TASMANIA

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**SESSION OF 2025 – 2026**

(FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)

# VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 55

THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2026

**1 COUNCIL MEETS.—** The Council met at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

**2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLE.—** The President said:

"We meet today on Tasmanian Aboriginal land. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and elders, past and present. We recognise them as the first inhabitants and the continuing custodians of this land."

**3 PRAYERS AND REFLECTION.—** The President read Prayers.

**4 HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSFORMATION PROJECT.—** Ms *Forrest* asked the Honourable the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport —

(1) What is the total value of Tasmania Government funding provided to Sharp Airlines for King Island to mainland Tasmania and King Island to Melbourne services, broken down by financial year for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27; and
(a) what is the term and expiry date of the current agreement?

(2) Is the funding a fixed payment, a per-service payment, an underwrite of seats, or another arrangement?

(3) What minimum service delivery requirements are attached to the funding, including:
(a) the minimum number of weekly return services;
(b) minimum seat capacity;
(c) required days and times of operation, including seasonal variation; and
(d) reliability and on-time performance standards?

(4) Does the agreement permit Sharp Airlines to cancel scheduled services for commercial reasons such as low passenger loads or soft loads? If so, under what conditions, and what notice must be given to the Government and to passengers?

(5) Does a cancellation for soft loads count against Sharp Airlines' contracted service obligations, and are there abatement, penalty or claw-back provisions where contracted services are not delivered?

(6) How many cancellations have there been by Sharp Airlines, and the reasons for these cancellations, for the financial years 2024-2025, 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

(7) What performance reporting does Sharp Airlines provide to the Government, how often, and is it published?

(8) Was the Government, or any agency, consulted or notified before Sharp Airlines decided to cancel the November services and any later services? If so, when?

(9) How many services across what date range were proposed for cancellation?

(10) What is the "review and consultation process" for poorly loaded flights referred to in discussions with Sharp Airlines, who participates in it, and how are island communities consulted?

(11) On Thursday 22 October 2026, Sharp Airlines notified passengers by SMS, email and in a follow-up phone call, that King Island–Essendon services, including SH927 on 19 November 2026, had been cancelled "at the direction of the Tasmanian Government". Your Ministerial Office has since advised that this was incorrect, and that the cancellations were an operational decision by Sharp Airlines due to soft loads. Has the Government sought a public correction from Sharp Airlines of its statement attributing the cancellations to the Government?

(12) Has Sharp Airlines given any assurance about management level approval of future customer communications in similar circumstances?

(13) What requirements, if any, does the agreement place on Sharp Airlines to consider passengers travelling for medical treatment, including those supported under the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme, when cancelling or rescheduling services?

(14) What assistance is available to King Island residents whose medical appointments or treatment are disrupted by cancelled services, including help with rebooking, extra accommodation or travel costs?

(15) Has the Government assessed the impact of the cancellations and the incorrect messaging on King Island tourism operators, including lost bookings and damage to visitor confidence? What is Tourism Tasmania doing to support affected operators and reassure the market?

The Minister answered:

(1) Funding of $189,000 was provided for the 2025-26 summer season, covering 1 November 2025 to 30 April 2026.

The current Grant Deed provides up to $260,940 for services from 1 October 2026 to 30 April 2027, when the agreement expires.

No funding was provided in 2024-25.

(2) The funding is a capped contribution of up to $260,940. Payments are made on a monthly basis to offset the gap between the airlines agreed operating costs and flight revenue on a per-flight basis.

(3) The Grant Deed does not set a minimum number of services to be delivered as this is ultimately a commercial decision, based on market demand. The committed public funds assist with offsetting commercial risk.

The Grant Deed provides for up to four services per week in October increasing to up to six services a week for peak travel dates over January to March 2027 between Melbourne and King Island.

Flights are operated using a standard aircraft type - the Metroliner - which provides 19 passengers seats on each leg.

There are no on-time performance standards set in the Grant Deed. If a service does not operate, Sharp is not eligible for any funding for that cancelled flight.

(4) Yes. The Grant Deed permits Sharp to cancel a scheduled flight where passenger demand is low. The Grant Deed requires Sharp to notify the Tasmanian Government within two business days of the cancellation or before the scheduled departure, whichever occurs first.

Notification of customers is managed by Sharp Airlines as part of normal business operations. The Grant Deed does not specify a minimum notice period for customers, as this is a commercial matter for Sharp Airlines.

(5) The Tasmanian Government is making a funding contribution, through a grant deed, to support delivery of a commercial service schedule determined by Sharp.

There are, therefore, no abatement, penalty or claw-back provisions where services are not delivered. The Grant Deed provides that no funding is payable for the service which has been cancelled.

(6) The management of this operational data is a responsibility of Sharp Airlines.

(7) Sharp provides monthly operational, patronage and financial reports during the funding period, followed by a final acquittal report, covering services operated, aircraft capacity, bookings, load factors, operating costs, passenger and freight revenue, and subsidy claimed.

The information is not published because it contains commercially sensitive operational and financial data.

(8) Building Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania routinely discuss forward flight schedules with Sharp Airlines. Sharp advised Building Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania on 12 October 2026 that it was reviewing some services in November and later months. These were the subject of discussion between Sharp and Tasmanian Government officials, with particular focus on the November services.

Sharp sent an email to staff in Building Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania on 22 October 2026 advising that it had cancelled flights across November and December 2026 and January and April 2027.

(9) Sharp advised that three services on 12, 19 and 26 November 2026 would be cancelled, together with 11 later services comprising three in December 2026, four in January 2027 and four in April 2027, for a total of 14 services across November 2026 to April 2027.

(10) The review consists of regular discussions between Sharp and officials from Building Tasmanian and Tourism Tasmania. Discussions focus on passenger demand, forward bookings and efficient use of the capped funding allocation. The objective is to maintain connectivity across the season and provide access for the community and visitors, taking into consideration both Sharp and REX schedules.

Sharp Airlines has been operating services to King Island for over 10 years and understands community needs based on both historical demand and forward bookings.

(11) Tasmanian Government officials contacted Sharp Airlines on the morning of 23 October 2026.

Sharp Airlines has written to me apologising for the communication, acknowledging that its statement that the cancellations occurred 'at the direction of the Tasmanian Government' was inappropriate.

Sharp Airlines will continue to engage with its customers directly, as is appropriate for a commercial airline. However, Sharp Airlines recognises the importance of consulting with the Tasmanian Government before significant scheduling changes are communicated to customers.

(12) As the air services between Melbourne and King Island are primarily a commercial operation, this is a matter for Sharp Airlines.

The Tasmanian Government understands that Sharp Airlines has assisted affected passengers with rebooking, or offered refunds where passengers prefer to travel with the alternative provider on this route.

(13) Medical needs of passengers travelling are not specifically addressed in the Grant Deed. In providing funding to support these flights, the Tasmanian Government's priority is to ensure the greatest overall connectivity and access to meet community needs and visitors, while ensuring efficient use of the capped funding allocation.

(14) Any rebooking of cancelled services including help with rebooking, extra accommodation or travel costs is an operational matter for Sharp Airlines.

(15) Schedule management is a core commercial activity for airlines. The circumstances in which the proposed cancellations were communicated was regrettable.

The Tasmanian Government has not undertaken an assessment of the impact of the cancellations given the ability of passengers to re-book on alternate services and the small total number of passengers affected.

**5 PAPERS.**— The Clerk of the Council laid upon the Table the following Papers:—

(1) Legislative Council: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(2) House of Assembly: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(3) Legislature-General: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(4) Environment Protection Authority: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(5) Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(6) Integrity Commission: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(7) Office of the Independent Regulator: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(8) Department for Education, Children and Young People: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(9) Brand Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(10) Tasmanian State Service: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(11) Tasmanian Industrial Commission: 'Review of Actions' 2025-2026.

(12) Department of Premier and Cabinet: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(13) Child Safety Reform: Implementation Monitor Annual Report 2025-2026; and Companion Document: Appendices.

(14) Expungement of Historical Offences Act 2017: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(15) Nominal Insurer: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(16) Department of Justice: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(17) Tasmanian Irrigation: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(18) Department of Health: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(19) Chief Psychiatrist: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(20) Council of Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Tasmania: Annual Report 2024.

(21) Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency: Annual Report and Appendices 2025-2026.

(22) National Health Practitioner Ombudsman: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(23) Tasmanian Community Fund: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(24) Tasracing Pty Ltd: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(25) Tasmania Development and Resources: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(26) Department of State Growth: Annual Report 2025-2026; Financial Statements 2025-2026; and Financial Statements 2025-2026 Abt Railway Ministerial Corporation.

(27) Private Forests Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(28) TasTAFE: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(29) Sustainable Timber Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(30) Office of the Custodial Inspector: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(31) Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(32) Tourism Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(33) Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(34) Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(35) Treasurer's Annual Financial Report 2025-2026.

(36) Audit Tasmania: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(37) Department of Treasury and Finance: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(38) Tasmanian Economic Regulator: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(39) Macquarie Point Development Corporation: Annual Report 2025-2026.

(40) *Legal Profession Act 2007*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. 71, Legal Profession (Barristers) Rules 2026.

(41) *Residential Parks Act 2026*: Statutory Rules 2026, No. 79, Residential Parks Regulations 2026.

**6 REPORT OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENERGY MATTERS.—** Ms *Forrest* presented Interim Report (No. 2) of the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters Inquiry into energy prices and related matters in Tasmania

*Ordered,* That the Report be received. (Ms *Forrest*)

*Ordered,* That the Report be printed. (Ms *Forrest*)

*Ordered,* That consideration of the Report and its noting be made an Order of the Day. (Ms *Forrest*)

**7 REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS.—** Ms *Webb* presented a report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report on its Inquiries into the 2024 and 2025 House of Assembly Elections and the 2024 and 2025 Legislative Council Elections.

*Ordered,* That the Report be received. (Ms *Webb*)

*Ordered,* That the Report be printed. (Ms *Webb*)

*Ordered,* That consideration of the Report and its noting be made an Order of the Day. (Ms *Webb*)

**8 REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS.—** Ms *Forrest* presented an interim report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters report on its Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2025 (62 of 2025).

*Ordered,* That the Report be received. (Ms *Webb*)

*Ordered,* That the Report be printed. (Ms *Webb*)

**9 BILL NO. 27.—** The Teachers Registration Bill 2026 was read the Third time and passed.

**10 BILL NO. 27.—** A Message to the House of Assembly:—

HONOURABLE SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council has this day agreed, without Amendment, to a Bill intituled, 'A Bill for an Act to provide for the registration of teachers'.

*Legislative Council, 29 October 2026* C.M. FARRELL, *President*

**11 BILL NO. 30.—** The Council resumed the Debate on the Question, That the Firearms Amendment (Strengthening Firearms Security) Bill 2026 be now read the Second time.

A Debate arose thereupon.

**12 SITTING SUSPENDED.**— *Resolved*, That the Sitting of the Council be suspended until the ringing of the Division bells. (Ms *Rattray*)

The Sitting was suspended at 1.00 o'clock p.m. and resumed at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

**13 QUESTION TIME.—** The President called for Questions without Notice. There were 10 Questions asked.

**14 BILL NO. 30.—** The Council resumed the Debate on the Question, That the Firearms Amendment (Strengthening Firearms Security) Bill 2026 be now read the Second time.

A Debate arose thereupon.

**15 SITTING SUSPENDED.**— *Resolved*, That the Sitting of the Council be suspended until the ringing of the Division bells. (Ms *Rattray*)

The Sitting was suspended at 4.52 o'clock p.m. and resumed at 5.13 o'clock p.m.

**16 LEAVE OF ABSENCE.—** *Ordered,* That the Honourable Member for Pembroke, (Mr *Edmunds)* be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for the remainder of this day's sitting. (Ms *Rattray)*.

**17 BILL NO. 30.—** The Council resumed the Debate on the Question, That the Firearms Amendment (Strengthening Firearms Security) Bill 2026 be now read the Second time.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

And the Bill was, accordingly, read the Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole Council.

And the President having left the Chair, the Council resolved itself into the said Committee.

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(In the Committee)

Ms *Forrest* in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 18 agreed to.

Clause 19, Amendment made (Ms *Thomas*)

Page 28, paragraph (b), proposed new paragraph (d), subparagraph (ii), after sub-subparagraph (A).

*Insert* the following subparagraph.

(X) sport or target shooting; or

Clause 19 as amended agreed to.

Clause 20, Amendments made (Ms *Rattray*)

**First amendment**

Page 31, paragraph (e), proposed new paragraph (da), after "whether a".

*Leave out* "relative".

*Insert instead* "partner".

**Second amendment**

Page 32, paragraph (g), proposed new subsection (2A).

*Leave out* that subsection.

*Insert instead* the following subsection.

(2A) For the purposes of subsection (2)(da), a partner of a person includes –
(a) a spouse of that person; or

(b) a person who is in a significant relationship, within the meaning of the *Relationships Act 2003*, with that person.

**Third amendment**

Same page, paragraph (h).

*Leave out* that paragraph.

*Insert instead* the following paragraph.

(h) by omitting paragraph (a) from subsection (3) and substituting the following paragraph:

(a) within the period of 10 years before the application was made, has been convicted of –

(i) a crime involving violence to another person, whether or not –

(A) that crime was committed in Tasmania or elsewhere; or

(B) the crime is a crime under a law of Tasmania; or

(ii) a family violence offence, within the meaning of the *Family Violence Act 2004*; or

(iii) an offence in another jurisdiction which, if committed in Tasmania, would be a family violence offence within the meaning of the *Family Violence Act 2004*; or

And the Question being put,

Committee divided.

| AYES 8 | NOES 4 |
|---|---|
| Ms *Armitage* | Ms *Glade-Wright* |
| Mr *Duigan* | Ms *Lovell (Teller)* |
| Ms *Forrest* | Ms *O'Connor* |
| Mr *Gaffney* | Ms *Webb* |

Ms *Palmer (Teller)*
Ms *Rattray*
Ms *Thomas*
Mr *Vincent*

Pair: Mr *Hiscutt* Pair: Mr *Edmunds*

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

Clause 20 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 27 agreed to.

Clause 28, Amendment made (Ms *Rattray*)

Page 42, proposed new section 55, after subsection (2).

*Insert* the following subsection.

(3) A person who is taken to hold a firearms licence by virtue of subsection (1) or (2) must notify the Commissioner of the location, within the State, where the person intends to store the firearm –

(a) in an approved form; and

(b) at least 24 hours before or, if 24 hours' notice is not practicable in the circumstances, as soon as practicable and not later than 24 hours after –

(i) the person brings a firearm into the State under the deemed licence; or

(ii) the person changes the storage location for the firearm while the firearm is in the State.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 25 penalty units.

Clause 28 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 29 to 35 agreed to.

Clause 36 disagreed to.

Clauses 37 to 51 agreed to.

Clause 51, Amendment made (Ms *Thomas*)

Page 78, proposed new section 121A, after subsection (3).

*Insert* the following subsection.

(YY) Subsections (2) and (3) do not apply to a person who lends a firearm, and to a person who borrows a firearm, if –

(a) the person lending the firearm, including the on-lending of the firearm, is only lending the firearm as part of an organised shooting activity (the ***relevant activity***) that is being held at an approved shooting gallery, approved rifle club, approved handgun shooting club or approved range (the ***relevant location***); and

(b) the following persons ensure that the firearm remains at the relevant location at all times during the relevant activity:

(i) the owner of the firearm;

(ii) if the owner of the firearm is not present during the relevant activity, a person (the ***nominated person***) who –

(A) is nominated, by the owner of the firearm, to be responsible for the firearm for the purposes of the relevant activity; and

(B) holds a licence or permit that authorises the person to have possession of the firearm; and

(c) each person borrowing the firearm during the relevant activity, whether from the owner of the firearm or the nominated person, holds a licence, permit or exemption, under this Act, that authorises the person to have possession of the firearm at the relevant location; and

(d) during or after the relevant activity, the firearm does not leave the relevant location, other than in the possession of –

(i) the owner of the firearm; or

(ii) a person who is nominated, by the owner of the firearm, to be responsible for the firearm on the completion of the relevant activity and who holds a licence or permit that authorises the person to have possession of the firearm.

Clause 51 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 52 to 56 agreed to.

To report progress and seek leave to sit again.

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The Council being resumed, Ms *Forrest* reported that the Committee had made progress in the Bill, and that she was directed to move that the Committee may have leave to sit again.

*Resolved,* That the Council will, tomorrow, again resolve itself into the said Committee.

**18 BILL NO. 45.—** A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly has passed a Bill, intituled — 'An Act to prohibit practices that are directed to changing or suppressing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, and for related purposes', to which the House desires the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

*House of Assembly, 29 October 2026* JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

The Bill was read the First time.

*Ordered,* That the Second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. (Ms *O'Connor*)

**19 BILL NO. 25.—** A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly has passed a Bill, intituled — 'An Act to to amend the *Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2024*, the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*, the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Regulations 2023*, the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*, the *State Service Act*

*2000*, the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020* and the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976*', to which the House desires the concurrence of the Legislative Council.

*House of Assembly, 29 October 2026* JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

The Bill was read the First time.

*Ordered,* That the Second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next. (Ms *Rattray*)

**20 BILL NO. 22.**— A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly does agree to the Amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Bill, intituled — '

'A Bill for an Act to amend the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* and the *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993'.*

*House of Assembly, 29 October 2026* JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

**21 BILL NO. 39 OF 2025.—** A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly does agree to the Amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Bill, intituled — '

'A Bill for an Act to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1924*, *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021*, *Electoral Act 2004*, *Evidence Act 2001*, *Family Violence Act 2004*, *Forensic Procedures Act 2000*, *Gas Safety Act 2019*, *Health Complaints Act 1995*, *Integrity Commission Act 2009*, *Justices Act 1959*, *Justices of the Peace Act 2018* and the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005';*

*House of Assembly, 29 October 2026* JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

**22 BILL NO. 12.—** A Message from the House of Assembly:—

MR PRESIDENT,

The House of Assembly does agree to the Amendments made by the Legislative Council to the Bill, intituled — '

'A Bill for an Act to amend the *Local Government (Highways) Act 1982*, the *Retirement Villages Act 2004* and the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020 and* regulations made under that Act*';*

*House of Assembly, 29 October 2026* JACQUIE PETRUSMA, *Speaker*

**23 ADJOURNMENT.—** *Resolved,* That the Council will, at its rising adjourn until 11.00 o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, 17 November 2026. (Ms *Rattray*)

A Debate arose thereupon.

And the Question being put;

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

The Council adjourned at 8.05 o'clock p.m.

C.L. VICKERS, *Clerk of the Council*.

*Briefings:*

- *Tasmanian Community Fund Amendment Bill 2025*