

Tuesday 10 July 2018

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

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

The following answer was given to a question upon notice:

2. EPA TASMANIA - TEMCO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOTICE

Mr FINCH asked the Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Council -

- (1) (a) Can the Government confirm that EPA Tasmania has not reviewed the East Tamar industry TEMCO's Environment Protection Notice since 2002?
 - (b) If the answer to (a) is yes, is the Government aware that EPA Tasmania's guidelines state that the notice should be reviewed every five years?
- (2) (a) As the European Union and the World Health Organization have safe limits for particulate material PM10, PM 2.5, lead, arsenic and cadmium, should there be testing by EPA Tasmania at the Bell Bay industrial area given these are believed to be by-products of some of their processes?
 - (b) Can the Government confirm that EPA Tasmania has not updated its Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) since 2004?
- (3) (a) As East Tamar industries are close to residential areas, how often are noise and air pollution measured?
 - (b) In what locations are measurements taken?
- (4) As noise pollution from Bell Bay has been an ongoing issue for Clarence Point, Beauty Point and other residents on the West Tamar, what steps can be taken to reduce the allowable noise impact?

Ms HISCUTT replied -

- (1) I understand the TEMCO Environment Protection Notice - EPN - has been under review and is currently in draft.
- (2) (a) The EPA imposes regular air emissions monitoring on all regulated premises at Bell Bay. The parameters monitored are relevant to the activity of the site. All data is available to the public via the annual environmental review - AER.
 - (b) The Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004, which is a legislated government policy, not an EPA policy, is currently under review.
- (3) (a) and (b)

All EPA-regulated activities within Bell Bay are required to undertake noise surveys to ensure compliance against permitted noise limits. The frequency of noise surveys varies

between every 14 months to every three years. Noise is measured at a variety of locations on the East and West Tamar over a period of 24 hours.

All EPA-regulated activities in Bell Bay are required to undertake air emissions monitoring to ensure compliance with permitted emissions levels.

Emissions monitoring includes onsite and extensive offsite monitoring throughout the Tamar Valley. Offsite locations include Beauty Point, Low Head, Rowella, Kelso and George Town.

Some operations undertake continuous emissions monitoring of stack emissions allowing real time data. If an exceedence is detected, an alarm sounds so that immediate action can be taken.

- (4) Noise propagation through the Tamar Valley is complex due to atmospheric and topographic conditions. The Tamar River creates an unusual environment for the transfer of noise. Noise is always generated from Bell Bay, but under certain atmospheric conditions it is not audible and under other conditions it is.

The EPA receives occasional noise complaints from residents at Beauty Point and Clarence Point. In the last 18 months, a noise complainant from Clarence Point has been particularly concerned about noise from Bell Bay.

In response to the complaint, the EPA has undertaken several investigations including the deployment of a noise logger to the Clarence Point property for a period of 10 days to measure the noise experienced at the property.

The EPA noise specialist has reviewed the data and determined that noise limits imposed on Bell Bay operators were not exceeded during that period.

The EPA is intending to redeploy three noise loggers during July throughout Clarence Point at the request of the complainant. This may provide further information regarding the nature of the noise.

The complaints relate to 'general noise' and as such, it is difficult to identify the source of the noise.

The EPA is in regular discussions with Bell Bay operators regarding the concerns of the complainant.

As reversing beepers were identified as a source of noise, a request has been sent to Bell Bay operators, including TasPorts, to convert their reversing beepers from high-pitched sirens to white noise sirens.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jonathon Heather, Belinda Kitto, Stuart Schultz and Dylan Pace

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, it is with pleasure I formally and warmly welcome to this Chamber Mr Jonathon Heather. Jonathon is a recent addition to the staff of the Legislative Council, taking up his position as the electorate officer to the member for Prosser on 18 June.

He has experience in working as the electorate officer and assistant adviser to Mr Guy Barnett MP and the electorate officer to Senator Jonathon Duniam.

Jonathon will be observing proceedings in the Legislative Council as part of his orientation. On behalf of all members, I extend to Jonathon a very warm welcome.

Before we begin Special Interest Matters, during which the member for Rosevears will speak about the AFL National Inclusion Carnival and the work done by the New Horizons Club, I welcome Belinda Kitto, Manager of New Horizons Club. Her work for that cause is exemplary.

I also welcome Stuart Schultz, Southern Coordinator for New Horizons Club; previously he was with Cricket Tasmania.

It is our pleasure to have Dylan Pace with us today. He is a southern AFL inclusion footballer. He was selected in the All Australian team for the second time during the carnival in Launceston two to three weeks ago. He also hones his skills in basketball and was a member of the Australian bronze medal team in Italy last year. He is a very talented sportsman and it is terrific to have Dylan here as well.

Members - Hear, hear.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Australian Rules Football - National Inclusion Carnival

[11.10 a.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, good old Tasmania - Belinda has a close relative in the member for McIntyre.

When you say AFL, we see big games at the top end of Australian Rules Football leading to a grand final that almost stops the nation. AFL is in our DNA. AFL stands for much more than that. The AFL works in various ways to make Australian Rules Football available and accessible to everyone in all communities. A key part of this endeavour is, as you mentioned, the AFL National Inclusion Carnival, held in Tasmania for the first time last month. Bringing the carnival to Tasmania was the result of a bid by AFL Tasmania and its partners the New Horizons Club, Tourism Northern Tasmania and the City of Launceston.

I remember being on the Gold Coast to watch the inclusion carnival last year. They had beautiful warm weather up there. While they spoke very highly of Tasmania, I thought, 'There is no way known we are going to have this carnival in Tasmania at this time of the year.' However, the New Horizons Club and its partners presented a submission that was second to none. It was streets ahead of the other submissions. Belinda was able to draw the carnival to Tasmania, Launceston turned on that beautiful winter weather we are well known for and the carnival was played in glorious sunshine. You might remember, Mr President, one footballer from the Northern Territory when asked at the launch of the carnival what he was looking forward to said, 'Going home.'

New Horizons has been providing vital sport and recreation activities to people with a disability in northern Tasmania for 32 years. It recently appointed a coordinator to work in the southern part of Tasmania, and that is Stuart Schultz, who is with us today.

For one week in June, Launceston played host to the National Inclusion Carnival with Australia's top footballers with intellectual disability from every state and territory, coming to Tasmania for an incredible competition in a demonstration of the power of sport to drive inclusion in our communities. New Horizons, led by Belinda, worked with its partners, as I mentioned earlier, to hold what the AFL has described as, 'the best carnival yet'.

The inclusion grand finals were played as curtain-raiser games for the Hawthorn versus Gold Coast AFL game in Launceston at the UTAS Stadium on 23 June. What a great moment for those players. Unfortunately, Tasmania was not among those teams but they did a lap of honour at half time and did a barrier run-through for the Hawthorn players, which was great.

In addition to the games, athletes took part in player education sessions, sightseeing and social dinners with local northern Tasmanian football teams. Belinda says -

Each and every player who competed in this Carnival faces challenges in their day to day lives that most of us can't imagine. People with disability can suffer deeply from social isolation, and are proven to be more at risk to many critical health issues than the rest of the population. Sport, physical activity, recreational and social pursuits are vital to the wellbeing of people with disability. BUT, opportunities that make taking part in these, as simple as they are for everyone else, aren't widely available.

However, we have been lucky in northern Tasmania for 32 years. Belinda's skills as a sports administrator, combined with her management abilities directing New Horizons Tasmania has filled a yawning gap for Tasmanians with disabilities. With help she has brought the AFL Inclusion Carnival to Tasmania. The event brought hundreds of visitors to the north in midwinter and demonstrated the economic power of people with disability and their families. There is no stopping the momentum Belinda has pushed forward. Mr President, the excluded are now the included.

Mr PRESIDENT- Like the member for McIntyre, Belinda is also a more than competent netballer - skills everywhere here.

Ms Rattray - Belinda was a lot better than I, but I am going to claim it.

Luke 'Action' Jackson - Tribute

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, Glenorchy Olympian Luke 'Action' Jackson is an inspiration and a fantastic ambassador for the northern suburbs. Luke has overcome adversity; he has dared to dream and he has made the seemingly impossible into a reality. No question, Luke is one of Australia's all-time greatest boxers. He has achieved high honours on the world boxing stage and has represented our country on many occasions.

To date, Luke counts his proudest moments as being named team captain for the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi and when he represented Australia at 2012 Summer Olympics, again as team captain.

He will have the opportunity to add to his accolades in a little over a month when he takes on his biggest challenge in the ring, facing Carl 'the Jackal' Frampton in the World Boxing Organization featherweight world title showdown. In the boxing world, it is pegged as one of the fights of the year. Frampton is an interim WBO world featherweight champion and on paper he looks the goods. Frampton has an impressive 25-1 record with 14 knockouts. He has the support of a home crowd of 20 000 at Belfast's iconic Windsor Park and the expectation of the boxing world, which has pegged Luke as a certified underdog, an amateur boxer sure to be dazzled by the pro stage. The bookies agree: Frampton is a clear favourite at \$1.02 and Jackson is the outsider at \$12.

What they are forgetting to consider is the spirit and resolve of Luke, who has spent his whole life fighting. In a recent tweet, Luke said of boxing -

Boxing keeps me alive. It gives me purpose. Without it I get a little bit lost. Everything you're supposed to learn from your mother and father, I learnt from boxing. To eat right, to go to bed early, be respectful or you'll get humbled.

This statement hints at a childhood spent growing up in a broken family, quitting Cosgrove High School in year 8, turning to drugs and battling mental health issues.

Boxing was not part of Luke's life until age 19, when he discovered he had a talent for it and, in doing so, found his saving grace and purpose in life. Through boxing, Luke continues to battle his demons and through sheer determination he has established himself as a world-class sportsman.

Equally as impressive as his sporting career, Luke is a champion for mental health awareness. Luke has been applauded for his honest account of his own mental health issues and is recognised as a leader in highlighting the effects it can have on all of us. Luke speaks frankly of his mental health issues and its significant impact on his life.

What is most admirable about Luke is his ability to use his lived experience to recognise vulnerable young people in our community. Luke has taken it upon himself to change their life direction. While managing his own international competition schedule, Luke makes it a point to engage young people and nurture their energies through boxing. Through the establishment of his highly successful gym, Action Fitness Centre in Derwent Park, Luke is making a real difference. AFC prides itself on its safe and family-friendly environment, promoting wellbeing and positivity to its members. Everyone is welcome, with Luke offering kids and young adults classes and one-on-one training for everyone - from the armchair athlete to those hoping to reach the successes he has.

There is just one condition that Luke expects from everyone who walks into his gym: you show up and you do your best. Luke extends these words beyond his gym and into the community. If you have ever had the opportunity to hear him speak, you will agree it is not possible to describe the feeling in the room when hearing his personal story. Luke is confronting, candid and honest when talking about his biggest opponent, mental health, and how it has shaped him to be the sportsman he is today.

Luke gives his time freely to community organisations, at corporate events, to personal appearances and public speaking; whether at the gym, out in the community or on his many social media platforms, Luke is a poster boy for the northern suburbs of Hobart, someone as Tasmanians we can all cheer on, not just for his fighting in the ring but for his genuine wish for other people to lead their best life possible.

On behalf of the northern suburbs, I extend my sincerest best wishes to Luke for his fight on 18 August. Whatever the result, Luke will find a positive and will continue his fighting way.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ulverstone - 7 Day Makeover

[11.21 a.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, when a community comes together it is amazing what can be achieved. My electorate office is based in the beautiful north-west seaside town of Ulverstone, where there is definitely a strong sense of community. This was quite evident recently when volunteers came together to give an under-utilised public space some TLC so it could be used and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. How long do you reckon this makeover would take? Three months? Six weeks? No.

Ms Rattray - They do it in a week on telly.

Mrs HISCUTT - We did it in seven days. This wonderful project was sponsored by the Central Coast Council and facilitated by Creative Communities International through its 7 Day Makeover program. In an article in *The Advocate* of 23 June, Creative Communities office manager Jodi Stojanov said the whole project was driven by the community. She said -

Council sponsors the makeover but the ideas generated over the next two days are ideas from community members ...

We do not come in here with a whole heap of preconceived ideas. Council could have just employed a designer to come in here and put some sculptures in but then the community won't have ownership over it ...

Ms Stojanov also stated the 7 Day Makeovers had been implemented in around two dozen other towns across Australia and New Zealand, allowing the process to be streamlined. She said -

Not only do they come up with the idea but they get to see that put into practice and they get to see the end result.

With the first two days of the project underway and with the guidance of 7 Day Makeover's founder David Engwicht, the volunteer community team brainstormed ideas, toured the town to see where these ideas could be implemented, selected which ones to put into action and then did the planning to make it all happen. In the same *Advocate* article, David Engwicht was quoted as saying that nothing was off the table in the planning sessions and gave the volunteers ideas on how to create social spaces instead of functional ones. He said, 'We want a more lounge room feel to the town centre'.

By all accounts, it sounds like there were some fairly 'out there' ideas, but in the end it was agreed that Apex Park, between Banjo's Bakery Cafe and Olivers Bakery and Cafe in the main street, would be the main focus of the events, transforming the courtyard into a bright space for creativity, enjoying a coffee and having a good conversation. Another idea agreed upon was a smaller project to bring some extra comfort and interactive art pieces at the wharf precinct on the Leven River.

Then the physical work began. Days three to seven were a flurry of activity, with volunteers removing old materials from the space to make way for new features. A variety of people from the community pitched in - mums and dads, local youths, retirees, small business owners and even a group of students from Leighland Christian School. All of them rolled up their sleeves to give back to the town where they live. The generosity of the Ulverstone community did not stop at the time it was volunteered. Councillor Rowen Tongs donated a shipping container, which was gratefully accepted and converted into a 'parklet' sitting area on Reibey Street. The Ulverstone Men's Shed also constructed and donated an array of coloured box stools for the space.

Besides the \$20 000 sponsorship, the Central Coast Council kicked in to assist with supplies and professional labour. They also made available a stockpile of scrap materials, stored for reuse in such a venture. When we live in a world where so much seems disposable, it was wonderful to hear these second-hand materials were being reused and repurposed. I congratulate the council for that initiative. The final day of construction was a long one, with members of the volunteer teams staying on site well into the early hours - 2 a.m. in fact - to put the final touches to Apex Park.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers, the Central Coast Council staff and the team from Creative Communities International for their huge efforts in revamping the Apex Park into such a beautiful space. This is but one step forward in making the most of the many spaces in our town. I am sure future projects will be in the works.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No.1) 2018 (No. 16)

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17)

Consideration by Committee of the Whole Council

10.26 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) (by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That with regard to Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16) and Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018 (No. 17) that the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider output and other expenditure detail contained in the document Government Services volumes 1 and 2.

Further, that the Committee be empowered to exercise a vote on each proposed outcome as part of the process of approving appropriations contained within the Consolidated Fund Appropriation Bills (Nos. 1 and 2) 2018 under the two-line Recurrent Services and Works and Services appropriation.

Further, that the Committee of the Whole Council be empowered to consider the outputs as recommended in the reports of Estimates Committees A and B and the

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

Motion agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

Second Reading

[11.27 a.m.]

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

That the bill be now read a second time.

Bill read the second time.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

In Committee

[11.28 a.m.]

Madam CHAIR - Honourable members, I would like to make a brief statement with regard to the way the Committee is to be run.

Before I do that, I acknowledge and note the efforts of Hansard during the committee hearings. They were extraordinary in having the *Hansard* reports out the next morning in the majority of cases. It is worth noting that with four committees going at any one time, there is a huge amount of work. I certainly appreciate it and I know other members do also. I note the efforts of Hansard and Pat Blood and her team.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms FORREST - This stage of the bill is intended to achieve two primary objectives: first, to enable full discussion of both the substance and form of the legislation; and second, to ensure the decisions already made at one stage are not reopened for discussion at the subsequent stage and do not as a result prolong the bill's passage unnecessarily.

In the context of the debate on the appropriation bills, members are reminded that the purpose of the consideration in the Committee of the Whole Council is to report to the House whether the bill should pass and whether clauses and items in the schedule to the bills should be: first, agreed to; second, subject to a request; or third, amended where the item is not for the ordinary annual services of the Government.

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

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

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

I remind members that debate in the Committee of the Whole is not a grievance-type debate. I therefore ask members to be succinct and keep their comments in mind when speaking to the items in the budget papers. I appreciate all members for their consideration.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clauses 3 and 4 postponed.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Schedule 1 - Purposes of Appropriation

DIVISION 1

(Department of Communities Tasmania)

Output group 1

Children Services System Management

1.1 Children Services System Management -

[11.33 a.m.]

Mr VALENTINE - I thank the officers for providing the detail. I am a little unsure of the split between staff on stress leave and workers compensation. Are they are one and the same? For instance, if you look at the table where it gives claim number TS815868 for 2013-14 and 2014-15, in 2015-16, it has WCT000189. There must have been a different method of identifying the claims.

Is there a separation between stress leave and workers compensation? If so, can I have the figures for those unravelled?

Mrs HISCUTT - We understand it probably has been a system change. For stress and the workers compensation, we would have to go back to the department to be sure of our answer. We cannot answer it at the moment. Would the member like to put it on the notice paper?

Mr Valentine - I do not want to hold things up for it. I am happy to put it on the notice paper, if that is what it takes, or I can wait for it to come through.

Mrs HISCUTT - As we have a lot to do, it would be best if you put it as a question without notice.

Mr Valentine - Okay. I will do.

Mrs HISCUTT - Thank you.

Mr WILLIE - In relation to what preventative programs the Government is funding to improve child safety outcomes, the answer I received spoke about children and the new services target -

Funding for children and young people within the remit of Child Safety Service and Youth Justice, Communities Tasmania has been unable to source whole of government information in the allocated time frame.

I am surprised that Communities Tasmania was not able to point to a raft of programs funded by the Government, even though they are across government, whether they be delivered in child and family centres or whatever that may be. It potentially highlights that the department may need to focus on this area, given the insufficient answer I received.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, it seems preventative programs are run by Health, CSS, Education et cetera, and are funded by the Government - DPAC - and local government. We would need to seek further advice from other agencies around the programs and funding arrangements. It is a broad question.

Mr WILLIE - I am surprised the department charged with upholding the Government's responsibility for child safety is unable to point to preventative programs across government. You would think that department would have whole-of-government strategies on preventative programs and strategies for government to help improve child safety. As I said in Estimates, there are three parts to this - preventative, early intervention work and the acute side of the Child Safety Service we often talk about. I am surprised the information is not readily available, given the department's responsibilities.

Madam CHAIR - Before you sit down, member for Elwick, you only have three calls on this line item and a number of questions left open for debate. You may need to raise those before you sit or you will promptly run out of calls.

Mr WILLIE - The next request was for provision of a breakdown of 45 child protection positions. The answer I received was, 'This response to this question is a matter of public record, as provided in the Legislative Council, Thursday 22 June 2017.'

I looked at the public record. There was no breakdown of those positions provided. There was an explanation that the Government was counting vacancies, which are not new positions. The former minister was caught out in the media and was unable to explain that figure in Estimates at the time. The Government still cannot provide a breakdown of those new positions from that time. I am making a point, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIR - Do you want to keep going with the others?

Mr WILLIE - Yes. The next question was: how many young people engaged with out-of-home care are not in the education system? The answer I received was -

It is Child Safety Service's expectation that every child of school age, who is able to, is engaged in education. It is not possible to determine how many children in out-of-home care are not engaged in the education system without undertaking 1253 individual file reviews of the children in out-of-home care.

Given the department's responsibility in being the legal guardian of these children, not having that information readily available, not monitoring that information in working with young people who may not be engaged in the education system is deeply concerning to me. I received an answer to a right to information request in November 2017 that provided some of this information. It is available. I highlight the insufficiency of the answer and my concern this data is not readily available and is not being monitored in an active way.

Mrs HISCUTT - Preventative health is different to early intervention. A health and wellbeing framework for children was recently announced. Your second question is a matter for public record already and was provided on Thursday 22 June 2017. Yes, it is available but it is a manual process and will take some time to be completed, given that children are sometimes not enrolled due to individual circumstances, and they do change. The CSOs know the statistics of individual children at school and work with them to engage in learning. Some are on flexible learning.

Mr WILLIE - As a former teacher and knowing how important it is that kids stay engaged with school, I am surprised there is not a holistic approach and that these statistics are not monitored at a whole-of-department level not just at an individual level by Child Safety officers. From my right to information request in November I know four children were recorded in out-of-home care as being either suspended or excluded from public schools. There were 13 on part-time enrolment.

My question was about whether there had been any progress. I have not been able to get that information. I express my concern and hope that the department will look at tracking the system at a departmental level.

I also asked how many cases have been reviewed by a magistrate and the cost. I was told that information was unable to be sourced within the allocated time frame. If the Government has not had opportunity to source that information to date, I will put my question on the Notice Paper.

I think that is my last call so I will make sure I have covered everything.

Mrs HISCUTT One of the member's questions is a different question from that supplied here, so we do not have the answer. That is, the numbers the member was talking about. Perhaps the member would like to put the question on notice, because we do not have the information here.

Children and young people with a child protection order will have a review period set by the court. Whether it goes back to the court will depend on whether CSS seeks an extension to the order. For example, some orders will be for six months, some will be for 12 months and others will be a transfer of guardianship. In this sense, all reviews are done.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output Group 3
Independent Children's and Young Person's Review Service

3.1 Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People -

Madam CHAIR - This was opened in my name. We received the information after the closure of our report. I am happy to leave that one.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Output Group 6
Disability Services and Community Development

6.5 Women's Policy -

Ms FORREST - Leader, I think you will be able to answer the question in spite of your advisor not being here. I will put it and see what you think.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - The member may pose a question. If the Leader cannot answer it, we may have to postpone the clause.

Ms FORREST - I have been searching for the response from Mrs Petrusma, which again arrived late but she was our last minister of the day in a very long week. My question is on women's policy. We received the number of women on government boards and committees during the Estimates hearings. That is the case across a lot of ASX-listed companies - there are improving numbers of women on boards but many of them do not hold the leadership positions of chair and deputy chair. I asked the question on notice: what was the percentage of women holding chair and deputy chair positions? The number was 38 per cent and I stand to be corrected because I cannot find the -

Mr Gaffney - I thought it was 28.

Ms FORREST - Is it 28?

Mr Gaffney - I will have a look.

Mrs Hiscutt - He might be able to answer.

Ms FORREST - The member for Mersey might be able to correct me. I must have left that one in the office, the only piece of paper I did.

Mr Gaffney - It is 28.4.

Ms FORREST - Right, 28.4 per cent. Thanks. The total number was 31 women compared to 78 men, which is 28.4 per cent. It is still a long way short of the target. Although we have made significant inroads in bringing women onto boards and committees, the fact that they are not being elevated to senior positions on those boards and committees needs to be considered. The Australian

Institute of Company Directors is doing a lot of work on this. The minister also stated the deputy chair gender statistics are not collected. I encourage the minister to do so. Surely it is not that hard. Everyone knows all the boards and committees the Government has and which report to the Government in one way or another. A deputy chair is often fulfilling a role in the capacity to take on the chair when the chair retires. Not always, but it can be, so 28.4 per cent is still low and we have some work to do there.

Would the Government consider noting and reporting on the deputy chair gender statistics? In the area of women's policy, until we report and shine a light on these less than satisfactory outcomes in comparison to the policy setting, they are a bit hidden. I am not sure if the Leader can answer; it is more a suggestion than a question if you want to take it that way. There is a significant amount of work to do.

Mrs HISCUTT - I agree that more work needs to be done. Even a third is not half, is it? Regarding your statistics on deputy chairs, I will make that suggestion to the Government. The bigger and the wider group of statistics you can collect, the better picture you have of the situation. Thank you for that comment.

Mr FINCH - Madam Deputy Chair, I missed the call on 1.1, Children's Services System Management. I would like to ask some questions about Ashley and the education system. If I have missed the opportunity, it is not of concern to me as I can ask those questions during question time, but am I able to have 1.1 recommitted, please?

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - Members, we are still within the division, but I am also mindful - I am sure the Chair will support me - that we do not want to do this as a normal procedure. We will allow the recommittal in this case. We will allow the member to ask his question because we are still within the division. We will finish this output first, which is Women's Policy.

Item agreed to.

Output group 6 agreed to.

Output group 4 Housing Services System Management

4.1 Housing Services System Management -

Mr WILLIE - The Government said it was going to spend \$45 000 on advertising initiatives to address the housing crisis. In this answer, it said that \$40 000 had been spent on a media campaign for a landlord incentive scheme and \$10 000 for communications. Does that mean only \$5000 was spent on the other initiatives? Does the Government think that was an appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars? It had extensive media coverage. I gave you some free media coverage. It might not have been in a positive light but people knew about it.

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Deputy Chair, the Tasmanian Housing Summit awareness program is a different program to the items at the summit. This is separate to what you are talking about.

Mr Willie - Can you clarify there is a separate budget for this?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Chair, I was pleased to see this line item was left open because we know there is a significant housing waitlist. When somebody has a medical condition, they need housing to manage that medical condition; they have all the appropriate paperwork from their medical support team and there is still no opportunity for them to be housed in more appropriate housing close to medical services. How is the department dealing with that issue? I am sure it is not unique to any area around Tasmania. It is well known very few rental properties are available and the social housing sector is exactly the same.

Madam CHAIR - I will allow you a little latitude here. It is off the topic of the line item left open for the purpose. If you cannot provide it -

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to medical conditions, that will determine the priority. If that person is deemed to be a higher priority, they will go up the list. They may be able to get private rental assistance. There is also a new supply under the Regional Supply Initiative, which is specifically targeted to the smaller towns and regions. It is all based on a needs category so the more you need it, the higher up the list you go.

Ms RATTRAY - I acknowledge a number of programs are in place and there is a priority list. My understanding is no houses are being built as yet under those initiatives in the priority list. If there is no accommodation, with all due respect, the initiatives are not operational as yet.

Are there any short-term solutions? I do not mean private rental because in a lot of places there are no private rentals. Are there any other short-term solutions for people who need to be closer to medical services?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Government understands this is a tough one but the regional supply will have a number of new units over the next 12 months, so that will help. Private rental assistance is the short-term solution, so that is used.

Mr WILLIE - If I could go back to my question for another clarification from the Government: the \$45 000 to advertise the Housing Summit initiatives was a separate budget to the landlord incentive scheme media campaign. Is the Government confirming that \$95 000 is being spent on advertising housing initiatives? If so, is there any other budgeted money for media campaigns on housing initiatives?

Mrs HISCUTT - The \$40 000 was for consultation, TV, print, social and digital media. The \$10 000 was for correspondence, forums and applicants, and the \$45 000 was part of summit-agreed actions on a range of initiatives to let Tasmanians know about those programs. That was at the request of the participants, who wanted people to know.

Mr WILLIE - The Government is confirming that it spent \$95 000 on media for housing initiatives. Are there any other budgeted items for media for housing initiatives that we do not know about?

Mrs Hiscutt - I do not know. I do not think so.

Mr WILLIE - I am asking the question. You should know.

Mrs HISCUTT - It seems that, yes, there possibly will be more. The Government uses media to let people know what is happening. That is how you do it. It could be in the normal course of

business all the time. For an example, there be an awareness program attached to HomeShare so that people know. It would be normal government business to let the public know what is going on.

Item agreed to.

Output group 4 agreed to.

Madam CHAIR - Before I move the division be agreed to, I will give the member for Rosevears the opportunity to ask his questions related to Output group 1, Children Services System Management. Do not make a habit of it.

1.1 Children Services System Management - reconsidered

Mr FINCH - Apologies again to the Council for not being ready to take up that opportunity.

My question to the minister at that time and during Estimates was to get some understanding of the education program at Ashley. My question was: how many FTEs or personnel were involved in the education program at Ashley?

The answer was that 10 personnel do the work at Ashley, which equated to 6.8 FTEs. Can the Leader apprise me of the type of education programs provided for the young people at Ashley?

I want to have some understanding about whether the programs taught, instituted and developed by the Education department are going to stand those young people in good stead when their time is served at Ashley and they go back into the community. Has the education program at Ashley left them in a good position? Will it stand them in good stead when they leave the program?

I realise some children are only there for a short time and some are there for a longer time, which may be more advantageous for them getting some understanding of a learning program or system. I would like to have some understanding of that set-up and how it works at Ashley and the work that those 6.8 FTEs get involved in.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is more a question for the Department of Education, but I can give the member a rough outline at the moment. If you are not satisfied, you might put a question on the Notice Paper.

Mr FINCH - Thank you.

Mrs HISCUTT - It is the Department of Education curriculum plus some vocational training, which could be something like carpentry or coffee making, for example. That is the sum of what I can give from the current advisers.

Madam CHAIR - The member for Rosevears might feel that if In school Education under the Department of Education is open still, it may be an appropriate time to re-pose those questions. I will leave that up to the House at the time.

Item agreed to.

Division 1 agreed to.

DIVISION 2

(Department of Education)

Output Group 1 Education

1.1 In school Education -

Mr DEAN - It has been pretty tough for us; many of the answers come back late, including some that came back at 9 o'clock this morning in another area.

We will need to proceed slowly in some of these areas so we can pick up those matters. The documents we received this morning were quite large. It has made it pretty tough for us.

During Estimates, I asked a question in relation to Newstead College. The question I asked is very clear on *Hansard*: what were the staffing levels at Newstead College during its peak period - in 2014, 2015 or thereabouts?

I reiterated the question in that process but I did not get the answer back. I am not quite sure that we have to accept some fault here in not putting the question in the right form when it was forwarded through. I accept some of that responsibility.

The question was: what were the staffing levels at Newstead during the peak period, and what is the staffing level at Newstead now? It is down to about half strength. The answer provided to the question about providing figures on anticipated staffing levels at Newstead College for the next three years was: 'Staff levels, particularly teachers numbers, are influenced by enrolment numbers.' Can I be given the answer to that question?

There were other questions asked in relation to achievements of students. I am not quite sure how this question was asked, but I will ask a question here now to see if it can be answered, and you might need to take this on notice. I asked the very same question last year in Estimates and it did not proceed any further, to my knowledge. Students who are assessed against the Australian Curriculum are given a rating from A to E. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority - ACARA - has work samples to assist teachers to identify work samples that are a C, for example, at standard. It also has work samples said to be above or below a C rating, but nothing to identify between an A and a B, or a D and an E. There are no assessment criteria, to my knowledge.

Madam CHAIR - This is outside the questions that were left open, so you will need to focus your question. We may have to put it on notice if we do not have the information.

Mr DEAN - Teachers make informed guesses on what constitutes an A, B, D or E. Many Australian states support their teachers by creating support materials that clearly articulate the differences between these ratings. Western Australia calls its documents 'judging standards'; New South Wales and Queensland have similar documents. Tasmania has nothing more than what ACARA provides.

Tasmanian teachers spend a day each year moderating work samples, and each year individual schools say how they distinguish between ratings. Often schools disagree with each other's processes, creating an education system where two students who complete the same standard of work could be assessed differently. Why does the Tasmanian Department of Education not create

support materials for Tasmanian teachers like other states to take the guess work out of assigning A to E ratings for students? Currently individual schools produce their own rubrics to support their teachers, which takes considerable time and does not ensure consistency between schools.

Madam CHAIR - That is outside the scope of what was left open. You have made your point. If you have other questions that relate to what is open, go ahead.

Mr DEAN - It is not a new question. The question was asked previously and the answers that came back have not been satisfactory in my opinion. I asked a question in relation to Newstead College and I am trying to think what other questions were answered. I need to ask more but we only get three calls.

Another question and, once again, the question I asked the Education department during Estimates is very clear in the *Hansard*. The question we put to the department following up that is not quite what was asked during the Estimates process. The question put to you was: provide information, if available, on the number of assaults or acts of aggression by teachers upon students for 2018 to date. The question was in fact about the acts of aggression or assaults against teachers by students during the financial year. The answer provided was, 'There have been no reported incidents in 2018 of violence, assault, by teachers against students.' I thought that might have been the case -

Through the Workplace Health and Safety Incident reporting system, there is one code of conduct investigation currently underway, related to an allegation of violence, assault by a teacher against a student.

What is the status of that - it is a serious matter - and when is it likely to be resolved?

Questions were asked about the extension school and senior secondary college enrolments and answers were provided by the department. I note the Ulverstone High School has two students enrolled at Claremont College and one student enrolled at Newstead College. Is that right? The document provided to us was called 'Extension School -

Madam CHAIR - Was this provided as part of the response from the Government?

Mr DEAN - I am trying to identify the document. The document is called 'Extension School and Senior Secondary College Enrolments'. This is part of the answer provided by the department relative to the question we asked. That document identifies the Ulverstone High School and it says, 'Claremont Senior Secondary College, two students, Newstead College, one.' Why do we have Ulverstone students enrolling - online, I suspect - at Claremont College and at Newstead College?

Mrs HISCUTT - Madam Chair, we will work our way through. The first question was about Newstead College. We only have figures on teaching services from March 2016. The headcount was 64 in 2016. It was 57 in March 2017, and 55 in March 2018. We do not have figures back to 2014 with us here.

We are talking about curriculum standards for A to B, D to E, the A to E rating. It is done on a statewide basis on moderation days. All work is moderated. Teachers bring samples of work and the work is moderated. In-school moderation and in-school professional learning concentrates on this, too. A range of online assessments, such as ACER PAT testing, are made available year round. Recently released itinerary and literacy and numeracy progressions from ACARA also assist.

Mr Dean - I foreshadow further questions on that.

Mrs HISCUTT - Your question on extension school and senior colleges - Ulverstone High with Claremont College and Newstead - that is all done online and it is because those colleges offer a particular course a child wants and that is the easiest way to do it.

With regard to assaults on teachers and students, the way you posed the question, you received the correct answer even though that was not what was intended.

Mr Dean - No, I didn't get the correct answer.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, you technically did. I think we have the answer here though.

From the OHS reporting system, there were 84 reported incidents of violence against teachers out of a total of 554 overall incidents reported.

Mr DEAN - Were there 84 incidents of a student acting violently in some way against a teacher?

Mrs Hiscutt - It is 84 assaults on teachers; it is not necessarily by the students.

Mr DEAN - I made this clear during the Estimates. I was talking about assaults or other aggressive actions by students against teachers. It has been brought to my attention it is happening fairly frequently. Of those incidences of violence against teachers, have there been any serious consequences? Are any of those teachers now not at work because of the violence committed against them? Are any teachers currently on sick leave as a result? What is happening in that area?

Madam CHAIR - Do you have any other questions with regard to the other matters?

Mr DEAN - My other question relates to the colleges and the Ulverstone students with the Claremont College, for instance. I take it the colleges have posted all the subjects they teach for all students throughout the state. Is that the way it is done? A student proceeding through to years 11 and 12 can make a choice to attend or to take that subject online. Is that the way it is done? If we have this difference, is it done because of the expertise and the quality of the teachers in these colleges in providing certain courses? Is that the process?

Mrs HISCUTT - There is a course handbook students can look at. Not every college offers every course. There are different specialist teachers at different places and different colleges specialise in different courses. If a particular student wants A, B or C, they would look at the handbook and say, 'Yes, that college offers what I want to do'. Therefore they enrol there online to do that particular course.

The figure of student assaults is not extrapolated from sick leave, other than to tell you that in March 2017 there was a figure of 500 and in March 2018 there was a figure of 447. This is the total workers compensation claims received. The figure is dropping. It is not specifically recorded that a violent incident led to sick leave. What is recorded is the injury as opposed to what caused the practice in the first place.

Mr Dean - What were the sorts of injuries?

Mrs HISCUTT - I can give you the body part that was reported. Does that help?

Mr Dean - Yes.

Mrs HISCUTT - Back - upper and lower - head or face, neck, shoulder, lower limbs, knees, upper limbs, trunk or abdomen, multiple, systemic, stress or other.

Ms SIEJKA - I had a couple of questions on notice in relation to this line item. Those answers have been now supplied but I want to raise the key data report.

It was quite disappointing and probably a little bit disrespectful to the Estimates committee that the minister gave a number of reasons why we could not have the key data report. Initially it was indicated we could probably have it, then it was said it was not printed and not available today, and then it was that it is not ready. It seemed there was no adequate reason other than the fact it was going to be tabled later in the week in the lower Chamber. I felt that was quite disrespectful to our Estimates committee. There appears to be no adequate reason why we could not have had the report in our committee. While we do have it now, I thought that was unnecessary, given we could have had it.

Mrs Hiscutt - Your comments are noted.

Ms SIEJKA - Thank you. We have it now. There seemed to be no adequate reason whatsoever. *Hansard* reflects my comments. I questioned it a number of times but 'It was not printed, it is not ready, it is not this, it is not that'. *Hansard* certainly says that, but we have it now.

I had other questions on notice around online study. Again this minister was one of the ministers who provided answers quite late in the piece.

The information will be of use when looking at extension schools and cross-enrolments and seeing that 87 students travel for 57 subjects. It will be interesting to know why they study online and how they are travelling. I note that information was not available. I think it would be good to collect this to see whether the school is supporting them to travel or whether they are travelling independently at their own expense. I am looking forward to when we start evaluating more holistically the effectiveness of the extension schools in terms of attainment and retention as that is part of the picture.

I received the answer to the other question which was to do with TASC. The data was available but it was extremely difficult to find. I appreciated having that data.

Mrs HISCUTT - Most of that is for noting, thank you.

For the record, I note that when the key data report was done, it was checked and a mistake was found so it had to be redone. There was a genuine effort made to get it. It was not corrected and ready to go until the last minute. They were scrambling behind the scenes.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Capital Investment Program -

Mr DEAN - During Estimates a number of questions were asked about Queechy High School and the funding provided to it. I specifically asked a question on whether the gymnasium and change rooms were going to be renovated from the moneys currently available. From the answers provided, it would seem they are not on the list. Have they already been brought up to a contemporary standard? If that is the case, I will sit down.

I asked the question because of the other funding there, and the funding still available, the \$2 million or so in the budget approved some three or four years ago. It seems there is nothing in there for those renovations.

When is there likely to be funding for the necessary changes to the gymnasium to ensure the people using it can feel confident about the cleanliness of the showers, that they are disease-free. People are avoiding the showers and the change rooms because of their condition. Could I be given some idea about what is happening there? If it has been done, that is great.

Mrs HISCUTT - Every year the Government asks all schools to put their wish lists forward. Out of that list, priority is given to the most needed. For the stage 1 works at Queechy High School, \$3 million was provided for the total refurbishment of Block C, to provide temporary learning areas. Works are 65 per cent completed and are expected to be fully completed in July 2018.

Stage 2 works: \$2 million was provided for the construction of new contemporary learning areas. Work commenced in June 2018. It is expected to be fully completed by February 2019.

With regard to your specific question, these proposed works are currently not funded. They are to be included in future capital works submissions from Queechy High.

Some of the school's wish list is being addressed. This one will be in due course. We cannot do everything at once.

Mr DEAN - The gymnasium and the change rooms were included in the original reports submitted on the matters that needed urgent attention within the Queechy High School. I have seen the report and I raised it previously.

For the benefit of the students and for the benefit of everybody using the facility, when is the money likely to be made available for renovations necessary to that part of Queechy High School?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is all subject to process and subject to budget delivery. It is included in the master plan. It is there. It will have to take its priority listing with other competing schools that think their gyms need work as well. It is a priority list.

Item agreed to.

Division 2 agreed to.

[12.45 p.m.]

DIVISION 3

(Department of Finance General)

Output group 3

Government Businesses

3.1 Sustainable Timber Tasmania -

Ms FORREST - Mr Deputy Chair, this question was answered late. For the benefit of other members, the question was: how much of the \$2 million was provided for firefighting and how much additional was needed? The answer was \$2 million spent and no additional funding was needed. I have no further questions.

Item agreed to.

3.4 Government Businesses -

Ms FORREST - Mr Deputy Chair, again these answers were provided somewhat late. I want to go to the answers provided yesterday. I am not being overly critical of Treasury or the Treasurer - there were a significant number of questions on the record and some of them were quite complex, mostly mine. I appreciate the amount of information provided by the Treasurer and I told him that when I saw him yesterday. It shows the degree of respect with which Treasury is treating our questions, which is acknowledged and noted.

This question is about the principal paid to Tasracing. I am not sure where that one is, sorry. I will come back to it when I find it.

The other question was about the borrowings for all government businesses. I found it somewhat interesting the Treasurer was not able to provide this across the table, particularly as the borrowings were noted in last year's budget as a \$111 million decrease and this time they were an over-\$1 billion increase, which is a significant turnaround. Some comment was made at Estimates about much of it being related to the new ferries in the out-years; from the information we received that is quite true. There is \$393 million in 2021 and \$673.6 million in 2022. One assumes they are entirely for the new TT-Line ferries.

An amount of \$25 million is being borrowed in 2020. Why is that \$25 million being borrowed there?

I put a couple of questions without notice through to the Leader's office over the weekend when we still did not have answers to these questions, because I want answers to these questions. We are getting some of those answers now but I will proceed with those questions, assuming we will get answers now.

My concern, which I continue to have, is the amount of debt being loaded onto some of our energy entities. The energy entities have taken the hit here - and I say 'hit' because I think it is. For example, the estimated outcome of TasNetworks' borrowings for 2018 is \$1.883 billion. This is a lot of money in borrowings. I am not sure what its gearing ratio is at the moment; maybe the Leader can advise me of that.

In 2019 the original budget was to be \$1.929 billion. By the time we get to 2022, TasNetworks will be borrowing \$2.08 billion, an increase of \$200 million in borrowings. When it is already heavily geared, this is a real challenge for it. I will be interested in the Auditor-General's comments on this when we hear from him at a later time.

The other entity taking a significant hit is Hydro Tasmania, which recently has not even been able to pay dividends; however, things have turned around because there has been a bit of rain. From the estimated outcome in 2018 of its borrowings, Hydro Tasmania's borrowings were \$700.9 million. By 2022, it will be \$719 million, about an additional \$18 million. This is not the total - the \$18 million is additional.

I raise this because it is a significant turnaround. There was not even a footnote to indicate what this turnaround related to. That is appalling. Some of us read the budget papers from cover to cover, including the footnotes. You look for the information there because it saves asking a few questions during the Estimates if the detail is there; it often is in the footnotes.

To re-pose the question: there is \$25 million in 2020 for TT-Line - what is the purpose of those borrowings? Why was there not a footnote to explain this? If the Treasurer knew that \$1.091 billion relates to the new ferries, that is fine. We know they are going to cost a lot of money, but be honest about it and tell us that TasNetworks is being loaded with another \$200 million-worth of debt over the forward Estimates.

My other question is in regard to Tasracing. I note information was provided that in 2017-18 Finance-General made a principal repayment of \$493 814 to Tasracing for costs associated with its borrowings from TASCORP. It is relevant we are paying this as taxpayers and we are paying the interest as well because that is the deal done with Tasracing. I hope we get to a point where we can see Tasracing requiring less taxpayer intervention because this continues to be a significant amount. I do not begrudge the fact Tasracing needs to upgrade its facilities and has to undertake a number of capital-intensive programs with its racing grounds and things like that, but we continue to fork out a lot of money for an industry that really should be paying its own way.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to the \$25 million, as far as I know it is for the new ships but that would be a question for TT-Line at GBE scrutiny time. The other questions about government business debts are also best asked at the GBE committees.

The Treasurer is currently considering a response to your questions without notice about government business debt and I will respond later in the week. Hopefully I will have answers on them very soon.

Ms FORREST - I will ask the questions again if I have TT-Line across the table from me in December, although I do not know I will. I am going to get an answer one way or another.

On the \$25 million in 2020 for TT-Line, the question is: when does the deposit need to be paid? This was a question that probably comes under 1.3, Shareholder Advice on Government Businesses, but it is relevant to this because it is relevant to the Budget. It is not relevant to GBEs entirely because we are looking at budget expenditure here - at how we spend taxpayers' money and how our government businesses fit into that. We are not just looking at the general government sector, we are looking at the whole state sector. In the whole state sector \$25 million is being borrowed by TT-Line in 2020. I want to know what it is for. I know the ferries are very expensive; I know they are because the big figures are the two out-years.

Mrs HISCUTT - The deposit will be paid once certain contract preconditions have been met by the company building them, FSG. The deposit amount has been fully hedged by TT-Line and the approximate equivalent in Australian dollars is \$140 million.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Output group 4

Miscellaneous

4.3 Miscellaneous -

Mr VALENTINE - Mr Deputy Chair, on the cycling strategy, I note in the response provided that there are a heck of a lot of mountain bike trails in the funding of \$3.1 million. It seems to be a bit thin on the ground given the escalation of cycling as a general activity for people in the community and as a conveyance. I am wondering whether there are ideas into the future looking at promoting by way of grant the more general cycling lanes. I can think of one between Taroom and Kingston, for instance, where there is a big safety issue. Is that in the sights of the cycling strategy?

I fully agree that mountain bike trails are very important for tourism and that anything we do in that respect will certainly pay dividends to the state through these grants. I am not knocking the grants; I am wondering whether general cycling infrastructure is also being considered for the future.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am sure there would be. That is perhaps something you might like to lobby for in your area. These decisions are our policy decisions for the future and we are always looking at ways of trying to get our people healthier, so I cannot see why any proposal that comes forward would not be considered.

With regards to this \$3.1 million, I would like to run through where the money is all going to. The Department of State Growth has advised it will be used for the following projects: Blue Derby MTB trails, \$400 000; Dial Range, \$275 100; Maydena MTB park stage 2, \$600 000; Meehan Range MTB park, \$13 750; Snug to Margate cycleway, \$84 189; St Helens MTB trail network, \$700 000; Wellington Park Foothills, \$154 800; Wild Mersey MTB trail stage 1, \$300 000; Oceana Road Cycling Championships \$37 500; and the Enduro World Series, \$215 000.

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

QUESTIONS

Roadworks - Launceston Traffic Options

Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.33 p.m.]

A number of reports over several years have identified the need for an eastern bypass or ring-road for Launceston, with the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources - GHD Pty

Ltd Launceston Traffic Study Summary Report of January 2014 identifying the preferred option of three distinct segments connected by existing roads -

- eastern bypass, between Hoblers Bridge Road and Henry Street
- inner ring road, between Henry Street and Forster Street
- new Tamar River bridge, between Forster Street and the West Tamar Highway.

Can the Leader advise, in view of the Government's election promise of a new Tamar River bridge, the 2014 GHD report and the increasing traffic issues in Launceston, whether the Government will discuss with the City of Launceston Council options for an eastern bypass and inner ring-road incorporating the new Tamar River bridge as a matter of northern importance and urgency? If not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Launceston for her question. The Tasmanian Government has committed to a broad vision for Launceston and the Tamar Valley. That vision includes a commitment to the City of Launceston's current priorities, which include \$40 million to expand the capacity of the Charles Street Bridge and undertaking upgrades to the local Invermay network to accommodate increased traffic to be generated by the UTAS relocation and commercial developments in the vicinity.

The Tasmanian Government is also committed to a feasibility study for a second Tamar River crossing. The minister recently met with the northern councils, including the City of Launceston, to discuss the establishment of a northern councils transport working group to identify and prioritise regional transport projects for the long term. The minister is sure matters such as the eastern bypass will be discussed at that forum.

Uber Drivers - Registration

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

[2.34 p.m.]

First, Leader, just build that roundabout at Mowbray.

My question relates to Uber drivers in Tasmania. Will the Leader please advise how many Uber drivers are registered in Tasmania and how many Uber drivers are registered in Hobart?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. As at 19 June 2018, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles had issued 624 ride-sourcing ancillary certificates to Uber drivers statewide. The Department of State Growth does not differentiate ride-sourcing ancillary certificates by location.

Report on Termination of Pregnancy - Publication of Submissions

Ms FORREST question to the LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.36 p.m.]

The Report on Termination of Pregnancy in response to a parliamentary notice of motion tabled on 3 July 2018 in the House of Assembly notes 28 stakeholders who were contacted for comment, either as individuals or private health practices.

Please provide all 28 submissions, comments or feedback provided that form the conclusions or advice received within the report.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. When preparing the report the department did not advise stakeholders that submissions would be published and, noting the sensitive nature of this topic, it does not intend to publish submissions.

Report on Termination of Pregnancy - Patient Travel Assistance Scheme

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.37 p.m.]

The Report on Termination of Pregnancy in response to a parliamentary notice of motion tabled on the 3 July 2018 in the House of Assembly states -

While the potential addition of a local private provider in the community was welcomed, there was concern about the affordability, long term viability and safety of such a service. Further, if the provider is at one site only, the need for intrastate travel was also identified as both a barrier for women and a cost to the Government.

The advice in the report states -

Where necessary and consistent with long-standing policy, PTAS should be provided to patients whose medical practitioner refers them to services interstate only for services that are unavailable in Tasmania. Once a private provider has been re-established in Hobart, PTAS should be provided in accordance with current policy to support the travel and accommodation of patients travelling intrastate.

- (1) As women from areas outside Hobart may need to travel for over five hours to access a service in Hobart, and noting that the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme - PTAS - financial support is claimed after meeting expenses, does the minister agree this creates an inequitable and discriminatory approach to access to health service for women who are financially disadvantaged and live in regional Tasmania?

- (2) As it can be easier for some women to travel to Melbourne in terms of time taken and family or other support, will there be reconsideration of PTAS support for intrastate travel if and when a Hobart-based private provider commences?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question.

- (1) The Patient Travel Assistance Scheme is designed to ensure equity of access for Tasmanians to specialist medical services by assisting eligible patients with transport and accommodation costs of accessing these medical services. This applies to a range of medical procedures only offered in Hobart or interstate, supporting equity of access. This is the purpose of PTAS.

To maximise the benefits of PTAS, the scheme is targeted to those most in need. The PTAS operational guidelines note that inability to pay the required patient contribution will not be used as a basis for refusing assistance to people who have been assessed as needing specialist medical treatment.

- (2) As noted in the report where necessary and consistent with longstanding policy PTAS should be provided to patients whose medical practitioner refers them to services interstate only for services that are unavailable in Tasmania. Once a private provider has been re-established in Hobart, PTAS should be provided in accordance with current policy to support the travel and accommodation for patients travelling intrastate.

It is not government policy to provide PTAS for services that are available in Tasmania. I note that previous PTAS was not available at all for surgical termination services whether the application was for intrastate or interstate travel.

Report on Termination of Pregnancy - Principles for Termination Services

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL Mrs HISCUTT

[2.39 p.m.]

The Report on Termination of Pregnancy in response to the parliamentary notice of motion tabled on 3 July 2018 states under 'Conclusions and advice to government' a number of principles emerged as necessary for a safe, effective and accessible surgical termination service for Tasmania.

- (1) How does the decision to only provide a publicly funded termination of pregnancy service in Hobart meet principle 1?

Patient-Centred. Services are shaped around the health needs of individual patients, their families and communities.

- (2) How does the decision to only fund a publicly funded termination of pregnancy service in Hobart meet principle 2?

Equitable. Equitable access to essential services for women recognising women as competent and conscientious decision makers and recognising a women's right

to exercise self-determination, sexual and reproductive freedom and sexual equality.

- (3) How does the decision to only provide a publicly funded termination of pregnancy service in Hobart meet principle 3?

Accessible: Equitable access to services, regardless of geographic location, where possible minimising the need for patients to travel for services.

- (4) How does the decision to only provide a publicly funded termination of pregnancy service in Hobart meet principle 4?

Affordable. Affordable services for all women regardless of their socioeconomic status.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. The report prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services provides a list of principles that emerged consistently through the consultation process undertaken by the department.

On consideration of the feedback from stakeholders, the following principles emerged consistently as being necessary for a safe, effective and accessible surgical termination of pregnancy service for Tasmanian women.

- Patient-centred. Services are shaped around the health needs of individual patients, their families and communities.
- Equitable. Equitable access to essential services for women, recognizing women as competent and conscientious decision makers and recognising a women's right to exercise self-determination, sexual and reproductive freedom and sexual equality.
- Accessible. Equitable access to services regardless of geographic location, where possible minimising the need for patients to travel for services.
- Affordable. Affordable services for all women regardless of their socioeconomic status.

In addition, the principles of timely, safe, appropriate, transparent, holistic, targeted, consistent and sustainable also emerged through consultation.

As the report states, the department was mindful of the principles when considering the advice provided in the report. This advice was, as summarised in the report, that -

the provision of adequate resourcing to deliver statewide surgical terminations in the public and/or private system is best provided through maintenance of the policy and funding position that has applied for over 10 years.

To be clear, this advice was reached with those aforementioned principles in mind.

I note that the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme is now available for this procedure and is a scheme designed to ensure equity of access for Tasmanians to specialist medical services by assisting eligible patients with the transport and accommodation costs of accessing these medical services.

Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.43 p.m.]

On 3 July 2018, the Minister for Health and Human Services stated in a media release titled 'Department of Health report on surgical termination services' -

The Department will also provide increased funding to the non-government Prescribed Health Services, and Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania, of \$40 000 each per annum over three years.

Great care was taken in the Reproductive Health (Access of Terminations) Act 2013 to ensure women who wished to receive information regarding all pregnancy options had access to services that provide information regarding the full range of pregnancy options.

If Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania, as a recipient of taxpayer funding, advertises its services, will it be required to inform women it has a conscientious objection to termination of pregnancy and cannot provide advice on all pregnancy options?

If taking calls or responding to drop-in clients, will it be required to inform women that it has a conscientious objection to termination of pregnancy and cannot provide advice on all pregnancy options?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. Pregnancy Counselling and Support Tasmania has been a recipient of taxpayer funding for decades and there are no plans to change the terms of its funding agreement. PCST provides support to women and families who seek it regardless of their circumstances, including women who have had abortions.

Christ Church, Low Head - Return of Grant

Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.45 p.m.]

I have received a response from the Treasurer on this matter that I would like to put on the public record even though it came after I had sent the question in. With regard to the \$20 000 granted in the Consolidated Fund Appropriation (Supplementary Appropriation for 2017-18) Bill 2018 to the historic Christ Church at Low Head for urgent repairs, and given that a decision on

whether this church will be sold will not be made until November this year, can the Treasurer please advise -

- (1) Should the church be listed for sale, will the Anglican Church be required to return the \$20 000 granted out of the sale proceeds to the state?
- (2) If Christ Church is sold and the Anglican Church is not required to return the \$20 000 granted out of the sale proceeds to the state, can you advise why?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Launceston for her question.

- (1) The Treasurer sought advice on this matter from the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Jacqui Petrusma, as the administration of this election commitment falls within her portfolio responsibilities. The member may be aware a preliminary list of properties to be sold was prepared for submission by the Anglican Synod and released in early May 2018. After confirming the church was not included in the preliminary list, Mrs Petrusma advised that the Department of Communities, Sport and Recreation had prepared a grant agreement with the Trustees of the Diocese of the Anglican Church as they were the responsible legal entity. The grant agreement was signed on 23 May 2018 and payment of the grant was made on 24 May 2018.
- (2) In early June 2018, the Synod approved an amended list of properties to be sold, which included the church. However, the Synod advised the list will not be formalised until later in 2018. Mrs Petrusma has requested that CSR discuss the matter with the trustees and examine options for ensuring the Crown's interests are protected in the event the funds are expended and the church is sold. This may include varying the agreement to specifically provide for the return of the funds in those circumstances, if required.

Report on Termination of Pregnancy - Local Private Providers - Government Support

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.47 p.m.]

The Report on Termination of Pregnancy in response to the parliamentary notice of motion tabled on 3 July 2018 in the House of Assembly states -

While the potential addition of a new local private provider in the community was welcomed there was concern about the affordability, long term viability and the safety of such as service. Further, if the provider is at one site only the need for intrastate travel was also identified as both a barrier for women and a cost to the Government.

The advice in the report states -

Appropriately licensed private providers should continue to be supported to provide choice and access when it is not available in the public system and, in

order to ensure access to that alternative consideration should be given to providing financial support to a provider on appropriate terms.

- (1) To promote equity of access to a health service for all Tasmanian women and to prevent a discriminatory approach to this service delivery, will the Government also financially support local private providers, such as private hospitals in Burnie and Launceston, to provide surgical termination of pregnancy services to women?
- (2) If not, why not and how can this service be considered equitable access to a legal reproductive health service for all Tasmanian women, especially those who are financially disadvantaged, because PTAS support is paid following the procedure and many women cannot afford the up-front costs?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question.

- (1) As announced on Tuesday 3 July 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services has reached an in-principle five-year agreement for a new private provider to deliver low-cost surgical termination of pregnancy services in Tasmania. This service will commence by October this year, contingent on finalisation of the terms of the agreement and licensing and accreditation requirements. I am advised that, like many medical services, a minimum volume of procedures is required to provide a safe and viable service. When the previous provider of surgical termination services ceased to operate in Tasmania, they cited diminishing market demand as a factor for their decision. There are lower numbers of surgical terminations occurring in Tasmania following the increased take-up of medical terminations and the service may only be viable and able to operate safely in one location. I am advised the department will continue to monitor the issue.
- (2) Regarding access, the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme will be available for intrastate travel to the Hobart-based service. PTAS is designed to ensure equity of access for Tasmanians to specialist medical services by assisting eligible patients with the transport and accommodation costs of accessing the medical service. This applies to a range of medical procedures only offered in Hobart or interstate, supporting equity of access. The scheme is targeted to those most in need to maximise the benefits of PTAS. The PTAS operational guidelines note inability to pay the required patient contribution will not be used as a basis for refusing assistance to people who have been assessed as needing specialist medical treatment.

Plumbers and Electricians - Professional Development Event, Launceston

Ms ARMITAGE question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.51 p.m.]

With regard to the one-day compulsory professional development event for plumbers and electricians to be held in Launceston on 7 August 2018, can the Leader advise -

- (1) Why has registration closed on this important event, given it is still one month out from the event?

- (2) If registration has closed due to having reached the maximum number of registrations for the event, why has a larger venue not been sought?
- (3) If a larger venue is not preferred, why has a further day not been organised for this event?
- (4) Given the unprecedented demand for this important course, will the Government hold a second full-day course in August or seek a larger venue?
- (5) If not, given the importance to the industry of CPD, why?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Launceston for her question.

- (1) The venue is at full capacity, with 415 participants already registered.
- (2) Given the nature of the event - professional development - the ideal number of attendees is fewer than 300. Participant numbers have already been stretched to 415 to maximise learning opportunities. It is not considered in the best interests of participants to increase this further.
- (3) Most presenters are external to the department, including from other parts of the state and country. It is not considered feasible to request an additional day or days, given the time and travel commitments already contributed by presenters, free of cost.
- (4) Additional days will be scheduled. Technology to make content and live course delivery available online will also be investigated. An additional day in August is not under active consideration at present.
- (5) Again, additional days will be scheduled. The event is part of a large number of options for licensees to achieve their CPD requirements. Consumer, Building and Occupational Services - CBOS - also maintains a calendar of events offered by itself and industry that provides flexibility in the way CPD can be achieved.

Burnie Antenatal Clinic - Funding - Upgrade and Remodel

Ms FORREST question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT

[2.53 p.m.]

Regarding the funding to upgrade and remodel the antenatal clinic in Burnie -

- (1) What matters will be consulted on and what consultation process will be undertaken?
- (2) Who will be consulted?
- (3) How will members of the public and/or midwives utilising this service be able to engage in consultation?
- (4) What is the time frame for consultation?

- (5) What are the desired outcomes relating to the location and services provided through the antenatal care period for north-west women?
- (6) What outreach services will be provided as part of this service?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. With regard to the \$2.1 million purpose-built antenatal clinic at the North West Regional Hospital and broader maternity services across the north-west coast, I speak for all of us when I say we are so very proud and grateful for the contribution of the nurses and midwives who continue to serve the women, families and communities of the north-west. These groups are exactly why the Government took this promise to the election - to deliver a better facility as part of the integrated north-west birthing service. This state-of-the-art facility will better support mums, babies and the dedicated staff who operate the service.

(1) to (6)

As per the election commitment, we will closely work with the staff to locate the best site and to design for the facility, which is expected to be complete by mid-2020. Appointing a consulting architect is the next milestone of this project and once this is completed, there will be an appropriate consultation process, including with clinicians, nurses and midwives.

Discussions about exactly how the public can contribute to this process will be undertaken once the consulting architect has been appointed. There will be no changes to the current model of care provided. The new facility will provide an environment that is conducive to the natural growth of the service, including midwifery group practice; an extended midwifery service, including lactation support; and counselling and support services.

The new facility will enhance the current ability to provide services for all aspects of antenatal and postnatal support, including increased space for assessment services, which will include an early pregnancy assessment service for women with bleeding or other problems associated with early pregnancy issues. Improvements to office space, consulting rooms and waiting rooms, as well as educational and meeting rooms, will enable all midwifery and obstetrics staff to ensure they are supported to work within up-to-date, evidence-based standards. The project team will include midwifery and obstetrics staff, and consumers.

CONSOLIDATED FUND APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

In Committee

Resumed from above.

[2.57 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT - Before the break, I was discussing the \$3.1 million allocated to the Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Fund and where it will be spent. There is \$200 000 for the Tour of Tasmania international upgrade, and \$100 000 for the Fairway Park Ulverstone upgrade.

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, I asked a number of questions regarding the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund under this output group. I appreciate the information provided. I have one further question. I note with regard to the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund and the balance expected to be in the fund, the answer stated that the general government cash and deposits balance at 30 June 2022 is forecast to be \$876.6 million. The value of investments is estimated to be \$193.9 million. Tabled together, this represents a total of \$1070.5 million. The overnight borrowing transactions at 30 June 2022 is forecast to be \$819 million. The balance of cash and deposits and investments at 30 June 2022, excluding the overnight borrowings, is estimated to be \$251.5 million.

Relating to the amount of cash backing at 30 June 2022, as I have just read, I note the Treasurer included investments of \$193.9 million. I am just interested in what those investments are. If these investments are investments that cannot be used for any other purpose, I am not sure why they would be included in assessing this balance. I think there needs to be some more information about that. If it is impossible for the Treasurer to get that, I can provide it in another forum, but I thought this information about what investments there are would be fairly readily available.

Mrs HISCUTT - It seems that a majority of all investments are concessional loan schemes from State Growth. We do not have exactly what is here because it is not this department. It would probably go to things like farm finance concessions or drought relief concessions. If you wanted something more specific, you might have to put it on the Notice Paper and we could look for a more thorough answer from State Growth.

Item agreed to.

Grants and Subsidies -

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, this was information we were waiting for. We did get a reasonable breakdown and it is important that this information is provided. Unless we table this information, it is not actually recorded as part of the public record. I would like the Deputy Chair's guidance on whether I can seek leave to table all the Treasurer's answers. A lot of information here is relevant. If we do not do it, it is not on the public record. It is not tabled as part of our report. I am happy to read the whole 14 pages, except for the chart on the back that I cannot read even with my glasses on.

Mrs Hiscutt - For clarification, are you talking about the report from the Treasury?

Ms FORREST - No, I am talking about the response to all the answers to questions. Normally we would get these in the *Hansard*, but we did not because the Treasurer was unable to answer them at the time.

Madam DEPUTY CHAIR - They are normally tabled when the report is tabled. The member is right that they have not been tabled because they were not available when the reports were tabled. I think that is a reasonable request.

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, I seek leave for them to be tabled.

Leave granted.

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, tabling the document has save me reading out these large numbers and figures. The information was helpful and I appreciate it, but it is important to have on the public record. I appreciate members' forbearance. A number of responses were not received in time to be included in the reports, which has been a problem this year.

Mr VALENTINE - In looking at the table presented, there is an item called 'Accelerated Local Government Capital Program'. I note in the Premier's Budget Speech, it has gone so well it is being extended statewide to the tune of \$60 million. What will be the upper limit for councils that apply for grants or funding under the program? It is \$2.714 million in total, but I noticed the Premier's Budget Speech talks about \$60 million having been provided for statewide applications as opposed to the north and the north-west for which it seemed it was originally intended.

Mrs HISCUTT - The program is closed, but the total provided was \$65.522 million. I can read the breakdown. You might be interested.

Mr Valentine - It's interesting that it's closed. Is it statewide?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, the statewide was \$16.425 million.

Mr Valentine - Can we table that?

Mrs HISCUTT - We will take it on notice and the Treasurer will respond.

Mr Valentine - Thank you.

Item agreed to.

Output group 4 agreed to.

Division 3 agreed to.

DIVISION 4

(Department of Health)

Output group 2

Tasmanian Health Service

2.1 Admitted Services -

Ms LOVELL - My question in this line item was to the number of times or occasions on which the Royal Hobart Hospital and the Launceston General Hospital escalated to the highest escalation level in their plans, and how many days they operated at the second highest level in their escalation plans. The answers we received from the minister were that escalation levels are not performance measures. They were put in place to support hospital staff with additional resources in periods of high demand. As such, it is not possible to accurately provide this information as data are only sampled at fixed intervals during the day and are not recorded when an escalation level changes. Accordingly, escalation levels may fluctuate between these recording periods.

To clarify, I am not suggesting they are performance measures or it is in any way an indication of the enormous effort the staff in the hospitals put in. They act as an indicator of how the hospitals

are coping with demand, particularly when we see fairly regular escalations to the highest level. I have follow-up questions to this answer, through the Leader: How often is this sampling done? Is the data collected and recorded? If so, are we able to have some information on how many times data has been recorded at each level of the escalation plan at each of the hospitals?

Mrs HISCUTT - There seem to be data flow meetings at 8 a.m. but it is different at each hospital. We do not have that information at hand. It may be provided if you would like to put that question on notice.

Ms Lovell - Thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - To the cost of locums per specialty on page 3 of the answer we received. We have the different specialties but it is not listed by hospital. Can that breakdown be provided?

Mrs HISCUTT - Because of the breakdown of the specialists and which hospitals they are at, this information is not easily extracted. They think it is possible to provide it, but it would need more time. If you would put that request through the usual process with questions on notice, that would be good.

Item agreed to.

2.3 Emergency Department Services -

Ms FORREST - We know emergency departments remain under pressure besides ambulance ramping, where it is usual to get a good run or lack of, however you look at it. The real concern for many people with EDs is the time and number of mental health patients waiting in EDs.

We are provided with information showing how many and for how long mental health patients waiting in the EDs - an extraordinary number of patients waiting.

In the Royal Hobart Hospital, for example, there were 2539 presentations that were waiting. I assume that means they were waiting. That was the question, so I assume that is what it answers, rather than being seen and admitted or being seen and discharged.

At the Royal, 266 minutes is over four hours. At the LGH, there were 1489 presentations with 293 minutes waiting time - that is well over four hours. There were shorter waits in the Mersey and the North West Regional Hospital, but when you consider the Mersey does not even have an acute mental health facility, it is only at North West Regional, if you add those two together, you get 960 presentations. If they need admission, they have to transfer from either the Mersey Hospital through to the Burnie hospital or to Launceston, depending on where they may get a bed.

We are still seeing a huge problem here for people. It is a most inappropriate clinical setting for a person with mental health problems, significant mental ill health, who is waiting for admission. It is disturbing to get that information.

We asked: what was the longest period a mental health patient had waited in any ED? The answer is extraordinary. The Royal Hobart Hospital maximum wait time was 8503 minutes. The member for Rumney might have worked out how many hours that is.

Ms Lovell - It is almost six days.

Ms FORREST - Almost six days - in a totally inappropriate clinical setting for a person with an acute mental illness. Not only are they a danger to themselves and potentially others, but they are a danger to the other patients and the staff being able to undertake their job.

We have the information we asked for in this respect, but the answer is totally unacceptable. I would like to understand how the Government is going to address this. It is not good enough.

Then we see one of the reasons - and we will come to this in another output group - is that patients cannot be admitted to the acute psychiatry ward because there are no beds there. Why are there no beds? Because there is nowhere for those people to go, even though they may be ready for discharge or into a less acute setting, but there is not the adequate support in the community. We will get to that in another section. It is extraordinary and totally unacceptable.

Mrs Hiscutt - To clarify the meaning of presentations: presentation means people who turn up to hospital. It is not a waiting period.

Ms FORREST - I understand that. They are mental health patients, though.

Mrs HISCUTT - In answer to your question, the Government has a strong commitment to improving bed access for those who need acute care. The Budget commences our \$95 million plan to build a better mental health system, including 25 new mental health beds and specialist inpatient child and adolescent mental health facilities, for the first time ever.

We also have invested significantly in community-based support with \$11.4 million for individual packages of care and more funding for organisations such as Rural Alive and Well.

We know there is currently demand pressure, but these initiatives will all help to reduce hospitalisations and improve patient flow at our hospitals.

Ms LOVELL - My question was: what is the longest period a mental health patient has been waiting in any emergency department? The member for Murchison touched on this. The maximum wait time in emergency at the Royal Hobart Hospital on 31 March 2018 was 8503 minutes, almost six days. You can only imagine this happens at a crisis point but it is frankly unacceptable and concerning when someone waits in emergency for six days because there are no beds for them in the hospital.

I appreciate what the Leader said about the mental health plan and the policy commitments the Government took to the election. It is very concerning that the majority of that money is not being delivered in this Budget; in fact, most of those measures will not come into play until at least 2019-20. There is very little in the immediate and short term to alleviate this issue. My question to follow on from this answer is: when will the data for the full financial year be available or is that available now? Can we find out what the maximum wait during this whole financial year was for mental health presentations to the four hospitals? This is so we can see whether there has been a decrease or increase on that maximum wait time since the end of March.

Mrs HISCUTT - Because of the timing of the end of financial year and the department being very busy with Estimates, those figures have to be reconciled. They will not be available for perhaps another four weeks. You might have to put your question in on questions upon notice because I cannot provide an answer in 24 hours.

Ms Lovell - I can put it on notice.

Item agreed to.

2.5 Statewide and Mental Health Services -

Ms FORREST - I thought my question on the emergency department was a very simple one and I had a very simple answer. What are the waiting times to see a community psychiatrist by region? The answer: this information is not available. How can this information not be available? We talk about improving mental health services, making access to mental health, in particularly acute inpatient mental health, easier. The only way to do that is to clear out beds and provide a reasonable level of community mental health support. I know people are waiting way too long to see a psychiatrist. Why can we not get the waiting times? Why is this information not available? Why is it not being collected?

I cannot believe we do not have this information. This is part of the problem with access to mental health services. If we cannot have a whole-of-mental-health approach here, where patients at their lowest point turn up at the DEM - which is where they generally end up, often in the company of police, and often in a distressed state - seeking admission, some of them may end up being discharged. Regardless of whether they are discharged then from the DEM or admitted eventually and then subsequently discharged, they need to have access to community psychiatry.

It is about prevention of exacerbation of acute mental illness. It is about making sure that the majority of people with mental illness should be cared for in the community. It is only a small percentage who actually have such acute mental illness that they require admission. Thankfully that is generally the case, but when there is not adequate access to community psychiatrists and other support, they end up rotating back through the system, putting pressure on our DEMs in a most inappropriate clinical setting, and round and round they go. A constituent of mine, some years ago, ended up in the Wilfred Lopes Centre before he received the support he needed. Finally he did and now he is a well man. It should not have to come to that. Unless we can be assured we have adequate community psychiatric services and support, we are going to see this continue. We cannot look at this in isolation.

The media rang me about this issue not long ago and I said, 'You can't just look at what is happening in the DEM; you can't just look at what is happening in the acute mental health ward - you have to look at the whole picture.' The majority of patients with mental health issues should be in the community, being cared for in the community. That the most therapeutic and appropriate place for them. I do not know whether they can even see a psychiatrist. It is disgraceful.

Mrs HISCUTT - The patients are referred to the community clinic. They are then triaged and given a case manager. They are given an appointment with the community mental health person that reflects their urgency. There is currently no waiting list.

Ms FORREST - Leader, is that no waiting list to see the mental health worker who triages them or is that no waiting list to see a community psychiatrist? If that is the case, why were we not given that information? It is not what I am hearing around the traps, I can tell you that.

Mrs HISCUTT - It appears that there is no wait to be seen at the community clinic, but what happens after that is a different story. It is not necessarily a medical appointment but they are seen by the community clinic with the appropriate level of triaging.

Ms FORREST - I understand that. You would not send them out of the hospital if you could not do that - I hope they would not be. The question was quite specific: what is the waiting time to see a community psychiatrist? I know a range of other people provide services but there are people who need to be supervised by a psychiatrist based in the community. I hope the Minister for Health can write to me at a later time and explain what the waiting time is to see a community psychiatrist. I hope like hell people would not have to wait to be assessed when they leave an acute health setting. That would be appalling.

I am interested in wrapping services around people to keep them well and in the community; and stopping them recycling through the DEM and the acute health centre, where we possibly can. I know sometimes you cannot. Some people will have an acute exacerbation that requires readmission. But for the majority, if we provide really high-quality care in the community, they will not be back. They will be much more stable and able to be cared for in the community.

I ask the Leader to undertake to get the Health minister to respond to this issue and identify what the waiting time is to see a psychiatrist. Once this person is back in the community, discharged from the acute health setting, is there a wait? I know they are potentially seeing other people, but when they need psychiatric follow-up, what is the wait?

Mrs HISCUTT - Some information will be formulated and sent to you in due course. In the meantime, there has been significant improvement in the seven-day follow-up, post-discharge. In 2013-14, the total was 59.9 per cent. In 2017-18, it was now 81.7 per cent follow-up.

Ms FORREST - It should be 100 per cent. Anyway, we will get there.

Item agreed to.

Output group 2 agreed to.

Division 4 agreed to.

DIVISION 5

(Department of Justice)

Output Group 1

Administration of Justice

1.1 Supreme Court Services -

Mr DEAN - During Estimates a question was asked in relation to matters going before the Supreme Court where mandatory sentencing was a part of that process. The answer provided from the department was that only one case had gone to the Supreme Court during that period and the offender in that instance pleaded guilty to the charge.

Was there any hold-up in the process? Was the plea of guilty entered at the first available time? Were any exceptional circumstances put forward? Was the mandatory sentencing legislation as it is imposed directly on that person?

Mrs HISCUTT - The DPP is not here. He is the person who can answer your specific questions about the case. The alternative is to put that question on notice. We do not have the information available here.

Mr DEAN - This creates a difficult position for us inasmuch as we asked a question during Estimates which could not be answered and was taken on notice. We were then provided with the answer. Had we been given the answer during Estimates, I would have followed it up with these questions.

We are now being asked to put something on notice that identifies with the appropriation bills and we will be asked to deal with these bills later today or tomorrow. It creates a concern. I am wondering whether the matter can be taken on notice now and perhaps an answer might be forthcoming prior to the appropriation bills being dealt with. Is that a way to do it? I do not want to hold up proceedings. It places me at a disadvantage. Had that question been answered, we would not have reached this point today. Is it possible the answer can come back prior to the completion of the appropriation bills and the third reading?

Mrs Hiscutt - I am advised the questions you are asking now are not fiscal questions of the bills at hand.

Mr DEAN - No, they are not.

Mrs Hiscutt - Your question can be answered, but I doubt very much it can be provided today because it is more of a policy question as opposed to a financial question.

Mr DEAN - I accept that. Are you saying I need to put it on notice? You have the question now?

Mrs Hiscutt - I have lots of questions to answer. Could you please put it on notice?

Mr DEAN - I will consider it and I will put it on notice if you cannot come back with the answer.

Item agreed to.

1.2 Magisterial Court Services -

Mr DEAN - A question was asked in relation to magisterial court services. I asked if the number of cases brought before the Magistrates Court after 30 June 2017 could be provided. The answer was that the Magistrates Court has received 32 247 lodgements in the 2017-18 year to date. Do the 32 247 lodgements only relate to matters in the criminal jurisdiction rather than the coronial, children's and other courts?

The lodgements were similar to those of the previous year; there has been a slight decrease. What is going to happen that is different to what happens in the Magistrates Court to address the backlog discussed openly during the Estimates process? Are we going to continue to see this blowout year in, year out until it reaches a stage that it becomes unmanageable and is clearly impacting on those people who are a part of that process?

Mrs HISCUTT - For the 2017-18 year to date, the Magistrates Court has received 32 247 lodgements, as you stated. These are made up of lodgements in the criminal and civil jurisdictions and of applications. The applications are things such as family violence, restraint orders, child protection and other, for bail or something similar.

We are looking for the backlog of lodgements and what we are doing about that. The Magistrates Court is employing the following strategies to reduce the backlog: the continued widespread use of mediation in general civil restraint and some family violence orders -

Mr Dean - That seems to be happening all the time and it has not had any impact.

Mrs HISCUTT - the appointment of Magistrate Kenneth Stanton, who commenced in June 2017, bringing the total to 14.8 magistrates and filling the vacancy created 12 months earlier by the appointment of Justice Brett, formerly chief magistrate, to the Supreme Court before Magistrate Stanton's appointment; the three-month appointment of temporary magistrate Mr Peter Dixon to assist with the workload in the north; the continuation of the duty lawyer scheme in the Magistrates Court, providing legal assistance to defendants who would otherwise be unrepresented, which is designed to assist with the efficiency of the court; the development of new legislation designed to modernise and streamline the processes of the Magistrates Court, criminal and general division; the implementation of recommendations in the review of the Magistrates Court carried out by KPMG with particular reference to improving finalisations, clearance rates, attendances and backlog indicators; and a focus on improvements to information technology through Justice Connect, funded from the Government's digital transformation strategy.

Mr DEAN - What are the developments in legislation that will assist in the streamlining of the processes in this court? You are talking about legislation -you must know what it is.

Mrs HISCUTT - The Magistrates Court (Criminal and General Division) Bill 2018 will establish a high-level framework for the criminal and general jurisdiction of the magistrates. It will modernise language and introduce new practices and processes.

Mr DEAN - I hear what you say but I fail to see how that will speed up the processes within this court and create a real decrease in the backlog we are seeing, a backlog that is increasing, year in, year out. If I can be convinced by your answer, you might be able to identify where that is going to assist in dealing with these matters much quicker than they are now.

Mrs HISCUTT - This is only one of a range of measures the Government reacts to from time to time. We will concentrate on this one for now. This bill establishes the high-level framework for the criminal and general jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court. The bill establishes the criminal and general division of the court and clarifies the role of magistrates, bench justice and authorised justice. It provides a new framework for the disclosure of prosecution evidence in summary proceedings, gives a specific statutory basis to case management and sentence indication powers, and includes a detailed scheme for electing to have prescribed indictable offences dealt with summarily. The bill also increases the property value threshold and the bill is currently being formulated.

Item agreed to.

1.4 Support and Compensation for Victims of Crime -

Ms RATTRAY - The value of victims of crime compensation levies collected by MPES as at 27 June was \$293 370. How much of that \$293 370 has been provided to those victims of crime?

My understanding is that in the past it took quite some time for the victims to be provided with that compensation.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am sorry to tell the member that for the end of the financial year those figures have not been collated yet. They can be collated but not for at least another four weeks, so there will be an answer but I cannot provide it today. You can put it on the Notice Paper if you like. We are going to be busy next sitting.

Ms RATTRAY - In that case, given I will need to put that into the system, I will also be putting into the system a question about the length of time it is taking for victims of crime to receive their compensation.

Item agreed to.

1.5 Legal Aid -

Ms RATTRAY - Again, this is an area where we received the advice through the process and this came in on time. We asked for the number of applications to Legal Aid that were refused. There were 4764 applications approved, which was 89 per cent of the total applications, and 583 applications were refused, which was 11 per cent. What were the reasons behind that? What is the general reason someone is refused, given 583 Legal Aid applications were refused in the last financial year?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Legal Aid website has a set of guidelines you have to fit into to become eligible for Legal Aid. It could be that your income might be too high or your assets might be too great, or things like that. There is a full list on the website if you wish to have a look.

Ms RATTRAY - Does it break down what the general reason is? Obviously you must fit the criteria but what is the general rule? If people understand that, they will not apply and it will be a lot less work for people to go through the assessment process. If 583 people are declined support, that is a lot of applications where someone had to work out whether people fit the criteria, so perhaps people are applying when they should not be. More work probably needs to be done on that.

Mrs HISCUTT - I do not have the answer here, but it can be provided. Again, it is the end of financial year.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output group 3 Corrections and Enforcement

3.1 Prison Services -

Ms SIEJKA - I appreciate that my question has now been answered, but it would have been good to have some of that data during Estimates. I understood a number of people were not able to be granted parole because of their housing situation. Having such a large number of people each year not being granted parole and needing to stay in the system seems an unnecessary strain on the prison budget. What is being done to reduce the impact on the budget? There is a new program

but 15 is a lot of people needing to stay in prison because of a lack of housing options, particularly with our housing crisis. What sort of impact is this having on the budget and what is being done about that?

Mrs HISCUTT - The Government has prioritised and explored ways to improve access to housing for prisoners returning to the community following imprisonment and, as part of the 2017-18 Budget, has committed funding to provide assistance for transitional accommodation for prisoners. In January 2018 the Department of Justice and the Salvation Army finalised an agreement for delivery of Beyond the Wire, a specialist throughcare reintegration program. The purpose of this program is to offer a multi-partner throughcare service for high- and complex-needs prisoners exiting prison who have chronic accommodation support needs. This cohort of offenders has a history of prior convictions and relapse, often returning to prison following release into the community without appropriate accommodation and specialist support. The program will provide prisoners exiting prison with access to case management, service coordination and planning with an initial prerelease focus leading to seamless throughcare to post-release and graduation from the service.

The program has resulted in a collaboration between a number of non-government organisations to provide a statewide service with the Salvation Army acting as lead agency. It will provide access to a broad range of services provided by each organisation: Anglicare, CatholicCare, Colony 47, Hobart City Mission and Salvation Army Tasmania. The term of the agreement is from January 2018 to 31 December 2021.

Ex-offenders leaving prison and requiring housing assistance also continue to receive support through Housing Connect, a one-stop shop for all Tasmanians in need of housing assistance. The Department of Justice and Housing Tasmania have discussed opportunities to improve and streamline the reintegration of prisoners to the community, resulting in the introduction of a number of policy changes to enhance referrals, prerelease assessments by Housing Connect, housing suitability assessments for parole applicants and changes to the prisoners' core day when required. Specifically, all prisoners may now request a housing needs assessment through Housing Connect up to 30 weeks before their estimated release date.

Mr DEAN - Of those 15 inmates who were refused parole for the housing issues that we were told about, what is the position of those 15 persons now? Will they be considered for parole again in some other circumstance, or will they not be considered for parole at all until their housing situation is confirmed? How long do they now hang around in this circumstance?

It would seem that the only reason these 15 people have not been given parole is because of their housing situation. Maybe that question could be answered as well. If that is the only reason they remain incarcerated, that is of concern.

Mrs HISCUTT - These particular 15 applicants can re-lodge an application three months later. Refusal may be for a number of reasons. It could be housing, not on its own, but could be one of these issues. It is up to the Parole Board to look at it.

Ms Siejka - The response from the minister says it was due to housing.

Madam CHAIR - To me the question was quite specific: 'Information on prisoners being unable to access parole due to lack of housing.'

Mrs HISCUTT - It could be the case a house was available but the Parole Board might decide it is not a suitable house. It could be the only availability they have is with other offenders and the Parole Board might decide they do not want them there. They may say that housing is the issue. The Parole Board looks at all this sort of stuff. It would depend on the issues associated with it. It could be the primary reason, but it could be that the available residence houses other people they do not want them associating with for fear of reoffending.

Mr DEAN - The point has been made very clearly that these 15 people were not given parole simply because of housing. You threw in that there might have been other reasons as well, but they, we know now, do not apply in this case. These 15 people were identified as suitable for parole. That question has been answered - it is only a housing issue. Why would they need to remain in prison for another three months if they came up with a suitable housing option?

I realise that once you are refused parole, you have to wait three months. In this case, they were refused on the basis of one point only. Is it fair and reasonable that because of that one reason they remain incarcerated for a further three months when they may now be able to come up with a suitable home? Is that not in their best interests? To be paroled at the first opportunity if they meet all the criteria? I would have thought so.

Mrs Hiscutt - You are saying within the three-month turnaround?

Mr DEAN - That is right, within the three months. If any one of them were to find other accommodation that is suitable, why can they not come back? I am surprised that prisoners' advocacy has not taken up this matter.

Mrs HISCUTT - If the application is adjourned sine die and something comes up, yes, that can happen.

Mr Dean - At any time within the three months?

Mrs HISCUTT - As long as the Parole Board adjourns the application sine die. Yes, that can come up.

Mr Dean - In each of these cases the matter has been adjourned sine die. Each of these 15 cases has been adjourned sine die due to housing issues. So it has been adjourned sine die.

Mrs HISCUTT - You would presume that if something suitable comes up, that would be discussed.

Mr Dean - So any one of these 15 can do that?

Mrs HISCUTT - As long as that is the criterion and as long as any house put forward is acceptable by the board.

Ms SIEJKA - I understand that the Beyond the Wire program is going to be up and running to assist people in terms of a reintegration program. As we all know and have discussed, the housing market is in crisis mode so what is being done to assist these 15 people? They could be there for quite some time trying to find a suitable housing option. I know Housing Connect exists but there are people who have been waiting 72 weeks to find a suitable house. For people who have been in

prison - and they are, obviously, not always the best candidates for a rental property - what is being done to assist them?

Mrs HISCUTT - This particular program, Beyond the Wire, is specifically designed for this. That is for them.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Output group 1
Administration of Justice

1.10 Workers Rehabilitation and compensation tribunal

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you very much for the information provided. I note in the table under ADT, page 2 of the response, that there is greater than 12 months. There are 23. Eight referrals in this category belong to one complainant and they have been stayed by order of the former chair. Will that case ever be heard or is it something that simply is finished?

Mrs HISCUTT - It appears your question is not hosted by this session. I am advised it does not sit under the Minister for Building and Construction. It is the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal, which sits under the Minister for Justice.

Mr Valentine - It is anti-discrimination too.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am still advised it is not with this. The WRCT hosts it, but we do not receive the information, particularly for the example we are talking about. It sounds complicated.

Mr VALENTINE - It does. In looking at the table, ADT, currently referrals are 52, then it is three to six months, six to 12 months and 23 over 12 months; then it has an asterisk and says, 'eight referrals in this category belong to one complainant and have been stayed by order of the former chairperson'. It is an anti-discrimination tribunal; it would seem it is not workers compensation.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, that seems to be correct.

Mr VALENTINE - Are you saying this is not something handled under this item?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is under the Minister for Building and Construction.

Mr VALENTINE - It is administered by the Department of Justice.

Mrs HISCUTT - The WRCT hosts the final tribunals. This department is responsible for the Asbestos Compensation Tribunal.

Mr VALENTINE - The part of the answer, information relating to both general and section 87 disputes, has been given - referrals, 1171, and section 87 referrals, 10. I understand you might not know the outcome of some of these cases because they might be settled without an arbitrated hearing. Is there no way you can provide some information about those settled by arbitrated

hearings, perhaps some averages or some information that gives an indication as to how these things run relating to outcome?

Mrs HISCUTT - The information we were provided with when we asked this question was that tribunals are unable to advise the level of entitlement awarded. Over 95 per cent of matters are settled without an arbitrated hearing and in many cases the tribunal is not privy to the settlement amount between the parties. At this stage, you are asking questions I cannot answer in this output. If you have something more specific, you might wish to -

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, thank you.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output group 4 Regulatory and other services

4.1 WorkSafe Tasmania -

Ms FORREST - Madam Deputy Chair, perhaps we need to be very specific with our questions because of the number of times we have asked this question seeking updated advice. The question was about the updated figures on workplace injuries by sector. What the minister has provided is the public sector and the private sector, which gives absolutely no meaning. I am sure he knew we were talking about the industry sector.

Mining often receives a bad rap as being a particularly dangerous workplace with high injury rates. Construction is generally higher. It is important we keep a realistic view about where the real risks are. Some service industries - for example, hospitality - have higher rates of injury than mining does. I would like the Leader to provide the industry sector breakdown of workplace and lost time injuries. I know it will be in the annual report in a month or so, but I cannot believe we received a breakdown by the public and private sector. How ridiculous.

Mrs HISCUTT - It appears that information can be sought but not here and now, maybe in half-an-hour or an hour, perhaps tomorrow. Is the member happy for me to present it when it comes, bearing in mind it will not be in any output we are in?

Ms Forrest - It won't be what, sorry?

Mrs HISCUTT - We would have passed this output by then.

Ms Forrest - Yes, you can table it as a document.

Item agreed to.

4.4 Consumer, Building and Occupational Services -

Ms FORREST - The reason this was left over is that we had not received these answers before our report was finalised. I now have a copy of that.

Item agreed to.

Output group 4 agreed to.

Division 5 agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[4.15 p.m.]

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

That the sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

Sitting suspended from 4.20 p.m. to 4.32 p.m.

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2018 (No. 16)

In Committee

DIVISION 6

(Ministerial and Parliamentary Support)

Output group 1

Support for Members of Parliament

1.1 Support for Ministers and Certain Parliamentary Office Holders

Mr FARRELL - This item is in regard to expenditure on certain parliamentary office holders, additional funding for a new ministerial office, support for the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and the increased costs of ministerial transport services. I asked a question attempting to get an answer but the answer that I received was, 'No, it does not'. I was after some figures.

I am prepared to put this on notice. The question concerned the cost of ministerial cars and the additional cost of hire cars and taxis. The actual amount was not covered. I am happy to ask a series of questions on notice if you are not able to obtain those figures.

Mrs HISCUTT - We would appreciate the member doing that. Thank you.

Ms ARMITAGE - It makes it hard when it says 'RA'. We are not totally sure which one of us it is, between Rob Armstrong and myself. We both asked questions on this area.

I asked whether any northern members were going across to the new CH Smith building. At that stage the Premier did not think so. That might be the question taken on notice.

Mrs HISCUTT - It seems we are not aware of any at this stage.

Ms Armitage - It was much the same answer the Premier gave.

Mrs HISCUTT - We have not been alerted to any movements.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Division 6 agreed to.

[4.35 p.m.]

DIVISION 8

(Department of Premier and Cabinet)

Output group 1

Support for Executive Decision Making

1.1 Strategic Policy and Advice -

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Chair, we received our answers, 34 pages of them, at 9 o'clock this morning. With all due respect to the people who work very hard in departments, it is not good enough. We have not had time to fully assess the information that has come back. It is difficult to follow up with questions and have the disclosure required through this parliamentary process. My entire committee supports me in saying this. We expect a better response from ministers. With all due respect, the Premier was before the committee on Tuesday. That is two weeks ago.

The report has some of the information we asked for, but we need time to assess your answers, Leader. We were not able to do so and were expected to leave all the line items open because we did not have the information we were looking for. It is not good enough. If this is the process we are going to undertake, we need a better system on the other end. I am sure we will discuss it at a later time.

My original question was in regard to COAG. It is well known in this place I do not always support the COAG process. I feel at times our state Government, without very much discussion and none with this parliament, decides to sign up for things that do not necessarily fit Tasmania. I asked for a list of partnership agreements and their current status. I received a list this morning of three, yet to be finalised - the National Healthcare Agreement, the National Schools Funding Agreement and the Closing the Gap Refresh. These are recently signed and finalised. The time frames for the first three, yet to be finalised, are listed as October 2018.

Recently signed and finalised is the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and the Skilling Australians Fund. They have been signed onto already, one by the Minister for Housing and one by the Minister for Education and Training. They are significant for our state. There are often implications for a state the size of Tasmania when we decide to sign up with the big boys. They have plenty of resources and it is easy for them to say, yes, we will head into that. I will look at those further because I have not had time to fully assess what implications or benefits are for Tasmania. Will the Leader take this back to the Premier? I am sure the message will reach him

without her taking it. Through this process, we are disappointed with the responses arriving at 9 o'clock this morning. We have not had time to fully assess those.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I apologise for the lateness of the answers and I will be progressing that section.

Item agreed to.

Output group 1 agreed to.

Output group 2

Government processes and services

2.1 Management of Executive Government Processes -

Ms SIEJKA - I was disappointed we only received information at 9.25 o'clock this morning, given the Premier has more staff to assist him and has taken the longest to process. It has been two weeks since Estimates. Much of the information I requested for this output was supplied during the Estimates process. It was only filling in the gaps and there was absolutely no reason that could not have been supplied at the time. Madam Chair, I seek leave to table the document because it would not be part of our report otherwise.

Leave granted.

Ms SIEJKA - Other than that, all the data is in there. It was more that we have not had time to analyse it properly, which is disappointing.

Ms RATTRAY - Mine was moving onto another issue. I hope I have not come in ahead of the member for Windermere. I appreciate the member for Pembroke tabling the responses that came in because they include the Premier's Discretionary Fund. It is attachment 2.

I had a quick glance through the extensive list. It is always of interest to members who have, at various times, put in a request on behalf of their community for support for various communities or organisations or, in this case, perhaps individuals. There are 40 requests or thereabouts made by individual persons for a contribution toward the cost of interstate travel. I have never seen so many requests for individuals before. We receive requests in our electorates on a daily basis from people who have made a Tasmanian team, some significant team or are involved in something and are expected to travel. Most members seem to provide support.

Is the Premier providing this support out of the Premier's Discretionary Fund and not using his electoral allowance, as the rest of us do? These are amounts of \$100, \$150, \$125 - one person was really lucky and received \$200. I have not seen anything to this extent and I am interested in how it is assessed. I recognise one name on that list. That person received money from me because they belonged to my patch; they made a request and I provided a donation toward their costs.

My second question is about the Anglican church at Barnes Bay. I have not had time to cross-reference it with the list of churches for sale on the Anglican Church list because we only received it this morning. That is towards the cost of infrastructure upgrades. Following the question from the member for Launceston, I suggest supporting infrastructure for any Anglican church may not be the right approach. This is my view, not the committee that looked at this. Everyone will be

able to look for themselves. I have no issue with a number of them: the Bridport Community Men's Shed, \$200 towards purchasing tools, which is exactly what you would use the Premier's Discretionary Fund for; the Deloraine Golf Club, \$2000 toward green repairs; the Huonville Meals on Wheels, toward the cost of a freezer, a perfect use of the Premier's Discretionary Fund. There are plenty on that list. I have not had a chance to add them up but it was slightly under what the Premier spent last year. I am interested in having a response about those. I apologise to my colleagues. I have not done as much homework in this area as I normally would have, due to the time frame for receiving this list.

Mrs HISCUTT - Was I hearing you correctly when you said you thought some of this travel assistance - \$100 et cetera - would have come out of the Premier's own electoral allowance? I note the Premier has only made one application to the discretionary fund. He would have used his electoral allowance for other costs. Who put those applications in? We do not have that. Is that what you are saying?

Ms Rattray - Normally when members of parliament receive requests from individuals who are to travel interstate, they have -

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I understand that. You alluded to -

Ms Rattray - You would use your electorate fund.

Mrs HISCUTT - The Premier only has one grant application to the fund. He has not used the Premier's Discretionary Fund to fund that. Where the individual applications came from-

Ms Rattray - All their names are listed.

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, but not -

Ms Rattray - Who put the application in?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes, I do not have that. I can tell you how many applications have come from different MPs but I cannot tell you what the applications are for. I can tell you the Premier only made one application to his discretionary fund. I do not know what it was for; it may have been travel assistance.

As to your question about the Barnes Bay church - this is from 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018 - it may have been a grant request that came in on 2 July. It could have been before all this trouble started with the church. I cannot break that down any further for you.

Ms RATTRAY - Madam Chair, perhaps I did not explain myself clearly enough. It is the first time in my 14 years that I have seen such an extensive list of small amounts of funds being provided for Tasmanians towards the cost of interstate travel.

Again, I instance members of parliament; in my case, I provide \$100 for everybody who makes a Tasmanian team and goes interstate. If they are lucky or unlucky, if they do not get to travel and they are part of a Tasmanian team playing here, they still get the same \$100 because it costs quite a lot for families or anybody to be involved in a group or sporting organisation.

That was my question: why am I seeing such an extensive list of individuals receiving \$100, \$125, \$150 and up to \$200 for interstate travel? It has been normal practice in the past, from my understanding, that you ask your MPs and they choose in their electorate how generous they are. It might only be \$50, whatever people can afford. It would come out of the Premier's Discretionary Fund. Someone on the list here received a donation from me and then went to the Premier's Discretionary Fund for support as well.

Mr Dean - I can identify about a dozen I have given money to in my electorate.

Ms RATTRAY - Is this something new everyone has decided to get on the bandwagon for, to use this discretionary fund in this way, different to how it was used in the past? Has the Premier changed the parameters around how he provides funds?

Mrs HISCUTT - Your point is taken. I will endeavour to talk about it with the Premier and ask him to reassess whether that is an appropriate payment. I will raise the issue with him.

Ms ARMITAGE - On that point, we need to be careful checking with the Premier to reassess. Many of these people who come to me - and I am sure they come to other members - are up for \$4000 or \$5000 when they travel overseas. While I might give them \$100, some of these families cannot afford for their children to go away. Personally I do not have an issue with it coming out of the Premier's fund as well because they are still way short regardless of how many members they get it from.

I am sure the member for Windermere and I have had the same students come to us and they might not be in my electorate. For a family to find \$3000 or \$4000 for one of their children to go away, when some people struggle to pay their bills and make other commitments, it is very sad if a child cannot go. I feel that if people are selected, the state or group should fund them to go.

I do not have an issue with that. I would be concerned if the Premier reassessed it. Any money some of these children get is very important and it goes a long way. My \$100 does not help that much when they are up for \$3000 or \$4000.

Ms RATTRAY - In response to the member for Launceston, I am not saying people should not be doing it. I am only asking whether there has been a change. It is the first time in my time here that I have seen such an extensive list of individuals. That was my question.

Ms Armitage - My comment was in response to the comment from the Leader that she would ask the Premier to reassess. I was concerned about reassessing. It is not a bad thing that they get the money. It was not your comment but more the Leader's asking the Premier to reassess.

Ms RATTRAY - I made it clear we are interested in how the parameters have changed.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am advised there has been no change to anything. Therein lies the conundrum.

Mr DEAN - The concern about the lateness of getting this document has been adequately covered. I was disappointed in having to work through it this morning.

If the Barnes Bay church is identified for sale, will a similar position arise as with the Low Head church, with the \$5000 to be repaid? I would have thought so in the circumstances. We are

told the \$5000 was for infrastructure upgrades, which would increase and improve the value of that church. Will that be the situation there?

I have asked this question previously. What auditing is done of the money paid out to ensure it is used for the purpose for which it is requested?

I want to raise another issue. I have certainly seen individual payments before. I ask the Premier to make them to most of the kids who travel. It is only those who know about it and are involved who apply to the Premier for support.

Ms Rattray - I have never suggested that anyone write to the Premier directly.

Mr DEAN - I have not seen this before: a payment of \$3500 made towards the cost of a scholarship. I am wondering whether that would fit all the criteria. I think it would be setting a precedent for anybody to make an application under the Premier's Discretionary Fund for money to complete a scholarship. I seek an answer to that. I am not sure if that can be given now or on notice.

I am not sure of the criteria. I understand the Premier has cut down considerably on the amount of money provided under this fund. If you look back over the years, there has been a large decrease in this area. I am not suggesting in any way that the Premier is doing anything wrong. I am questioning the issues, including the \$2000 given to Lend a hand to Hugo towards the cost of a business plan for fundraising. I would have thought that they could have used the \$2000 for fundraising.

Are there clear criteria set for the Premier to provide funding under his discretionary fund? That may need to be a question on notice. I am sure there would be others, but I have not had time to go through the entire list.

Mrs HISCUTT - With regard to your first question about the church, it is not something we can answer here. We do not know the details, the variables or whether it will be listed or not. There are too many unknowns to make a comment at this stage.

Mr Dean - You'll come back with an answer?

Mrs HISCUTT - You might want to put it on notice. There is information about the Premier's Discretionary Fund and about the audit process on the DPAC website under 'Routine disclosures'.

We would need more information to look into the scholarship and Lend a hand for Hugo. It is not available here and now.

Mr Dean - I can't give you more information because I am going on the document we have been given.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is right, yes. We haven't that in-depth information here. Do you want to put it on notice?

Mr Dean - On notice again?

Mrs HISCUTT - Yes. I will read the general comments on the discretionary fund -

Generally payments are for small one-off payments and for quite specific purposes with tangible outcomes -

For example, to support the purchase of equipment or the building of a physical asset -

or to financially support a specific activity such as travel.

A specific benefit of the Fund is that payments can be made under this program to organisations or individuals having difficulty in accessing alternative sources of funds, or for an activity that does not readily fall within the criteria for standard grants programs.

There is no formal application process but the Premier does have approved guidelines for that fund, similar to those used by previous governments. I do not think there has been much of a change.

Mr Dean - I take it the committee would make the decision and not the Premier?

Mrs HISCUTT - People within DPAC would look at these things and put a recommendation forward once they have looked at the guidelines.

Information relating to the Premier's Discretionary Fund can be found on the DPAC website under 'Routine disclosures'.

Mr FINCH - I had not given much thought to this, Madam Chair, but listening to the discussion, I want to put in my two bob's worth in respect of the Premier's Discretionary Fund. This probably harks back to the past - am I on the right track, Chair?

Madam CHAIR - I am watching.

Mr FINCH - You could try listening.

We had a controversy before with the Premier's Discretionary Fund when a certain member made a welter of it. But it was transparent about who had made the submission. I notice that has disappeared from this particular compendium of who was the beneficiary of the accolade for getting the funds -

Madam CHAIR - Who lodged the request on behalf of the person or organisation?

Mr FINCH - Yes.

I think it is excellent we have a run-down of groups being supported. There are one or two you could dispute or ask for more information on but generally this is an opportunity for people in the community to seek small funds, which do not go to the Tasmanian Community Fund or to other opportunities. Sure, it is paramount to pork-barrelling. It is an opportunity for the Premier to glow as far as these people are concerned. And why not? I think there should be an opportunity to give to needy groups in the community to get the stimulus they need. Sometimes the Premier has supported it, so businesses and others are more likely to offer their support, particularly local councils.

I am in support of this process. I cannot see too many in my own electorate, but I will encourage them to take more notice in future.

Mr DEAN - I think I am right in raising this point. We asked a question about providing the current number of workers compensation claims for DPAC.

Madam CHAIR - No, that would be a different output group. I think you will find it in 4.1.

Mr DEAN - It is 2.4 Corporate Support. Thank you.

Item agreed to.

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

Ms SIEJKA - As I mentioned before, we have not had enough time to look at these things properly. Given I had asked a couple of questions about workers compensation and particularly stress leave, I am surprised that that data was not able to be supplied. We were supplied with some data around workers compensation but the question I had asked was about people on stress leave relating to workers compensation, not sick leave. That question was not answered. I am fairly certain that this data must be collected because having been on professional boards and involved in large-scale organisations as part of the workers' health and safety data that is collected, stress is one of the many factors and many data items that is collected. I would think, given that is something the Government expects of organisations like TasTAFE, the Government would also collect that data itself.

I also asked for the workers compensation across all agencies, not the sick leave just for DPAC. It is in *Hansard* that it was across all agencies.

Mrs HISCUTT - Stress leave is not a leave type available to employees. If an employee was away from work due to stress not related to a workers compensation claim, it would be taken as sick leave. For the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 there have been seven workers compensation claims accepted.

Mr Dean - For sick leave?

Mrs HISCUTT - I have not finished yet. Five of these claims remained open as of 3 March 2018, and two of them were for psychological claims, so that would be stress leave.

Ms SIEJKA - That answers my question. The question I had asked was around workers compensation for stress so it probably was the wording referring to it as stress leave, which of course is a common term that is used, but it was about data collection on stress-related claims for workers compensation. That data is collected.

Mrs Hiscutt - Yes.

Item agreed to.

Output group 2 agreed to.

Output group 3

Electronic Services for Government Agencies and the Community

3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania -

Ms RATTRAY - I got pulled up in my tracks with this one. I asked about the opening hours of Service Tasmania around the state and the response came back, 'Please visit www.service.tas.gov.au/about/shops/'. In other words, go to the website. That is what it is telling me. That is fine. I have access to a website. Not everybody has access to a website. I am just a tad disappointed. If I wanted to go onto the website I would have done that previously.

I was interested to see as much as anything the comparison between the hours of opening across the state. In a number of Service Tasmania shops in my communities the hours have been cut back considerably. They open at 10 a.m. and close at 4 p.m., which is not very helpful if you start at 9 a.m. and finish at 5 p.m. and do not work in the town where there is a Service Tasmania shop. Are other communities better served by the opening hours? That was the reason why I asked the question. I will go onto the website and have a look at the hours spread across the state and perhaps ask Parliamentary Research to do some research for me.

In the interests of looking after our communities that are not based in the cities, we are looking for fair and equitable arrangements for accessing Service Tasmania, hence my question and I got the message.

Item agreed to.

Output group 3 agreed to.

Output group 4

State Service Management

4.1 State Service Employment and Management -

Ms ARMITAGE - I was disappointed in the answers I received about boards this morning. My questions were - and I will read them from *Hansard* - Could I have a breakdown of board membership by region and interstate for each government business enterprise? Second, the other breakdown of board membership by region in Tasmania and interstate I would like for each state-owned company. I received: number of positions, 77; vacant positions, 3; north, 9; north-west, 3; south, 40; and interstate, 22. That does not answer my question. It does not list each GBE. It does not list each state-owned company.

Leader, if you like, I will send you the answers I received in 2016 with all the boards listed and perhaps an updated list can be attached to it. The answers I received certainly do not relate to the question that I asked as recorded in *Hansard*. I understand it may take some time but, as was mentioned, the Premier was on early in the week and I have these answers from 2016. If it suits, I will put them without notice and send them to you. We might be able to get an answer by August when we sit again.

Mrs HISCUTT - The department is more than happy for you to provide that list, member for Launceston, and we will update it for you when we get it. If you are happy to provide that list for

us, we will get an update and then we know what you are looking for. Send us the list you want updated and we will do that.

Mr DEAN - It is terrible trying to read through all this now. In the answer provided to the question asked by the member for Launceston, there is a note which says, 'There are five people who appear on multiple boards'. How many boards do each of those five individuals sit on? Also, why do we make these people professional board members? Surely there would be other people in this state who would have the expertise and knowledge to sit on boards. I wonder why we go down that path. The boards are made up now on equality, 39 males and 35 females, which this Government said it was going to do when it came to power. That is a good move.

Can you table a detailed breakdown of intrastate, interstate and international travel costs for DPAC staff? The expenditure for DPAC was in excess of half a million dollars. I then go to the attachment, which I am trying to work through as we are looking at it. What purpose do each of those expenditures relate to? For what reason did the board members go? For instance, if we take the first one, output 1.1 Strategic Policy and Advice, it is intrastate travel of \$1160, and interstate travel of \$39 775, a total of \$40 936. After each of these, you would ask why that travel occurred. With the technology we have today - on our committees, for example, we have been told to use technology rather than travel - I wonder what is behind all the large amounts of travel.

Mrs HISCUTT - The expenditure relates to travel costs mainly to do with COAG and committees there. It has to be secure.

Mr DEAN - You are not saying it all relates to COAG?

Mrs HISCUTT - Most of it does.

Mr DEAN - Can we get a breakdown of that?

Mrs HISCUTT - It is for COAG and associated committees, so it is all wrapped around COAG. They have a degree of teleconferencing but when it is between the Premier and the Prime Minister, it is a face-to-face meeting. That sum is associated with security and the things that go with that. It is around COAG and the associated committees with that relating to travel expenses and other supporting mechanisms.

Mr Dean - I will put a question on notice in relation to it because I have issues with that.

Ms RATTRAY - I am in the same boat as the member for Windermere because I have not had an extensive time to look at this. I was interested in Service Tasmania; I am not picking on you, but for in intrastate travel on output 3.2, Service Tasmania, it is \$102 755. How would Service Tasmania -

Madam CHAIR - You are in a different output group; we are on 2.4 at the moment.

Mr Dean - It comes under that.

Madam CHAIR - Sorry, it is 4.1. Is Service Tasmania under this as well?

Ms RATTRAY - No, it is only travel costs for DPAC. The Chair of Committees would not have this information because we only got it this morning at 9.10 a.m. It is tabled now. My question

is about the - in my view - exceptionally high intrastate travel costs, from the DPAC information we received. What would it entail to come to \$102 755 for Service Tasmania's intrastate travel costs? This seems to me to be reasonably excessive. The others are not exceedingly large. I understand the COAG process and having interstate travel of around \$47 000 when it is the management of executive government processes. You would need to go to COAG and be at the table listening - sometimes perhaps not signing up, but listening. That is a couple of areas. The other one I am interested in having some more detail about is output group 6.4, Sport and Recreation. The total cost is about \$137 000 and there is \$95 000 of interstate travel and \$37 000 of intrastate travel. It seems like a very extensive amount of money for travel costs. That is what I am looking for.

Mrs HISCUTT - It seems that Service Tasmania intrastate travel costs are due to the implementation of the new organisational structure. This is an unusual one because they have restructured. They would have people visiting different Service Tasmania shops throughout the state. It also includes the travel for relief staff to help with getting it up and running. I presume it will not be that high next year, unless there is another restructure.

With regard to sport, that is the Tasmanian Institute of Sport travelling around the state. The TIS sporting activities include the coaches and athletes moving around the state. It would also have a little to do with the Commonwealth Games at that particular time. These figures would probably not be that high next year.

Ms RATTRAY - Restructure of Service Tasmania - what sort of restructure? I have not noticed anything significantly different in how Service Tasmania operates. They certainly have not expanded their opening hours in some of the regional areas. What did the restructure actually consist of, and did they take everyone from the office?

Mrs HISCUTT - One part of the restructure is training people for the new contact centres. It could be other things. If you would like to put a question on notice forward, we can answer that for you.

Ms Rattray - Yes.

Item agreed to.

Output group 4 agreed to.

Division 8 agreed to.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. Wednesday 11 July 2018.

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 5.27 p.m.