaboration with the federal Labor government. I have mentioned the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU); the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania; the Tasmanian Hospitality Association; Cricket Tasmania, Brendan Self from Vandemonian Touring; Robert Mallett, Tasmanian Small Business Council; and of course Brendon Gale, CEO of Richmond Football Club and the greatest football club alive - the Richmond Tigers - and a fine Tasmanian as well. What did he say? He said:

The impact would be seismic because nothing drives participation of a sport more than proximity to the elite game. It is going to stimulate participation. It is going to create aspiration. It is going to create ambition, and young boys and girls from all over the state can grow up and become local heroes and reside in their home state.

That is where I would like to conclude, to encourage participation of sport and recreation across the state. As a person with type 1 diabetes, a Diabetes Australia Ambassador, I am a long-term supporter of more healthy, active lifestyles, and this will absolutely inject that. The JackJumpers are a very good example where you have seen an elite sport come in, and participation rates in basketball not just in Hobart but across the state have seriously jumped up. That is fantastic and that is what we want for Tasmania.

We want the best for Tasmania and we will continue to fight for the best for Tasmania.

[5.51 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Greens for bringing on this motion this afternoon. We will most certainly be supporting their motion.

The motion, again, provides us with an opportunity to state for the record that Labor supports an AFL team and an AFLW team but we have never supported a stadium as part of the pitch for an AFL team.

Just yesterday, my nephew called to say that he has been offered \$700 a game to play football in Victoria, because the Tasmanian Football Association that he normally plays under still have not organised their fixtures. It tells you about the state of football in Tasmania, how it really needs a lot of government support, and really needs to be professionalised.

That is one of the reasons why our leader and our party - I cannot speak on behalf of the Greens, of course - supported the Government in the pitch for an AFL team.

There is great uncertainty around whether the stadium is a prerequisite for the Tasmanian AFL team. The Premier has denied this in and out of parliament, but departmental advisers such as Kim Evans have directly contradicted Jeremy Rockliff on this point. During the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 24 March, Kim Evans, the secretary of State Growth, said in relation to a Tasmanian AFL team:

In our discussions, both through directly with the Government and taskforce to the AFL, I think it's fair to say that the AFL has said that a new stadium, through discussion, through negotiations, is a prerequisite.

We have been deceived by the Government. The Tasmanian Labor Party have always supported a Tasmanian AFL and AFLW team; that was never in dispute. Our leader supported the pitch. We were excited. We joined the Government as a united front on this - and you have deceived us.

On 6 September 2022, the Premier said that the stadium was not part of the licence bid. The Premier went on the record to say:

The Macquarie Point stadium is not a prerequisite for a Tasmanian AFL team.

Either we were lied to, or the Premier bit off far more than he could chew. I am beginning to think that maybe the people who have been doing the negotiations with the AFL - because the AFL are a savvy lot, there is a lot of money involved and they are very savvy - maybe the people, that is, premiers and the people in these government departments really have no idea about what they are doing. They are completely out of depth when it comes to negotiating with the likes of the AFL. That is what it is starting to look like.

At the moment, as everyone in this room knows, we have a health crisis, a housing crisis and a cost-of-living crisis in Tasmania.

We believe as a party that taxpayer money could be much better spent tackling these dire issues that everyday Tasmanians are suffering through, under this Government's watch. We could be spending this money - this potentially billion-dollar stadium that this Government wants to build - on Tasmanians.

Even worse than lying to us about the AFL and AFLW teams not being contingent on a football stadium is your treatment of our veterans. There is a massive difference between meeting with groups and consulting with groups. How could you possibly consider obstructing the Cenotaph with the monstrosity of a stadium? How could you look our veterans in the eyes and give no answers? These are veterans. One of the most apolitical groups in our community is the RSL.

The Hobart Cenotaph is more than just a structure or a site. To them, it is more than that. It is a sacred site. This is also the case with many people around Tasmania. That Cenotaph is very important to a lot of people. It was built to show respect to those who lost their lives.

How does this Government show their respect? They announce on the front page of the *Mercury* that they will build a stadium alongside the Cenotaph. How is that showing respect to those who have lost their lives?

The Hobart Cenotaph pays homage to those who made the ultimate sacrifice and has been significant to our community - and will continue to be - since it was built in 1925. Over the last century, nothing has impeded - or potentially impeded on - the Hobart Cenotaph more than this Government with their ridiculous, monstrous, potentially billion-dollar stadium.

RSL Tasmania just wanted three answers from the Government. Three answers on three really simple questions. This is all they wanted: how big is it? How wide is it? How long will it take you to build it? They are the three questions, and they have not been able to get those answers. They have met with everybody. The Government can tick the box that they are meeting with all the stakeholders but you cannot even tell them that.

You are willing to kill the relationship with veterans right across Tasmania - every single sub-branch member will be voting on this in congress in May, when RSL Tasmania meet. Apparently, they are going to be briefed by the Government, and they are going to be trying to find out how big it is, how wide it is, how long will it take to build. If they do not get those answers - I do not know if you even have those answers, because according to them, you cannot answer those questions now, because despite killing your relationship with vital stakeholder groups, killing your relationship with the community - and for what? - you do not even know apparently what this thing is going to look like.

You cannot even look veterans in the eye and tell them whether or not this stadium will impede on their Cenotaph. It is really important.

To finish up, I would like to talk about a conversation I had just this afternoon with the kids from Deloraine Primary School. I went upstairs and introduced myself to the children. I explained to them that on the right side of the Chamber we had our leader, Rebecca White, and we were debating the stadium today. I asked, 'Did you hear of the Hobart stadium?' They said yes. I explained that on the other side of the Chamber there is Jeremy Rockliff, and he is debating for the stadium. That is what it is about.

I said to them, 'What do you think of the stadium?' I hear from one kid:

It is a bloody waste of money.

From the next kid I hear:

We have a great stadium in the north and that's where I go to watch footy.

From another kid, I hear:

That money should be spent on homeless people and shelters.

These are school children. Then I said to them, it is good to have proper debates in the House. That is what it is all about. I asked them, 'Is there anyone here who thinks building a stadium in Hobart is a good idea?' and they all shook their heads. These are school children who visited our parliament today. Their message was so clear. This is how tone-deaf your Government is that you cannot understand that.

You have the majority of your senators saying there is no way we are going to go to Canberra and lobby for this because we know it is not in the interests of our state. You have

lied to us. You told us that a Tasmanian AFL team would not be contingent upon this stadium. Then we find out that apparently it was. Obviously out of your depth, playing with the big kids, with the AFL, and the little Tassie negotiating team went in there. Is that what happened, because I tell you what, it looks really unprofessional.

**Time expired.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 11**

Dr Broad  
Ms Butler (teller)  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Connor  
Ms White  
Mr Winter  
Dr Woodruff

**NOES 11**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Mr Wood  
Mr Young (Teller)

**PAIRS**

Ms O'Byrne

Mr Street

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The result of the division is 11 Ayes and 11 Noes. In accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Motion negatived.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Racing Industry - Allegations of Corruption**

[6.05 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise again tonight to talk about Tasmania's racing industry, and the corruption in the heart of its integrity body and the Racing minister's failure to ensure a clean industry and high animal welfare standards.

As members know, this morning in parliament we presented some very graphic images that were collected by animal welfare advocates over the past couple of years. I know every member in this place would have seen those images and been saddened and revolted, no matter where you stand on this issue. They painted a too real picture of a grim circle of death within the worst parts of Tasmania's racing industry.



I acknowledge there are plenty of good people in the industry who are just passionate about racing and they love animals. However, there are a few very bad eggs, and they are being enabled and facilitated by a corrupted Office of Racing Integrity.

The photo that we showed this morning showed ex-pacers who had reached their use by date being led to their death, to be shot and butchered by notorious greyhound trainer, and Ben Yole's mate, Anthony Bullock. The one picture that really sticks with me is of that skinny horse, its ribs showing, wide-eyed with terror. It knew what was coming because horses are sentient beings.

Anthony Bullock, who was revealed this morning as the owner of the Ben Yole horse that won the last race at the now infamous Burnie Cup, was the one who put the \$500 bet on in the minutes before his long-odds, non-performing horse, trained by his mate Yole, driven by his mate's drivers, stitched up the win. It was that bet that made Bullock that night a tidy \$11 000. It dropped the odds so much that the race caller twice mentioned it during the race. Written In Silk: for anyone who saw the photos this morning, it seems more like Bullock and Yole's relationship is written in blood.

I note the comments made by the Director of Racing on ABC radio yesterday morning in response to that now infamous race at Burnie where he claimed that the stewards did conduct reviews of the races, but were unaware of the betting plunge until the ABC article. The plunge was noted by the race caller during the race, as was pointed out by Mr Winter in his question this morning.

Mr Bullock and Mr Yole have both flooded race fields with so many animals they just cannot lose. They both have around 100 dogs or horses at their properties, which they drag to the track on a regular basis. They have both also received very favourable treatment by the state's racing regulator, the Office of Racing Integrity. We argue that this cowed, corrupted, integrity entity is protecting the likes of Ben Yole and Anthony Bullock because they are too big to take on and too big to fail.

Just like his mate Yole, when Bullock was found not to have a kennel licence last year, ORI refused to stand him down from racing. Just as ORI found that those horses in dusty paddocks up there at Ben Yole's stables at Sidmouth eating their own manure was perfectly acceptable too.

After the last few days, the dark corrupted heart of the racing industry has been exposed. ORI has dismissed - or overlooked, we would argue - allegations of animal cruelty and dodgy practices and worse, and they have potentially silenced whistle-blowers. For anyone who heard Gavin Kelly on the ABC's Leon Compton show yesterday morning, he said:

They wield so much power and they use it. The ORI let you know they have all the power and they use it. It's scary.

ORI, like its minister, has lost public confidence. Whatever your view is of racing, one thing is clear. While massive questions hang over the Office of Racing Integrity, it should not be in charge. Just as Ben Yole should not be racing right now, ORI should not be in charge. Those integrity functions should be contracted out to Victoria. How can anyone be confident that ORI is doing its job overseeing not only harness racing but all three codes?

Right now, most people in the industry and welfare organisations are really worried and they are demanding as much transparency as possible. We need clear air and independent oversight. That extends to any investigation. Whistleblowers need the comfort that this independent investigation will protect them and protect their interests because people are really worried.

We will have some questions again for the minister tomorrow about the review that she set up. I believe Mr Ray Murrehy is a person of high integrity but he did look into Ben Yole's practices in 2018. There is a story here from January 2018 where former Sydney steward Ray Murrehy was 'called in to head an inquiry into betting activities on several Tasmanian harness races last year'. Five years ago, Mr Murrehy was given the job of looking in to Ben Yole's practices. Nothing happened and nothing was changed. That is not on Mr Murrehy. That is on Government - the same Government we have now, a Liberal Government. They have appointed the same person who looked into these practices five years ago and nothing changed. It is not good enough.

In my last few moments I want to say this: we now have an upper House inquiry, which again exposes itself to potential conflicts of interest when you have a former racing minister on the inquiry and a person chairing the inquiry who has deep, long-standing connections to the harness racing industry. The clean participants in the industry, animal welfare advocates and Tasmanian taxpayers deserve so much better than what they are being dished up by this minister, this Government and this parliament at the moment.

**Time expired.**

### **Andrew Brakey - Tribute**

[6.11 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I offer my condolences to the family and friends and colleagues of Andrew Brakey. Sadly, Andrew passed away suddenly on 19 March 2023 with his family by his side. I offer my thoughts and sympathies of this parliament and our Government to Andrew's wife, Jen, his daughter Esther, his parents Mike and Janet and nan Lorna, his brother Nick, sister in law Sarina and nephew Oliver. We also offer our sympathies to Emily Shepherd and Andrew's colleagues at the Tasmanian branch of the ANMF.

Andrew grew up in the beautiful town of Turners Beach on the north-west coast. Despite some early health challenges, Andrew had an active childhood with his brother and friends in Turners Beach, where he could be regularly found in and around the beach and the Forth River on a bike or with a cricket bat in hand. Andrew studied nursing at UTAS and quickly became known as a skilled clinical nurse, universally liked by colleagues and patients alike.

Andrew's particular expertise was in neurology and neurosurgery nursing practice. Andrew's capability quickly made him a candidate for management roles. He thrived with a quiet and thoughtful leadership style. Andrew moved to the ANMF Tasmania branch in 2014. Mirroring his clinical career, he steadily built experience and recognition within the organisation. Andrew went on to complete an MBA with the University of Tasmania, which assisted him to fill roles with the ANMF, including as executive director, acting secretary and as director of operations and strategy.

Despite facing personal health challenges, Andrew remained steadfast in his commitment to outstanding care for patients and for the representation, development and wellbeing of our nurses and midwives. Andrew was fiercely intelligent, coupled with a quiet sense of humour. He was universally liked and respected by all who worked with him, even those across the negotiating table, which is no small feat. I had some engagement with Andrew in more recent times and could attest to the virtues that I have just described as a thoughtful, intelligent, articulate but very passionate advocate for the hard-working nurses and midwives of which he represented in that very key advocacy role.

I was just speaking to Mr Ferguson, who had the role of minister for Health for some years. Mr Ferguson was also saying what a very decent person Andrew was.

Andrew's passing is a great loss to the nursing and midwifery community, and to those who knew and loved him. His contributions will never be forgotten, and his legacy will live on through his family and the nurses and midwives whose careers he helped shape.

My sincere condolences to Andrew's family, friends and loved ones. Vale Andrew Brakey.

### ***Alone Australia* - Launch on SBS Television**

[6.15 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** - (Clark - Minister for the Arts) - Mr Deputy Speaker, it is always hard to rise after a contribution like that. I give my condolences to Andrew's family and loved ones.

This evening I share with the House the exciting news that the first double episode of *Alone Australia* launches tonight at 7.30 p.m. on SBS: it is film night right here in our backyard. *Alone Australia* airdrops 10 contestants separately into the remote wilderness of Tasmania with only their survival skills to rely on to win a prize of \$250 000. I must say I would require far more money than that to do it. There you go.

While this series has been filmed worldwide in some pretty extreme locations, I must say *Alone Australia* would have to be one of the more difficult, with filming occurring during a Tasmanian west coast winter. The 10 contestants must rely only on themselves for food, water, shelter and warmth, using nothing but what is in their bags and what the habitat around them provides. There are no camera crews, no help from a production team, and each of the 10 contestants self-documents their experience.

Multi-award-winning Tasmanian cinematographer and filmmaker Tim Noonan was hired by the production team to train the competitors to film themselves, as well as to shoot second-unit footage. Tim is one of our local stars, and is highly sought after as a sharer of factual content. He is an expert at self-filming, having produced multiple series that are filmed by and starring himself and his wife PJ Madam, including *Rites of Passage* and *Extreme Engagement*.

Screen Tasmania has worked closely with SBS, and we are very proud of them for doing so. They do some fabulous work. Thank you to Alex, and thanks to his team - and also to ITV Studios Australia, local councils, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, landowners and

other government agencies to ensure that this production was safe, sustainable and sensitive to our unique Tasmanian environment.

As a result of our Government's support of this project through our Screen Innovation Fund, Tasmania's extraordinary natural and cultural landscapes will now be broadcast to homes across the world. Tasmania now joins the likes of Patagonia, British Colombia, northern Mongolia, Canada's North West Territories and northern Norway in hosting versions of the show.

The Government believes Tasmania is a natural home for reality TV and production. We were proud to host the Paramount+ reality series *The Bridge Australia* - also filmed in the Tasmanian wilderness in early 2022 - and episodes of MasterChef Australia. That is more my comfort zone, I must say, than *Alone Australia*.

Our Government, through Screen Tasmania, is focused on growing the capacity, talent and creative skills of the Tasmanian screen industry. It is pleasing that this investment has given the wider Australian screen industry the confidence that Tasmania is able to service projects such as *Alone*, *The Bridge*, the Amazon Prime series *Deadloch* and the ABC series *Bay of Fires*, which is not that far from airing.

The increasing interest in filming in Tasmania is creating real jobs, supporting work for our local sector, and delivering benefits in particular for our regional economies.

*Alone* is a landmark worldwide property, and the production of *Alone Australia* is a coup for our state that cannot be understated. I hope members will take the opportunity to watch the series; if not tonight, you can access it via streaming.

I have to host our friends from our Samoan delegation tonight with some other members, but with my interest in my husband's home town of Zeehan, I will certainly be trying to spot some locations, and he will too. We will be streaming it later this week.

I am sure everybody will enjoy the series, even if you are not one of the people likely to ever be dropped in our wilderness to do that for \$250 000.

### ***Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* - Encore Theatre Company**

[6.20 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, over the last two weeks and for the next week to come, the Launceston theatre and music-loving community has been loving the nightlife and getting to shake their groove thing, because it has been raining men to the sounds of pop music at Launceston's Princess Theatre for the Encore Theatre's production of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*.

Adapted from Elliott's 1994 film, *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, the musical tells the story of two drag queens and a trans woman who agree to head west from Sydney to Alice Springs on a bus to perform a drag show. The three friends experience a series of comic adventures and meet some very different people, but they also experience some confronting incidents of homophobia.

We were treated to incredible direction and production, and we did get to see the true colours of the lighting team, led by Jason Bovaird, Chris Payne and Jack Price, with fantastic sounds from the sound team, led by Marcello Lo Ricco. I am sure all the artists said a little prayer for the costume designer Anthony Phillips, and for Sonia Jager, Margaret Quillam and the army of dressers in the wings. The musical direction of Denise Sam and Michael Stocks was absolutely hot stuff.

You may have to go further than to Venus to find hair, makeup design and painting better than that which was displayed and provided by Sharon Parker. Our wonderful divas Dani Barnett, Sam Hammersley and Brooke Targett were strong, fabulous and proved that girls just want to have fun. I have to say to my friend Rae Smith that her character of Shirley will always be on my mind. I am not sure if I will be ever able to separate her from that character again.

Nathan Wheldon, Deklan Haas, Ross Marsden and Stuart Loone, thank you for your beautiful characterisations filling these amazing characters with love, joy and sadness, without ever making them sad characters. You truly led us on a fine romance. Chelsea Whitchurch, who brought the down house as Cynthia, thank you for the way you embraced her.

I add that praise to every member of the cast I have not mentioned.

I do not know how to explain the fabulous company of dancers and singers, other than to say that they took us to a boogie wonderland - so please, do not leave us this way, or in fact any way. As audiences, we enjoy every time you grace the stage with such professionalism. You lift every production.

As the curtain closed and the orchestra ended its performances, we in the audience knew that even though the show was over, we would survive. I was probably not the only one still singing the soundtrack the morning after.

Thank you to Encore Theatre Company, and each amazing, hard-working member there for providing such colour in our world.

On a more serious note, can I say that after the anti-trans events around the country in recent days, it was wonderful to see the Tasmanian response as one of love and inclusion. As the song says, we belong to the light, we belong to the colour, we belong to the sound of the words we have fallen under. Whatever we deny or embrace for worse or for better, we belong, we belong, we belong together.

At this point, the Deputy Speaker is supposed to be in the chair, as we arranged last night. I was going to turn to him and say, 'Mr Deputy Speaker, I know as a farmer from the east coast of Tasmania you probably thank God you are a country boy, but can I encourage you to go west to Launceston and see this production'. That fell a bit flat, but I am pretty sure it is going to work anyway.

To Dani, Ross and Belinda, I can offer no more than the English translation of *Sempre libera*, you will be pleased for that:

Free and aimless I frolic  
From joy to joy,  
Flowing along the surface

of life's paths as I please.  
As the day is born,  
Or as the day dies,  
Happily I turn to new delights  
That make my spirit soar.

Congratulations on *Priscilla*, it is a triumph. Bring on *The Boy from Oz*, we cannot wait.

### **TasRail - Vehicle Derailment in Devonport in 2018**

[6.24 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to raise an issue on behalf of the Rail, Train and Bus Union in relation to the derailment of a TasRail vehicle that occurred in Devonport in 2018.

To remind members, that happened on the morning of 21 September, 2018. A train driver was using remote-control equipment for a TasRail train so that it could be loaded with cement powder at the siding in Railton. The driver was outside the train and nobody else was onboard. The result of that incident is that the train travelled through 10 active and three passive public level crossings, beneath the highway overpass and through five sets of points, mostly at speeds greater than the maximum track speed and reaching a maximum recorded speed of 87.5 kilometres per hour.

The train left Railton without a driver and not under control and ended up in Devonport, having gone that distance over a period of about 23 minutes. It ended up colliding with a concrete footing and surrounding fence at the end of a silo siding in a Devonport yard. That derailment caused significant damage to the train's locomotive and seven wagons as well as damaging the end of the siding and the fence. That fence debris struck two pedestrians who had been walking in the area, resulting in minor injuries to both of them.

On 18 November 2022, a final report was handed down by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau in relation to this specific incident. That report confirmed that all six issues that were identified as safety concerns because of that matter were satisfactorily addressed and are closed, which is good news.

The question I have been asked to raise in this place is in relation to a document that TasRail commissioned for themselves, which is an internal investigation relating to the driverless cement train derailment incident that occurred in September 2018. I am aware that there is a document but after seeking the release of this document through Right to Information, TasRail has chosen not to release it.

Given the findings from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, which found that all six matters were now closed, I am asking the Minister for Infrastructure, Michael Ferguson, to actively disclose the report that TasRail has commissioned.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union wants to ensure that the safety of workers on the railway line have information in a transparent way about what advice TasRail received at that time and what action they took. We can all see this external report, which is 164 pages of detail, so it is quite extensive. It identifies each of the safety concerns and how they have been addressed, so

there is no reason for the Government to not share that information with the union that represents their members. Even if they do not disclose it publicly they should work cooperatively with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union through an active disclosure process so that they can have that document and share it with their members.

I think it would not be enough for them to be offered a briefing in closed session, for instance, which then prevented them from talking about that document with their members, particularly if the organisation does not have anything to hide. It sounds like they do not.

There is nothing malicious about this request. It is simply about accessing information that TasRail has that will further inform the workers about what was discovered at that time and assist the union representing those workers to feel comfortable with the steps that were taken by TasRail management after that incident in September 2018.

I am here today on their behalf to call on the Minister for Infrastructure to work with the management of TasRail and encourage them to actively disclose that document in the interests of continuing to foster a good relationship with the union and to make sure that the workers who are employed at TasRail feel valued and are able to access all of the details in relation to that incident.

### **Salmon Industry - Correction to Speech**

[6.29 p.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, last night I was excited to share some experiences I had in the north-east and my delight at seeing a giant freshwater cray for the first time. I had the pleasure of meeting Todd Walsh to discuss the impacts on the giant freshwater crayfish and also the concern, support and care that is ensuring the numbers that exist now in Tasmania are protected.

In my excitement and joy in sharing that, I said I talked to another gentleman I met that day from SALTAS. By mistake, I called him a genealogist. For the purposes of the *Hansard*, I want to correct that. The gentleman I met, Lewis Rands, is the program manager of selective breeding at SALTAS. He has a degree from the University of Tasmania. He graduated with honours. He did a Bachelor of Biotechnology with first-class honours in genetics and biochemistry, but he is not a genealogist. I wanted to correct that.

Everyone in the Chamber at the moment is a supporter of the salmon industry. Twice a year SALTAS analyses the health of fish in its breeding program. CSIRO stands with them and does work. I mentioned that they conduct analysis of heart health to see how the breeding programs are impacting the health of the heart. Then I went on to say 'and kidney health'. I saw the fish being masterfully filleted by members of Huon Seafoods and they very gently remove the heart and the liver, not the kidney. Because it is an area of learning and interest to me, I said two things that were wrong and I wanted to correct that tonight.

**Mr Barnett** - Thank you.

**Ms FINLAY** - Mr Speaker, I also reflected on a reflection on yourself this morning and, for that, I wish to apologise. Thank you very much.

## World Enduro Championships

[6.32 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing) - Mr Speaker, tonight it is a great honour and a pleasure to highlight the success of mountain-biking in the World Enduro Championships that are being hosted in Tasmania, last weekend, 25 to 26 March, at Maydena and then 1 to 2 April at the Blue Derby Championships. It is a world championship. This is fantastic for Tasmania. I am so proud and honoured to highlight the success of mountain biking in Tasmania. The world championships go to the Netherlands in May and then they go to Switzerland and Austria in June. Last weekend and this coming weekend, they are in Tasmania, Australia. We are so pleased and proud of the investment that our Government has made in mountain biking and in Tasmania's natural environment that is helping make this all happen.

Regarding the fast-growing recreational sport of mountain biking, it is very easy to see why. It is exhilarating, particularly the last few decades. It has really taken hold right around the world but particularly in Tasmania. It is a sport, it is fun, the need for speed, intense experiences. You can go from being a novice rider right up to being a world champion. At Maydena the second place getter was an Aussie. It is fantastic to see the Aussies doing so well.

It is more than a sport, it is a lifestyle. There were about 500 competitors at Maydena last weekend and thousands upon thousands of spectators. They were all getting into the groove and absolutely loving it. Those who were participating last weekend were here for three to four weeks, I am advised, in the preparation for and during the event, and afterwards.

Maydena was built as a base for forestry operations in 1947, located in the Gordon River Road, south-west of New Norfolk. I will do a plug for New Norfolk: it is in the top three in the Australian Town of The Year. I am so pleased and proud. I put that out on Facebook just a week or so ago. It is the only Tasmanian town to be in the top three of the Wotif Aussie Town of the Year. Well done, New Norfolk. That is obviously the heart of the Derwent Valley. You go from New Norfolk through to the Bushy Park hopfields near Westerway, the famous Westerway berry farm, up to Mt Field National Park with its stunning walks, the all-abilities walk to Russell Falls, past the National Park Hotel, great hospitality, amazing counter meals there, through to Tyenna - I love fishing up on the Tyenna - and Fitzgerald right through to Maydena itself. It is a great place.

In terms of mountain biking, the natural environment, it is now famous as the steepest, mountain biking competition in the southern hemisphere, I understand. Maydena is known for that. It is one of the best. In fact, it was said so by one of the key groups that participated at Maydena.

I compliment and congratulate Simon French and Liam Hooper, and their team for getting that up and going in these last few years. They make it very clear that forestry and tourism can and should operate together, working closely together to ensure that we have a sustainable economy, sustainable environment and providing opportunities for mountain biking, not just in Maydena but also up at Derby. This is part of the expressions of interest process our Government established. The Blue Derby was established under that process, as was Maydena and the Freycinet Lodge on the east coast of Tasmania. Tourism and forestry working together.



I do a bit of a shout-out for the master plan being developed in and around Derby. That is a very good idea. That is to be encouraged. A five-year strategic plan for Maydena has been recently released. That is definitely worth looking at because we need to plan for the long term. This would deliver jobs in our natural environment, protecting our national and cultural values, and promoting tourism and our visitor economy.

If you look at mountain biking in Tasmania in the last decade, you have Derby, St Helens, Maydena, Penguin, George Town, Queenstown more recently, Hollybank and other parts of Tasmania. In Tasmania, we are famous for world-class mountain biking. We are proud of it and we are growing it. We are making it even better. We have invested, significantly, taxpayers' money into Maydena and Derby. I had the honour and pleasure of participating in the opening of both Maydena and Blue Derby.

I did come off a couple of times at Maydena on opening day a few years ago. I remember it well, up at Eagle's Eyrie and then down, down, down. Only came off twice, no broken bones. Likewise at Derby on opening day, with the former minister and member, Sarah Courtney. Again I came off, no broken bones. It was absolutely exhilarating. I am road cyclist, as you know, Mr Speaker, and I have many friends who love the mountain biking. Being a member of the FHAT group, the Foxes, Hounds and Turtles group, in Launceston, many of the members at my bike-riding group love their mountain biking.

It is a tribute to Tasmania, hosting the world championships. We are pleased and proud of that. We have a big future in Tasmania. It is bringing the world to Tasmania. It is something of which we can all be proud and back 100 per cent.

### **Southern Cross Care - Proposed Changes to Model of Care**

#### **Southern Cross Care - Proposed Fee Increases**

[6.39 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, when I undertook my graduate year at the Royal Hobart Hospital, on 2B South, I learnt a lot from the colleagues I worked with during that first year of clinical practice. I particularly remember one enrolled nurse who, despite me being a bit scared of her to begin with, I soon came to admire and respect deeply for her knowledge, experience, excellent assessment skills and rapport with our patients. She was a great operator and you could always have the utmost confidence in her abilities.

Later in my career, I met some amazing enrolled nurses in the community nursing service. They were absolutely second to none. Enrolled nurses play a critical role across our healthcare settings. They are important members of the healthcare team.

That is why it is difficult to understand why Southern Cross Care is considering changing their model of care to a household model and looking at replacing up to 50 enrolled nurses across the state with personal care workers. The removal of enrolled nurses will lead to fewer clinical nursing care for vulnerable aged-care residents and this is the last thing they need. The Aged Care Royal Commission recommended more qualified nurses in aged care, not less. Current government reforms in aged care are focused on improving the quality of care for residents, not diminishing it, which is what this proposal by Southern Cross Care threatens to do.

Concerns have been raised for months about these proposed changes, the lack of details and the impact on patient care, staff morale and retention. There are also concerns about the future roles of leisure and lifestyle attendants at Southern Cross facilities. The ANMF (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation) and HACSU (Health and Community Sector Union) have been very proactive in their campaigns to halt these changes and save the jobs of these highly valued ENs, leisure and lifestyle attendants and servery staff. I thank them for their continued efforts. It was my pleasure to attend, with Rebecca White, a forum held by the ANMF in Hobart recently. I attended virtually.

While this uncertainty continues, it will be increasingly unsettling for residents, families and staff. Staff are already under incredible pressure, doing their very best to provide the very best of care to residents.

I have raised this issue with the federal Minister for Health and I understand that Southern Cross Care has recently provided feedback to the nurses union about the proposed changes. I put on the record today that Tasmanian Labor values our enrolled nurses, and leisure and lifestyle attendants working at Southern Cross Care. We believe strongly that they deserve to continue to stay working in aged care.

Mr Speaker, the second issue I wanted to raise on the adjournment is also in relation to Southern Cross Care. This time it is about the extreme fee hikes for residents at Southern Cross Care retirement villages across the state.

The residents I met with recently at Glenara Lakes are going to be footing up to a 50 per cent increase in their fees. These residents were representatives from the newly formed Tasmanian Association for the Residents of Retirement Villages (TARRV). They were a great couple of gentlemen I met with and they provided a very informative overview of the changes at Southern Cross Care and how it will impact residents at those retirement villages.

I will read from a media release they issued on 13 February this year, in which they said:

State MP Lara Alexander said the significant fee increases by Southern Cross Care without any forewarning or consultation might be within the rules of the Tasmanian Retirement Villages Act 2004 but by any measure it is morally bankrupt. Many retirement village residents fear the 50 per cent hike in fees is being used to cover losses in the residential care component of the business.

'I am not suggesting this is the case but I am saying this is how the retirement village residents with whom I have met are feeling about this decision,' Mrs Alexander said.

'I fully support TARRV's approach to the Attorney-General because in its current form, the act offers poor protection and lacks direction for Tasmanians living in retirement villages. The act must be reviewed and updated.

'I have reached out to the Premier and the Attorney-General and they have both assured me they will be looking into this matter,' Mrs Alexander added.

This media release and those words I have quoted have quite rightly seen Mrs Alexander speak out against the current legislation in Tasmania. It does need amending to address the concerns of these residents. I note that she called on the Attorney-General and the Premier to make some changes to that legislation. I would like her to update the House on what those deliberations have been and when we can expect to see those changes to the legislation come before the parliament.

I will continue to work closely with this group and provide advocacy for them. I have been pleased to speak on this matter on their behalf in the parliament tonight. Mrs Alexander, could you please update us on what the outcomes have been of your deliberations and discussions with your Government colleagues about how we go about changing this legislation?

**Rob Deverell - Tribute**  
**Fire and Emergency Services - Recognition of Service**  
**Sorell Emergency Services Hub - Opening**

[6.44 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, I stand today to pay tribute to the memory of Rob Deverell, who sadly passed in recent weeks. Mr Deverell was a highly esteemed and cherished colleague to many. I know his loss will be felt by all who knew him and the emergency services.

Mr Deverell joined the Tasmanian Fire Service in 1975 as a volunteer firefighter in the Burnie fire brigade. He commenced as a career firefighter two years later in 1977, was promoted to district officer in 2000, and performed roles that supported our volunteers over the course of his career.

Mr Deverell will have a lasting impact on our emergency services and firefighters. He sponsored the Ian Mitchell Memorial Shield, which is awarded to the firefighter of the year each Christmas. In speaking with both the chief fire officer and the United Firefighters Union on Rob's passing, I know that he will be missed by all.

On behalf of the Tasmanian Government and the Tasmanian parliament, and acknowledging the support from the Opposition, I recognise and thank Mr Deverell for his service to Tasmania, and offer my condolences to his family, friends and loved ones.

I also take this opportunity to recognise the incredible efforts of members of our fire and emergency services - particularly our volunteers, who contribute many days and years of their lives to serve their communities. Over the last month, over 40 long service badges have been awarded to firefighters across Tasmania, including 23 in the east coast district, eight in the Hobart district and 13 in the Midlands district. The long service badges are awarded to people who have served five years or more with the Tasmania Fire Service.

I recognise, in particular, Mr Paul Tate of the Runnymede brigade, who in March was awarded a 40-year service badge for his service. This is a phenomenal achievement, and Paul's service to his community has been exemplary. I thank him for this.

I also recognise members who have been awarded 35-year service badges. Mr Chris Manton and Mr Roger Manton of the Tea Tree brigade; Mr David Klug of the Hobart brigade; and Mr Steven Butler of the Bushy Park brigade.

Mr Phil Pyke of the Lachlan Fire brigade, Mr Andrew Luttrell of Campania, and Paul Fergusson and Rick Birch of the Runnymede brigades were all awarded 30-year service clasps.

Awards were also provided to people who have served 25 years, 20 years, 15 years, 10 years and five years.

We have incredible members in our organisations. I congratulate everyone who has recently been awarded long service medals for their contributions to the people of Tasmania.

While we rightfully celebrate the long-term achievements of many hundreds of our volunteers and members of the Tasmania Fire Service, it is also timely to recognise our newest volunteer members from our newest volunteer brigade.

This Government - and may I pay tribute to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your outstanding work for sponsoring and enabling this to happen - opened its \$12 million Sorell Emergency Services hub on 8 March this year. The hub sees three of our emergency services - the TFS, the SES and Tasmania Police - come together under one roof for the first time in our state to serve Sorell and the surrounding region. Fifty new volunteers have joined the Sorell hub for both the TFS and SES, with a near 50/50 split between the services - and also between the genders, which is just an outstanding result and shows how far we have come.

Last night, on Tuesday 28 March, the members had their first inter-agency training. Volunteers looked over their new appliances, which have been made possible due to a \$400 000 investment by this Government. Also, last Friday, 24 March, the brigade kicked off another first - their very call-out. The Sorell volunteers supported the Cambridge Fire Station to respond to a vegetation fire.

We are proud and grateful for our emergency services, and we are pleased to see the Sorell Emergency Services hub - that brigade and that unit - up and running.

### **Southern Cross Care - Proposed Fee Increases**

#### **Just Cats - Tribute**

[6.49 p.m.]

**Mrs ALEXANDER** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ms Dow, for talking about an issue that is quite important for me in relation to TARRV, the association of the retirement village residents. Having worked in that space for a while and meeting with people, I know how important it is that this issue be brought to attention.

In fact, it is very timely because, today, representatives from the committee of that group travelled to Hobart and met with representatives from the office of the Attorney-General. I was unable to participate because I was in the Public Accounts Committee at lunch time. It was over that lunch break to make sure there were not conflicting things that would have otherwise retained people who advised the Attorney-General. My adviser, Elizabeth Bowerman, who

also has a wealth of experience, having worked previously with me in aged care and at St Vincent de Paul, attended on my behalf. I have not been able to talk to her but she texted me and she said that it has been really good. I am hoping to catch up with her tomorrow morning. It has been productive from what I understand.

I want to briefly talk about the lovely organisation, Just Cats, that I got to meet many years ago and I have kept in touch with. Just Cats is based in Launceston. It is a fantastic organisation that was founded in 2012 by Rachel Beech. Since that time, starting from a very small beginning, the organisation has been registered as a charity with DGR status and has taken in and rehomed almost 8000 cats and kittens.

What is fantastic about this organisation is it has come such a long way to get its accreditation. It is one of only three accredited organisations that deal in this space in Tasmania. All the work it does is not really funded by the state Government. They do it through donations, fund raising and with tremendous support from volunteers. The board includes business women who have come together to support and create this organisation that benefits the community.

They have been strong supporters of our Cat Management Act and have worked closely with councils in teaching people and the community about dealing with feral cats and colony cats. They are at the forefront of the message that needs to be spread in the community. They have one shelter in Mowbray and the adoption shelter at Longford. They are trying to establish another shelter on the north west coast.

They have a fantastic team of volunteers from the north west coast. When people surrender cats or kittens, they will travel all the way to Launceston to bring the cats to the facilities in Mowbray or Longford. Some people say they do not like cats, but at the end of the day humans have created the problem we have with feral cats killing our native animals.

In dealing with this problem we need to deal with it in a measured way and in a way that does not create unnecessary suffering. Some of the programs they offer are educating the community on responsible cat ownership, working hand in hand with the Government, they provide cat care advice to the general community, they do a lot of talks with schools, they work with the local vets, they provide options and advise for nuisance cats, trap the cats and deal directly with people who are hoarding cats.

They are supporting Tasmanians during the rising cost of living by providing low cost, microchipping, de-sexing and vaccination to low income earners in the community through the Last Litter program. They are working with local councils via various programs such as the low-cost microchipping program with George Town Council. The Last Litter program also has a partnership with Burnie and Launceston councils through their community grants programs.

They also support the vulnerable in our community and offer domestic violence crisis care for cat owners fleeing domestic violence. They have built a boarding facility at Longford shelter to cater for the increasing need of crisis care. People who find themselves homeless or go into hospital need somebody to look after their cat. This was funded privately and fitted out by Just Cats. This is the level of commitment by this fantastic community organisation that just works quietly away and does it all through support from volunteers and donors.

**The House adjourned at 6.56 p.m.**