

# Inaugural Speech – Robert Valentine MLC



Hon. Robert Valentine MLC

Legislative Council

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Electorate: Hobart

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**CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2012 (No. 16)**

**CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2012 (No. 17)**

## **Noting of Budget Papers**

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart - Inaugural) - Madam President, indeed it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be here today. Let me, on this occasion of my inaugural speech, acknowledge the Mouheneener people, the traditional custodians of this land who have a continuing association with this land. I acknowledge their elders, both past and present, and I am committed to the ongoing process of reconciliation between our communities.

Moving into the main purpose of my speech, let me say how warmly welcome I have been made to feel since arriving in this House. You yourself, Madam President, individual members in this chamber and the staff have all been very helpful, kind and, above all, patient in explaining the operational aspects of this House. I acknowledge that level of acceptance and the expressions of congratulations, either personally here in this chamber or by letter from individuals. It is most definitely appreciated and I can only hope I can make it last for the entire six years of my tenure.

I certainly intend for my part to make sure the channels for dialogue and discussion are always open even though our various positions on particular issues from time to time may be significantly different. I look forward to sharing ideas I will mention today with honourable members so we can discuss them and flesh out their merits. I have ideals but those ideals cannot exist in isolation. I am always open to debate and to listen to my colleagues in this chamber. I may not agree with them or they with me, but at least the opportunity is taken and who knows where that may lead. If this is being reformist, as some outside this chamber have been so bold as to indicate on my behalf, then so be it. The whole business of this House is reforms by nature in one way or another, as legislation is being modified almost every sitting day.

At this time I wish to congratulate the honourable member for Western Tiers on his election and look forward to serving with him in this House. Not to forget the honourable Leader for the Government in the Council in his elevation to the post. We are both on a steep learning curve here, I expect, although in very different ways and I am sure of that, but I wish him well.

Today, I wish to talk about my election to this House, governance and the adversarial system, strategic planning, a little on exploring the possibilities and powers of the upper House, and I will finish with a few brief comments on the budget.

First, to my election. Madam President, my election to this House as the member for Hobart is the next step in what for me has been a very interesting personal journey. I count it an honour that the people of Hobart have placed their faith and trust in me to serve them in this important representative capacity. The importance of the role is not underestimated in these somewhat interesting times, if we can call them that.

Let me place on the record my great appreciation for the unswerving support of my family, especially my partner in life, Margaret; my parents, Hugh and Babs Valentine; and brother, Kim. Over the years, Margaret and my children, Ben, Tamsyn and Nicholas, have always supported me in serving the community, first, through my work with the local New Town community and then throughout my 20-year career in local government, even though this has resulted in very significant personal sacrifices on their part in terms of having quality time with their husband or father. Without their support, I can assure you, the path for me standing here giving this speech today would have been impossible to negotiate. I thank them sincerely.

My mum and dad have always been an inspiration to me in not letting the grass grow under one's feet. At the ages of 88 and 89 they still run a stall in Salamanca Market during the summer period so in terms of activity I have good role models in life.

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Madam President, during the recent campaign I stated that I would continue to advocate for the people of Hobart and, as you also commented at my swearing in, work for legislation that benefits Tasmanians as a whole. This is the most important point. While being elected by our various communities I believe it is very important to remember that we are basically here first and foremost for the welfare of the state of Tasmania. To achieve this properly, one has to be able to identify with people across the state and not just those in a particular electorate, of which I am sure no-one here needs reminding, but I will certainly be interested in travelling to various parts of the state to fill in those knowledge gaps.

As a little background for the honourable members here today, although I have been a city dweller for many years now, I spent my childhood in the country town of Dunalley to the south of Hobart. During those 20 years, and the years following, I was acquainted with the commercial fishing industry, fish processing in particular; agricultural research; stud cattle rearing; sheep and dairy farming; and had relatives who were heavily involved for many years in dairying at Forth and the Smithton-Marrawah area in the north-west.

Primary industry is a very significant plank of Tasmania's economy and I appreciate some of the issues that sector faces. Most in this House, I expect, would have related activity occurring in their electorates to a lesser or greater extent, so I am sure I will be able to glean the essentials from them as well as travel when necessary to see for myself firsthand.

The same goes for the mining industry. This is a sector of which I have little knowledge apart from reading accounts of various activities so I look forward to broadening my understanding there as well.

I want honourable members to know that when we debate issues that affect their communities I will always endeavour to listen and balance my thinking accordingly.

Further to those experiences, I have worked for a combined 36 years within the government departments of Agriculture, Public Works, Department of Main Roads, Metro, Community Welfare and Health and Human Services, mainly in the ICT arena, and therefore understand the general service provision and operational aspects of such departments. Hopefully, this should assist me when the House performs its role in keeping a check on executive government, although I am sure many things have changed since my association with them.

Madam President, with government in mind, I wish to turn to the general issue of governance in our parliamentary context. It is my belief that good governance is about understanding the various sides of an argument before trying to apply solutions. To do this, I believe it is important to approach decision-making in a cooperative manner in our parliament. During this election campaign I spoke with many residents who were frustrated with the general thrust of politics being so adversarial and party-focused. I did speak with some who absolutely despised one or other of the parties and were not backward in expressing it. I am sure that comes as no surprise to the members in this chamber. In fact, some mentioned it yesterday in their grievance debate.

We all know there are quite deep divisions in some sectors of our community with respect to politics and those divisions need to be healed for good progress to occur. As an aside, Madam President, I have a little quote I use on occasions and it reads thus - 'The idealist has the essential vision, the realist has the essential focus. For good progress to occur, one must be tempered by the other' - author, Rob Valentine. It is a simple mantra, Madam President, and it has served me well in years gone by, to remind me there are always two sides to a story.

Back to the divisions I see in our community. I find it very pleasing to see members of this chamber in formal debate largely playing the ball and not the individual. This is a modus operandi that I believe has great benefit. To my mind, personality politics can be very negative and divisive. In our schools we teach our children to respect others and be considerate; to do otherwise goes against the general thrust of community expectation. Parliament displays a caring, sharing attitude in many of the acts that it develops but for some reason, when debating in parliament, the gloves are off.

I believe parliament should lead by example, if not only for the fact that many students visit and observe. I am not suggesting for one minute that criticism of government ministers or members' positions on a matter should not be voiced if a particular policy or action warrants it. To the contrary, that must be expected. I am not referring to the somewhat jovial nature of the friendly banter and criticism I have most definitely observed over the last few days in this chamber, and which, no doubt, I will be guilty of participating in over the longer term.

In addressing the sometimes deep community divisions, I believe as a parliament we have a duty to the people of Tasmania to govern this state in the most effective and efficient way possible. In these difficult and obviously challenging times we need to work together to improve our lot as a state - not apart. I feel quite strongly that the present party-based system militates against good decisions being made for this state, as party takes first row in the scheme of things, in preference to the welfare of the state, rather than party taking the second or third row back.

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I find it rather interesting that each member of the other place is elected by the people to govern, basically with the same quota. Yet approximately half are relegated to opposing, for the most part, the views and policies of the other. Hence their combined intellectual capacity and life experience is not harnessed in the best possible way. Which board of any successful company operates in this way, Madam President? Sure there are politics in boards, but they would be in a sorry state commercially if they operated in this way.

Deep down I am sure we all wish for a culturally and commercially vibrant, economically resilient and environmentally aware state, one that cares for its people, and wants Tasmania to be sustainable well into the future. In some way we must work to see such a vision become a reality. Most in this chamber and in the other place would not want to see our state reduced to a worthless heap through factionalism and division. As a result, in my opinion, parliament needs to examine its processes carefully to reduce its adversarial nature, which I realise is a mark of the Westminster system, but the system does not suit this state well.

We have a university that is brimful of knowledge on the models of other jurisdictions around the world and how variously successful or otherwise those jurisdictions are in the rather involved area of governance. We need to utilise that intellectual power to discover the best way forward, to reduce the conflict and angst within the community and deliver a governance system that works for Tasmania, and not just party ideals for the term of a government. That is a big request, I hear many in this chamber say. I fully understand we could never hope to eliminate completely the conflict and angst, but I am sure there are better ways. If we never start we will never find the solution. We need to be agents for change at this point in our history.

That brings me to the matter of strategic planning, Madam President. While such investigations by the university into better governance models are taking place, parliament can start by examining better ways of strategically planning the future of this state. It would most definitely take the will of a party in power to think laterally to change the present paradigm to one that allowed parliament as a whole to agree on even a small number of big-ticket items - perhaps only eight or 10 items. These could form the basis of a strategic framework for this state, spanning at least two terms of government, preferably 10 years, which would result in the third parliament in the cycle revisiting the framework prior to an election taking place two years later. This may require legislation to ensure that it is not simply dismissed or overridden by party interests at the change of government but would provide greater certainty for the community and especially investors.

The elected government of the day would then be the holder of the tiller as it develops and negotiates action plans to set a strategic direction for the term of its tenure, within the constraints of parliament's framework, to achieve the specific outcomes within it. Yes, it would reduce the flexibility for government when compared with that currently afforded under the present paradigm of operation but would, I believe, serve this state well.

In my short time in the role I have listened to the honourable members of this chamber bring up valid queries and questions regarding continuity, and I believe that such a system may help to deliver that. Under an act of parliament local government is expected to produce such plans with all the diversity of elected members they have around their tables. Diverse they are, you must agree, so this is a process that is well proven. Such an approach could provide a greater opportunity to achieve not only better outcomes for our state but greater harmony across the community, knowing that our parliament has agreed on the big ticket items which by legislation and community expectation would be hard to depart from. One positive aspect of this model would be the more united approach to Canberra for funding on those agreed items, as the need arose.

Until this is done, along with other more collaborative moves, we will continue to see a totally adversarial approach with all of the disappointing outcomes that we hear time and time again being reported to the community over the radio or television news. It is rather like gang warfare at the moment. With the state facing such difficult times, I believe that it is most timely to harness the collective intellectual power of our elected members. It is simply not an option to continue down this adversarial line.

We often hear of good ideas being brought forward by a party, which are immediately claimed as being 'stolen' from an opposing party's policy, or an idea lambasted simply to denigrate a member. We really do have to move past things such as this. The operational paradigm needs to change. We need to celebrate good ideas and deride opposition for opposition's sake. The community expects better. Is there the political will? I guess we will have to wait and see.

When considering those good ideas that I speak of we have every reason to be optimistic in this state. A number have already stated as much in the chamber during this debate. The numberplates on our cars shout out 'explore the possibilities'. Thankfully there are moments of light when all parties agree on a particular path that needs to be taken. A recent example is the investigation into farming of industrial hemp. This initiative was championed many years ago by Patsy and Fritz Harmsen, as honourable members may recall, but was more recently brought to the parliament by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Rockliff. It has the opportunity to broadly address issues of both unemployment and the introduction of new industries that will hopefully see growth in GST payments to this state. It is one possibility that we need to grab with both hands.

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Farming of industrial hemp has the capacity to assist in solving the rather toxic debate over forestry in this state. I did say 'assist' - not solve on its own. Thankfully all parties have agreed to the investigation into industrial hemp farming by a lower House committee. The benefits of such an industry should not be easily dismissed. It is a low tetrahydrocannabinol crop - a very active ingredient in that other type of drug, sometimes known as fireweed - so it is not a drug variety. I am told that it provides a greater percentage of fibre by volume than eucalypts and can be used to provide fibre for paper, and clothing, and can produce good quality food oil, including the much sought after omega 3.

It has also been used as biomass to produce ethanol, however that may not be as environmentally friendly. It can also be used to make insulated building blocks, with the glue that binds the blocks also being sourced from the plant. These are just some of the uses. The greatest benefit of all - it is a rotational annual crop providing yet another plus for our farmers as they can grow peas, beans and other crops in the same soil, without the land being locked up for a generation while trees mature.

That is not to say that we do not need tree plantations. I want to make that quite clear. We need tree plantations, more particularly for structural timber, veneer production to a certain extent, and also for growing certain specialty timbers such as blackwood or celery top pine to supply future generations of builders, artisans, wood-turners and cabinet makers. In the case of blackwood, trees take about 30 years to be of any usable size, and much longer for other species. But if we do not start now we cannot expect a sustainable craftwood industry in 100 or even 50 years from now. It is simply not an option to think our native forests can supply the demand in a sustainable manner into the future. It would cease being native forest at some point.

Industrial hemp will not assist in solving the issue of what to do with current plantations of trees to be used for pulp, for which there is low market interest it seems, but over time industrial hemp could provide flexibility in the production of fibre. For example, if demand reduces as a result of the high Australian dollar, farmers simply plant another crop and then go back to that crop in following years if things improve. Processing mills could balance their output according to demand from the many other industrial sectors that would use their product. It also allows a more efficient way of managing our land, preventing hectares of tree plantations from sitting idle under such circumstances. I believe GST receipts could improve given the new industry it could spawn and employment is likely to rise. The disenfranchised workers coming out of the forestry industry restructure would be far more easily employed in some of these pursuits than in a coffee shop in their local town.

As the honourable member for Apsley reminded us yesterday morning, we are in the Year of the Farmer. What better present than to hand them yet another rotational crop to put into the mix? Of course it all needs thorough investigation through the lower House committee that has been set up. Will it be taken up? Only time will tell if it falls victim to party politics. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see a brace of new industries develop from this providing even more optimism for our state? If we were to investigate some of these industries we would find that the fallout from a possible IGA would not be as drastic as we may expect.

I personally do not think we have an option but to go with an IGA scenario, should it be presented to this House, but it would be great to have it supported by these new industries. We can demonise those who are in the room negotiating the IGA from one side or the other, but the community division over forestry simply must be stopped. Proponents and opponents will be wrestling as we sink below the waves. It does not mean scrapping the forestry industry, as I explained above. That is so definitely needed.

Another matter that needs to be investigated is the sale of crown land that is currently occupied by commercial entities or private individuals. Basically, if an individual leases crown land that has a commercial operation, such as a café or restaurant that serves some public benefit, then there needs to be consideration regarding sale of that land to the occupier, because they will never develop it to its fullest potential otherwise. The state is losing out in GST receipts. We are told that banks will not generally lend money in such circumstances as they cannot hold the title as security, I expect. This reduces the opportunity for job creation. Selling such land would assist the state financially without major detriment to the public. Not all land occupied for such commercial purposes should be considered, of course, unless it can meet a public benefit test.

As for the pulp mill issue, to answer the question posed by the honourable member for Windermere yesterday, I do not support it in its present form if it impacts on established industries - industries that have invested heavily to achieve their present viability. I would find it very difficult to advantage one business operation over the fortunes of a yet-to-be-established business. I am told there are aerial and effluent pollution issues that need consideration in that regard. Perhaps they can be resolved or another location may be possible, which would need to be properly analysed. One thing is for certain, and that is that such a facility needs to be compatible with all of the branding that the various producers in this state have come to rely on in producing pure product. If we ignore this we do so at our peril, I believe.

We would certainly need some form of fibre production with the industrial hemp scenario that I have outlined, but not I expect to the extent of the current pulp mill proposal, however, it would need to be part of the investigation.

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Getting back to exploring the possibilities, another project that must be given serious consideration is a cycleway from Hobart right through to the north-west. While this seems a rather small project, I believe it could have a significant impact. The cycleway that follows the flattest route between two points is the path that follows our railway line. This could build on the present proposal for the north-west in the budget. I have no costings on such a proposal, but imagine the little towns along the way would be revitalised through demand for accommodation and bicycle repair facilities and such like.

We have a state that is seemingly to die for, Madam President, and we should maximise that to our benefit, in an environmentally friendly way of course. I am unsure of parts of the west coast, but perhaps the honourable member for Murchison could enlighten me as to its viability, given the level of infrastructure that such a cycleway may require with the steep nature of that terrain and such a tortuous route the rail takes, I know that.

The particular tourism-related experiences at each location that could be provided would also add to the level of interest and provide further employment. There are not many projects that could enliven our smaller, almost forgotten, towns in such a way and also spread out across the state as well. Imagine the tourist train that follows this route. It would be one of the great little train journeys of the world. Cyclists could use it to hop on and off at various towns, catering for people of varying abilities and fitness levels. It could be one of the great experiences that would attract many people to this state - explore the possibilities, indeed.

Another area that could be explored to great effect is that of sports at the more extreme end of the scale. We heard from our member for Mersey last week about a canyoning experience he had in his electorate. There are many opportunities along those lines here in this state that have already been taken in some instances and do not mean degradation of the environment: rafting, sea kayaking, climbing and mountain biking to name just a few. The mountain bike north-south track on Mt Wellington in my electorate - and I think it was outlined by the member for Nelson yesterday - has already gained very positive international comment. It is a matter of marketing - something we heard from Dr Sirolli in his presentation yesterday morning, and quite passionately.

New Zealand has a name for extreme sports and it works for them. There is no reason on this earth why Tasmania cannot get its share of that market. We need to build Tasmania's brand.

With that thought in mind, I was told only last week by Mr Glenn Campbell, the CEO of Family Planning Tasmania, that he was told many years ago that Tasmania used to be known as the ABC state: apples, beer and chocolate. Quite cute, I thought. What is our brand? We need to consider that once again because we are no longer the Apple Isle, although when travelling about, we do hear the tag still being used, which tells you if we build a good brand it can last for years and serve us well as a state.

Conversely, negative branding can also occur if we make the wrong moves. That can be to our detriment for years to come as well. I have an idea that one of the honourable members mentioned branding in a speech yesterday - or was it last week - it has all been a bit of a rush for me over these last few days in the House, given the intensity of budget proceedings. I look forward to getting a few sitting days under the belt and developing a routine, I can tell you.

Some may see us as the retirement state as many come here from other states because they can sell their homes for a substantial amount, more than what it costs to buy one in Tasmania. They can then invest some of the proceeds for later years. It is a real win for them. An advantage for Tasmania is that these couples do not take a job but create a service demand which boosts employment. Unfortunately, being in their later years, they also create a demand for health services so it is not all beer and skittles. We also do not wish to lose our young people because of some perception the state is only interested in the older generation. So there is the need to balance it with the extreme sports component, more music festivals, and other offerings for the cross-section of our society.

We have the distinct advantage of being close to the Antarctic and this has seen Tasmania and greater Hobart, in particular, become the Antarctic gateway for Australia. This is well recognised now by the federal government which has backed Hobart as the location for the re-signing of the Antarctic Treaty this year by the various treaty nations. This industry is worth in the vicinity of \$185 million and approximately \$100 million of that is generated in this state.

A company in Burnie modifies caterpillar tractors for use in the Antarctic and these are now being purchased by a number of other countries as the preferred equipment. Caterpillar in the United States does not even produce them - quite an achievement for little Tasmania. Of course, we also know of the insulated living quarters known as the 'apple' with its manufacturing history starting in Woodbridge - another innovative product doing so well in that market for many years. There are many more examples. There are 836 people employed in Antarctic-related business, 653 in research alone and 183 in Tasmanian-based businesses, as far as can be ascertained.

The research sector associated with the Antarctic and Southern Ocean is very significant indeed. I want to list the organisations:



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We have the international centre for temperate and marine science education. Tasmania hosts 65 per cent of Australia's Antarctic scientists; I do not know whether people are aware of that. There is the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources - CCAMLR, as most would know it. There are some 43 nations visiting here a number of times a year to deal with business under that banner. We need to take advantage of that, not just CCAMLR but the fact that we have 43 nations on our doorstep. There is the Secretariat for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, the Australian Antarctic Division; the CSIRO and Marine and Atmospheric Science Division; the CSIRO ICT Database Infrastructure; Antarctic Tasmania; the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies that is going to occupy Princes Wharf No. 2; the Secretariat for the International Antarctic Institute, which is hosted by UTas; the Bureau of Meteorology's East Antarctic and Southern Oceans Office; the French Polar Institute Paul-Emile Victor, Southern Base; the Cooperative Research Centre for Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems funded by the Australian Research Council; the Headquarters for the Integrated Marine Observing System hosted by the University of Tasmania and the International Project Office for Southern Ocean Observing Systems. What is there not to be excited about with respect to such a clutch of research-based organisations working out of this state?

There is much to build on from an international perspective and other countries to woo in order to grow the business. What is important is that the process dealing with the wharf area that is now up for consideration must factor this into their thinking. It is not an option to disregard it. Thankfully, I believe it is on the radar and I look forward to a good outcome in that regard.

We have opportunities to capitalise on the NBN rollout. The NBN highway is a wonderful opportunity for this state, provided we have the products to run over it. The highway is not much use if there is nothing to run on it. We need to think past the streaming of movies over this infrastructure. E-health is one use that we can continue to develop to the benefit of isolated communities. It can strengthen employment in remote locations and save much discomfort and personal expense as patients are able to be diagnosed near or even in their home, only then having to travel for an actual operation or procedure. There is room for the funding of research to create the products that the NBN can facilitate. Tasmania is in the box seat if we can see that happen, probably in conjunction with our university.

Madam President, these are but a few of the reasons we have to be optimistic. It has been said before that we need to talk up our state. Our state has many advantages and we need to be positive about our future, not preaching doom and gloom, as mentioned yesterday by the honourable member for Apsley.

On the subject of powers of the upper House: during the campaign and when doorknocking many homes there were a number of issues discussed but many out there commented on the potential power of the Legislative Council. This was due to the mooted blocking of supply that was raised recently and deserves a degree of attention. The news feature did get quite a grab, I have to tell you, and a reaction. Many agreed that this House does not have a mandate to block supply as its members are not all elected at once, that basically it is not elected to govern; it is elected to review and to keep a check on executive government and if it blocks supply it should be forced to face the people. Madam President, facing the people achieves little but an expensive exercise. I believe the honourable member for Huon made that observation yesterday in this House.

We may see a new government installed but the economic circumstance of the public service will change little. To my mind, when the going gets tough it is not always good politics to be changing the riders mid-race. Had we had a different rider I do not think the outcome would have been that different, quite honestly. Global conditions have conspired to make life very difficult, and no matter what colour we had, it would have been a challenge. There may well have been some things that could have been done differently for better outcomes in the minds of some but, all in all, the world is not in good shape.

Such a blocking capacity is termed an absolute veto. In fact it was last done, I am told, in 1948 when my great uncle Edward, or Teddy, Brooker was premier for a short period. I am not sure whether that is an omen or not.

*Members laughing.*

**Mr VALENTINE** - If someone tells me the time before that was in 1912 when my great-grandfather was a member of the lower House I would have to feel pretty shaky, Madam President.

I am talking to those who are more academically aware of political processes and procedures than I am and we could investigate legislative change to see the absolute veto modified to what is termed a 'suspensory veto'. In my understanding, and I am not an expert on this, in the event this House felt strongly enough about the inadequacy of the budget it would allow a period of six weeks where the government is forced to defend their budget and individuals in this House would defend their reasons for blocking it. At the end of that period, this House would then be required to pass it, regardless. The government would then be judged on the relative strength of its arguments and this House in a similar manner, and the strength of those arguments remembered at the next poll, no doubt. It would still not be something to be used lightly.

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This is food for thought that would modify the power of this House to a more reasonable basis and in the interests of democracy may be a beneficial change. An interesting topic for debate nevertheless, and I am told that it would mean changing the constitution. Perhaps we could explore this aspect together at some point in a committee. I would be interested in the views around this chamber. I will stop there although I do have a number of things that will come out in future debates.

First, let me say that with regard to this budget I look forward to the estimates process next week to hear the answers to many of the questions raised by honourable members in this House over the past few days. I have been here two minutes, figuratively speaking, and need to gain knowledge of the more in-depth processes and procedures associated with the budget to draw better conclusions. I look forward to that.

That said, I believe we are living in some very interesting times given our fiscal position as a state. While we may question why and where some of the cuts are being made, I believe that there is no option but to reduce expenditure when the hay in the barn has run out - in fact it is being borrowed from the cooperative down the road. It is obvious this budget is supportive of disadvantaged Tasmanians and, unfortunately, it is a real indicator of the hard times we are presently facing. There are many out there who need assistance simply to survive. Make no mistake: many Tasmanians are hurting. But as expressed yesterday in this chamber by the honourable member for Nelson, if we can see job creation we will see an increase in GST and further to that an increase in community confidence, helping this state to pull itself up by its bootstraps. There would appear to be no other solution.

The budget speech indicates that there is to be growth in employment to the tune of 8 000 new jobs, and one can only hope that the strategies government intends to employ to meet that target are successful. Personally, one of the aspects I am interested in is to see how the creation of three new Tasmanian health organisations will work in the provision of continuity of service statewide and efficient administrative structures. If not properly managed there is room for individual THOs to go their own way and not cooperate with their sister organisations across the state to see amalgamated, efficient, corporate services implemented. Only time will tell if the model is successful.

I personally experienced another attempt in the 1990s and it was reversed. It appears to be the opposite approach to the setting up of one sewerage and water corporation for the state which I know the government was keen to see happen. Cost of service delivery as a whole will also be interesting to monitor over time. The opportunity for individual THOs to gain further funding from the federal government through effective service delivery is welcome and should assist the improvement of service delivery even further for those THOs that manage to perform. Unfortunately, the downside may be even more parochialism than we already have. That to me is a problem because it has the tendency to hold us back as a community statewide. Only time will tell.

At this point I will vote to simply note the budget as requested in the motion before us. I look forward to the Estimates Committees not only as a new experience but to listen to ministers' responses to the various queries and questions that have arisen as a result of the deliberations of this House.

Madam President, I thank the House for its indulgence in listening to me in silence. I have a feeling that that level of generosity will not always be afforded me from this point forward.

**Members** - Hear, hear