



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 25 June 2020

REVISED EDITION

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The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 10 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read prayers.

PETITION

Huntingfield Development - Kingborough Future Infrastructure Plan

Ms Webb presented a petition signed by approximately 956 citizens concerned with the Huntingfield development and the Kingborough future infrastructure plan.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

The following answers were given to questions upon notice:

39. COVID-19 - REDUCTION IN ALCOHOL-RELATED OFFENCES

Mr DEAN asked a question of the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council -

With regard the COVID-19 restrictions and the reduction in alcohol-fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour -

- (1) During the COVID-19 restriction period to date how many serious public place alcohol-fuelled assaults have occurred?
- (2) Does the Government support the call by the Police Association of Tasmania for reform of licensing laws particularly with regard to changes to early morning trading between the hours of 3.00 a.m. and 5.00 a.m.?
- (3) With the evidence now available, will the Government consider reviewing the late/early morning trading practices of licensed premises?
- (4) The Premier has made reference to improved and increased education in this area:
 - (a) Who is it that the proposed education programs will be targeting?
 - (b) How is the education proposed to be delivered?
- (5) During the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to date), how many public place assaults, liquor infringement notices or public order incidents have been reported to police in and around the Hobart waterfront where businesses trade well into the early hours of the morning?

- (6) During the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to date), how many offences/actions have been taken against licensees (staff) regarding the 'responsible serving of alcohol' requirements?
- (7) While the licensing commissioner approves/issues out-of-hours permits for early morning trading (1.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m.):
 - (a) what policing of these permits and licensed premises is undertaken by licensing commission inspectors during this time period; and
 - (b) if not policed, why not?
- (8) During the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to date), what number of charges have been preferred by licensing commission inspectors within the state?
- (9) During the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to date), how many charges have been preferred by licensing inspectors involving matters between midnight and permit closing periods?
- (10)
 - (a) How many licensing inspectors are there?
 - (b) Where are they located?
 - (c) What are their hours of duty?
 - (d) Do they have any responsibility at all to police out-of-hours permits?
- (11)
 - (a) Is there a problem with the licensing legislation in that while the licensing commissioner can impose restraints and reduce licensing hours they are overturned whenever an appeal is taken?
 - (b) If this is the case, what action is taken to remedy the situation?

Mrs HISCUTT replied -

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. The response had to come from two ministers - the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management - so it took a little while to come. The response is very lengthy in nature and it contains a couple of tables. If the member agrees, I seek leave to table the answers them into *Hansard*.

Leave granted; the documents incorporated as follows -

Response from the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

- (1) Between 23 March and 31 May 2020, 11 serious (indictable) public place assaults have been recorded in Tasmania. This is consistent with the 61 serious public place assaults recorded in 2018-19. Of the 11 serious public assaults recorded -
 - five occurred in the Southern District
 - two occurred in the Northern District
 - four occurred in the Western District

Tasmania Police has advised that it is not possible to determine whether alcohol is a contributing factor in every assault.

- (5) The table below shows selected public order indicators occurring during the early morning period around the Hobart waterfront.

Indicator	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (to 31 May)
Public place assaults	44	56	34
Liquor infringement notices	209	188	78
Public order incidents	465	410	242

Note 1 - For the purposes of this question 'early morning period' has been defined as 1.00 am to 4.59 am as per question (7). The statistics in Table 1 refer to the time that the offence occurred, or, for public order incidents, the time that a call was made to emergency services.

Note 2 - For the purposes of this question 'Hobart waterfront' has been defined as the localities of Hobart and Battery Point.

Note 3 - Liquor infringement notices refer to infringement notices issued for liquor offences committed under section 25 of the Police Offences Act 1935. This does not include liquor licensing offences.

- (6) The table below provides the responsible serving of alcohol liquor licensing offenders proceeded against by police in the Southern District from 1 July 2017 to 31 May 2020.

While there has been a significant increase in responsible serving of alcohol offenders in 2019-20 thus far, only five out of the 73 have occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Offenders by proceeding type	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (to 31 May)
Prosecution	4	0	14
Infringement Notice	22	30	58
Youth Caution	1	0	1
Total Offenders	27	30	73

Note 1 - For the purposes of this question responsible serving of alcohol offences have been defined as offences under the following sections of the Liquor Licensing Act 1990 - sections 5, 46, 46A(1), 64, 69A(1), 70(1), 70(2), 71, 75(1), 78(1), 78(2), 79.

Note 2 - The Department of Treasury has advised that according to their usual interpretation, section 5 of the Liquor Licensing Act 1990 is not generally considered to be a 'responsible

serving of alcohol' offence, although broadly it does qualify as such. Over 90% of the offenders recorded for 2019-20 in the table above relate to this legislative section.

Response from the Minister for Finance

Refer to response from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management for questions (1), (5) and (6), which are to be cleared through its minister.

- (1) Refer to the response from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- (2) The Government supports the role of an independent regulator to regulate the liquor industry in Tasmania. Under the Liquor Licensing Act 1990, the Commissioner for Licensing is responsible for issuing liquor licences, monitoring licensed venues and imposing licence conditions. Where appropriate, the commissioner has imposed permit conditions and reduced out-of-hours permit times to minimise alcohol-related harm and avoid jeopardising the enjoyment of other patrons and community members.

The Government will continue to work with the commissioner to ensure that a safe and vibrant Tasmanian hospitality sector is maintained.

- (3) A reduction in the number of public place assaults, liquor infringement notices and public order incidents during the unprecedented COVID-19 restrictions is not unexpected, given the closure of licensed premises and the requirement for people to self-isolate in their homes.

Tasmania Police is the only entity under the Liquor Licensing Act to have specific enforcement powers to issue infringement notices and police barring orders.

The Commissioner for Licensing has broad powers under the Liquor Licensing Act to address the occurrence of disorderly conduct, annoyance and disturbance in and around premises licensed to sell liquor. The commissioner is able to review intelligence gathered by compliance inspectors and police officers, and investigate on a case-by-case basis if evidence suggests that a breach of the liquor licensing legislation has occurred.

The commissioner will continue to monitor the easing of COVID-19 restrictions on licensed premises.

- (4) Changing how alcohol is perceived and consumed in order to reduce alcohol-related harm is a shared responsibility across government, councils, and community and industry sectors.

The Liquor Licensing Act requires the completion of responsible service of alcohol training to ensure that licensees, staff serving liquor and security employees are informed about the responsible service and consumption of liquor. This requirement remains in place for all licensed premises where liquor is sold.

The Government acknowledges the importance of community education as a demand reduction strategy, to increase the understanding of harms and change the acceptability of alcohol use. Agencies across government are currently developing the new Tasmanian Drug Strategy - TDS. One of the identified priority areas is community information,

which will focus on increasing community understanding of the risks and harms of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use across specific population groups, including children and young people.

Community sector organisations are well positioned to deliver alcohol education. The Drug Education Network in Tasmania is funded by government to improve the wellbeing of Tasmanians through prevention, resource development, education and training to service providers and the wider community about alcohol and other drugs. The network continued to provide these services during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. There has also been a national alcohol education focus on the impact of alcohol during COVID-19. The Australian Drug Foundation - ADF - campaign 'You haven't been drinking alone' encourages parents to be more mindful of their drinking during isolation, and the role it can play in shaping their children's attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol.

- (5) Refer to the response from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- (6) Refer to the response from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.
- (7) An out-of-hours permit is required to authorise the sale of alcohol on licensed premises for any period between midnight and 5 a.m.

Compliance inspectors of the Liquor and Gaming Branch, Department of Treasury and Finance, undertake regular inspections of liquor licensed premises outside of normal business hours.

Compliance inspectors conduct these inspections alone, or as part of joint inspections involving other state and local government entities that may include Tasmania Police, local councils and the Tasmania Fire Service. Joint inspections are instigated by the Liquor and Gaming Branch and demonstrate the importance placed on ensuring that licensee activities are conducted in accordance with all of their legislative obligations.

For the period 1 July 2019 to the closure of licensed premises on 23 March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, a total of 126 premises inspections were completed statewide outside of normal business hours by compliance inspectors. This includes 66 joint premises inspections with Tasmania Police.

The Commissioner for Licensing requires premises that trade past 2 a.m. to have CCTV surveillance in place meeting the commissioner's high standard in terms of coverage and resolution. This allows the commissioner to access accurate vision of incidents that might require disciplinary action.

- (8) Under the Liquor Licensing Act there are 63 prescribed offences that a police officer can issue an infringement notice for, if they consider that an offence has been committed. There is no provision in the act for Liquor and Gaming compliance inspectors to perform this function.

Compliance inspectors undertake investigations into breaches of the Liquor Licensing Act as part of their duties. During the period 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to 15 June 2020) investigations have resulted in the Commissioner for Licensing taking disciplinary action against six separate licensees. These actions addressed various breaches of the

liquor licensing legislation and resulted in a range of penalties including monetary fines, variation to permit hours and conditions or letter of censure. In addition, the conditions of permits are reassessed when permits are reapplied for and, if warranted, more stringent conditions are imposed.

- (9) Over this same period, of the six instances of disciplinary action taken by the commissioner, three related to breaches of the act that occurred during the period of an out-of-hours permit (between 12 midnight and up to 5 a.m.).
- (10) Liquor and Gaming compliance inspectors undertake duties to ensure both the provision of gaming operations, and the sale of liquor are conducted in Tasmania in accordance with the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Statewide, there are a total of 11.3 full-time equivalent compliance inspectors responsible for conducting inspections of liquor and gaming licensed premises. Of this, 5.5 FTEs are based in Hobart and 5.8 FTEs are based in Launceston. Compliance inspector activities are overseen by regional-based team leaders and the Hobart-based compliance manager.

Compliance inspectors work during normal business hours. In addition to this, through a workplace agreement, six compliance inspectors (equally split between the north and south) are able to work 450 hours per region, per annum outside of normal business hours.

This agreement provides for a loading on base salary as compensation for work to be undertaken between 7 p.m. Friday and 2 a.m. Saturday, and between 9 a.m. Saturday and midnight Saturday. Work that extends past these times is accommodated by an overtime provision.

- (11) The appeal provisions in the Liquor Licensing Act provide an appropriate level of natural justice in administrative decisions.

During the period 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (to 15 June 2020), the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission has not overturned on appeal any decisions by the Commissioner for Licensing relating to disciplinary matters.

41. COVID-19 - TASMANIAN DISASTER RESILIENCE STRATEGY

Ms WEBB asked a question of the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council -

With reference to the formal state of emergency declared by the Government on 19 March 2020 under section 42 of the Emergency Management Act 2006 due to the presence of COVID-19 in Tasmania -

- (1) How has the Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy 2020-2025 informed or influenced the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (2) Noting the Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements - TEMA - is required under section 32 of the act and that pandemics are identified as a potential 'emergency' or 'disaster' for which the state needs to be prepared:

- (a) what is the status of the TEMA;
 - (b) how was TEMA implemented; and
 - (c) how has it informed the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (3) What is the status of the current Special Emergency Management Plan and the associated State Recovery Plan that is described by the Department of Premier and Cabinet - DPAC - Office of Security and Emergency Management - OSEM - as a 'broad, scalable framework for recovery that can be tailored to meet the needs of each emergency event and affected community', and which details the state's recovery governance framework?
- (4)
 - (a) Was the state's recovery governance framework, as outlined on the OSEM website, implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - (b) How was it implemented?
- (5)
 - (a) What is the membership of the State Recovery Committee, chaired by the State Recovery Advisor, who the Premier informed the Parliament on 30 April 2020 has been appointed to that legislated role under section 24A of the act?
 - (b) What COVID-19-related work has that committee undertaken?
- (6) Has the State Recovery Advisor provided, or been asked to provide, advice to the Premier on -
 - (a) any future appointment of a state recovery coordinator; and/ or
 - (b) the establishment of a recovery task force, as provided by section 24B of the act?
- (7)
 - (a) Is the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council intended to fulfil the role of the recovery task force?
 - (b) Will PESRAC operate instead of, or in parallel to, the recovery task force and the act's recovery provisions?
- (8) Will the chair of PESRAC fulfil the role of the State Recovery Coordinator as specified under section 24D of the act, which is also provided for under TEMA and the DPAC State Recovery Plan?
- (9) What advice has the Government sought or received regarding -
 - (a) the implementation of the Recovery Taskforce and State Recovery Coordinator role in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - (b) any implications of establishing PESRAC as an alternative or parallel process?

Mrs HISCUTT replied -

- (1) The Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy 2020-2025 was approved by the Tasmanian Government in December 2019. The strategy builds on current and recent initiatives to pursue a vision of a more disaster resilient Tasmania.

The strategy's vision is 'Using the best available evidence, everyone works together to reduce the risk, and to prepare to withstand and adapt to the impacts of disaster.'

Ms Webb - Which question is this answering?

Mrs HISCUTT - Question 41 on the Notice Paper.

Ms Webb - Yes, but there are a number of questions there. None of them asked for a description of that.

Mrs HISCUTT - So the member does not want this answer?

Ms Webb - No, continue. I was just wondered if it was actually answering my questions.

Mrs HISCUTT - I am halfway through question (1).

Ms Webb - Okay.

Mrs HISCUTT - The strategy emphasises that disaster resilience is everybody's business, but also recognises the Tasmanian Government plays a key role. The response to the pandemic is consistent with the strategy's vision and goals.

- (2)
 - (a) The Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements - TEMA - were endorsed by the State Emergency Management Committee before being authorised by the State Controller (Commissioner Darren Hine) and approved by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Hon. Mark Shelton MP, on 10 December 2019.
 - (b) The TEMA do not require implementation; they describe existing roles, authorities and responsibilities for emergency management, including governance, administrative and legal frameworks.
 - (c) Pandemic is an identified hazard in the TEMA, and COVID-19 has been managed in accordance with emergency management arrangements. As the response management authority - RMA - the Department of Health is responsible for prevention and response in relation to a pandemic. The RMA is required to develop a more detailed State Special Emergency Management Plan - SSEMP - in relation to hazards for which it is responsible.

In accordance with the TEMA and SSEMP for COVID-19, the State Control Centre was activated on 19 March 2020 to coordinate whole-of-government activities in response to COVID-19. On the same date the Premier, Hon.

Peter Gutwein MP, declared a state of emergency under the Emergency Management Act 2006.

- (3) The State Recovery Plan - which is the SSEMP for recovery - was approved by the State Controller on 7 January 2019.
- (4) (a) Yes. Noting that given the prolonged nature of the pandemic emergency, relief and recovery activities have been taking place concurrently with the response.
- (b) The State Recovery Advisor - Craig Limkin, Deputy Secretary, DPAC - has a formal role in the State Control Centre to advise the State Controller and the Ministerial Committee for Emergency Management in relation to recovery. The State Recovery Committee has been meeting regularly to identify and address relief and recovery needs. Mr Limkin holds the office of State Recovery Advisor on delegation from the Secretary, DPAC under section 24A of the Emergency Management Act.

When the State Controller stands down, there will be a formal transition to recovery in accordance with section 24F of the Emergency Management Act.

- 5 (a) During the current state of emergency, the following are members of the State Recovery Committee -
- Deputy Secretary, DPAC - State Recovery Advisor (Chair)
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Health
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of State Growth
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Treasury and Finance
 - Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Department of Communities Tasmania
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Education
 - Deputy Secretary, Department of Justice, and
 - police commanders from all three geographical regions.

Since the establishment of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, the Director of the PESRAC Secretariat has also been attending State Recovery Committee meetings.

- (b) During the current state of emergency, the State Recovery Committee has met 10 times since 24 March 2020 and has been solely dealing with COVID-

19-related issues in that period. During that time the committee has coordinated the resolution of short-term economic and social recovery needs; has led the development of the COVID-19 Safe Workplaces Framework; had oversight of the COVID-19 Safe Workplace Guidelines and COVID safety plans, and has helped shape the governance arrangements for the transition to medium- and long-term recovery.

At each of its meetings the committee also worked through a needs assessment report which identified high-priority needs throughout the state and liaised with the regional emergency coordination centres to support regional recovery.

- (6) Advice provided by the State Service is deliberative and therefore is confidential.
- (7) (a) PESRAC is established under section 24C of the Emergency Management Act.
(b) PESRAC has been established to provide high-level policy advice to the Government on strategies and initiatives to support the state's short- to medium-, and longer term recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 emergency.
- (8) No.
- (9) Advice provided by the State Service is deliberative and therefore is confidential.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION (REGULATORY REFORM AMENDMENTS) BILL 2020 (No. 21)

Consideration of Amendment made in the Committee of the Whole Council

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read the third time.

MOTION

Consideration and Noting - Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Annual Report 2018-19

[10.17 a.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere - Motion) - Mr President, I move -

That the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Annual Report 2018-19 be considered and noted.

In moving this motion, we are not far from the next annual report. I have given some thought to this as to whether I should continue down this path or simply forget about this report and start afresh when the new annual report comes out, whenever they might come out this year. I suppose

there could be some delay in that as well. Do we know whether that is the case? I am not sure whether they will be required to be produced on time or whether COVID-19 will impact that.

Having said that, as I keep saying in this place, it is important to look at these reports. COVID-19 has taken over the world insofar as our activities and everyday needs are concerned - our social and working lives, entertainment - and with any business we do in this place not connected with COVID-19 it will be hard to retain the interest of members. I understand that at this time although we are starting to get out of it.

As I said yesterday, we know full well it does not matter what is happening with COVID-19, the sun will come up in the morning. If you look at the clock at the back of the room, the hands are still turning around.

Ms Rattray - Thankfully, the sun is up this morning in the south.

Mr DEAN - We still need to move forward and move on.

During this period the police have been under an awful amount of stress to do the work required during the COVID-19 situation and to retain their work in the field and the other areas they work in. I take my hat off to them. They have worked under all that stress and they have done it very well. They have come out with flying colours once again and the public has recognised that. That is good. The police have stood up well in all the circumstances. Having said that, there will have been some work that could not be done by police in that time, and you wonder what the impact on that might be in the future. I am looking to see where it all goes.

As I have said now for the past 16 years, I know it is important for us as state representatives to hold all government departments, government business entities - GBEs - and state-owned companies - SOCs - accountable for the services they provide for the Tasmanian people. One way we can do that is by noting and considering these annual reports. That has been my position now for a long time.

Policing functions and requirements are not like any other as required by any department or organisation. Their oath of office applies in perpetuity - that is, while they remain a police officer. It does not only apply while on duty - it is 24 hours a day every day of the year. It also applies when they are on holidays. There is no relief for police to say that at no time are they a police officer and not required to work within the requirements of the oath of office they take, unlike any other business. I do not know any other department that is sworn in a similar way in their occupation. The police are simply different.

Their oath of office has not changed since it was accepted by statutory requirement. That occurred at the beginning of the establishment of the police in Tasmania. That oath of office commenced very early in the piece. One wonders whether there ought to be relaxation of that to cover for holiday periods and to cover for other areas. I have been there and done it. On holidays if you witness something that requires urgent and immediate attention, you would do it - you attend to it. You are expected to. I have been on the roads on many occasions during periods on holidays when I have witnessed an incident and I have had to become involved in it as the first person at the scene.

Mr Valentine - Not a speeding fine.

Mr DEAN - Particularly road crashes. Unfortunately, I have had a number of those experiences.

It has become even clearer over the past years that police have become, in a way, responsible for the work of many other departments that work only eight to five Monday to Friday and are absent during public holidays and weekends. The police have to pick up many of these functions and they do it well.

The police now have to pick up the work periodically that is not able to be attended to by the responsible department - for example, Ambulance Tasmania. The police are being called out frequently in many of these incidents to attend as first responders to medical call-outs. In fact, between 1 January 2019 and 14 October 2019 police assisted Ambulance Tasmania on 2861 requests for support.

I have raised this matter by way of questions and had it raised in Estimates. It is a concern for the Police Association of Tasmania because it takes police away from their core responsibilities and 99.9 per cent of its members do not have the medical training as required to deal with some medical call-outs. What concerns PAT is that its members have also been called to attend medical call-outs on behalf of the Tasmanian ambulance service to provide for downtime of Ambulance Tasmania for their break periods and meal periods and so on.

That is my view. I have a good example here, but I do not need to refer to it. Police grab a meal if they can; they often have to go without and they do that on a very frequent basis. That is of concern to the Police Association of Tasmania.

As I said, in my opinion the Ambulance Tasmania call-outs will change when attendance by Tasmania Police goes horribly wrong. If it is through lack of staffing or members on duty, rest assured that matters will be addressed when such a case arises. The Tasmania Police executive has been made aware of this issue and they accept that it is a problem but that police have a responsibility to help out. Nobody says that they do not. The police accept that. They have a responsibility to help to assist other departments and other organisations, but, as I said, it ought not to be as a first responder to a medical situation.

I refer to a letter received by the Police Association of Tasmania on 2 January 2020 from Acting Commissioner Scott Tilyard on the subject. I will just quote from that letter because it identifies the issues I am talking about -

The Corporate Management Group (CMG) agrees with the Police Association of Tasmania (PAT) that police officers should not be tasked with incidents instead of Ambulance Tasmania staff as police officers are neither trained nor equipped to the level of Ambulance Tasmania (AT) responders.

That is what I have been saying. They do not have that level of medical background that is necessary in the circumstances -

However, it is longstanding practice that police and emergency services personnel assist each other in supporting the Tasmanian community. This includes situations where police and in some areas, firefighters, may be requested to assist by attending an incident if AT staff are unable to attend in a timely manner. This form of assistance occurs on a reasonably regular basis in both rural

and urban operating environments and in some circumstances is not unreasonable provided that police are not engaged in higher priority incidents.

These requests recognise that police officers are certified first-aid providers and with all police vehicles equipped with first-aid kits, a police response is sometimes necessary to provide care and/or preserve life. That said, the management of fatigue amongst police officers is also an important factor in determining the extent to which police may have been able to assist.

Police support to Ambulance Tasmania and other emergency services is not raised in the annual report. I cannot find it anywhere in the report; maybe I have missed it - if I have, maybe someone could point it out to me. I have just identified a number of times that Tasmania Police have had to assist this organisation. I would have thought that within the annual report there would have been some recognition of that because it is work Tasmania Police has done and done very well, but I just do not find it anywhere in the report. I think it ought to have been there.

I want to refer now to some issues raised by the Secretary, the Commissioner of Police, in his foreword to the annual report. The Commissioner of Police refers to Project Apollo, 16 drone aircraft and the advancement it is providing for policing. We have heard a great deal about that project and the drones police are now using. I had a number of questions there and I will just raise the questions as I go through. I think they were passed on; I am not sure

Mrs Hiscutt - I have a load of answers to give you.

Mr DEAN - These questions were passed on a long time ago. My questions were -

- (1) Where are the drones retained and what is the success rate of them?
- (2) Has the evidence, if any, been tested in court as yet?

I think that is a fairly important issue -

- (3) Are they being used in the areas of persistent 'burnout' activity and if so, have they identified any of these idiot drivers?

Those who drive along the Mud Walls Road, the Colebrook Road, would have seen the burnout marks on that road. They stretch for - I actually measured the distance on one occasion when I was driving through there; it turned out to be almost 20 kilometres.

Mr PRESIDENT - Not one skid?

Mr DEAN - Well, there is almost one skid, but, no, there was a little bit of a break here and there in some of them. That is how long it went on for on that road - 15 to 20 kilometres. I could not believe it.

Mr Valentine - More money than sense.

Mr DEAN - The brain of a peanut; in fact, I think a peanut probably has more -

Ms Rattray - A very wealthy peanut.

Mr DEAN - A peanut probably has a better brain. That is not the only reason. These burnout marks are just all over the place and it is dangerous. These kids behave who behave like this and do that sort of thing - it is just beyond you. John Lees Drive out at Dilston at Launceston is similar. It is blackened. If you go to suburbs like - sorry to mention this again - Rocherlea and Ravenswood, you would swear the roads had just been resealed because they are so black with burnout marks. It is crazy.

Project Authenticate - the Commissioner of Police mentions this project, which is about the body worn cameras. The Commissioner of Police states a fact here - that is, these cameras are contributing to a decrease in assaults on police. That is good because police are not punching bags. I think the statistics now show probably four to five police officers being assaulted almost daily in this state, which is not good enough. If body worn cameras help with that reduction, that is great.

Ms Rattray - The recruitment of new police officers - that program is still underway, I think, 2020-22. So with those sorts of figures - five police officers assaulted each day in our state - you would have to wonder why people would even put their hand up and say, 'I want to be a police officer and protect our communities'.

Mr DEAN - The member makes a good point. I think that is one of the downsides of policing but there are so many other good sides to it that they far outweigh those downsides.

Ms Rattray - A bit like being a member of parliament.

Mr DEAN - You are right. There are plenty of downsides to this place.

Ms Rattray - But the good parts keep you above it.

Mr DEAN - Many of those coming into the police service do it because they want to provide a community service. They want to assist the people. They want to try to make Tasmania a better place, a safer place, and they want to help people. I think you will find that is a major part of why people want to join the police service.

The other reason is because of the multitude of different positions and jobs it provides. You can stay in the police, but you can move around so many different areas - investigative work; if you want to be a photographer, you can; if you want to be a forensic person, you can; if you want to do traffic, you can; if you want to work in an office, you can. There are so many different areas and that is another factor that interests many people coming into the job.

There was unease with these body worn cameras when they first came in. Police were a bit suspicious as to what it might actually do for them when they are completing their work. The same unease was there when I was there, with the introduction of video recording of interviews. The same unease was there then because the police had to make such a big change in their work life to accommodate these big changes coming into it.

A few questions there I had, Leader. Are they issued -

Mrs Hiscutt - I want to thank the member for putting those questions forward to give time to get some full answers.

Mr DEAN - I think that is an easier way.

Mrs Hiscutt - Thank you very much.

Mr DEAN - Plenty of notice to the police; I think they have had about 12 months notice now.

Are these body worn cameras now issued to all frontline police, to people working at the coalface? If not, what is the rollout period for them? Have there been any negative sides to their use? Are we seeing more pleas of guilty through the courts?

It was always said that these cameras would, apart from the other things they do, probably see more pleas of guilty, more people accepting their errors and accepting the offences they have been charged with. It would be interesting to know whether at this time they have had an impact, or is it still a bit too early?

A next generation policing capability review is being undertaken and police are being consulted; the Corporate Management Group is to report in due course on that.

The future for policing and its challenges will see many changes; that is a given. One change necessary will be - I have raised this here - a consolidation of all the body equipment members now carry. I often wonder if some of the smaller police officers struggle to work comfortably with it. I would be surprised if we do not see work injuries resulting from it. I will ask a question later about whether that has happened.

I notice that Barry Prismall - for those who know that journalist - wrote a piece in the paper recently that has been criticised by the Police Association of Tasmania, and good on them. I was critical - I was going to write a letter telling him he was out of order but the Police Association got to it well and truly before I did. The article related to carrying firearms in this state. Sadly, it is a necessary requirement because of what is happening.

Mr Finch - I would have complained to four or five police ministers about the carrying of guns over the years, but I have changed my tune. Our environment for people's welfare in Tasmania has changed so dramatically, I have pulled back from that and welcome seeing police officers with them.

Mr DEAN - That is a good point; thank you for raising it. It is a big issue. I carried one the whole time I was in the organisation. I carried one as a detective and, yes, I used mine a number of times as well. The sight of carrying and producing one has the desired effect at times. You have to have been there and done it to really understand what the position is at the time, what is going through your mind and the mind of the other person.

Firearms are a necessity, sadly, particularly with the drug issues we have now with ice and so on. I have no doubt that the carrying of firearms has probably saved a lot of police officers, perhaps lives, and has saved situations getting out of control simply because they are there and they have them.

Mr Prismall was out of line. He made that statement in the paper and referred to New Zealand police not carrying firearms, which is not right. He was clearly wrong about that. We had the tragic situation, only a few days later, of two police officers being shot in New Zealand. They were simply doing their job in a routine traffic inspection. One lost his life and the other is still struggling to survive. What a tragic situation.

Significant changes made in the past have been the use of videos, body worn cameras, drones and capsicum spray, to mention a few. The wellbeing of police will be a focus, including other challenges for police, into the future.

How does what is happening with police and the rioting in America impact on policing here? It does impact police here. You have people making stupid statements such as that they would be shot. All this sort of nonsense makes it hard for police. People see all this on television and follow it, and it comes back on police here as to how they have to manage that situation because they are all tarred in a similar way, unfortunately.

You have probably seen the joke going around about Australian police, Canadian police and the American police apprehending a person - the Australian police talk to the offender, try to talk them down and talk them out of it, and, if they need to, in most places the police will run, move and get out of it so there are no deaths; the Canadian police, one bang; and for the American police, it was bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, reload, bang, bang, bang, bang.

In future, we will see a greater work connection amongst police, the Tasmania Fire Service, Ambulance Tasmania and the State Emergency Service. Police have many of the skills necessary to undertake some of the functions of these emergency services, but that is not generally reciprocated in the other areas and it needs to be.

When I was at Devonport the police were run off their feet - they could not keep up with the workload - and across the road, and I am not running the people of Tasmania Fire Service down because they work hard as well, fire service officers were sleeping while waiting for a job to attend to while police were failing miserably to keep up with the tasks they were given during the night. I often thought it would be great for them to pick up some of those people and take them along to do some of the work that needed to be done. I think that could be done. I think we may see moves in future about them working more closely and working better together.

The table on page 7 of the annual report for 2018-19 is an added area and succinctly explains the main strategic focuses for the year. It is a welcome addition to the report. The new livery introduced for police vehicles is also about making the cars more visible to other road users. We have seen some of these cars on the road. Seeing police on the roads is the greatest deterrent of the lot in modifying traffic behaviours. Police on motorbikes modify traffic behaviour. The unmarked cars will catch a few offending drivers, but they have little deterrent value.

I often wondered why the police did not advertise that more, identifying they have unmarked police cars on the road. It would be good if they could have a strategy to say - and give it good coverage - that there will be five unmarked police cars patrolling the Midland Highway every day of this week, letting people know that they are there. Unless an unmarked police car stops you, you have no idea they are there. I can pick quite a few of them, but the ordinary member of the public would not be able to pick many of them. There needs to be a little more publicity. They apprehend offenders and that is good, but I think they could use them better.

The Youth at Risk Strategy is referred to in the table. It reads okay, but how is it being managed? Is its success or otherwise being measured? It is all very well having all these strategies and programs in place; I used to argue for this strongly - dare I mention the fox task force? - but unless you can measure what is happening and see the results coming from these programs -

Mrs Hiscutt - What is the task force you are talking about?

Mr DEAN - This is the Youth at Risk Strategy.

Mrs Hiscutt - The fox task force -

Mr DEAN - You will hear more about that in August. I am confident you will. I have quite a lengthy speech -

Mr Finch - Oh, good. Send me a copy.

Mr DEAN - The member for Rosevears is going to miss it, but I will probably go to his house and give him a personal first on it.

Is the Youth at Risk Strategy successful? If so, to what extent has youth recidivism been reduced? That is a measurement as to whether any good results are coming from it.

Organisational profiles are listed on pages 12 and 13 of the report. Police numbers in each of the geographical districts was raised by me forever and a day when I was a commander of police. I used to have problems with it. I have raised this every year as a parliamentarian, and also when I was a commander in charge of the Northern District. The Northern District has been challenged with its crime statistics for the past 20 years that I am aware of. Launceston, even in 2019, was being referred to as the crime capital of Tasmania. On a comparison with other districts, the Northern District was leading the pack with its problems with crime.

When I took over as the commander of the Northern District, Launceston was referred to as 'little Chicago'. Those people who lived in Launceston back in 1999-2000 would remember. The place was pretty much out of control, with assaults –

Ms Armitage - With respect, it might have been in some areas but I certainly don't recall it, no, and I have lived there since 1955.

Mr DEAN - You would have to recall 1999, if not 2000, when they had that vicious assault in the mall in Launceston. The judge described the offenders as a pack of wild animals attacking a civilian, knocking him to the ground and kicking him.

Ms Armitage - Unfortunately, there are always going to be nasty incidents but I don't believe that makes a place little Chicago.

Mr DEAN - That was one of many incidents that occurred in Launceston at the time.

Ms Armitage - I am sure you did a great job as commander, but I don't believe you changed it from little Chicago to Launceston.

Mr DEAN - I took control of crime in Launceston. If you look at the crime statistics - I will refer to the graph and hopefully it has changed - of the districts around the state and crimes and offences, there is a chart showing where the districts sit by way of criminal activity in the state. For instance: public place assaults, the districts of highest concern - north, an increase from 105 to 129; uniform patrol hours - the state is down from 177 877 to 170 843, over 7000 - and north, it is down approximately 9000.

Ms Rattray - I suggest the new police commander or whoever is in place now is doing an excellent job.

Mr DEAN - No doubt, he is doing an excellent job with the personnel he has, and I would never suggest otherwise. If you look at total offences, north, it is again the district of highest concern. I am not going to go through the figures. They are available if people want to look at them. For serious crime, the district of highest concern is the north; robbery, district of highest concern is the north; for offences against property -

Mr Gaffney - Honourable member, to clarify something: if they are catching more people creating offences or committing crime, does that mean they are doing their job better? If they didn't catch as many, that means they wouldn't be doing their jobs. We wouldn't ever want to find our police choosing not to catch anyone on any given day because they want to bring their crime statistics down. How is it reflected in the statistics? Is it per head of population?

Mr DEAN - The police numbers are worked out by per head of population and there are some details in this report. The south has 1.85 police per 1000 people, the north has 1.81 per 1000, so it is a lower percentage there. There are number of police involved in that. You can then compare that with the west, which has 2.2 police officers per 1000 people.

Mr Gaffney - Is that because of the size of the jurisdiction, because of the west coast?

Mr DEAN - Geographically, you are right. There would be a larger area for both. The Northern District covers a big area as well, right down to and across the north-east and down the east coast. Burnie or the North-Western District is set up differently, but I will talk about that in a moment.

If I go through all these other crimes, sadly, the north is on top and is the district of highest concern. When you looked further into that, each district is split up into a number of divisions of highest concern. If you look at the districts and the divisions, the divisions of highest concern, sadly and unfortunately, Launceston wins, or loses, in every category. If you look at public place assaults, Launceston is the division of highest concern; offences against a person, Launceston Division is of highest concern; total offences, Launceston Division is of highest concern; serious crime, the same; robbery, the same; offences against property, the same; home burglary, the same; business burglary, the same; property damage, the same; motor vehicle burglary, the same; stolen motor vehicles, the same; and fraud, also the same.

Ms Armitage - Maybe you need to say northern Tasmania.

Mr DEAN - No, that is not northern Tasmania. This is the division of Launceston.

Ms Armitage - It includes Windermere and Rosevears.

Mr DEAN - The division of Launceston covers an area, but I am not talking about a district, I am talking about a division and there is a difference. This is a problem for the Police Association of Tasmania and they are battling hard for the Northern District to catch up with police numbers. If police are running around, reactive all the time - and that is what is happening - there is little time for proactive policing and that is where they miss out. They are unable to do those other things that the police do to get people doing the right thing. That is one of the issues. The Commander of

Police Brett Smith is a great person and he is doing a good job. He is an articulate guy, he is up there, he is seen to be about and he is working hard.

Ms Rattray - He is on the radio quite regularly, talking about what is happening in the district generally.

Mr DEAN - I meet with Brett fairly regularly in doing my work in that area. He and the police there are doing a great job. If you looked at the work the police are doing in that area, they would probably be, if not on top, leading the pack in Tasmania with their work and their arrests. They are working extremely hard.

One of the problems you have, as the Police Association of Tasmania often refers to it, is that the Northern District only has the one 24-hour police station and that is Launceston, whereas Southern District has four 24-hour police stations in Hobart, Bellerive, Bridgewater and Glenorchy. The Western District has two, Devonport and Burnie, which obviously has a big impact on the capacity of police to work within their areas. One in the north, four in the south and two in the north-west. There needs to be a review of many of these issues. I am aware there have been changes in the boundary divisions, and I am not quite sure where they have gone.

Having said that, I am not sure of the position of making comparisons with previous years. There is a footnote in the annual report saying that the figures are not directly comparable with previous annual reports. I am not sure what is meant by that, maybe the Leader might explain.

Under the heading of 'Leadership' on page 19 of the report, we now see some police carrying two pairs of handcuffs. What is the carrying limit for a police officer and where will they fit all of this on their belt? It is an issue for police, with some police working in certain areas now being required to carry two sets of equipment. I understand why that is the case. I had the situation reversed on me once, with my handcuffs being put on me, by a crook. It was not a pleasant experience. It is not in the area where you were going, Leader -

Mrs Hiscutt - Stop.

Ms Armitage - You did say you still have those handcuffs, member for Windermere.

Mr PRESIDENT - He can neither confirm nor deny.

Mr DEAN - We will move on, Mr President.

The Wellness Program - it is not my intention to cover all issues in the report but this is one area where much work is needed and it is being done - concerns the PAT, and it should concern the executive and all within the department. Policing it is a tough job, added to by the violence police see and are subjected to - the horrible crime scenes, road crashes, mangled bodies, injured and deceased children, and it just goes on and on. The notifying of parents and other people of a loved one who has been killed is on top of all those. You see a mangled body and police are trained to deal with these issues, but when it comes to telling a parent at 3 o'clock in the morning that their loved one has been killed in a tragic road accident, it is not an easy task. I have been there and done that a number of times, and it really rips you apart.

Police see these scenes, sadly, some on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. They are fairly common, unfortunately, and police are required to make split-second critical decisions that could

mean life or death, and that again places a lot of pressure on a police officer. Their wellbeing is a critical part of their service and the move to provide a wellbeing program will be welcomed by members. When you take into account that, on average, four police officers are assaulted each day it puts into perspective just how vulnerable police are and their need for support. This program provides for both Tasmania Police and Ambulance Tasmania staff. I am not sure I fully understand what it is about and/or what it will deliver -

Mr Valentine - Is that figure of four being assaulted each day the Tasmania figure?

Mr DEAN - That is Tasmania Police officers. It averages to about four per day; it is in the 2018-19 annual report, but I think it has been fairly consistent over a period of time. My question to the Leader is: what is the Wellness Program and will it work? Hopefully, it will.

Family violence, electronic monitoring, Project Vigilance - all of this is referred to. Project Vigilance is a welcomed direction change as it will provide a greater level of security and safety for domestic violence victims. Electronic monitoring is now working across the state, with an independent review period set in place. That now has been handed down and I have a notice on the Notice Paper. Hopefully, I will be talking more about that review in August.

The Tasmanian Government Radio Network -

Ms Rattray - I have that on my list.

Mr DEAN - I will leave it for you because all I want to say is that this project has been around forever; it must be close to two decades or more. In my time, there was a whole change of the communication system within the police service. It really caused mayhem because of the gremlins in it and all the other things that happened. A tender request was issued to the market in November 2018 and responses closed in May 2019 for evaluation. Where is that at? The member for McIntyre will probably raise more about it.

Ms Rattray - I think you have already asked my question, so that is fine.

Mr DEAN - What is the identified delivery date for the service? When is it going to happen? The benefit of the delay will be seen in the changes in technology during that time and a better service will be provided. If you look at technology and the way we are going, it is changing daily. There comes a time where we have to make the move, to make the change, and look at it again in two years time to try to catch up again.

Ms Rattray - If there is no action on securing that coordinated network as soon as possible, the actual cost is just going to increase and it will be out of reach.

Mr DEAN - It will blow out. You might be able to go into that in more detail when you speak.

Public safety - page 30, public place assaults - is quite disturbing. There has been a 10 per cent increase in the past two years, 1 per cent in 2017-18 and 9 per cent in 2018-19. On the evidence we now have from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' latest Crime Victimization survey, only about half of the victims of assault reported the crime to police. That is a concern. It will be interesting to see the figures for 2019-20, for the COVID-19 period. Police are now saying there has been a downturn in a lot of criminal activity during this period, and that is good. Hopefully, that will be reflected in some better figures for this year.

The ABS data from this survey also shows that Tasmanians are more likely to be victims of assault than people in any other state or territory. The 2018-19 report tells us that 889 public place assaults were reported to police - that is, 71 more assaults in the 2017-18 revised figures. If only half are reported, it is not surprising people in Launceston are concerned for their safety in the streets, particularly at night. It is interesting to see the number of people who do not walk the streets at night for fear of physical attacks. In Tasmania, is that good enough? Is that what we should expect? If it is not, what can we do about it?

Proactive, not reactive, policing will help, and we have made a case for additional police in Launceston. With only 60 per cent of people feeling safe at night while nationally it is 54 per cent, it is far from good enough.

Serious crime is listed on page 35, and is creating much discussion in the state, particularly in Launceston. The clearance rate for crime in these areas has remained fairly good in most areas. When police become involved in a complex investigation, it takes them out of action for quite some time. I recall a case in Devonport I was involved in as a detective. It took us four years of persistence to track down the crooks. It was an armed hold-up, a robbery, a kidnapping with people driven around in cars and goodness knows what else. It took four years, a huge time out of the lives of the detectives I was responsible for, to resolve that matter.

Mr Gaffney - They were from Launceston.

Mr DEAN - No. This was when I was at the CIB in Devonport.

Mr Gaffney - No, but they were from Launceston.

Mr DEAN - Oh, the crooks? In fact, they were from the mainland. One was from George Town but the others were from the mainland.

Consorting with outlaw motorcycle gangs for criminal purposes is an area in the legislation we passed 18 months ago and is intended to stop or at least control motorcycle gang crime. Since then, 87 official warning notices were served on a total of 24 convicted offenders, which means that multiple notices have been served on the same offender. Have there been any breaches of the notices? If so, what action has been taken? I note an additional motorcycle gang listed in the group is also targeted because of its nefarious activity.

We should not stereotype people, but the fact is that if you are a member of one of the earmarked and registered gangs, you become a target for police. The saying is, 'If you fly with crows, you are bound to get shot at.' There are good members in these gangs; several people I classify as friends of mine are members of an outlaw motorcycle gang and to my knowledge very responsible, law-abiding people. Some do the right thing, but unfortunately these gangs are tainted and we know involved with a lot of criminal activity.

Firearm thefts and crime: firearm thefts and the use of firearms in crime is sadly a common practice. As I have always said, crooks will always have them and always know where to get firearms. Are we able to compare firearm crime today with previous years - that is, the stealing of them, use of them in crime, use in property shoot-ups and/or suicides? If so, what are the comparisons over the past three financial years? Where are firearms used in crime coming from? We know most of them are coming from stealing of firearms, from break and enters.

While we have amnesties on hand backs - they can be handed in at any time without fear of charge; a lot of people do not realise that - I think the law is still the same. If anybody has a firearm they do not want, or is not registered or licensed, they should hand them over to police. Taking them in in the right manner, pulled apart or broken, so they can be seen to be safe at the time. They can hand them in at any time without fear of charge. That is unless they have stolen the thing. That can happen; it is there, but it is not well known.

Mandatory penalties should apply to stealing firearm crimes. Why would you steal a firearm if it was not to be sold to other criminals or used for criminal purposes? There has been a bit in the press about this of late. Other people have referred to it, and I also. Stealing a firearm should be a separate crime with severe penalties applying. We have to try to stop this from happening. We have to try to give people who lawfully own these firearms some protection.

Mrs Hiscutt - They are not the criminals, are they?

Mr DEAN - No, they are not the criminals at all - 99 per cent of the people who own firearms do the right thing and have them locked up, but they are unfortunately targets, particularly if information gets out they have them. We need to look at how can we stop this from happening, or at least having some control over it. Making it a specific crime with severe penalties might be a start.

Some here will say, would it be a deterrent and/or sentencing is a matter for a judge. No, keep away from that. I always raise at this stage the Heath Morton situation. A very valuable firearm, valued at some \$20 000, was taken from his possession about five years ago. The police still had it when I last contacted Heath about eight or 12 months ago. I have lost contact with him. I wanted to raise it here again today. I will track him down to see whether this matter has been resolved.

Drugs referred to in the report - serious drug offences and the total drug offenders for 2018-19 dropped off, but is this a sign of fewer drugs out there or fewer police activities in that area because of their other responsibilities? I am not sure what the situation is there. Ice seems to be all around us. There is the perception the larger percentage of offenders appearing in court on criminal charges have some relationship to ice. This really is in the papers all the time; the amount of ice around is just horrendous. It would be interesting to know the percentage where ice drugs are used as a reason - not an explanation - for why a person has committed a crime, a serious offence. It would be interesting to have the statistics. I would think it would have to be fairly high.

Ms Armitage - In the newspaper or online today was the big bust of Tasmanian police of \$1 million of ice through the mail.

Mr DEAN - I was aware that was going on. I should have said at the beginning of my comments that I have a son in the police service, and it makes no conflict of interest in what I do and say here. I have a specific interest in that he was engaged in this. Great things they doing.

Ms Rattray - The member mentioned it is attributed to ice. It is also used as an excuse.

Mr DEAN - The courts do not accept it. If you go back very early in the piece with drugs, people were able to use that as a mitigation in the crime, but that has changed. The courts now are not able to accept it as mitigation in any way for the commission of a crime or offence. But the member is right, the crooks used it as an explanation to try to say, 'If I were not on this drug, I would not have committed these crimes.'. That is what they try to say.

Ms Armitage - They still use alcohol as mitigating circumstances.

Mr DEAN - Yes, you are absolutely right. I struggle and have issues with the drug situation and its impact in crime. Murders and other serious crime.

You could talk for hours about violence against women and children, and there are a couple of motions on the books in relation to this. During the year there were 2516 notifications from schools regarding 3574 students affected by family violence.

That is 2516 notifications from schools of students impacted in some way by family violence. Very sad. Police recorded 3579 family violence incidents under the Family Violence Act 2004. This was an increase from 2017-18 of 103 reported cases; since 2014-15, when there were 2673 reports, the increase has been 906 cases. That is not all, because we had 2377 incidents classified as family arguments reported for 2018-19. This is an increase on 2017-18 of 132 reports.

If past years are relied on, one can expect that these increases - particularly family violence incidents - will be much higher than as reported at the time of this annual report being done.

Ms Rattray - Does the member consider there has obviously been a focus in the community to alert people to their rights that may well have led to an increase in reporting? We have had a focus on family violence as a state and as a community, and I suggest perhaps people feel more comfortable in reporting those matters.

Mr DEAN - The police have gotten to the member, haven't they? This is what they have been saying for the last 10 years. The member makes a good point. I will refer to this in a moment.

I will mention the corrected figures. This is what happens with figures in annual reports. Many figures are corrected from one year to the next because they are not included in the year in which something happens and they become known later on and so on.

The corrected figures are normally always much higher or lower than whatever the worst position is in relation to these matters, so the figures I give you are likely to be increased in next year's figures.

The corrected figures for 2017-18 saw an increase of 91 serious family incidents. In the corrected figures, there were an extra 91. The police have continually until the 2018-19 year used this statement or similar to cover for the increase in family violence figures -

Figure 7 shows a consistent upward trend in reported family violence incidents over the past five years. An increase in incidents does not necessarily mean that family violence is increasing. It could also suggest an increase in reporting to police, which would be positive. The underlying reason for changes in reported numbers is not conclusively known.

This year, or for 2018-19, that statement has changed somewhat. I do not know whether it was my consistent arguing on this point or what, but it has changed slightly. I will read what the statement is this year -

There has been an upward trend in reported family violence incidents over the past five years, as shown in figure 8. The increased levels of reporting may

suggest a changing in culture in the community with greater level of awareness and reduced levels of tolerance for family violence.

It is a slight change, a variation, from what we had previously.

Ms Rattray - A new person writing the report?

Mr DEAN - If we are continually of the belief and view, and police are not saying that is the case - they are saying it could be a cause; that is what they are saying - the evidence would show this position has been identified to the public and the police, that they are much safer now in reporting these offences and have been given more support. No doubt it would influence some people to report a matter they would not otherwise have reported - I accept that - but the numbers are quite high, the increases we have been seeing are quite high. I think we have to start to think that maybe there is more family violence out there now and we really have to do something about it.

Is what we are doing now enough? Are all the strategies we have in place out there now working? Are they returning what we want from them? That is, a decrease in this crime because it is an abhorrent crime. It is not acceptable. We talk a lot about it here. In my view, it is a time for us to really hit this hard. There are people out there who know a lot more about it than I do, but we need to see change in this area. As I said, are the current strategies and approaches to family violence working to decrease the crime? If yes, where is the evidence to show this? It may provide for more support, but where is the evidence it is all working?

Maybe the time is here for the University of Tasmania to be involved. I refer to UTAS because I recently visited Fiji, which has a very severe time in relation to family violence. The problem was so severe that the University of Fiji was asked to look at family violence, to put together a review, and to put some recommendations about what could be done and how they could get on top of this atrocious crime. That is what it is - a crime. Should we follow that line? Family violence is just not acceptable.

What is happening is cruel and we know the devastation it is causing around the country. The recent tragedy that occurred in Queensland - and it was recent when I put this report together - is beyond the comprehension and understanding of us all. People would have seen that. You do not need me to remind you of it, where the husband, or the partner, set alight the car and burnt his wife and incinerated his children in that car. It is just beyond belief. That brings home to all of us the tragedy and the seriousness of this crime - just intolerable. When I saw that, I had tears in my eyes. You could not but see it that way. It could not have anything else but that effect on you. As a human being, it had to. As a human being, the impact was just devastating, absolutely devastating.

The issue is, and other statements have been made in relation to this, that offenders have been using that incident as a threat against their families, against their partners and wives. Absolutely the pits. To make threats in itself is a crime, of course, under the legislation, but that is almost as serious as committing the offence, in my view. It is just unacceptable.

We have to do more to prevent the crime. The time is here for strong action. Education through the schools - I know we are doing that, but we need to do a lot more on how to treat people, women in particular. The penalties have to be harsh. Mandatory penalties, dare I say it? Prohibition on alcohol sales in some cases, electronic surveillance, mandatory reporting of a crime - it should be mandatory. We know that perhaps only half these crimes are reported as well. You look at the

figures I referred to - how many are not being reported? Names should be placed on registers, and there are other strategies that could be considered. It is high time for us to go down that path. It is such a vile crime committed on defenceless women in the main. It is a cowardly act committed by weak individuals, thugs.

Assault and sexual assault - this is reported in the report with family violence. The details and statistics on assault and sexual assault against women and children are on page 39 of the annual report. In addition to the family violence reports, there were at least 1457 assaults against women for the same reporting period, an increase on 2017-18 of 20 assaults reported. These are not related to family violence. On top of this, 116 sexual assaults on women were reported, an increase on 2017-18 of seven crimes. It is not surprising some women see men as evil; it is not surprising at all.

I think the time is with us for a meaningful discussion around the subject, perhaps an inquiry. This does not have to sit with Government Administration Committee B. I have talked about this and raised it in a number of other circles now. I hope to raise it with the University of Tasmania as well as to see where and what we can do in regard to this.

I go to shoplifting and stealing - in 2018-19, the decrease in known crime was from 2489 to 2380. We know that would be the very tip of the iceberg. I do not think too many businesses would agree there has been a decrease in shoplifting. It is stealing. That is what it is - it is stealing. People try to rationalise their behaviour when they are stealing from shops by saying, 'Oh, it is not stealing - it is just shoplifting - that is all it is, just shoplifting.'; 'It is a petty thing, really nothing in it. It is not a crime of dishonesty; it is shoplifting.' We need to get away from that. It is not shoplifting at all, it is stealing. It is a crime of dishonesty and it should be treated as a crime of dishonesty.

Ms Armitage - The Leader found some handcuffs.

Mr DEAN - Okay.

Ms Forrest - I have the phone number of the commissioner if I need it.

Mr DEAN - Do you? Thank you.

Mrs Hiscutt - I think the member might be fortunate that it is the State Controller and he is too busy to answer.

Ms Forrest - He might not be. He might take a call from me if I am desperate enough.

Mr DEAN - We have serial shoplifters, stealers, earning a living from it. We had one in Launceston recently - sorry, member for Launceston - a person aged 29 years, who has been stealing from shops most of her life. On this occasion she appeared on more than 20 charges. On one count - this is incredible - she walked out with \$1678-worth of stolen tools from a hardware place. A professional indeed. How do you get out with that amount? I do not know.

Ms Rattray - Through you, Mr President, tools are very expensive. It would not take a lot to add up to that sort of money.

Mr DEAN - You are right. I am not sure of the number of items. I do not think it was mentioned in the press release either.

Ms Rattray - I know they are often bulky though. I doubt you could put them up your jumper.

Mr DEAN - Yes. But it is an issue.

I want to touch on traffic. Fixed and mobile speed cameras modify speed in their locations and for short distances only. What do we have speed cameras on the roads for? I thought it was about road safety, ensuring people comply with the speed limits as you travel along the roads. If people slow down, all or most the people in Tasmania know exactly where they all are. It would be interesting to know the statistics of mainland or international visitors to our state caught on these cameras. The locals know where they are, so I would not have thought there would be too many locals getting caught by these cameras.

Ms Rattray - From the budget Estimates process we know a lot of the mainland or other visitors to our state who do get caught do not pay up very often. It is a waste of resource.

Ms Armitage - There are generally parking fines, too.

Mr DEAN - We are not getting the value out of our six speed cameras that we should be able to get because each one is signposted with a speed camera message a couple of kilometres away. Why do we need to do that? What are the cameras for? They are there to improve road safety by stopping people from speeding. That is what they are there for. To get the ultimate value from them, we do not need them signposted and we ought to do something about it.

New South Wales is going down that path right now. It has identified this as an issue and the state is not getting the return from its fixed cameras that the authorities feel they should be getting. The minister in New South Wales is now looking at removing the signs and not having the cameras signposted.

Ms Armitage - Are you suggesting that rather than people slowing down because they know there is a camera, you would rather they speed and be fined?

Mr DEAN - No, I would prefer to see these signs strategically placed on the roads. You might have one as you leave Launceston, one in the Midlands or somewhere simply to say speed cameras are in place in this state. Simply have them strategically located on the highways but not right next to or near to where the speed cameras are. Let people know there are speed cameras in this state -

Mr Finch - It seems to me, member for Windermere, that you are promoting the speed cameras as a revenue-raiser rather than the safety proposition you are putting to the public.

Mr DEAN - If you pass a sign as you, say, move out of Launceston on the Midland Highway that says that speed cameras are in place in this state, you would look at that and then drive according to the speed limits that apply on the road. Currently people know where the speed cameras are; they slow down and then they take off. I had one the other day.

Mr Willie - Most modern cars tell you anyway. My car tells me about all sorts of traffic conditions. You can take the signs down, but the car is going to inform you anyway.

Mr DEAN - We could get more out of our fixed speed cameras than presently. Not revenue-raising at all; it is not about that - it is about getting the message through to people that we

have speed cameras in this state and they need to comply with the law the whole time and not just on a section of the road.

Mr Finch - It sounded to me from what you were saying that you are concerned that not enough revenue is being raised, yet you were in the campaign many years ago about the odium the police department was getting about raising revenue by trapping people by putting cameras at the bottom of hills and that sort of thing. It was a terrible time for motorists in Tasmania.

Mr DEAN - Yes, spot-on. I was very vocal and concerned. It almost got me sacked. I could not accept the quota happening; it was a real issue and I got into a great deal of trouble for not supporting it. I did not mention revenue at all. It is not about revenue; it is about road safety. Road safety is the ultimate. That is what we want.

Mr Valentine - It can go the other way regarding some of the signs left up after workers have left the site - 40 kilometres per hour on a major highway is so frustrating.

Mr DEAN - We had a PAC committee inquiry on speed limits.

Ms Forrest - Yes, it was revealed in the Auditor-General's report.

Mr DEAN - Yes, that is right. Where speed limit signs are left out, are not used properly at roadworks and so on, severe action could be taken against the team or company involved in that work. We were told that would happen if it was identified. I am hoping the member is right because it is frustrating when it happens.

Mr Valentine - It does not encourage people to do the right thing.

Mr DEAN - I will mention the quest for statistics. With fatalities in Tasmania, in the last years, we cannot decrease them from about the 34 to 35 mark. In 2009, before we had all the speed limit decreases and the other things we now have, the fatality rate was 69. Average deaths in Tasmania were between 60 and 80. It has dropped in the last years. In 2018, we had 33 fatalities; in 2017, 32; 2016, 36; 2015, 33; 2014, 33; 2012, 31; and 2011, 24, which was great.

We have it down to the mid-30 mark and do not seem to be able to drop it any further. It means we need to do more work in this area. We have safer cars, safer roads - all of that - so one would expect the number of fatalities to continually drop.

If you look at the statistics for serious injuries, they remain somewhat similar. Last year, 2018, were 281 serious injuries; the years before - 269, 282, 298, 267. It is always about the mid-200s and not dropping.

I would not be doing my job if I did not mention evade police. Every paper you read today sees police having to deal with some moron evading them in a vehicle. While there was a drop in the number of evades from 451 in 2017-18 to 409 in 2018-19, that is still more than one every day of the year, while 285 people were charged with the more serious offence of evading police, aggravated circumstances.

How many innocent lives were put at risk during the 409 evade cases? We do not know, but suffice to say, many, including the lives of police. We are not doing enough in this area. It is not

good enough we have people evading police on a regular basis. We need to try to do something about it. It is sad this is happening.

Evade police should attract the mandatory penalty of a long suspension, jail or home detention for a long period, no vehicle ownership for a period and the vehicle involved either sold, confiscated or crushed. It is pretty ordinary.

Alcohol and drug use. I do not want to harp on it, other than simply to say there has been a pick up in the number of drug tests done in the year, which is good. We are seeing more drivers being charged with having illicit drugs or prescription drugs in their system than those with alcohol. However, as has been pointed out, there is no limit on drugs in the system - it does not matter what level, you have committed an offence under the current legislation and current law.

I notice that Greg Barnes, civil libertarian that he is, has made a statement on this. He said it is all wrong and they need to have a review of it. I do not fully disagree that there should be a review of it, but the law needs to be strong in relation to people driving with illicit and prescription drugs in their systems and so on.

Mobile phone use continues to cause problems on our roads. Once again, I am not sure we are doing enough in that area. Police detected 2445 drivers using mobile phones. I reckon I detected about 1000. I suspect all of us have.

Ms Forrest - Was that counting yourself?

Mr DEAN - No, I have a hands-free. Not guilty at all.

Ms Forrest - There are some who would argue that even using hands-free is a distraction, though.

Mr DEAN - That is within the law. You can use a hands-free phone in your car but you cannot use a phone that is not hands-free. That is the law. I accept the law, and I comply with the law.

To answer the member for Rosevears, I cannot say that absolutely every time I am on the road I comply with the speed limits. Sometimes I am unintentionally a bit over the limit.

Ms Rattray - I will be writing out a ticket about that right now.

Mr DEAN - But my car pulls me back into line.

Ms Armitage - I have to disagree. I have been in your car and your car does not pull you back - it just tells you are speeding.

Mr DEAN - It tells me I am speeding. You are right.

Ms Armitage - Regularly.

Mr DEAN - Fair go, Mr President. Come on.

Ms Forrest - I think you have overtaken the member for Rosevears in the past.

Mr Finch - While cruise control is a good friend to those of us who are on the roads a lot, if you do not use it or if you have that turned it off for some reason, and your mind is ticking over on issues of the day or something you are thinking about, you can very easily lose concentration. With modern cars, you do not get a real sense that you have exceeded the speed limit particularly at 110 kilometres per hour. It is easy to go over that on a good highway.

Mr DEAN - I agree exactly with what you are saying. You can unintentionally do it. It happens. The member is right. You do not mean to do it, but it happens.

Ms Rattray - If you are the member for McIntyre and you are travelling in many of her areas, you cannot possibly go at the speed limit because the roads just do not allow for it.

Ms Forrest - It is a limit, not a challenge.

Mr DEAN - For the information of the member for Murchison, Tasmania Police is trying to bring more women into its organisation. It is working well with that. Currently, according to 2018-19 figures, we have 885 men in the job and 449 women, which is great. It is gradually increasing. The numbers are becoming more acceptable.

Ms Rattray - Does the member know if, out of the overall increase of 125 police officers by 2022, there is a number they are looking for in the gender split?

Mr DEAN - I am not aware of it. I think the Commissioner of Police and other leaders within the organisation have said they are trying to get some equality with gender in the organisation and that they are working on that, trying to appeal to women to come into the organisation. They do that well, but I do not know if they have any other strategies in place. Maybe the Leader might be able to tell us that.

If you look at the State Service, it is the other way. In the State Service is we have 320 women in the police service area and 212 men. There is a difference there, which is good.

Ms Forrest - We should do the pay comparisons across both areas. That would be quite telling.

Mr DEAN - If you do the pay comparison, a female employee in a male position in the police organisation gets exactly the same salary as the male gets; there is no difference in salary.

Ms Forrest - That is not what I am talking about; you misunderstand the question.

Mr DEAN - I know where the member is coming from with those in senior positions and all the rest of it; that is what she is talking about.

Ms Forrest - The difference is women are in the lower paid roles and men are in the higher paid roles.

Mr DEAN - Things are changing. When I was in the organisation, I think there were seven women in the organisation. There were about 600 to 700 men. So, over time it is changing. It is changing now. We are seeing women in leadership positions in the police organisation; there are a number of inspectors now, even at the very highest level next to the commissioner. We have assistant commissioners and so on and commanders. It is changing and it will continue to change in that way.

Once it was never recognised. The belief was that women could not do the job,. That was it. They could never be police. The seven or so who were there when I was there were all involved in roles within the community other than coalface policing. They were not involved in that because it was then considered it was too great a risk for them and they were not capable of doing it. But it has changed.

It is good to see some positions are now becoming permanent in the Special Operations Group - SOG - an area where police are trained to the highest degree to become involved in violent and situations that could become a risk. We can look at what happened in Launceston recently in that area, where the offender was sentenced to eight years imprisonment.

Ms Rattray - The siege?

Mr DEAN - Yes, in relation to that siege.

Ms Rattray - It was in Trevallyn, I think.

Mr DEAN - Not in Launceston.

But the SOG was involved in that. Its members were there for long hours on duty. At the end of the siege, the SOG had to make split second decisions. I can talk at some length on this because of my personal friend. They have this guy counting down. He said once he got to zero or whatever, he was going to shoot the lady he had in the house with him. The SOG had to decided there and then. What do we do? As you know, they blew the backdoor off its hinges and mesmerised the offender. They were able to take control of the situation without any injury; it was extremely well done. Tasmania Police can be highly commended for their action on that occasion. I think the judge expressed his admiration of the SOG on that occasion in his sentencing.

I wanted to raise an issue that the Police Association of Tasmania has talked to me at length about. That is, forced blood tests for offenders who spit on police or where there is a blood exchange when people are being arrested and so on. New South Wales is looking closely at this now. I think it might even have legislation drawn up.

Where that happens, the offending person, or it could be the victim, will be forced to have a blood test. I think it can take up to anywhere like six months for a police officer to be assessed as to whether they have contracted some horrible disease as a result of the contamination or exchange of fluids. The police officer virtually receives a sentence of six months with their activities. They have to be very careful about what they do at home. Their physical activities at home are impacted for that time. If there were forced blood tests here, that assessment could be made within days to see whether the person who passed on that fluid has a disease. It really does need to be looked at; New South Wales is looking closely at it. It is a horrible situation for police to be involved in.

I refer again to a case up north, where a female spat on a police officer. She received a \$450 fine but the police officer got a six-month sentence in a way and has to wrestle with the fact of not knowing whether they had contracted a disease or anything in the meantime. The Police Association of Tasmania is looking at this and I will be giving it every support that I possibly can in the circumstances.

I will leave it at that. I commend considering and noting of the police annual report now on the Table.

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for again raising the police annual report. It is always worthwhile -

Mr Dean - But not Launceston?

Ms ARMITAGE - I appreciate when you say 'Launceston' continually, you do not only mean the electorate of Launceston, and that crimes happen in many areas of the greater Launceston area.

It clearly has been a busy year for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management with a number of programs implemented both within the department and in conjunction with other stakeholders.

Since the annual report was published, so much has happened in our world that relates to the police and emergency management that I would like to take some time to speak about it. This motion has been on the Notice Paper for a while, and I have changed this speech quite a few of times over the last few weeks, so I am glad we are actually doing it today, otherwise I might have had to change it again.

Over the last weeks, we could not turn on our televisions without seeing the shocking footage of the riots occurring across America and the world in response to the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of a police officer whose mandate was to protect and serve, no doubt exacerbated by the coronavirus restrictions that have been imposed.

For the most part, these riots, and the incidences of peaceful protest, are an expression of grief and the desire for change. In reflecting on these matters, I consider how lucky we are in Tasmania and in Australia. This is by no means to say that our system is perfect, but in times of great tragedy in Australia, from the Port Arthur massacre to the bushfires that recently ravaged our country, Australians come together in unity in the spirit of cooperation and reveal our best selves.

It is said that no-one hates a bad cop more than a good cop; in the overwhelming majority of cases, police are good people who serve their communities with good intentions. I emphasise my support for our Tasmania Police, our good cops, who consistently do the right thing for communities and for each other.

So much has changed in Tasmania and the world throughout this coronavirus crisis. There has been an effect on crime, criminal behaviour, emergency response, management and mitigation.

I note that in April it was reported that crime rates had dropped across the state by around 10 per cent over the preceding month. *The Examiner* reported that serious crime had also decreased although business burglaries had remained steady compared to the same time last year.

Tasmania Police is to be congratulated for its outstanding work during the coronavirus pandemic, with its officers being required to take on additional roles over and above their usual day-to-day duties. The same is absolutely true of our other emergency response units, whose jobs have become more complex and stressful owing to the pandemic taking hold.

Another issue that the coronavirus lockdown has revealed is something that perhaps is not unexpected, and that is the significant reduction in public place assaults involving alcohol and

drugs, down 89 per cent, and the issuing of liquor infringement notices, which has also gone down by a similar amount.

Obviously, the closing of pubs and clubs has had this result, but a reduction in these types of offences is something we ought to strive for in any case. I am sure the department will be looking into how this momentum can be maintained as we ease our way out of the restrictions we have all been subjected to over the past weeks and months.

A further but probably not an unexpected side effect of the lockdown has been the immediate slowdown in Tasmania's road toll. According to *The Advocate*, Tasmania had a shocking start to the year in terms of road toll deaths recorded being higher than the previous year, but noted an immediate downturn in road deaths once the lockdown was implemented. Again, Tasmania Police has my overwhelming appreciation and gratitude for taking the changes required by the coronavirus in its stride and by implementing lockdown checkpoints in a manner that aimed to prevent the spread of the serious disease and not necessarily to punish people for not staying home.

Now, more than ever, being a police officer has never been so significant and so fraught. Only a couple of weeks ago, the Launceston Police headquarters literally came under attack when a Molotov cocktail was thrown in the direction of the diesel storage tanks located just outside the building. It is believed to have been in response to a criminal investigation relating to drugs and stolen property. To attack the police headquarters is also to attack our community, and I wish to convey my serious support for Tasmania's police, particularly those stationed at Launceston headquarters. I hope the judiciary applies an adequate penalty to the offenders when they are caught.

A lot has been happening for the department throughout the year with an important milestone being the implementation of the multi-agency component of the emergency services computer-aided dispatch - ESCAT - which was rolled out for Tasmania Police in October 2017, the Tasmania Fire Service in September 2018 and Ambulance Tasmania in June 2019. This provides a more effective and efficient information-sharing platform. I note that in June 2019, Tasmania became the first Australian jurisdiction in which police, fire, SES and ambulance services are on the same computer-aided dispatch system. I am sure that is a lot better, member for Windermere, than it was during your time and certainly would be a lot more efficient.

Mr Dean - Pardon?

Ms ARMITAGE - It would have to be a lot more efficient now than it was during your time. You were not listening. I listened to every word you said. I am talking about the computer-aided dispatch system.

This is a huge achievement and I congratulate all involved, as the benefits this will provide to emergency management will be significant. Likewise, a successful migration to a new triple zero platform was implemented to manage emergency calls to the fire service, police and ambulance Tasmania in early 2019. This new platform also brought noise reduction, simplified operator interfaces and a sophisticated queueing system to manage these calls. I further congratulate the department for this successful outcome.

In a similar vein, the establishment of Project Unify, a strategy to replace a number of legacy and ageing policing information system within the department - you are actually putting me off by

looking at me - was initiated. I understand the new Atlas system is now in the process of being implemented with phase 1 of Project Unify being launched in October 2019.

I think we can all comprehend the challenges that come along with implementing large-scale changes in big organisations. I hope the process is proactive and transparent to ensure proper positive implementation. The \$300 000 provided by the Tasmanian Government to the department to implement initiatives to reduce shoplifting - and I agree with the member for Windermere that the word 'shoplifting' does not have the same thought or connotation as the word 'theft'. It really does not. As you are aware, I am an 'independent person' with Tasmania Police and many times you have people come in, young people under 18, for shoplifting. They really do not see they have done anything particularly wrong. It is a real issue; I certainly agree with you on that point.

To reduce shoplifting from Tasmanian businesses has already brought positive results despite program delivery being in its formative stages. The annual report notes there has been a 4 per cent decrease in shoplifting, from 2489 offences in 2017-18 to 2380 in 2018-19. It is still far too high, particularly with the way businesses are now suffering with COVID-19. It obviously needs to decrease far more. A holistic approach has been taken to tackling the issue of shoplifting, including engaging retailers in plans to protect their businesses and proactive campaigning by Crime Stoppers Tasmania to work with members of the community to identify offenders and disrupt their behaviours.

I was interested to read about the progress of the Safe Families Coordination Unit which engages in the identification of high-risk family violence offenders. Tasmania Police is the lead agency for this unit. It takes a multi-agency collaborative approach to tackling family violence and works with the departments of Justice, Health, Communities Tasmania and Education to provide assistance to victims of family violence through the provision of timely and targeted actions.

I look forward to the preliminary results of Project Vigilance, a collaboration between Tasmania Police and the Department of Justice in trialling electronic monitoring of high-risk family violence perpetrators. It is hoped an ongoing policy response can be devised by the Department of Justice for the ever-increasing problem of family violence.

However, this being the case, it is still disheartening to know the number of family violence incidents in Tasmania during the 2018-19 year was 3579. This is above the year before, well above the national average of 3285 reports and continues a trend of rising incidents over the past five years.

The annual report states the increased levels of reporting may suggest a change in culture in the community with greater levels of awareness and reduced levels of tolerance for family violence. This may very well be true, but I believe this would be worth investigating further and finding more concrete reasons for the continuing rise rather than a suggestion of changing culture or reduced levels of tolerance.

Having a more solid idea would additionally assist the Safe Families Coordination Unit to best target the resources to most effectively address this scourge in our community. I encourage the department to devise a way to gain a better understanding of this. I note I made this exact point when noting last year's annual report and I am disappointed nothing still seems to have been done about this.

Another big development for Tasmania Police during the 2018-19 year was the implementation of Project Authenticate, which delivered body worn cameras to frontline police officers statewide. The benefits in this have been two-fold: first, total offences against police have been reduced; and, second, this technology has enabled police to better collect contemporaneous evidence at crime scenes to support investigations and prosecutions.

This has continued not only with police, but also with parking inspectors in Launceston, who also wear cameras. Having spoken to them they tell me they are having many fewer confrontations with people complaining about parking fines and meters when they are wearing the cameras, so the cameras certainly benefit many.

The 2018-19 year saw more progress being made by way of enhanced recruitment and proactive care of police officers in the force. The pledge by the Tasmanian Government to increase the number of full-time equivalent officers by 125 FTEs to a total of 1358 FTEs across the state has made progress.

A mix of new recruits and accelerated training program members joined Tasmania Police, which boosted the total number of FTEs to 1286 by the end of the year. As this recruitment continues to be rolled out, I am optimistic about the capacity for qualified candidates to join Tasmania Police and have a positive effect on our communities.

Project Wellbeing is a further initiative to proactively address health and wellbeing of the emergency services workforce across the entire department. This wellness program will prove more options for staff and volunteers and their families to access resources and information on general health and wellbeing. The establishment of a new wellbeing unit within the department is a very positive step forward and shows care for emergency services staff is a priority, as it should be.

The annual report also indicates the result in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing, which shows that 85 per cent of Tasmanians are generally satisfied with policing services. That is comfortably above the previous year at 79 per cent and the national average for the current year of 80 per cent. Has any analysis been done on what this score can be attributed to?

What measures have the department and Tasmania Police taken more generally to engage proactively with our community so the satisfaction levels can be maintained and perhaps even improved upon?

It is also a welcome development to see broadened diversity within Tasmania Police, with 34 per cent female participation in the Sergeant Qualifying Program and 44 per cent female participation in the Inspector Qualifying Program over the year.

I am fully aware of some of the very talented and able women who serve the community in their work with Tasmania Police. I wholeheartedly support any initiative that supports them to succeed and thrive in a position which greatly benefits from their input.

A further welcome development is the recent announcement of a \$7 million refurbishment to the Launceston Police headquarters, which is one of the oldest police stations in the state. I can see the Launceston headquarters from my electorate office window.

Mr Dean - In fact you can see your whole electorate from your electorate office.

Ms ARMITAGE - I probably could if I stood on the top of Henty House.

Ms Forrest - Good call, member for Windermere, I am with you on that one.

Ms ARMITAGE - I accept that I, like a couple of the other members here, are fortunate to have smaller electorates in size, but obviously we have the same number of constituents. I am very fortunate that I do not have the amount of travel that some members - such as the member for McIntyre - have. She has a lot of travel, and she does it very well.

Ms Rattray - And she loves it. She speeds around -

Ms ARMITAGE - I do not know that she speeds around. As I said, I have been in the car with the member for Windermere when we have been travelling within the suburbs and his car has told him on regular occasions -

Ms Forrest - Gets up to 100 there, does he?

Ms ARMITAGE - His car often tells him that he is going over the speed limit.

Ms Forrest - I will ring the commissioner.

Mr Dean - Who needs friends like Rosemary?

Ms ARMITAGE - He has even named her. I am just trying to remember her name, member for Windermere: is it Mabel? You have named that lady who tells you that you are speeding. What was her name?

Mr Dean - Yes, I have - Lois.

Mr Willie - And you want to pull the signs down.

Ms ARMITAGE - For those who do not know, my nickname in this place is Lois - but that is not because it is me.

Ms Forrest - Yes, it is; it truly is.

Mr Dean - She is nagging me all the time.

Ms ARMITAGE - We should not be laughing about such a serious subject.

As I said, I can see the Launceston headquarters building from my electorate office window, and I can confirm it could definitely use some tender loving care.

I regularly attend the Launceston Police headquarters as well for my work as an independent person. I can certainly attest as well that the inside of it certainly can do with some tender loving care, particularly the interview room where I sit with the young offenders. It is just a little box with cameras in it. It really is very primitive. I am pleased to see they are giving it some attention. The officers have to work in there. I am not too worried about the offenders having to be in there, but the officers are continually working in these small rooms. They certainly could do with better facilities.

According to the Tasmania Police Northern Commander Brett Smith - Brett, I have to say, does do a very good job; we catch up regularly for debriefs - this station houses 210 staff, a far cry from the original 120 staff that the building catered for when it was first built, probably back in your time, member for Windermere.

Mr Dean - I was not there when it was first built.

Ms ARMITAGE - I look forward to work getting underway, and for the police working at Launceston headquarters to have upgraded, more fit-for-purpose facilities to ensure that police can get on with the vital work they do.

The 2018-19 year for the Department of Fire, Police and Emergency Management has been a very big one. While it was not without its challenges, there is certainly much to be optimistic about, seeing the progress which is being made towards internal wellbeing and community protection. I look forward to seeing further progress being made towards proactive steps to care for those most vulnerable in our community - the elderly, women and children in particular - and the best managed emergencies when they do occur.

In closing, I very much appreciate the work of Tasmania Police. Its members do a fantastic job. I think, as we have heard said in this place many times before, they run in when everyone else is running out. I think that sometimes we might be driving along the highway - I certainly agree with the member for Rosevears, I am extremely grateful and always make sure that every car I have has adaptive cruise control. Even going through small towns, you hit an 80 kilometre per hour speed zone or you hit a 60 or 50 one. I must admit I put it in the 80 to 60 to 50, because it is really easy to start thinking about something and just forget the speed you are doing.

All jokes aside - I do make a bit of a joke and give the member for Windermere a bit of a hard time - but it is difficult in the modern cars. They are so quiet and they speed so easily that you really do not know.

I really appreciate Tasmania Police. I have asked the commander on a couple of occasions if I could have a couple of lights, even just a little flashing light, on my car coming down to Hobart. So many times you see people, when you are doing the speed limit, just speeding past you at the speed of light. I said to Brett, 'If I could just have a flashing light, I am sure it would slow them down.'. But unfortunately -

A member - No flashing light.

Ms ARMITAGE - No, no flashing light, not even a police siren.

Mrs Hiscutt - I have a pair of handcuffs if you want.

Ms ARMITAGE - I am not sure if you are even allowed to have handcuffs, so I could not pull anyone over. I really appreciate the work of Tasmania Police. It will soon be time for the next report to come out, but I appreciate and I note the report.

[12.05 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre) - Madam Deputy President, the member for Windermere has again made his focus on the role of Tasmania Police and those who undertake the emergency services and operations in our state. He is right. It is an important area and providing this scrutiny is always a

very welcome opportunity. I had quite a few areas I was also going to touch on, but I think between the member for Windermere and the member for Launceston and the myriad of interjections through your contributions, particularly from the member for Windermere, there is not a lot left to really point out.

I have a couple of areas I would like to say something about. By interjection, I asked about the police recruitment and the overall increase of the 125 FTE police officers by 2022. I am interested to know whether that project is on track. Obviously, with COVID-19, will we put that program back by a year, possibly, or push it out by a year? From memory, I know recruits attend the training facility for quite a few weeks. It would be interesting if we could have some understanding about whether there is a target, or when they look at the applicants, whether they decide if they need one-third of the female gender, or how that is worked out.

In regard to the wellbeing program, which the member for Windermere touched on, the successful tender was Gallagher Bassett. I asked a question a couple of weeks ago, but I could not find the answer in my emails. I was too intent on listening and was not concentrating enough on the email trail. Was that mainland company given the contract? I am interested to know whether any Tasmanian companies tendered for that. We talk about buying locally and I would have thought there would have to be Tasmanian companies that could deliver that service without having to source that expertise from outside Tasmania.

I completely understand if those questions are not able to be answered today. I am happy to take them on notice; that is no issue at all. It is putting the department on notice that we see this feedback from the community and we are asking the questions: Why was there no Tasmanian tenderer as an applicant in that tender process? Were they not suitable? That is worth having on the public record.

In regard to the firearms policy, again, the Firearms Act always tends to raise various issues. I know some of them are quite specific to members of the community. I have not had so much contact of late from members of the communities I represent complaining or raising issues around the firearms department and various aspects of owning a firearm, and accessing the inspections that take place.

Mr Dean - That has settled down since that last lower House inquiry. It has calmed things a little.

Ms RATTRAY - It will be interesting to have an update, and that may well be something we could look to the Leader to facilitate in the latter part of the year, a briefing of the Whole of the Council. It has been of significant interest for a long time. The member for Windermere may well be right - things have settled and there is more clarity around how that particular arm of Tasmania Police operates. They are a couple of areas.

I cannot sit down without again putting out the challenge to the department to look at the relocation and the building of a new police station at St Helens. There is a building that is not fit for purpose, member for Launceston.

Mr Dean - I thought funding was provided for St Helens. Was there not?

Ms RATTRAY - If there has been, somebody forgot to alert me as the local member.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - It is the hospital you are thinking of.

Mr Dean - May well be.

Ms RATTRAY - We have a new hospital, but a greenfields site has been offered by the council right next door, adjacent to the new hospital, where there could be a new purpose-built police station so we do not have to contend with the very small footprint that is the St Helens Police Station. You often see police vehicles parked out on a pretty narrow street as you drive towards the school. Even the police vehicle, the marine vessel, is sitting out in the car park, no shelter. It is not fit for purpose.

I have put out a challenge to the minister, who is the local member as well. What a perfect fit for someone really understanding the challenges that station has to contend with, day in and day out, for not being fit for purpose. The cubicles that officers work in - not even a square box; it is a cubicle they work in. Finances are tight, I understand that, but this is infrastructure for the long-term benefit of the state and certainly for the Break O'Day community. Again, I put out that challenge - it needs to happen.

I have been talking about this for the last 10 years and I do not want to have to continue to talk about it for the next 10 years, but if I need to, I will.

Mr Finch - Is that the district central office for that area of the east coast?

Ms RATTRAY - It certainly has a strong police presence. They look after an area down to the southern one. They look after Bicheno, St Marys, Pyengana, Weldborough. It is the whole Fingal Valley.

Mr Finch - So it would be the headquarters for the district?

Ms RATTRAY - Launceston is the district.

Mr Dean - I will explain it, if you do not mind.

Ms RATTRAY - Launceston is the district, but it is a fair way from Launceston to St Helens; from memory, it is 100 kilometres.

Ms Armitage - Two hours and 10 minutes.

Ms RATTRAY - It is a fair trek. It is 100 kilometres from St Helens to Scottsdale.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Is this relevant? Let us move on. You have made your point that it is a long way.

Ms RATTRAY - Possibly not. I have made my point and again, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to make a brief contribution to the noting of the annual report. I thank the member for bringing it forward.

[12.15 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Deputy President, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the 2018-19

annual report of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. I thank the member for Windermere for bringing his comprehensive coverage of the report.

The report provides an important record of the department's performance. The report highlights that the department has adopted innovative technologies in the last 12 months to disrupt criminal activity, hold offenders to account, enhance safety and increase accountability and transparency in policing. In particular, the report notes that Tasmania Police continues to hold high levels of community confidence. The National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing 2018-19 identified that Tasmania Police exceeds the national average in most reporting categories, including satisfaction with policing services, police dealing with public order problems and feeling safe in public places during the day and the night.

I acknowledge the continued commitment demonstrated by all employees of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to deliver the outcomes achieved in 2018-19. The report highlights a number of significant projects undertaken by the department, and the member for Windermere has asked numerous questions about these projects throughout his contribution. I have numerous answers to these questions and an answer to the police gender split and all that is wrapped around that. As it is so lengthy in nature, I seek your agreement to tabling the answers.

Leave granted; see Appendix 1 for incorporated document (page 131).

Mrs HISCUTT - I urge members to read *Hansard* and look at those questions because the member's questions were comprehensive and very comprehensive answers were provided to them. The Government notes the report and we look forward to a brief summing up.

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Madam Deputy President, I think I made it clear that I admire Tasmania Police, always have done always and always will do. You do not serve in an organisation for 35 years unless you have great respect for it. There is no doubt that we have the best police service in the country.

I am not quite sure if there were any questions, but I think the member for McIntyre has a question about the impact of COVID-19 on the recruitment courses at the academy. Has it slowed down the process? Will we see those numbers keep increasing as the Government wanted?

Mrs Hiscutt - I think the member for McIntyre asked that question without notice; I do have an answer to that question.

Mr DEAN - Great, that is covered. It is an interesting point.

The wellbeing program is a good one because it really relates to diet and food. With respect, I think the Greens have raised this issue as well - why a Victorian company was given that contract. Even if a Tasmanian organisation were a little more costly, which might have come into it, one would think we would opt for the Tasmanian company. I guess there is a good reason the contract went to Victoria but the member raised a good point.

The Leader initially said the St Helens Police Station is covered in the answers, but I think it is not. There is also the gender question –

Mrs Hiscutt - I can confirm I do not believe there is a funding allocation for the St Helens Police Station.

Mr DEAN - Hopefully, the Leader and her adviser can confirm that.

The St Helens Police Station is really a subdivision and it has responsibility, as indicated, for a certain area, as does Scottsdale. The Scottsdale Police Station is responsible for a certain area. I think the Bridport police officer is responsible to Scottsdale, but there was a policeman in Bicheno. I am not sure if that is still the case.

Ms Rattray - The last time I drove through, honourable member, there certainly was.

Mr DEAN - Yes, so St Helens has a responsibility, and it is a subdivision.

I thank members for their contributions. I appreciate the member for Launceston's support of the Launceston area. It is usually a great area. I have lived there for quite a long time now and will continue to live there. Launceston is really the capital of the state, but it has some policing issues and Brett Smith, the commander there, is aware of that and he is trying his damndest to get it right, to make it the leading district and division in the state. He is working hard on that and I admire him for what he is doing.

I finish with a statement made by Sir Robert Peel. He was the founder of the London Metropolitan Police in the 1880s. Robert Peel believed the key to policing was that 'police are the public and the public are the police.'. Isn't that true?

I thank members for their support.

Report noted.

MOTION

Poker Machine Use in Tasmania

Resumed from 17 March 2020 (page 26)

[12.23 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I wrote this speech some time ago and have not revisited it because of other things in the way. This motion was brought on some months ago. We are going to hear a lot about gambling this year, with the Government's release of the public consultation paper on future gaming markets, the outline of the proposed time line for a consultation process, the subsequent exposure draft of the bill amending the Gaming Control Act 1993, and then there will be the bill.

Gambling is an issue that crosses party lines. It is an issue we all have opinions about, but because it is a more nonpartisan issue than many other issues we have to deal with, I always feel we should, as a community, try to reach consensus as a way forward. Like most controversial issues, a large burden will fall on us in this Chamber to ensure changes are in the best interests of all Tasmanians. That is not a small task. As a former health professional, I regard problem gambling as a form of addiction and therefore a public health issue. I do not want to say any more on possible overall gambling changes at this stage because I know, Mr President, that you will soon remind me that I am straying too far from the motion front of us now.

The current motion before us covers the social harm aspects of poker machines, which is only one aspect of the Government's Future Gaming Market policy, which also includes casinos, EGMs in casinos and keno. I would like to spell out how I see EGMs in my electorate. This was written before COVID-19, so this is pre-COVID-19. We know what has happened with COVID-19. I will not reflect on that but this is written for the situation as it was and the way it will be, assuming we go back to what one might suggest is normal, whatever that is.

As you probably all know, there are currently 2300 EGMs in 93 community venues statewide. That comprises seven clubs and 86 pubs with EGMs. In my electorate of Murchison we are blessed with 305 EGMs or, should I say, cursed with them? That is 13 per cent of the state's total, which is more than a fair share, with only 6 per cent of Tasmanians living in my electorate, one of the poorest and most socially disadvantaged areas in the state.

Across the state in 2018-19, poker machine losses were around \$104 million. In Murchison, losses were about \$12.3 million. The Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission issues data on player losses for local government areas - LGAs - where there are three or more venues with EGMs. People with industry knowledge have provided me with an estimate for the other venues.

It must be remembered that a full list of EGM losses for each venue was leaked to Andrew Wilkie shortly before the 2018 election, so everyone in the industry had a pretty good idea what the losses were for each venue. In my electorate, there were \$12.3 million-worth of losses for 2018-19. The 13 pubs with EGMs - there are no clubs with EGMs in Murchison; both Wynyard and Burnie RSLs removed them to reduce social harm and avoid further financial loss, a commendable decision by both Wynyard and Burnie RSLs.

The pubs received 30 per cent of the losses as commission - that is, \$3.7 million of the \$12.3 million. Network Gaming, owned by Federal Hotels, retains the rest - what is left over from the \$3.7 million of the \$12.3 million. Of the \$3.7 million commission retained by the pubs, \$1.4 million was immediately paid to Network Gaming for the EGM hire. The machines are owned by Network Gaming and venues pay a hire fee. That left \$2.3 million. Of the \$12.3 million in losses, \$10 million left my electorate and only \$2.3 million remained.

We were told during the 2018 election campaign that if EGMs were removed from clubs and pubs there would be job losses. Can you believe that? If an extra \$10 million was retained in Murchison during the 2018-19 year, there would be job losses - COVID-19 aside? I have yet to have someone explain to me how that is possible, to retain \$10 million in the community that is currently losing it and that we would have job losses. It is the most ridiculous and, dare I say, deceitful claim I recall being made for some time.

Saul Eslake co-authored a piece in *The Conversation* at the time and he found that -

The claim promoted by the Tasmanian Liberal Party that "around 5,000 jobs are at risk if electronic gaming machines are removed from pubs and clubs" is an exaggeration - and a significant one.

Saul's article relies on employment data outlined in the social and economic impact study referred to in this motion. I agree that, away from the heat of the election campaign, we should take a closer look at the data, which the government needs to update, as this motion asks us to consider legislative changes.

The heat of the election campaign is a bad time to discuss issues. The mandate argument, that an election win gives the victor the unfettered right to expect policy announced during a campaign to be automatically rubber-stamped by the new parliament, has never been shown to be more ridiculous than the case of gaming policy taken to the electorate in March 2018. It was one of those golden moments halfway through the campaign, as reported by *The Examiner* on 22 February 2018, when the then premier Mr Hodgman was asked about poker machines.

It is probably easiest if I refer to his comments in *The Examiner* article -

Asked why he planned to give away such lucrative licences during an interview with *The Examiner* on Wednesday afternoon, Mr Hodgman twice insisted that the government was putting the pokies out to tender and that a fair price would be achieved for Tasmanian taxpayers. Asked if it were true that, rather than being put up to tender, the rights to the machines were being given to the club and club owners, Mr Hodgman said, 'that is entirely untrue. We will make sure Tasmanians get the best possible deal. We are, for the first time, opening for tender the future of gambling or gaming'.

That is what he said. The only thing wrong was that Mr Hodgman had completely misunderstood his own government's policy. He was the premier at the time; I remind members that was the case - the policy did not include a public tender for licences to pubs and clubs. One of his staff later corrected the public record for him.

If the former premier did not understand the policy, what chance did the electorate have to understand it at the time? I repeat: this policy issue was not supported by all Liberal voters, nor rejected by all Labor voters, either. This was made very clear to me following the election when several constituents from both sides expressed different views. Some voted against their rusted-on party preference for the first time ever, rusted-on Liberal voters told me. I knew they were conservative voters and there was no hiding that fact. They had rushed off and voted Labor for the first time. One of them told me that if his father knew he had done it, he would be rolling in his grave.

The same from the other side, for some of the Labor rusted-on voters who made similar claims. They did not support the Labor Party policy and voted Liberal as a result. There is no mandate. To my mind, these facts make the mandate argument a bit thin. If the former premier did not understand a policy for which the current Government is now claiming a mandate to implement, he can hardly criticise members in this place for wanting to ensure we get the best possible outcome for all Tasmanians, not just a few with vested interests.

The motion before us asks to note the addictive qualities of EGMs. I thoroughly agree with these parts of the motion. I wrote some time ago now about this in an opinion piece published in *The Advocate*, discussing the addictive nature of EGMs in Tasmania and the need to treat this as a public health matter. I stated in this article that when deciding future policy, we should never forget the gaming machines are programmed to be addictive. A real problem exists because some, possibly many, users of gaming machines are unaware that it is a fact that gaming machines are programmed to be addictive. The machine disguises losses as wins. They are programmed to give small wins to keep people at the machine longer because they lose even more money.

The machines use a predictable reward schedule. That means the time until a reward or some return on money spent is given is uncertain. This keeps people interested in playing, as they believe

they can win big and that cannot be far away, therefore they keep playing longer. That is how those machines are designed. The anticipation of a win is what triggers the release of a hormone, dopamine. Don't we all love a bit of dopamine? Dopamine is a neurotransmitter or a chemical that helps transmit signals in the brain. When dopamine is released into the brain of people and animals, you anticipate a reward - it tells the brain that whatever has just been experienced is worth getting more of. Dopamine also has a reinforcing effect and motivates a person to do something again and again. This is well documented. I am not making this up; it is scientifically proven.

The release of dopamine also makes a person feel good. The anticipation of a reward or win on the pokies is associated with feeling good and creates a high that can lead to addiction. Most people do not know or understand how addictive these machines are designed to be. They do not understand they are designed to ensure that the player has regular releases of dopamine in anticipation of a win rather than the win itself, ensuring the addictive nature of the machine. It is not the win that creates the release of dopamine, it is the anticipation of a win. When used as intended, there is a real risk that users will become addicted very quickly, because 25 per cent to 40 per cent of regular players become problem gamblers. Machines are designed to maximise the amount of time and money people put into them.

How can we, as a civilised society, sanction this exploitation? Harmful design features can be removed and this should be done in the forthcoming legislation. It is a matter of the design of the machine. Mr President, it is not only addictive qualities of EGMs that can and should be removed. Spin speeds and bet limits can also be used to lower the impact on players without unnecessarily detracting from the leisure experience, which I humbly admit I do not fully understand. Everyone finds different things enjoyable. Some people do not like the opera. Some people do not watch the football. In fact, football gives you good doses of dopamine when your team is almost winning. That is what happens, it does.

Mr Gaffney - Yes, but you have not experienced that very often recently, have you?

Ms FORREST - Yes, I have. North Melbourne is on a real roll at the moment, except for last week.

The industry will probably say it cannot be done - this is the removing of these features from the machines. I am not convinced of that at all.

A parameter that is almost never talked about is the house percentage. If an EGM is programmed to return 85 per cent to players on average, the house percentage is 15 per cent. Why not a lower figure? Why not return more to the players? Wouldn't that also reduce the harm? I have no doubt machines are made to extract as much as possible in as short a time as possible. I am sure harm could be greatly reduced with more appropriate design. As outlined above, my electorate lost \$12.3 million in 2018-19 and only \$2.3 million of that \$12.3 million remained in my area.

Those figures only include losses in the pubs in my electorate. The pub that extracts the most from players' wallets outside of the member for Elwick's electorate is down the road from Murchison. We know Elwick has the highest losses, but the next is in the Leader's electorate. The boundary is a bit murky and was recently changed, but I am pretty sure that across Mount Street in the Leader's electorate of Montgomery is the hotel that hoovers up almost as much as the Elwick Hotel, with \$3 million lost there. There are punters from Murchison who visit it because it is just across the boundary.

Ms Webb - Burnie Top of the Town, second highest in the state.

Ms FORREST - Yes. That is based on that particular hotel on top of the hill. There is a lot for our community to lose and it has produced a lot of undesirable consequences, as the member for Nelson explained in her contribution some time ago.

The Leader's electorate had losses totalling more than \$9 million from 165 EGMs in 2018-19. I am sure she is aware of that. I hope she is aware of that. Next door, the member for Mersey's electorate hosts 295 EGMs, which extracted \$13 million from players in 2018-19. I am not sure that is something he will boast about. I am sure it is not.

It not only Derwent and Elwick that lose a lot of money to the EGMs, the north-west coast is much poorer for EGMs. In a way, EGMs are like cigarettes - they are both legal products, they both cause harm, both are addictive and both divert income from poorer and more disadvantaged sections of our community. Public policy should be designed in the best interests of those who buy the product, not those who sell the product and receive the greatest benefits. I support the motion.

[12.37 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I continue the deliberations in this place regarding the motion proposed by the member for Nelson some months ago, when she presented her very thorough contribution.

Like the member for Murchison, I acknowledge COVID-19. I want to refresh some of the interesting aspects of the speech the member for Nelson gave to the Chamber. We are also fortunate in this place that members bring a variety of life experiences to the Chamber. The member for Nelson's last quote on that day was very enlightening -

Mr President, having spent two decades working in the social services sector, public policy, advocacy, research and the past five years talking with thousands of Tasmanians about the harm caused by poker machines in this state, I am deeply concerned we are not just missing an opportunity to make things better, but that we are actively heading towards an outcome that is far worse. It is incumbent upon the Government to demonstrate to the Tasmanian people that is not the case.

I might take a few moments to refresh parliamentary colleagues on some other aspects of the member for Nelson's motion speech, and there are probably six or seven quotes. On 17 March, the honourable member for Nelson said -

It is about the machines being designed to addict. In fact, the motion says poker machines typically in use in Australia are designed and programmed to include features that increase the likelihood of addiction, with evidence suggesting that normal use of Australian poker machines is likely to cause addiction in one in six users. These features relate to spin speed, bet limits, maximum jackpots, near misses, losses disguised as wins and returns to player.

Poker machines are computers; there is no skill involved. They are programmed by their owners to make money for their owners. They are advertised as fun and entertaining, yet our gaming commission says they can take \$600 from a patron in an hour, every hour, remembering that some of our gambling venues are allowed to be open 20 hours a day. It is no accident that poker machines are

addictive. The features that make them so are carefully researched, thoroughly understood and purposefully included in the machine design.

The Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission has recommended over many years, including most recently to the parliamentary inquiry in 2017, which I chaired, that -

... Tasmanian spin speed settings should be slowed to six seconds, and the maximum bet limit should be reduced to \$1. Doing this would reduce the maximum theoretical loss from \$600 an hour to \$60 an hour. That is a ten-fold reduction. It is substantial. Just those two simplest of adjustments would make an incredible difference to the safety, health, wellbeing, and in fact the lives of tens of thousands of Tasmanians.

The member for Nelson went on to say -

Another thing to ask ourselves would be, is there a downside to adjusting those programming features of poker machines such as spin speeds, bet limits, jackpot levels, return-to-player rates, near misses and losses disguised as wins? The short answer is no. We can make these modifications with little, if any, impact on the so-called recreational gambler but with a significant reduction in harm to those who gamble regularly and harmfully. Research backs up the claim that recreational players will not be disadvantaged by changes we might make.

Perhaps in her summing up, in relation to (1)(c) of the motion, which deals with the impact on recreational gamblers of modifying features on the machines, the member could tell us what local evidence or advice is available to support that statement?

The member also stated that -

We can categorically say that poker machines are a dangerous product and they are regarded that way globally. They are a product that puts health, families, livelihoods and lives at risk. As legislators tasked to establish appropriate policy regulation of this product, how can we, on the one hand, support government investment in health, mental health, suicide prevention, family violence, law and order and employment services and support and, on the other hand, neglect to make every available effort to reduce the risk of harm and the severity of harm that pokies cause to Tasmanian families?

In future, when we look back at these neglected opportunities we have had to reduce harm caused by this product, I think we will do that in the same way that we look back now at the lax and ill-informed regulation on cigarettes in decades past, except that we could have - we should have - learned a valuable lesson from our experience. We should have learned that big industry operators gaining super profits from an addictive product will go to great trouble and expense to block effective regulation of their product.

The member then went on to say -

The Government's policy on future gaming market reforms has not, at any stage, been taken to the community for open consultation. It has never been subjected

to appropriate scrutiny, assessment and public examination. To date, there have been no details made public on the policy's development process, nor the evidence base that informs it, nor the social and economic modelling that underpins it, or even on the real policy objectives, in detail, that it aims to achieve.

It is important for us to remember that, and I thank the member from Nelson for that valuable contribution in this place.

While it was quite lengthy, it was necessarily so. I first came across the member in her role in Anglicare Tasmania when I was chairing the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets. I well remember the level of detail and research in this motion were also exemplified in her presentations and briefings to that committee. The member for McIntyre was deputy chair of the committee, which also included the member for Huon and three members from the lower House.

The committee was formalised on Wednesday, 31 August 2016. It was a very interesting committee process. The final report was tabled some 13 months later on Thursday, 28 September, and we had until the end of September to get the report completed. It was a huge undertaking and, as those who are familiar with committee work will know, the time went very quickly. It was a huge commitment, with 150 submissions, many of them very lengthy. There were also 12 days of intense hearing involving over 50 stakeholder groups. Four of those days were held on the mainland - in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Victoria - and the report contains 73 findings and 23 recommendations.

I do not intend to make a lengthy contribution to this motion, as the member for Nelson has provided us with a very detailed transcript. I will focus on a couple areas of special interest for me.

Recently, I was researching some information for a constituent and came across an article that I think it is well worth reading into *Hansard*. It is 'Winning Big' by Fred Rubinstein February 2020. He said -

My dad was smart. He had businesses - first, the *Australian Jewish News*, which his family brought out from Poland, and then a printing press - but he was also what I consider a semi-professional gambler. He bet on horses.

Dad was very sensible, but he had bipolar disorder. I've come to realise that bipolar and gambling can go hand in hand, because it's all about the highs and lows of life. This is something I was exposed to from a young age. Dad passed away from cancer when I was 13.

This young chap is about 22 or 23 years old now.

I barely made it through school. I was naughty; getting in trouble, suspended, expelled. When I finished school - which I'm very proud of - I started university, but it wasn't for me.

With a big inheritance and no structure, no real transition from school, I didn't know what to do with myself. I developed a routine: the casino from midnight until 8 am, playing roulette, baccarat, blackjack, poker, you name it, then sleeping all day, when I wasn't gambling on anything and everything online.

All I wanted to do was win.

I was mostly losing, and that was the hardest thing to accept, because I thought I was good, ahead of the curve. All I wanted to do was win. Dad had been intelligent and patient and done alright for himself, but I wasn't a winner. I completely lost control. I became depressed and put on a lot of weight. Over 2015, I gambled away my inheritance: a quarter of a million dollars. Dad lost when he was young, too, but he could never have lost what I did in such a short time, because gambling wasn't as accessible then as it is today.

My friends gambled, too, but I was more obsessive than them, I took it to every extreme. I don't think they could relate to me in that respect. And I was good at hiding the anxiety and shame. But when you're sleeping all day, and at the casino all night, and people see you there and hear things, they start to wonder. But no-one knows how bad it is until you tell them. I have amazing friends and I wish I'd gone to them earlier.

I was good at hiding the anxiety and shame.

It's the same with my mum. I live at home with Mum and we have a great relationship, but it was tested at that time. If anything, Mum was too supportive, she didn't crack down hard enough. She tried, but it was very difficult, and she didn't have my dad. She's always been a soft, free spirit, like me. When I ran out of money, I started stealing from her.

The breaking point came when Mum said, 'If you do this again, I'll call the police'.

When you gamble, you're all about instant gratification, self-gratification. Until you realise the effect it's having on others, and it makes you feel uncomfortable, you're not going to do anything about it. Mum dragged me into a psychiatrist's office and that changed everything.

I see 2016 as my 'reforming' year. I started a business degree, went to the gym and lost a lot of weight. I still gambled, but much less. The following year, I got my first job, working in before and after school care. It's inspired me to change to an education degree. I'm studying primary and secondary inclusive education, so I can work as a special-needs teacher. I love special kids. A lot of people might see them as naughty, but at the schools I go to, I'm like, 'Give them to me'. I have empathy for them and can look past the condition and see them for who they really are: interesting and amazing people.

That gambling can be advertised so easily is a major problem for me.

I'm big on my sport. I grew up on AFL and am now playing and coaching soccer, which I take very seriously. The sports betting ads we see everywhere really highlight for me how underrated gambling addiction is as a social issue, compared with other addictions. The ads are so positive, with bright colours, jokes and banter; that's just not the reality. That gambling can be advertised so easily is a major problem for me. But it's really encouraging to see so many sporting clubs

end their dependence on gambling revenue, by forgoing sponsorship from betting companies, as well as removing pokies from their venues.

I love what I do

I found out about the Foundation's Lived Experience Advisory Committee through a Facebook ad. I applied because I feel young people need role models to show them there's a different way, and that it's not going to be like this forever. You need to break the bubble, and the first thing is to be open with yourself, and then other people. For me, self-awareness is everything.

The first thing is to be open with yourself, and then other people.

I'm 23, and as of 3 January 2020, I haven't gambled for three years. I'm very busy, sometimes too busy, but it's good. I love what I do, and I still have a strong desire to win and achieve. Just in healthier forms in life.

This personal account of one young man's experience is just another example of one of the many tragic stories in our communities. However, it must be recognised that a gambling problem is not confined to age, sex, race, social standing, intelligence, financial or social wealth or community involvement. I can remember clearly the former Victorian state MP, Carolyn Hirsh, who appeared with Anglicare before the inquiry. Ms Hirsh was a qualified psychologist and she spoke of her struggles in dealing with a poker addiction while she served as government whip in the Bracks Labor government. Ms Hirsh lost everything through EGMs, and she wanted others to realise how devastating that roller-coaster road is. She knew what she was doing; she knew it was wrong, but she just did not have the will or power to break the cycle. Ms Hirsh said her addiction worsened following the death of her daughter, 'I had guilt, I had anger, and I used those machines to soothe me', she said. 'Within 10 minutes that dopamine rush', that Ms Forrest spoke about, 'would be flowing. I would be hypnotised. On top of those emotions, I had to cope with shame of addiction'.

Addiction shows no fear or favour. The member for Nelson, in her speech, provided many, many examples of Tasmanians who have been left desolate and financially, socially and emotionally broken from gambling. As I re-read the member's speech, it really struck me as being very thoroughly researched and reviewed. Her responses to part (1)(a) through to (g) clearly articulated each issue.

I also believe that part (2), that -

The Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to undertake and publicly release modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023 -

is a very reasonable request. It would help inform the community of the new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in 2023. We have to realise that whatever we, as legislators, agree to via legislation will be in place for another significant period of time, more than likely two decades.

As chair of the future gaming market inquiry, I stated publicly that my view regarding poker machines changed over that committee period because of community groups like Anglicare and individuals like James Boyce, who spent a lot of time and energy and considerable expense to address the poker machine industry in Tasmania. Their evidence was too compelling for me not to reassess my personal opinion. From that committee work, we were presented with a swathe of information reinforcing to me that we, as a state, have this wrong. Now, we need to do something about it.

I remember the following facts were presented. Some of our most economically disadvantaged communities have such a proliferation of machines. Back then, there were 207 machines in Glenorchy, a loss of \$20 million for the financial year. The member for Murchison has spoken about that. In my own electorate of Mersey, in the last 12 months, \$13 million was sucked out of the community.

The argument put forward by the industry was that EGMs created jobs. Economic modelling, however, showed that \$1 million of revenue creates three jobs in the gaming industry. However, that \$1 million revenue would create eight to nine jobs in retail, and the \$1 million revenue in hospitality would actually equate to 16 to 17 jobs.

All this aside, the goal of the COVID-19 recovery phase is to create more jobs in our community. If you look to those statistics, we are now going to be opening up our casino. It shows that the \$1 million revenue - I think in the last so many months \$43 million has been saved or not gone through the machines - creates three jobs in the gaming community. It creates eight or nine jobs in retail, and it creates 16 to 17 jobs in hospitality. So, if the Government is serious about the recovery phase of COVID-19, it must reassess what it is doing here.

Initially, when pokies were placed into pubs and clubs in the mid-1990s, it was hoped it would stimulate the Tasmanian community. It was felt that Tasmania would follow the New South Wales model, and that EGMs would be the saviour of RSL and community clubs. Unfortunately, that was not the case and the big winner was definitely Federal. Indeed, many RSLs walked away from EGMs, recognising they are not a healthy option in terms of social engagement. It was evident that a greater community togetherness and social interaction came after a number of RSLs removed poker machines.

I agree with the member for Nelson who stated in her speech -

The primary way chosen by most of the rest of the world is to only put poker machines in destination gambling venues such as casinos.

As I have stated on previous occasions, I believe that poker machines are best suited to be solely located within casinos. This should be the first choice of Tasmania when the current licence ends in 2023.

Some of us could remember in this place when both casinos at Wrest Point in Hobart and some years later the Launceston Country Club were viewed as event destinations - a place to go for exciting times, socialising, dancing and a bit of gambling. Indeed, many a show or musical star presented their show at the casinos and they were actually enjoyable places to visit.

It is obvious that the pubs and clubs scene in Western Australia is so much more vibrant than in Tasmania. When the committee visited the casino there, there was a lot happening and they

explained that the entertainment scene was well supported in Perth's clubs and pubs. The casino would also put on shows and performances to attract patrons to that venue. The committee was informed that Western Australia has comparatively low levels of pokies harm.

Many people still see casinos as enjoyable, warm, clean and providing a chance of winning some money, which is fine and I understand the desire for people to attend. Unfortunately, I view them now more as a big pokies barn, and to me casinos have very little appeal factor as an event destination unless perhaps attending the odd concert or conference. I add that the casinos have a good range of restaurant and gambling options for those who wish to have a flutter. However, I believe that Tasmanian casinos and the TT-Line should be the only venues for EGMs in our state.

At a meeting of the EGM committee on 26 September 2017, I put forward that the following recommendation be adopted for the purpose of the report - 'that EGMs be removed from all hotels and clubs in Tasmania'. Those in favour were Ms Dawkins and Mr Gaffney; those against were Ms Courtney, Mr Armstrong, Ms Rattray and Mr Bacon.

Interestingly enough, from the outset the Labor Party stated that its gaming policy for the 2018 elections was going to be informed by the EGM committee report. The committee members were informed that an abstained vote would be recorded as a no vote. Thus the vote was 4:2 against the recommendation. As members would recall, Labor went into the election with a no pokies in hotels or club policy.

I will add some comments for the record from Dr James Boyce in his recent addition to the book, *Losing Streak*, titled 'Background Notes to the Tasmanian Government's proposed 2020 poker machine legislation'. Dr Boyce wrote -

The AEC reported that the Tasmanian Branch of the Liberal Party had income of \$4.169 million ... \$404 000 was from the pokies industry ... The THA alone disclosed \$269 750 in donations to the Liberal party ... Non poker machine corporate donations of \$118 000 were similar to 2017-18 but the poker machine industry only donated \$40 000.

He also noted that there were unanswered questions about the Government's election policy to provide an unpublicised \$6.8 million grant to the THA. No doubt more information will come to light when the debate around EGMs comes back to this Chamber.

I genuinely believe that with fewer venues available in Tasmania, a better identification program could be in place to ensure that problem gamblers could actually be identified. I do not believe it is possible with myriad pubs and clubs in Tasmania where people can access a poker machine.

According to Anglicare's response to the Government's public consultation paper data from the social and economic impact study of gambling from the 2016 census, it estimates there are 2300 adult Tasmanians who are considered to be problem gamblers; 5400 adults who are moderate-risk gamblers; and 19 000 adults who are low-risk gamblers. Perhaps the most disturbing part about those alarmingly high numbers is that the low-risk gamblers are losing \$3000 per year on average - \$3000 is more than the average household spends on electricity or on clothing, alcoholic beverages and tobacco in this state - and that is low risk. I find that quite astonishing. I believe there is a known and accepted link between problem gambling and accessibility.

In closing, I can remember asking the CEO of the Adelaide Casino when we were in the high rollers room about an example of a significant player in the high roller room. I was informed that they had a middle-aged gent there three weeks prior to our visit and he lost \$8 million in seven days.

Before closing, a question for the member to consider in light of COVID-19. It relates to term of reference (1)(e) of motion, about data on poker machines. When this issue is discussed in the public domain or the media, people often point to the level of online gambling being of higher concern. Even most recently during the COVID-19 shutdown, there have been suggestions that much poker machine use has been transferred online. If you have any information or data on that, that would be valuable.

I support the motion wholeheartedly, and I thank the member for Nelson for her continued commitment to keeping the realities of this issue at the forefront of our minds as legislators, leaders and human beings in the state of Tasmania.

[12.59 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, just a short contribution from me today. I am sure we will have an extended debate when we finally see the bill before this House.

I understand that many people feel passionately about the impact of poker machines in our community and for some this is because of a harrowing personal experience.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program

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

[2.31 p.m.]

- (1) Is the Government aware that under the apprenticeship policy currently in place that when an employer takes on an apprentice who leaves - e.g. 3.5 years into that apprenticeship - to work elsewhere, the new employer gains the apprenticeship benefit and the former employer is not entitled to any of the apprenticeship completion payment?
- (2) Does the Government support this policy?
- (3) Why would the former employer not be entitled to a pro rata of the payment?
- (4) Does the Government recognise this arrangement is a disincentive to employers employing apprentices?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her questions.

- (1) Yes, the Government is aware of the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program structure and notes this is an Australian Government program.
- (2) The Government supports apprentices completing their obligations under a training contract wherever possible. Employers are required to seek support from Skills Tasmania if the training contract is in jeopardy - for example, when an apprentice wants to resign. When apprentices are nearing completion, there is a range of possible solutions to complete the training with the original employer.
- (3) Incentive programs and the structure of payments are a matter for the Australian Government. The Government is not aware of any pro rata payments.
- (4) Employers who provide a supportive workplace will have the best chance of retaining their apprentices through to completion and gaining the benefits of the Australian Government incentive payments to subsidise their wages and build a skilled workforce. As at December 2019, Tasmania continued to have the highest apprenticeship completion rates in Australia, with 59 per cent of the Tasmanian apprentices and trainees completing their training contract compared to 49.4 per cent nationally.

Hydro Tasmania - Balance Sheet Loss

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

[2.33 p.m.]

Mr President, this question to the Leader has been like pulling teeth, but anyway we will see how we go. Hopefully, she will answer the questions asked.

This is a follow-up question to the answer received on 25 March 2020 wherein it was stated the underlying cause of the decline in the value of Hydro Tasmania's balance sheet of \$195.83 million was a commercial-in-confidence matter not to be shared with the beneficial owners, the people of Tasmania.

I note the Government has been trying to gain support for various projects to build on our strengths in renewable energy generation. Adopting a secretive approach appears to undermine the search for a social and economic licence, especially given the balance sheet loss representing almost 10 per cent of Hydro Tasmania's value.

- (1) Was the Government aware of the terms of the contract to which the loss relates before it was signed?
- (2) Did the Government have any input into the terms and conditions of these contracts?
- (3) Did the Government insist on these specific conditions as they relate to prices and/or the term of the contract, or was it left entirely to the discretion of Hydro Tasmania's board?
- (4) What is the term of this contract?

- (5) When was the contract signed?

ANSWER

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

- (1) The provision referred to in note 16 on page 51 of the 2019 annual report relates to a number of different contracts as opposed to a single contractual arrangement. The accounting approach used for the provision is in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

The contracts largely relate to offtake arrangements, which assist renewable energy projects to be built, financed or partially sold. At the time of entering into these offtake arrangements they were generally net present value-positive. If the market price for energy and/or large-scale generation certificates falls during the term of an offtake arrangement, it may become onerous - that is, the unavoidable costs of meeting the obligations under the offtake arrangement may exceed the economic benefit expected to be received under it.

On 5 September 2017, Hydro Tasmania was directed to enter into an offtake arrangement with WestCoast Wind to facilitate the construction of the Granville Harbour Wind Farm. This ministerial direction to perform a community service obligation was issued by the Energy minister and the Treasurer pursuant to section 65(1) of the Government Business Enterprises Act 1995, the Tasmanian GBE act.

For the other offtake arrangements, Hydro Tasmania would have consulted with and sought approval from the Government when required to do so under relevant legislation and guidelines, dependent on a range of factors, including size and materiality. These requirements stem from the GBE act, Hydro Tasmania's Ministerial Charter and Guidelines for Tasmanian Government Businesses, capital investment and subsidiary companies and joint ventures.

- (2) Contractual terms and conditions are a commercial matter for Hydro Tasmania. As outlined above, Hydro Tasmania consults with the Government as required, depending on a range of factors.
- (3) Unless acting in accordance with a ministerial direction to perform a community service obligation, the Hydro Tasmania Board is required to act in the best interests of the corporation. The offtake arrangements entered into were based on sound commercial decisions and were not onerous to begin with.
- (4) The average term of the contracts was 10 years.
- (5) The earliest of these contracts was entered into in 2009 and the latest in 2017.

Family Violence Victims - Safe and Secure Housing - North-West Coast

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

It does pay to persist to actually get a little bit more useful information, thank you.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am glad you are pleased.

Ms FORREST - With regard to safe and secure housing for victims of family violence when escaping a violent and/or unsafe living arrangement on the north-west coast -

- (1) How many properties are available in each local government area in the north-west region to women and families escaping family violence or abusive relationships?
- (2) How are service providers who provide counselling advice, care and/or other support to victims advised of the location and availability of these properties?
- (3) How many victims who are escaping from family violence are waiting for safe housing in each local government area and how long has each person or family been waiting?

If much of the information is in tabular form, I am happy to have this answer tabled.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her question. This might not be the answer the member is looking for, lengthy as it may be. We will see how we go.

- (1) The Warrawee Women's Shelter in Ulverstone provides four beds of supported shelter accommodation for women and manages 10 Housing Tasmania-owned transitional properties for homeless Tasmanians, including women in the Central Coast municipality.

The Salvation Army's Oakleigh House accommodation service in Burnie provides five beds for shelter accommodation and manages 13 Housing Tasmania-owned transitional properties for homeless Tasmanians, including women in the Burnie municipality.

Wyndarra Centre in Smithton manages three Housing Tasmania-owned transitional properties in the Circular Head municipality for homeless Tasmanians, including women.

Under the Rapid Rehousing family violence program, 19 head-leased private rental properties are available in the north-west region for women and families escaping domestic violence - 14 of these properties are in the Devonport municipality, three are in the Burnie municipality, and two are in the Central Coast municipality.

The Government recently announced funding to secure 20 more properties statewide and these are currently being recruited and assessed by the contracting organisation, Centacare Evolve Housing.

Short-term brokered emergency accommodation: at the end of April the Government announced \$4.3 million to expand homelessness services to Tasmanians in need. This included funding the Salvation Army to run a 10-bed, 24/7 safe space program in Burnie for six months.

It also included more funds to expand Housing Connect's capacity to provide emergency accommodation in motels and cabins statewide, including in the north-west.

- (2) Housing Connect is the place for anyone requiring housing assistance to go to, including individuals escaping family violence.
- (3) As at the end of May 2020, 75 applicants were on the housing register in the north-west who identified being impacted by family violence. In Burnie, there were 19; Central Coast, 17; Devonport, 21; and 18 in various other locations. The note says that these numbers are not disclosed due to the potential of identity to the applicant.

Regarding wait times, three-quarters of those waiting have been on the waiting list for less than a year, with a further 17 per cent waiting up to one-and-a-half years, and the remainder waiting longer.

Housing support organisations around the state work closely with applicants to identify ways to decrease the time someone is waiting for housing - the time that it takes to house somebody on the waiting list.

Ms Forrest - It is focused on families escaping family violence, I assume?

Mrs HISCUTT - The question you asked was how many victims escaping the family violence are waiting for safe housing, so I can only presume it relates to the question.

Housing support organisations around the state are working closely with applicants to identify ways to decrease the time someone is waiting for housing. The time it takes to house somebody on the waitlist will be influenced by the needs of the applicant, such as the number of bedrooms or special requirements, and the number of suburbs the applicants select.

The Government is committed to delivering more social houses to help Tasmanians in need, especially women, over the long term. That is why we recently announced that we will bring forward funding of \$14 million, to provide new funding of \$10 million to deliver 220 new social housing dwellings by 2022 - 18 months earlier than planned.

We also announce that the Government will invest an additional \$100 million in partnership with community housing providers to deliver up to an additional 1000 new social houses. These investments complement, but are additional to, targets and actions in the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-23.

Licensed Premises, Hobart - Hospital Admissions

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

[2.43 p.m.]

My question relates to the early morning trading hours of licensed premises in Hobart and hospital admissions. Would the Leader please advise -

During the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 to date, how many injury admissions have been made to the Royal Hobart Hospital post-2 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday mornings?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his single question.

Emergency department presentations for injuries are captured across a broad category, which includes injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes, but does not explicitly identify injuries resulting from alcohol consumption.

The location and cause of an injury is not always easily identified, and the location and type of injury may not have any relationship to the cause of the injury. Therefore, caution should be exercised in linking injuries to the trading hours of licensed premises.

With that precursor, the number of injury-related emergency department presentations on Saturday between 2 a.m. and 5.59 a.m. in 2019-20 was 131, compared to 116 in 2017-18, and 122 in 2018-19.

The number of injury-related emergency department presentations on Sunday between 2 a.m. and 5.59 a.m. in 2019-20 was 139, compared to 157 in 2017-18, and 179 in 2018-19.

COVID-19 - Breastfeeding Rates- Tasmania

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

[2.44 p.m.]

With regard to breastfeeding rates in Tasmania and related data -

- (1) Does the Government recognise and promote the benefits of breastfeeding?
- (2) What are the breastfeeding rates for Tasmania for each of the last 10 years, noting both fully and/or partially breastfeeding rates listed separately at -

- (a) hospital discharge by hospital;
 - (b) three months postpartum; and
 - (c) six months postpartum?
- (3) What measures were taken to support breastfeeding mothers during the COVID-19 shutdown period?
- (4) What research has been done to consider the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on breastfeeding rates and success, which could actually be positive?

ANSWER

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

- (1) Breastfeeding is supported by the Tasmanian Health Service and more broadly, in the Tasmanian community using a range of strategies. Tasmania is the only Australian jurisdiction to have all hospital maternity services accredited through the Baby Friendly Health Initiative.

The BFHI aims to create a healthcare environment where breastfeeding is the 'norm' and practices known to promote the wellbeing of all mothers and infants are promoted.

Tasmanian hospitals provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding, ensuring all mothers receive unbiased information, appropriate support and factual advice about infant feeding.

The Child Health and Parenting Service provides information, support, assessment and advice, including clinical services related to breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding information and resources are provided through the Healthy Kids Toolkit as part of the Healthy Tasmania initiative.

Public Health Services coordinate Breastfeeding Coalition Tasmania. It is a partnership that brings together Tasmanian organisations working to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

- (2) Breastfeeding rates at hospital discharge have remained relatively stable for some years, and about 85 per cent of women are breastfeeding when they leave the hospital.

I will quickly go through this information, which gives the percentage for the year and then the percentage of breastfeeding, including partially breastfeeding.

Ms Forrest - At each hospital?

Mrs HISCUTT - No.

Mrs HISCUTT - In 2012, it was 82.5 per cent; in 2013, 83.7 per cent; 2014, 83.9 per cent; 2015, 84.6 per cent; 2016, 84.3 per cent; and 2017, 85.6 per cent.

Breastfeeding rates at three and six months postpartum for the Tasmanian population are not routinely collected or reported.

Ms Forrest - That is a shame.

Mrs HISCUTT - That is a shame.

- (3) Tasmanian hospitals were able to continue their services supporting women with usual access to lactation consultants and midwifery support during the COVID-19 shutdown; however, some changes were required to service models. For example, during March 2020 and April 2020, maternity services at the Launceston General Hospital modified their services to account for restrictions within inpatient settings and group settings. Adaptions included the introduction of phone and online support for women being supported to breastfeed at home.

Public Health Services led the development of the fact sheet, 'Feeding your baby safely when you have COVID-19', for the Tasmania coronavirus website. The intent of this fact sheet was to ensure breastfeeding was well supported and clinicians were informed, along with expectant parents, and currently feeding parents.

- (4) Breastfeeding rates at maternal discharge from hospital will continue to be monitored. Research into the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on breastfeeding rates has not been planned at this stage.

Local Government Loans Program

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

- (1) How many councils have applied for the \$150 million Local Government Loans Program provided as part of the Government's stimulus package?
- (2) What is the value to date of these applications?
- (3) Can the Government outline participating councils and their proposed projects or the assistance being provided to councils by the Government?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his questions.

- (1) As at 10 June 2020, a total of \$141.6 million in loans had been provided to 20 local governments.
- (2) The loans have been provided to local governments to fund a range of projects and initiatives, including property improvements, \$58.6 million; roads, bridges and jetties improvements, \$42.8 million; rates relief, \$16.7 million; operational initiatives, \$12.7 million; and stormwater improvements, \$10.8 million.

- (3) Further details regarding the Local Government Loans Program, including specific council projects and initiatives, are available on the Department of Treasury and Finance's website.

COVID-19 - Testing Essential Travellers

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

[2.50 p.m.]

Further to the comprehensive information provided on the Tasmanian Government coronavirus disease website, would the Leader please advise -

- (1) Is precautionary temperature checking or COVID-19 testing conducted for travellers deemed as essential as they move in and out of the state, regardless if they self-identify as being symptom-free?
- (2) If such checking and testing is not being conducted, what measures does the Government undertake to ensure, as far as practicable, that travellers deemed as essential are not posing a risk of carrying the disease into Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Hobart for his two questions.

- (1) The measures undertaken upon arrival and departure at Tasmanian air- and seaports are under the control of Biosecurity at the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. It will be the authority for the provision of up-to-date advice in relation to measures at these facilities, such as temperature checking. Testing is not a requirement upon entry or departure from Tasmania for essential travellers.

Currently, COVID-19 testing is offered to all interstate arrivals if they develop even mild symptoms, or on day 12 post-arrival, regardless of symptoms, but it is not compulsory. In accordance with the most up-to-date evidence available and the recommendations provided by Communicable Diseases Network Australia - CDNA - testing of symptomatic persons is the mainstay of controlling the spread of COVID.

These recommendations have been made at the national level, and provide a risk-benefit analysis of testing. Essential travellers, as a condition of their designation of essential traveller status, must comply with directions to self-quarantine, and contact Public Health for advice in the event of any symptoms.

- (2) Each essential traveller application is strictly assessed for level of risk on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the prevailing status of COVID-19 within Australia at the time of application. Essential travellers are required, in accordance with the directions in relation to persons arriving in Tasmania, to self-monitor for any developing illnesses, and are required under the law to self-quarantine in the event of symptom development, and to contact the Public Health hotline for further advice.

This approach has been informed by public health authorities, and is consistent with the currently available evidence base.

Further, Tasmanians arriving are contacted by Public Health Services on day 12 post-arrival and are offered testing, even if asymptomatic.

As the situation continues to evolve within Australia, and particularly within other jurisdictions, these measures may be adjusted accordingly to minimise risks to Tasmanians.

Supporting Tasmanian Business - Online Wellness Program

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

[2.53 p.m.]

Given that small and family businesses contribute to over one-third of Australia's GDP and employ nearly half of Australia's workforce, and with Tasmania's business community identifying with this fact - and obviously now more than ever there is a need to support local business, something that was raised in the debate on the member for Windermere's motion to note the police and emergency services report - can the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management explain why a \$65 000 training program to deliver a 12-week online wellness program to 182 staff released for tender was awarded to a mainland company, namely Gallagher Bassett?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for her question. There are two elements to the Ready for-Response program - an online service and a face-to-face service.

The face-to-face service relies on access to gyms and fitness centres. Since the program commenced, 87 per cent of the value of the contracts has been awarded to Tasmanian businesses. This reflects the face-to-face proportion of the program.

In February 2020, the evaluation committee unanimously agreed that the selected provider for the online part of the program strongly met the specifications, including value for money, above all other applicants. However, contract negotiations for the face-to-face program were placed on hold due to COVID-19, and the resulting restrictions on fitness facilities mean that they could not deliver the services required.

I can advise that while not finalised, all responses for the face-to-face program were from Tasmanian businesses or companies that would utilise the services of Tasmanian businesses. We hope that with the COVID-19 restrictions easing, the contracting for this part of the program will be finalised soon.

Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist - Access

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

[2.55 p.m.]

Mr President, I have many questions. There may be a glitch in my office or the honourable Leader's office. Either way, I will put the questions on the record and write to the minister. The answers are fairly urgent for the people who are waiting for this information. My question to the honourable Leader is in regard to access to ear, nose and throat - ENT - specialists in Tasmania -

- (1) How many ENT specialists are available to treat public patients in each region of the state?
- (2) What is the current number of people on waiting lists to see an ENT specialist in each region?
- (3) What is the current number of people on waiting lists for ENT surgery in each region?
- (4) How many ENT surgeries were conducted in each major hospital in each of the last three years?

I understand there is probably not an available answer to that.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for her questions. In response, we have your questions now, but there seems to have been a glitch, and it went astray between your office and mine. If any questions are not answered today and I receive answers to them this afternoon, I will table them before the end of the day.

Gun Licences - Reciprocal Rights Between States

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

[2.56 p.m.]

I am aware of a situation in which a Western Australian resident who holds a gun licence has relocated to Tasmania and changed his address, which then required him to complete the full application process to hold a gun licence. When this former Tasmanian resident moved to Western Australia, he only needed to register a change of address to keep his licence current.

What are the reciprocal rights for gunowners who move between states with regard to gun licences and their renewals?

ANSWER

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

Western Australian legislation requires a firearm licence holder from another jurisdiction to immediately apply for a temporary permit for up to three months to allow that person to complete a firearms licence application in Western Australia. Western Australia does not recognise other jurisdictions' licences alone and requires the person to hold a temporary permit until the application process to obtain a Western Australian licence is completed.

In Tasmania, section 56 of the Firearms Act 1996 deals with the topic of corresponding licences. If a person relocates from another jurisdiction to Tasmania, they must notify the commissioner in writing that they intend to reside in this state. For a corresponding category A or category B firearms licence from another jurisdiction, the licence is taken to be a Tasmanian licence for a period of three months.

For a corresponding category C, D or H firearms licence from another jurisdiction, the licence is taken to be a Tasmanian licence for a period of only seven days from the date of the notice. Provided that the person who holds a firearms licence in another jurisdiction applies for a Tasmanian firearm licence within the aforementioned three months or seven days depending on the category, that person is not guilty of an offence under section 9 of the act for possessing or using firearms without a valid licence while the application is being determined.

Any person who wishes to obtain a firearm licence in Tasmania must undergo the normal licensing process, which includes the application form, payment of fees, provision of proof for their genuine reason to have a licence and completion of the firearms safety training course. Some interstate firearms safety training courses can be accepted as equivalent in Tasmania. If a person is relocating to Tasmania, but has missed the required notification time, they may be required to store their firearms with a firearms dealer or the police for safekeeping until such time as they have a valid Tasmanian licence.

This is a fairly usual approach across Australia.

Tasracing - Stakemoney

Ms RATTRAY question to MINISTER for RACING, Ms HOWLETT

[2.59 p.m.]

I appreciated the answers provided yesterday. There are 15 points, but the actual question was not answered in those 15 points, so I ask the minister again: how much money will TasRacing receive in the next financial year from the point of consumption tax collected from 1 January to 30 June?

I appreciate that we are not at the end of June now, but there must be some sort of assessment of what that is going to be. Whatever that figure is - I suggest it will be \$2 million from the advice I have received - why will only \$660 000 of those funds be going toward stakemoney for the three codes when Tasracing will receive that larger sum?

I would appreciate the answers to those questions on behalf of my community.

ANSWER

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

It is very difficult to say what a definite amount will be at this stage. We have had 72 days of zero racing. The estimate I have been given from Treasury is approximately \$1.8 million, but I cannot give the member a definite figure. Ideally, it would have been \$2 million, but we have had 72 days of no racing and no sports betting occurring, either. The \$660 000 that will increase stakes by 3 per cent will be brought forward from the point of consumption tax from 1 January until the end of June.

Ms Rattray - Can you tell us why the codes are only receiving \$660 000 out of that possible \$1.8 million?

Ms HOWLETT - Correct. Each code will be negotiating with Tasracing as to what the percentage is. We have to remember that we committed to increasing stakes and investing in animal welfare and infrastructure upgrades with that money. Tasracing has lost a lot of revenue, having no race fees. It is a decision that Tasracing will make.

Ms Rattray - They will take the bulk of the money, predominantly.

Ms HOWLETT - We need to wait to see what that actual figure is.

COVID-19 - Testing Travellers

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

[3.03 p.m.]

- (1) What COVID-19 testing is currently conducted for travellers entering Tasmania?
- (2) What are the current plans for COVID-19 testing for travellers entering Tasmania when the borders are opened?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Huon for his question.

- (1) It is recommended that people with any of the following symptoms be tested for COVID-19 - fever; runny nose; cough; sore, itchy throat; or shortness of breath. Testing is also being encouraged for people who fall into the following criteria -
 - all persons presenting with respiratory symptoms or with history of recent respiratory symptoms within the last seven days

- hospital patients being discharged to residential aged care facilities
 - healthcare workers displaying symptoms or healthcare workers without symptoms
 - household members for healthcare and aged-care workers who are displaying symptoms are also encouraged to be tested.
 - close contacts of confirmed cases between days 10 to 12 of a quarantine period and non-essential travellers between days 10 and 12 of quarantine.
- (2) The Government will follow any public health advice regarding enhanced testing for travellers entering Tasmania. Currently, testing is encouraged for non-essential travellers between days 10 and 12 of a quarantine period.

COVID-19 - Legislative Council Elections 2020

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

[3.04 p.m.]

These questions were asked some time before the election was announced; I had them on the Notice Paper and they were not answered. I ask these questions again today in the hope of receiving an answer to them. The last question does not need to be answered. The questions are asked of the Leader and relate to the Legislative Council elections for 2020. In an earlier time, the Leader indicated to the House that the Government held very real concerns regarding contestability if the 2020 Legislative Council periodical elections were conducted by a full postal vote process.

Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) What are the Government's very real concerns, and what were the Government's very real concerns?
- (2) If a postal vote were legislated, could such elections be contested?
- (3) Does the Leader accept that although deferring the scheduled elections for Rosevears and Huon has reduced the health risk of attending a polling place, it has widened the democratic risks as noted by political scientist, Richard Herr, as he wrote in *The Examiner*?
- (4) Now we have moved to Stage 2 restrictions - I think there are three stages - and given the low active case numbers of infected people with COVID-19 in Tasmania and also the increased testing of the public, has the Government given consideration for the 2020 Legislative Council elections to take place as a matter of urgency? The Government has, and the last question has been answered, so only those first three questions need to be answered.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his questions.

- (1) The Tasmanian Government received advice from the Tasmanian Electoral Commission highlighting concerns regarding holding a full postal vote. The TEC also briefed Legislative Council members regarding its concerns on this matter when the bill was presented to the parliament and information regarding this can also be found on the TEC website.
- (2) The mechanics for a disputed election of the Council are set out in the Electoral Act 2004.
- (3) The Tasmanian Government has consistently stated that the 2020 Legislative Council elections for the divisions of Huon and Rosevears are an essential part of Tasmania's democratic system. The Government has received advice from Public Health that given current progress of the COVID-19 cases in Tasmania, there is no longer a significant risk to public health that would make it unsafe to hold the 2020 periodic election.

The Governor has now issued the proclamation to hold these elections on Saturday, 1 August 2020. Shortly voters will be able to apply for a postal vote, should they wish. There will also be a pre-poll period to ensure people have a range of options to cast their important vote.

Further information in this regard will be issued by the TEC.

Mr Dean - I have a feeling I could be coming back again, but, anyway, keep going.

Mrs HISCUTT - I thought that was all you wanted.

- (4) See the answer to the previous question. The election polling date of Saturday 1 August 2020 was announced on the 12 June this year.

Do you want me to keep going?

Mr Dean - No, thank you.

Mrs HISCUTT - Okay. Thank you.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION (REGULATORY REFORM AMENDMENTS) BILL 2020 (No. 21)

Amendments Agreed to by House of Assembly

The House of Assembly advised that it agreed to the Council amendments.

MOTION

Poker Machine Use in Tasmania

Resumed from above.

[3.09 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, earlier I was talking about many people feel passionately about the impact of poker machines in our community and for some it is a very personal harrowing experience. Gaming policy was obviously prominent during the last election campaign because after a significant time, the licence to operate poker machines in Tasmania can be amended on new terms. At that juncture, the Tasmanian Labor Party was the first major party anywhere in the country to commit to withdrawing them from pubs and clubs. That was a point in time.

What is important to note in this debate and the one that will follow is we did not win the election and we cannot give effect to that policy from opposition.

It is also important to note the Labor policy at the last election contained a significant transition package for the industry and we are not in a position to work with Treasury and health workers and businesses through any change.

I confirm and indicate we will be supporting the member for Nelson's motion because it is factual in nature and calls on the Tasmanian Government to undertake and publicly release modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023, which will further inform the debate we will have whenever the Government decides to bring a new bill forward.

Quite rightly, we should be concerned for the people in our community who are addicted to poker machines. Our commitment remains to a strong harm minimisation framework. We will closely scrutinise the bill the Government brings to the parliament to give effect to its gaming policy.

[3.11 p.m.]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Huon) - Mr President, like the previous speaker, I will not be saying too much on this motion. Honourable members are well aware I was a member of the Joint House Committee on Future Gaming Markets. That committee received 149 submissions which covered all aspects of gaming machines. The committee held extensive hearings and we heard from supporters and non-supporters of gaming machines.

When the proposed legislation comes to this Chamber in due course, that will be the time when everything will be before us to make a decision on future gaming machines in this state, but we need to see the legislation first.

There will be a great deal of discussion before that draft bill is released for comment, and any modelling done will form part of that debate. That will be the time for members and the public to have their say, and I am sure they will.

When we have the briefings and gather information from all sides, we can give this proper consideration. When we do, and I have all the information in front of me, that is when I will make a decision on poker machine licensing arrangements.

A comment I will make relates to the member for Mersey commenting on online gaming. If my memory serves me correctly, during our committee process, online gaming was the fastest growing area of gaming. As far as I am aware, it does not have the scrutiny that physical venues have, whether it be a casino, hotel or club.

Ms Rattray - That was specifically related to younger men who are the ones who like to do online gambling. Probably not surprising because young people are so tech-savvy. They are the ones in the online gaming bracket.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I am not sure how it works.

Ms Rattray - They have a phone to do it.

Mr ARMSTRONG - If you are going to bet online on gaming machines, which you can do apparently, do you put your credit card in, away your money goes and where does it go? It could go anywhere in the world. Horseracing is different. You have an app where you bet with BetEasy or whatever it may be.

I read and heard somewhere that since the COVID-19 lockdown, online gambling has grown even more. I am not sure whether that is a fact or not but the member for Mersey raised that -

Ms Webb - He asked me a question, which I will be happy to mention in summing up.

Mr ARMSTRONG - I do not play gaming machines, but I know people who do and do it responsibly. They cannot all get to a casino. One person in particular I know lived at Strahan and spent her \$20 every Saturday night after she had a meal with friends. Sometimes she won and sometimes she lost. It was her relaxation for the week. Do we want to take that relaxation away from her? That is a question for another day when we see this legislation.

Other people I know around the state are the same - cannot travel to a casino, but will support their local club or hotel. We need to remember this is enjoyment for a lot of people who gamble responsibly. Sadly, I recognise there is the problem gambler, but that is the same as other industries. There are problems with alcohol that probably cause as many family breakups as gambling does. The beastie fast foods and the other scourges are drugs - they are a bigger problem than any of the above.

As I said earlier, I need to see the legislation that is to come before us and then the scrutiny will begin. I will support some of that motion - the first things that are very factual - but will not be supporting the motion as a whole.

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I do not play these machines, do not like them, have no interest in them whatsoever and am not likely to ever play them. They are set up to take your money; they are not set up for you to win and, sadly, a lot of people seem to believe that they can win. You cannot win if you play them frequently.

All that is required here is that Legislative Council notes these points. I raise this issue: it is simply to note only the points herein.

Ms Rattray - Except when you get to (2) when it calls on the Government.

Mr DEAN - Well, that is the point they make. To 'note' I suspect means that you accept or agree with the points perhaps as well. Or does it? Then you come to some of the points where it calls on certain actions to occur. By noting it, are we supporting the actions to be taken just by noting it? A question I raise. I am not sure - maybe the mover might be able to explain that to me.

If I look at (1)(b), I have concerns with a lot of these issues. I have been fairly outspoken about these issues, the glitzy lights, the noises these machines make, the rattling of the till you hear when you win \$5 makes it seem and sound like you have won a \$1 million. What is all of that done for? There is no doubt it is done for the purpose of influencing people to continue gambling or to get onto these poker machines. I have concerns with all these issues.

I have made statements about this from time to time and was talking to the member for Launceston about it during the lunchbreak. I would like to see, on these machines, and as the member pointed out to me, it could happen only if you used your credit card -

Ms Armitage - They have loyalty cards.

Mr DEAN - Loyalty cards or something. If you had that to use in the machine and the machine, every half hour or hour, would flash, 'You have lost \$200' or '\$300', and if you had won, it could flash that you have won - something to bring to the players' attention that they are losing money. Those sorts of things are a possibility. Of course it would not be supported by the industry because it is not something they would like, because it would likely deter and prevent some people from continuing to gamble that night.

Having said that, while I do not play and have no interest in these machines, the member for Huon is right; there are people for whom this is their only form of entertainment. I can talk about an elderly relative of mine, now deceased, who used to play these machines almost every Saturday night without fail, had to go to the casinos or a club to play these machines. She was not an alcohol drinker or smoker, did not go out, was on her own as her husband was deceased and she knew what she was going to put through these machines. She would never tell us what the limit was, but she had a limit, she was well off, and if she exceeded that limit, away she would go. She would have a meal, meet people and enjoy the night. That was her entertainment. Another relative of mine is living on her own; her husband passed away and she is doing exactly that same thing. It is her only form of entertainment. There are people who see pokies that way, but you are right - for some people it is not the addiction that is the problem, it is when addiction takes over. When you cannot see what is happening, that addiction is a problem. I guess you could say that my relatives were addicted, but that form of addiction was not harmful.

If we look at (1)(c), I am not sure how this could be done. I suspect it could be done, as I said, by changing the glitzy colours that flash around and the noises and so on. I suppose reduction of all those things might be able to modify the behaviour of people who play these things.

Ms Webb - Just to clarify, (1)(c) relates to all those things just above it in (1)(b). When it mentions modifying the design and programming features, I think you are referring to the ones above that, which (1)(c) relates to.

Mr DEAN - I am absolutely aware of that. It is exactly what I am saying - if you modify some of those things in these machines. I referred to colour and noise; I think some additional things could go up there - losses and so on.

Looking at (1)(d) -

The impact of harm caused by poker machine use on Tasmanian health and mental health services, family support services, welfare services, criminal justice system -

This is one I have had problems with for a long time. Some members might recall me raising this every time I have spoken to police at Estimates. Now that they fit within our sessional committee, I might ask further questions in relation to this now.

We do not have an exact or a good assessment of the criminal damage being done by these machines. I have asked police for statistical data on the number of people of whom they are aware through investigation, arrests and charges who have committed crime to gamble or have gambled all their money and other people's money and so on, or who have committed fraud and all those things that go with it. The police do not keep any records. The previous commissioner of police, Mr McCreadie, said at one of the Estimate sessions that there was no reason it could not be done, or words to that effect. He could see no reason that statistical data could not be kept. I have some concerns in relation to that.

If you read further on, under (1)(d), it says -

is not currently measured and monitored by the Tasmanian Government so as to effectively inform policy development and regulation relating to poker machines.

It should be done; I think all those things should be done. If we avoid doing those things, I think it looks as if we are trying to cover up the harm and damage that perhaps these machines do cause. We need to be open and transparent and bring it all out.

We then go onto (1)(e) -

Data available on poker machine use indicates:

- (i) at least 23,000 Tasmanians are in at-risk groups (low, moderate and problem gambling);
- (ii) one in three Tasmanians personally knows someone with a serious problem with gambling on poker machines -.

To me, that statistic could mean a lot. It could be that the one in three people knows the same person. It could be that they all know that Bill Smith is an addicted gambler and it is screwing up his life. It could be that one person.

It could mean that the each one in three knows a different person. In that the case, we would have about 170 000 people in this state fitting into that category - a third of 520 000. That is what it could mean. I have difficulties with the way some of these statistics are used; 79 per cent of Tasmania's Gamblers Help clients have poker machines as their primary form of gambling. Again, what does that really mean, other than the fact that we have that number of people engaging in that activity?

Ms Webb - I am just asking to note that as a factual piece of data. I am not asking you to interpret it in any way, shape or form.

Mr DEAN - I need to make clear what it could mean and what the reasons for it are - the impact of it.

Subparagraph (iv) of (1)(e) says -

40 - 60 per cent of the money taken by poker machines comes from people addicted to the machines or are classified as at-risk.

I have already covered that by saying that you cannot say it is harmful to people to be addicted. Being addicted to something is not necessarily harmful. I have given a couple of examples of a couple of people who were clearly addicted to them. They have to be there at certain times and days. They also enjoyed a meal at the casino, or wherever they are, and they enjoyed the company.

I go to (1)(g) -

To date, the Tasmanian Government has not released and made available for public scrutiny and discussion, modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023.

I take it that paper is available. Has it been done? Is it available? I am not sure where we are with that. It is interesting where that might be at this present time. Paragraph (2) of the motion is -

The Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to undertake and publicly release modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023.

From that point I take it that has been done. It is there, but not been released. Is that right? I am not too sure.

Ms Forrest - I think it is important to have that information in order to make decisions about what we are going to have in the future.

Mr DEAN - Absolutely. I am not disagreeing with that.

Again, I would like to look closely at this legislation as well. I think we all will when it does come before us.

Ms Webb - This motion is not related to any particular legislation. It does not reference legislation or ask to make any decisions on legislation. Just to clarify - it stands alone.

Mr DEAN - I am just making the statement.

I would like to see the legislation looking at all these things. I would be better and more informed and able to discuss some of the issues and points.

It simply says 'noting', and I am not certain what that means. The member for McIntyre pointed out that it is asking for certain things within those points.

Ms Rattray - It is asking for an action in (2), whereas the other part is only asking for notice.

Mr DEAN - I am not sure I can support it with that there. Anyway I will listen to the rest of the speakers and make my decision then.

[3.29 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, my view is probably along the lines of the member for Windermere. I am little betwixt and between. I understand the 'take note of' because I assume it is accurate. I really appreciate the member for Nelson and her genuine concern, having worked for Anglicare.

I am thinking: Do I support it? Don't I support it? I am not fond of (2) because we are calling on an action, but then if we relate it to the new bill that will come up in 2023, obviously we would need that done, and that is something the Government would have to do.

I have a question about paragraph (1)(f), which reads -

The Social and Economic Impact Study ... notes limitations to the collection of accurate and reliable data...

However, paragraph (1)(g) says -

To date, the Tasmanian Government has not released and made available for public scrutiny and discussion, modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023.

So it does relate to the bill. Paragraph (2) says -

The Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to undertake and publicly release modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced in Tasmania in 2023.

Have they already done it, or have they not? In (1)(g) we are asking them to release it, saying they have not released it, but in (2), we are asking them to do it.

Mr Dean - Thank you for pointing that out. It does relate to the bill.

Ms ARMITAGE - It relates to the bill, but (2) says we are calling on them to do it but (1)(g) is saying we are asking them to release it. They cannot release it if they have not done it. I am a little confused with that. I do not have a problem with taking note of things.

I have not done all the research the member for Nelson has done to say whether this is accurate or not accurate. I accept that some people have real issues with gambling; I agree with the member for Mersey - I would like to see the betting limit reduced. I think that is probably a good thing.

Having said that, the member for Windermere mentions a relative or a family friend. My mother loved the poker machines. She would play golf at the golf club - she was a member of the country club. She would then go to the gym and then have dinner. She had a limit of \$50 and she would play a few games of Keno. She was not a problem gambler, but it was her enjoyment. When

she went to the shack at St Helens, she went to the RSL club there - same thing: she played golf, had dinner, and that was her entertainment.

Many people do it responsibly. We have to be careful we do not become a nanny state. I say that with respect to the member for Windermere, with his smoking.

Mr Dean - There is a difference with that. It kills people.

Ms Webb - This kills people too, with all due respect.

Ms ARMITAGE - It does, but sometimes we have to take responsibility for ourselves and it is not always easy. I am betwixt and between. I hope more people may speak. I will certainly listen to the member for Nelson in closing.

I could go either way. I could accept it, taking note of it, but then I am confused with the section on public scrutiny. I accept that it is a real problem for many people. I am sure much of this will be done before we get a bill before us. I admit that I have not done as much research as obviously has been done by the member for Nelson. I accept that all this is correct - I know she is very thorough with her research so I am certainly not going to doubt anything that is there.

I hope a few more people will speak and I will listen to them with interest.

[3.33 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, while we are telling stories about aged people, I have a couple of ladies in my family who used to go and play \$50, as was the limit to older female family members. One used to win the \$50 and one used to lose the \$50. We used to laugh and say, "Why don't you hand your \$50 over?" But they had a great ball. They did it once a month; one lost \$50 and one gained \$50, so they had good fun.

The electronic gaming machine - EGM - gambling - is a lawful form of entertainment for Tasmanians, delivering a positive, economic and social benefit to the community. Nevertheless, the Tasmanian Government recognises the need to protect and support people susceptible to problem gambling. The Government does this by delivering a range of regulatory and public health initiatives targeted at industry, the community and at individuals.

These measures are some of the strongest nationally and will continue to be so under the proposed new future gaming market licensing model.

I will turn to the points in the motion.

Paragraph (1)(a) - in 2017, comparing all Australian jurisdictions that have EGMs in hotels and clubs, Tasmania had 8.7 EGMs per 1000 adults, well below the national average of 11.9 EGMs per 1000 adults. More recent data for the same cohort shows that in 2019, Tasmania was second only to Victoria in the lowest number of EGMs per 1000 adults, with 7.8 EGMs per 1000 adults. This compared to the national figure of 10 EGMs per 1000 adults, the highest number being New South Wales with 15.1 EGMs per 1000 adults.

At 30 June 2018, Tasmania had the third lowest number of EGMs in Australia after Western Australia and the Northern Territory, while New South Wales had the highest number. Tasmania

has only 1.7 per cent of all EGMs in Australia compared to New South Wales, which has almost half at 48.2 per cent. Although gambling severity is not available for EGM gambling specifically, in 2017 an estimated 0.6 per cent of Tasmanian adults were classified as problem gamblers, 1.4 per cent were considered moderate-risk gamblers, and 4.8 per cent were low-risk gamblers.

Paragraph (1)(b) - EGMs in Tasmania must be approved by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission in accordance with the requirements of the Australian/New Zealand Gaming Machine National Standards and the Tasmanian appendix to that standard. The national standard has been developed to support the EGM regulatory framework in each jurisdiction and includes regulatory obligations to prevent or minimise potential harm from gambling and to ensure that the industry provides gambling services in a responsible manner.

The fundamental goal of the national standard is to ensure that EGMs, games and related equipment are designed to be fair, secure and auditable, and to minimise any potential for harm to players. Tasmania's EGM design features are comparable to other jurisdictions. However, jurisdictional requirements may differ. For example, of the jurisdictions that impose spin limits, Tasmania has the joint slowest with Queensland, with a minimum spin rate of three seconds. In Tasmania, a maximum bet limit of \$5 is in place compared with limits in other jurisdictions that range from a maximum limit of \$5 to \$10 dollars. Tasmania is more stringent with respect to casino bet limits than other jurisdictions.

In Tasmania, standalone jackpot prizes offered in hotels and clubs must not exceed \$25 000 and linked jackpot prizes must not exceed \$60 000. No standalone or linked jackpot prize limits are specified for Tasmanian casinos. The Tasmanian limits align with Queensland and the Northern Territory. Limits are not imposed in casinos in other jurisdictions.

Falsely presented game outcomes relating to near misses are prohibited by the national standard and audible affirmations associated with a net win that is less than the total credit bet are subject to close regulatory scrutiny. Tasmania's EGM minimum return to player is 85 per cent. The minimum return to player varies between jurisdictions and gaming markets and commonly ranges from 85 per cent to 92 per cent.

Paragraph (1)(c) - to require EGMs in Tasmania to be different to the rest of Australia would necessitate a significant movement away from the national standard. Tasmania's EGM market is a very small proportion of the national market at 1.7 per cent. National game manufacturers would require significant scale to supply and support EGMs with Tasmania-specific configurations, making it uneconomical to supply Tasmania with different machines. In addition to the requirements that EGMs comply with the national standard, Tasmania's regulatory framework is further enhanced by a range of robust harm minimisation measures that apply to EGM gaming - e.g. the commission's Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania - and the commission's rules for gambling operators mandate that gambling operators must make information available to players so they understand the nature of gaming and make informed choices about participating.

The commission's suite of information to players closely aligns with gambling support program material and includes information on, for example, the chances of winning; responsible gambling; where and how to get help; how to make a complaint via a number of mediums; and brochures in venues and contact cards and stickers on EGMs.

Paragraph (1)(d) - Tasmania like all other Australian jurisdictions recognises mental health, unemployment, homelessness, family violence and resorting to crime are complex social issues that stem from a range of contributing factors. It would therefore be misleading to isolate any one factor as the cause.

A component of the Fourth Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania, the 2017 Tasmanian gambling prevalence survey allowed for the quantifying of gambling harms in Tasmania for both gamblers and affected others, and noted -

The observation that gambling-related harm is not confined only to problem gamblers, but is rather distributed more broadly in the population ...

However, the study notes -

that assessment of population-level gambling harm is an area of active research, and there remain unanswered questions regarding the most reliable and unbiased methodology to apply

The Government supports people at risk of problem gambling through a range of harm minimisation measures targeted at industry, the community and the individual. These measures, which are some of the strongest nationally and which will continue to be so under the proposed new future gaming market licensing model, include the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission's Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania and rules for gambling operators.

The Tasmanian Gambling Exclusion Scheme requires people wanting to self-exclude to speak with a counsellor in recognition of the comorbidity factors generally presented for problem gamblers. The Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania is a three-yearly study on the economic and social impacts of gambling in Tasmania and community education and support services, including counselling funded under the Community Support Levy and administered by the Gambling Support Program.

Paragraph (1)(e) - the Government continues to pursue a safe gambling environment that balances gambling harm minimisation with the impact on recreational gamblers. The Fourth Social and Economic Impact Study of Gambling in Tasmania noted that the overall adult gambling participation rate in Tasmania has been progressively declining since the first prevalence study. It was 71.7 per cent in 2008; 64.8 per cent in 2011; 61.2 per cent in 2013; and 58.5 per cent in 2017. The survey found that an estimated 0.6 per cent of Tasmanian adults were classified as problem gamblers, 1.4 per cent were considered moderate-risk gamblers and 4.8 per cent were low-risk gamblers. These estimates are comparable to previous surveys. Tasmanian gamblers' expenditure on all gambling activities has decreased since the 2011 study, from an average of \$1054 to \$950 in 2017. While EGMs accounted for the largest share of gambling expenditure at 58.6 per cent, real expenditure on EGMs had trended downwards, falling from \$263 million in 2008-09 to \$191 million in 2015-16. The proportion of total EGM expenditure contributed by problem and moderate-risk gamblers has fallen from 36 per cent in 2013 to 27.7 per cent in 2017.

The overall use of in-person counselling sessions, the Gamblers Help service, has declined from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Over this period, the number of counselling sessions fell from 727 to 707, and the number of clients fell from 314 to 274.

Paragraph (1)(f) - the results of the fourth Social and Economic Impact Study - SEIS - prevalence survey are based on a sample of people - i.e. about 5000 people - rather than a census of the Tasmanian adult population. Some variation between the results from survey to survey and between subgroups within each survey will occur by chance.

Paragraph (1)(g) - further, the sample of people reached and their associated characteristics, such as age or gender, may not reflect the broader population. As such, survey results have been weighted to reflect the properties of the broader population, which is best practice. Some of the gambling frequency and expenditure data in the 2017 SEIS are subject to sampling error, highlighting that the estimates should be used with caution. In addition, some of the data are not available for publication due to insufficient responses.

The 2017 study used a revised methodology for the estimation of unemployment in the gambling industry compared to previous studies. The 2017 estimate was built from the ground up, utilising industry stakeholder estimates and from limited industry employment data to develop a full-time equivalent estimate as opposed to a headcount. This was considered by the consultant to be a more robust approach than used in previous studies, which had relied on estimates of the number of persons licensed as special employees by the commission.

Given the diversified nature of most gambling businesses, the people employed often carry out multiple roles within the venue, and therefore the FTE method does not fully reflect the number of people on the ground involved in delivering gambling services. Both the 2013 and 2017 prevalence studies were completed by an independent consortium and subject to two peer reviews, which included review of the methodological design and the data analysis. Matters raised were addressed by the consultant in the final report.

The fifth study has been delayed due to venue closures resulting from COVID-19 health restrictions. I think this is what the member for Windermere was talking about. A contract has been entered for the study which will deliver methodological enhancements and involve consultation with industry and community stakeholders. Allowing for recent delays, the report is expected in the first half of 2021. In January 2018, the Government released a comprehensive Future Gaming Market policy. In developing its policy, the Government took information from a range of sources, including the three-yearly social and economic impact studies and the findings of the joint social committee, which reflected broad community input from parties, including the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission, and industry and community stakeholders.

While the Government may not have responded to every recommendation individually, please be assured the Government considers them in the formulation of its future gaming policy. The Future Gaming Market policy establishes, among other things, the structural framework for EGM operation in hotels and clubs, and responds positively to the final report of the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets. In particular, the reforms provided for a decrease in the statewide cap for EGMs by 150, individual venue licences to operate EGMs in hotels and clubs, two new high roller, non-residential casino licences, more appropriate distribution of returns, tender of the network monitoring licence and increased future funding to improve harm minimisation.

The Government has established a dedicated Future Gaming Market project team to manage the significant and complex restructure of the gaming industry, which will require legislative amendments to implement. The details of the new regulatory model have recently been the subject of a public consultation process and will be reflected in legislation to amend the Gaming Control Act 1993. A further period of public consultation on the exposure draft of the legislation will occur.

Targeted consultation will also continue to be undertaken during drafting of legislation through the implementation stages and will involve a broad range of stakeholders, including the community services sector.

Paragraph (2) - the Future Gaming Market project team is continuing to undertake the significant and complex work associated with implementing the Government's policy, including extensive financial modelling and the development of licence fees, tax rates and licence terms. The Government has not yet finalised the entire package of licence fees, tax rates or licence terms that will apply under the policy and therefore modelling is not currently available.

It is also important to note that the social and economic impact studies in Tasmania provide a base of information. Ongoing studies will continue to be used to inform government policy. For all the reasons I have stated, we will be opposing the motion.

[3.51 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I thank all members for their contributions on this motion. We have had quite an unusual go at it. We began back in March, then we had quite a significant delay and now it has resumed. I appreciate it is difficult to re-engage after that break and I very much appreciate the efforts people have made to do that.

I brought this motion forward originally because it was timely to do that considering what we, as a Chamber, would be looking at this year in terms of legislation relating to a new licensing model. However, this motion itself does not deal with that, which has been noted by the members. This motion is, in fact, solely a selection of matters that the Council is being asked to note. Those are facts and figures and then the final point is a call on the Government to release its social and economic impact modelling before its proposed licensing arrangements. Again, that has no particular time frame attached to it. It is just a fairly straightforward and standard call that it should occur.

In bringing the motion, tabling it late last year and having it dealt with when we arrived back in the Chamber in March, I had intended and hoped it would be an effective and potentially helpful opportunity for members to familiarise themselves with some facts and figures and some background understanding about poker machines before we dealt with a complex licensing model. We will have to look at it very intently at some stage when it comes to us.

The Legislative Council has always played a really important role every time that licensing arrangements or other forms of legislation relating to poker machines have come to this place. The Legislative Council has always played a very constructive role in helping to shape better outcomes, helping to put sensible measures in place and really add value. I hope that is what we as a Chamber will do when licensing eventually comes to us. This motion is aimed towards informing a base level of understanding about poker machines for our look at that future legislation.

When we began on this motion on 17 March 2020, I called for the closure of gaming rooms. We were just at that initial moment when COVID-19 was starting to hit and affect our state and our country. I made that call then because of the risks - the particular and unique risks - that poker machine and gaming areas with poker machines presented in terms of health, but also in terms of their economic and social impact. Here we are 13 weeks later. The machines were turned off on 23 March 2020, the week following our previous debate, and across that 13 weeks more than \$43 million has not gone into poker machines. Tomorrow we are reopening those machines. We are switching them back on and opening the gaming areas, but at that time I still believe they pose

a risk that is particular to us, not just a health risk, but a social and economic risk that is not in the best interests of our state. I would prefer that consideration of the timing of the reopening of those areas be given more careful thought. However, that is not in relation to this motion, so I am going to move on from that.

My intent really was to provide that educative focus. Members have noted the facts and figures. Some members have indicated they take me on my word that the facts and figures were correct. My hope was that they might be looked at and into as part of a better understanding towards the legislation. In my initial contribution, I mentioned - and other members also referred to - sources of information. There are plenty of sources, so hopefully people will be able to find their way to them to look at them when they feel it is relevant and necessary.

Let me just first deal with a couple of things that were raised in the contributions. I will try to do this as expeditiously as possible.

I start with the Government's contribution which we have just heard. I thank the Government for not disagreeing with anything at all in the motion. It surprised me really, when we reached the end of that contribution, to hear that the Government is not supporting it. In fact, at no point during the contribution relating the points of the motion did the Leader provide anything that contradicted what is actually in the motion. It puzzles me a little. Even with the final call, the indication from the Government was that it would undertake this modelling in due course, so clearly it is not done yet, and would provide it as part of the debate. It sounds like the Government agrees that call is a valid and expected part of what will play out when eventually we see the coming legislation.

Other than that, I would clarify that in paragraph (1) of the motion, (a) relates to Australia, not Tasmania. Thank you for sharing all the information about Tasmania compared to the rest of the nation, but that is not what paragraph (1) relates to. Given that the Government did not have anything to say against paragraph (1)(a), I presume it agrees with it.

Paragraph (1)(b) asks us to note that poker machines in Australia are designed with particular features that increase the likelihood of addiction, with evidence that normal use is likely to cause addiction in one in six users. It just lists the features and is factual information. In response to that point, the Government did not provide anything counterfactual to it and did not present anything that made an argument against that statement. Again, it appears we have agreement there.

Paragraph (1)(c) relates to the fact that it is possible to modify design and programming features. The Government suggested the industry claims it is awkward to do that and it would be difficult for Tasmania. That point can be made by industry and/or government all together. That is fine. It still does not counter the fact that it is possible, which is what the point in the motion says.

The impact of harm and its connection to other social issues, covered in paragraph (1)(d) - again, there is no claim in the motion that singles out poker machines as the only, or even particularly a significant, factor; it just makes the link, which is made in a multitude of research, much of which I talked about in my contribution and which the member for Windermere talked about in relation to criminal justice. It is very well accepted.

Again, I do not think the Government presented anything that disagreed with (1)(d). The data available on poker machine use - we had agreement on that. The Government did not present anything that appeared to counteract those well-accepted facts.

The social and economic impact study - thank you for providing information about that. Everything the Leader mentioned in the Government's contribution actually supported paragraph (1)(f)(i) and (ii) - that the social and economic impact study acknowledges and notes limitations to collect accurate and reliable data about frequency and employment figures.

It does that, and actually everything the Leader talked about shows it does that. There are limitations to it. The Leader discussed the varying ways that information can be collected in those surveys, and the fact that there are those limitations around accuracy. So I think we are in agreement on that one as well.

We agreed on (1)(g) - that to date you have not yet released the social impact modelling on the new licensing arrangements and you presented a rationale for why that is the case. Thank you for presenting that. Again, it does not disagree with (1)(g).

I thank the Government for its contribution, which appeared to agree with all points of the motion. I am disappointed the Government is not therefore supporting the motion.

I will briefly skip through this. I will pick up on a couple of things, but I will not go through everybody's contributions in detail.

I note that the members who referred in their speeches to this, did so with absolutely no ill intent, but if we are to talk about the fact that there are people in the community who can use poker machines as a recreational activity and do so without being harmed, we need to be careful we do not do that flippantly. The reason is that we know from research that when people use these machines as intended for recreational purposes, at least one in six of them will become addicted. It is a chemical addiction. It is not a choice; it is not about level of responsibility; it is not about intelligence; and it is not about how worthwhile you are as a person - it is, as the member for Murchison described in her contribution, a chemical addiction to dopamine.

I cannot hazard an exact number but I would put it well and truly into the thousands, if not tens of thousands, of families in Tasmania who have members of their family - and, in many cases, elderly members of their family - who have become addicted to these machines through the normal recreational use of them.

I cannot tell you how pleased I am to hear members describe people of their acquaintance or in their families who are able, thus far, to use these machines without becoming addicted and without having devastating harm caused to them or their families. It is wonderful to hear that, but we cannot talk about that flippantly, without knowing. I can talk about this anecdotally. From the thousands of Tasmanians I have talked to about this issue, I cannot tell you the number of families about their family members who have been devastated and who, in many cases, have lost their lives. That includes elderly family members.

My point, other than I want to acknowledge that we cannot be flippant when we discuss the so-called recreational use of this product, is that again nothing in this motion, in any way, shape or form, takes away or suggests that we should remove the ability for people to engage with this product recreationally.

One of the points very specifically speaks to this - point 1(c). We can pull out the research that supports it, but we will not go into that level of detail in this summing up. But, absolutely, what it describes is that we can have these machines in our community if we wish to do so. We can have

them exactly where they are located now if we wish to leave them there. That is fine, but in addition to that we can make them significantly safer to use and so significantly less likely to cause addiction to those at least one in six users.

We can do it quite readily through programming and design features. The industry may find it awkward, but it can be done. If we as a government decided it should be done because it is in the best interests of our community of Tasmanians and their families who are at risk of addiction and devastating harm, we as a government, here in this place, in the parliament, could choose to do that.

It is possible for every recreational user, for all the family members mentioned here today who apparently are using the machines and not yet experiencing harm, to be able to continue to do that as they do now. Nothing is taken away from people, but everything is gained in terms of safety. The motion points to that when it highlights the difference between how we do this in Australia and how the rest of the world does it.

As a specific example, I refer people to the speech I made when opening debate on this motion, where I discussed the situation in the United Kingdom. I contrasted the arrangement they put in place for machines located in the community in different sorts of venues and how it differs from us. The difference is not that they put them in locations in the community; the difference is that in the UK, they have mandated and regulated the design features, the ones I have spoken to in the motion.

They choose to regulate lower maximum bet limits - in fact, as low as 17 cents effectively in grassroots community venues, as low as \$2 in pub-type venues. They regulate spin speeds and make them longer than we have here. They regulate the maximum jackpot. Instead of it being \$25 000, it is \$200 in a pub in the UK. I discussed this in my opening remarks. I will not repeat it any further other than to refer members to take a look because it shows the point I am making. In the UK, levels of poker machine harm are miniscule compared to what they are here. People are doing exactly what we described here in terms of recreational use, but they are not getting addicted at anything like the same level. They are safer because of it. The government has chosen to make them so.

I will touch on two more things and then wrap up. One of them is the online gambling issue. The member for Mersey asked me to elaborate on that to some extent, and that I clarify it for him and for the member for Huon, if he were here. I hope he is listening.

Ms Rattray - He is definitely listening.

Ms WEBB - Thank you; I can clarify it for you too, because you raised concerns about it.

I am not going to delve in and pull out detailed facts and figures about online gambling. I will speak generally and ask you to follow up with me if you would like me to point you to the sources. Online gambling has been increasing in our community for a while now and that is concerning. It is still a very small fraction of people when you compare it to the number of people who use poker machines.

We can also look at the losses. There is the user issue and then there is the loss issue.

Let's talk about before COVID-19 started, when life was relatively normal. Losses to poker machines were 10 times the level of losses to online gambling. That is the magnitude of difference between what was being lost to online gambling and what was being lost to poker machines in Australia immediately before COVID-19 came, and that had been the case for a while.

I will use general figures rather than be tied down to quoting exactly. Around \$1 billion losses for online gambling and in excess of \$12 billion for poker machines - that is the magnitude of difference. That is not in any way to say online gambling is not a concern. The fact that it is increasing is also a concern, but it is a straw man argument to say we somehow have to pick one or the other to be concerned about or that we have to pick one or the other to do something about. We can and should do something about both. We can effectively do that. We have a really great evidence base about how we could do that in both instances. I am all for that.

Online gambling is regulated at a federal level so it is the federal government that needs to put restrictions in place around online gambling. That could be restrictions on advertising or restrictions on using credit cards. I think that was raised and it is a really valid concern.

I believe during COVID-19, the UK actually made it impossible to use your credit card or credit for online gambling. What a great initiative.

Mr Armstrong - There are ways people can use their credit card; there is no way we know how much money is being spent on that card with an American card game or something. You do not really know how much money is being spent on online gambling.

Ms WEBB - The national agencies that do research in this area can present information about this and I am happy to follow up with that later. I am agreeing with you - online gambling is a concern and we should do more about it. My point is we need to have this conversation and contemplate doing something about poker machines when and if we have the opportunity to do that because of online gambling. I am agreeing with the member and sharing his concern. We can put that issue there for consideration and we can consider it here. Online gambling is regulated at a federal government level and, absolutely, advocacy to the federal government is important and I encourage others to engage in this too.

Regulation of poker machines is done at a state government level. This is absolutely our core business. This is what we do here. This is what we are going to be doing here this year. This motion is about information as a background to that.

We know online gambling during the COVID-19 shutdown has gone up and pokies have not been on. That appears to be the evidence. Online gambling has gone up. Even if online gambling for a start has gone up significantly - one figure I have seen is 65 per cent - we are still thinking about magnitude of harm and what has been saved on pokies compared to what has been lost on online gambling. It is still only a fraction and I do not say that to minimise it; I am highly concerned about this too and there are numerous things we should do to make it better, but there has not been a transfer from all the pokies money not being spent now moving to online gambling.

I want to share one thing because I specifically looked into this and contacted a lady. Her name is Anna Bardsley, and she is based in Victoria. She is a lived experience advocate and works for the Alliance for Gambling Reform. She runs a program that supports people with lived experience to be advocates and to share their story and to provide information.

Mr PRESIDENT - I remind the member she cannot revisit her second reading speech to reply.

Ms WEBB - Okay. I was just answering a question about online gambling during COVID-19 and bringing information to answer that question, which I do not think I covered in my initial speech if that is allowable.

I will mention that I have reached out to people who have lived experience both locally and interstate to ask what has happened in terms of people's use of poker machines not being available and whether they have used online gambling. The anecdotal reports are very low levels of transference.

There is research being done now so down the track we will know for sure what has happened, but so far, I am hearing low levels of transference. I will move on and wrap up.

Ms Armitage - Have you answered my question yet?

Ms WEBB - No, I probably have not. I am sorry; I know people are mindful I might take too long, so perhaps -

Ms Armitage - It would be good. I was with the Deputy Clerk previously when the Leader was speaking so I am not sure whether she mentioned whether they had done it or not.

Ms WEBB - Yes; can you remind me what your specific question was?

Ms Armitage - My question is on 1(g), which says that 'to date the Tasmanian Government has not released and made available for public scrutiny' modelling and so on, but in paragraph (2), it causes them to undertake and publicly release it. They cannot publicly release it if they have not undertaken it. Have they undertaken it and not released or have they not done it?

Ms WEBB - When I was preparing this late last year, they had not released it, which is what point (1)(g) relates to. To date the Tasmanian Government has not released and made available for public scrutiny and discussion modelling on the social and economic impact of the proposed new poker machine licensing arrangements to be introduced. That was part of noting in this motion. That is factually true. Because it had not been released and the Government had not provided information about whether it had been done at that point, I phrased point (2) not knowing whether it had been done and certainly only knowing it had not been released -

Ms Armitage - Well, should (2) be removed?

Ms WEBB - Well, no, I do not think so.

Ms Armitage - If they have already undertaken it. All I am saying is, in (1)(g) you are saying -

Ms WEBB - The Leader confirmed in the Government's contribution that it has not yet fully undertaken it. I heard that Government contribution to indicate, from its assertion, that there is a range of factors that mean they have not been able to fully undertake that, and will not be doing it until further down the pathway of this legislation. That was really specifically outlined by the Leader. They are yet to undertake it, from that advice. This call stands, is pretty straightforward and fairly standard. It is calling on them to undertake, then publicly release that. The Leader, in her contribution from the Government, confirms that is going to be happening. It is a fairly uncontroversial call to support actually, given it has been confirmed it would happen.

Ms Armitage - I missed half the Leader's contribution because I was with the Deputy Clerk, so that is why.

Ms WEBB - Does that slightly clarify for you?

Ms Armitage - Slightly.

Ms WEBB - At the time the motion was tabled and still, (1)(g) stands as something we can note non-controversially as true, because it has not been released.

Ms Armitage - You mean the part that has been done has not been released, because it has not all been done?

Ms WEBB - I am not sure to what extent it has been done. The Leader did not go into detail about what has and has not. I am talking about the totality there in a broad sense. I want to make sure I did not miss any other key questions people had.

Mr Dean - Other than what does noting of this report mean?

Ms Forrest - She covered that earlier.

Mr Dean - Right. Well, I was out.

Ms WEBB - The same, you were out of the room. The first part of the motion is noting things - perhaps there is a confusion in the drafting - there is noting things through to (1)(g), then -

Mr Dean - Is it accepting that what is in there is correct and accurate?

Ms WEBB - Yes. Noting those facts and figures and points of data. If there is something in there that -

Mr Dean - There are a number of things in there I am unclear on, as I raised when I spoke on it.

Ms WEBB - I am happy to go through those; I did note them. I would be happy to touch on them briefly if you would like me to, member for Windermere.

The member for Windermere raised an excellent point about various other harm minimisation options available which are in fact evidence-based and supported by research that we could contemplate. I have not mentioned them in here. You mentioned things like a pre-commitment card of some sort or an interruption of play-type mechanisms to help disrupt people's extended play. Those are very valid and actually very well supported harm minimisation measures that could be considered. I support that too. It is not mentioned in the motion, but the motion is not meant to be exhaustive in that sense.

You talked about people who use poker machines as a form of entertainment. Because you are behind me, I am not sure if you were in the room, but I certainly dealt with that in my contribution and prefer not to revisit that. It is an area that is really important for us to acknowledge, that nothing in this motion, and certainly nothing in fact I am calling for in the public domain at this time, takes away anybody's opportunity to engage with the machines for entertainment. It simply means they are safer to use and less likely to trigger addiction.

You talked about a connection to criminal justice, that we do not know the data on this. That is really what the motion is actually highlighting. They are agreeing with point (1)(d) there, that

we just do not have enough data that helps inform us on these policy decisions about the connection to various things, including criminal justice.

Mr Dean - I agree with the criminal justice system; I don't know if the other is right or not.

Ms WEBB - I presented rather a lot of information in my initial contribution so I could refer the member to that if he would like. I could follow up with him later to provide even further sources. If there are any there that he thinks are incorrect, it is up to him to support or not support that.

Mr Dean - If you could answer that other question on (1)(e)(ii). What does that mean? Does it mean we have 170 000 people with a serious gambling problem or does it mean that those one in three people are talking about the same 20 people?

Ms WEBB - In fact (1)(e)(ii) simply asks you to note that one in three Tasmanians personally know someone with a serious problem with gambling on poker machines. The reason that piece of data is in there is that it directly relates to a survey done in Tasmania in 2016. It was an EMRS survey of 1000 Tasmanians statewide, representative, rock-solid, and it asked people in that survey: do you personally know someone who has a serious problem gambling on poker machines? The result was around 34 per cent, so about a third, one in three, of Tasmanians personally know someone. All I am asking for in this motion is that you note that.

Mr Dean - I don't know what it means.

Ms WEBB - We don't need to know -

Mr Dean - I do. If you note something, you accept it.

Ms WEBB - Okay. I have just told the member where the figure comes from. I am not asking him to believe anything about it beyond its fact, its existence, as a figure. I am not making a claim beyond the fact that survey results would suggest to us that one in three Tasmanians personally knows someone with a serious problem gambling on poker machines.

I actually commissioned that survey when I was working for Anglicare. This might provide context and explanation for the member for Windermere. The reason I did that is, as is noted in point (1)(f), is that it is really hard to know what the real prevalence is in our community of problems relating to poker machine gambling. It is really difficult. I talked in detail in my initial contribution about why that is and I am not going to revisit that. But even the social and economic impact study commissioned by the Government admits that. It stresses that the figures it uses are 'at least' and it is a given that it is an underestimate. That is what that study says. So, it is difficult for us to know.

I talked in my initial contribution about some reasons that might be the case. I talked about levels of shame being a potential reason, but there would be multiple reasons. Back in 2016 we were thinking to ourselves how else we could illustrate what it might look like in our community in terms of the prevalence, the frequency, and how often people might be experiencing and seeing and coming into contact with issues related to poker machines. One way we felt might be an interesting indicative figure to look at would be statewide polling, in a very robust way, asking people if they personally knew someone who had a serious problem gambling on poker machines. So that is what we did.

Again, it is part of a piecemeal, indicative picture. We cannot ask everyone and we cannot necessarily know that they would tell us the truth, or give us the full information even if we did. So, we do not know exactly how many people are affected, but amongst a range of different figures that can point to frequency and prevalence and impact, this is one of them.

It is not claiming to be any kind of be-all and end-all. It is asking you to note that, based on a creditable survey done in 2016, yes, which is four years old now - we could re-survey now; if anyone would like to fund that, please contact me - but at that time, which is the most recent time we have surveyed that question, one in three Tasmanians personally knew someone with a serious problem gambling on poker machines. I hope that can satisfy the member and I will move on from it.

I will pick up on another point he raised to make sure I have completely addressed the issues he spoke to. It is in the same section and it is point number (1)(e)(iv) -

40 - 60 per cent of the money taken by poker machine comes from people addicted to the machines or are classified as at-risk.

The member wondered about the classification of addiction and whether that might be people who may not be getting harmed. That particular figure comes from Productivity Commission research into poker machines and relates to people who have been deemed to fit into a category of problem gambling or at risk, so they are being harmed. Perhaps the person you described whom you categorised as being addicted would not have fitted into the categories used to get that figure by the Productivity Commission. That figure is based on demonstrable and classified categories of addiction and risk of addiction. That stands as a very credible figure that is typically not questioned. It comes from the Productivity Commission, so it is regarded as a credible figure. I hope that clarifies that question.

Mr President, I want to thank people for engaging in this with me. It was my intent that we would, in a fairly straightforward fashion, discuss matters relating to poker machines via this motion. We have had a chance to do that and I am very grateful to members for contributing to it.

No doubt some questions will still remain. I am always happy to engage with people in a very straightforward way and point towards information, sources of information, evidence or data if there are still gaps in people's understanding that they would like to explore further.

It is important we do that ahead of legislation coming to us because that will be complex legislation. We can come to understand better a range of things about this topic prior to that, which will stand us in good stead to do our job well when the legislation comes to this place.

It is a historical positive in this state, the contribution made by the Legislative Council when issues relating to gaming regulation come before it. I very much hope we live up to that historical legacy and are able to perform our role effectively when the time comes.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

COVID-19 - Impact on Tasmania and the Lives of Tasmanians

[4.28 p.m.]

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

That with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Tasmania, the Legislative Council acknowledges -

- (1) The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the people of Tasmania with many losing their jobs and curtailed the personal freedoms of all;
- (2) The Government's response has reduced the spread and impact of the virus;
- (3) The death of 13 Tasmanians and offers our sincere condolences to the families and friends of these Tasmanians; and
- (4) Recognises changes in response to the pandemic in the following areas -
 - (a) opportunities to work from home;
 - (b) flexible work hours and places;
 - (c) free child care;
 - (d) greater focus on housing those who are homeless;
 - (e) developing different ways to identify and respond to domestic abuse and violence;
 - (f) greater use of telehealth services; and
 - (g) community support and connection with vulnerable and elderly members of the community.

Mr President, I speak broadly to this motion and focus on a number of areas that deserve a more focused debate. The virulence and severity of the virus, especially on older and vulnerable people, is well known. It has had a devastating and deadly impact in so many countries where the poor, elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community have been far more susceptible to the ravages of this virus.

Tasmania and Australia as a whole have done well to contain this virus, but it is not over yet. The threat of a second wave is real and potentially devastating. The virus does not discriminate; however, it is clear that serious illness and death have been far more prevalent in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

In Tasmania, very sadly, 13 people have succumbed to the virus. I offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of these 13 Tasmanians and also note the remarkable stories

of survival by some who, despite being in the category described as being in extremely high risk, caught the virus and survived.

The extraordinary and often named unprecedented times we are living through have and will continue to impact on us for some time to come. Some of the outcomes will be with us forever and this is not necessarily a bad thing. The impacts of the COVID-19 coronavirus around the world have been and continue to be profound. I recall listening to podcasts about it back in February and early March. We often become a little complacent here in Tasmania, and even Australia, and we think we may be immune - pardon the pun - to the ravages of this virus as we were seeing it unfold in places like China and Italy. It was beneficial to see this reality because it helped us to take seriously the very real threat COVID-19 could bring to our shores.

In Tasmania, particularly in my electorate, we have an ageing demographic, with a higher than average burden of chronic disease. This made me acutely aware of the very real risk we were facing. Watching what was occurring in northern Italy was truly frightening. Northern Italy is a region with a sophisticated and well-resourced health system and they were seriously struggling. Many people were dying, including young and otherwise well health professionals. I know our Public Health officials led by Dr Mark Veitch were watching this carefully as he and the Government were planning our response. I believe these events in other parts of the world definitely informed our response. Should we have closed the nation's borders to more countries sooner? Possibly, but things were moving so fast, it would have been hard to react much more quickly because a range of measures needed to be put in place and on the ground before any of these measures were actually in place.

I believe the response by the federal government and the state Government was appropriate and proportionate. I also know others disagree. There are those who believe that this whole 'COVID thing', as they call it, is a conspiracy. I disagree. I know we have all been deeply impacted by the measures taken to control it. Many are far more negatively impacted than any of us here. We all kept our jobs, many did not - many suddenly had no income at all. I commend both the federal government and the state Government for stepping up to support those impacted through job losses, for the raising of the Newstart allowance to the new JobSeeker payment, which is a godsend for many - some can finally afford shelter. This could well be lost if the payment is cut back to levels that force people to live below the poverty line. To suggest this payment should not be a 'lifestyle choice', as I have heard some federal members refer to it, is blatantly ignorant of the reality many on Newstart are facing. To say these people should get a job, when many struggled to find employment prior to the pandemic, is ill informed at best and absolutely heartless and cruel at worst. To find a job in the current economy in coming months will be even more difficult, particularly for young people and women, with the Government itself predicting unemployment rates of 12 per cent.

However, not all workers were supported. The arts sector was completely overlooked, perhaps until today. Maybe there is a bit of light at the end of the tunnel for the arts sector, but when I wrote this motion, they had still been completely overlooked. Many, almost all, in this sector have struggled during this period. Ironically, during the shutdown, many of us turned to the arts for our own mental health and wellbeing. I challenge anyone to suggest they have not consumed any art over the period at no cost to themselves, because we all have.

The restriction of movement within and around the state and country has been very difficult. We are not accustomed to any such limitations on our freedom of movement. I note that the vast majority of Tasmanians did the right thing and followed the rules. The rules at times were confusing

and somewhat contradictory. Much of my time was given to providing clear and understandable messaging to those who contacted me during this period. I and my office have never been so busy and I know my community appreciated these efforts.

I note the huge effort my assistant, Yvonne Stone, put into assisting me in this role. Even when I instructed her to have the weekend off, she refused and worked anyway. Her efforts helped me to stay on top of matters and, I believe, to respond to almost all, if not all, requests that came in, many that took quite some time and effort to respond to effectively.

I commend the Premier for his leadership at this time. He was clear on his messaging and decisive. He responded to Public Health advice with decisions made based on this advice and on evidence. We have not seen this style of leadership in some other places - the difference in the outcomes could not be starker. I also appreciate the fact that he is available - well, he was, at least - to the opposition parties to discuss the situation the state was facing. Both the Leader of the Opposition, Rebecca White, and the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens, Cassy O'Connor, were, as I understand it, constructive in their input and supportive of the measures taken. It seems that may have taken a slight turn for the worst, but I will not give up hope on that.

I hope this level of cooperation can be continued in the important areas where the best interests of the state and its citizens are crucial - areas such as the elimination of poverty, access to safe and secure housing, education and health care. If we are to serve the people of Tasmania well, we need to work together on these crucial areas.

I also appreciate the regular and direct contact I had with the Premier during this period, especially when the north-west outbreak was unfolding and ongoing. It was a very stressful time for all of us on the north-west and having such free access to the Premier, the Minister for Health and other senior officials was extraordinarily important and helpful. The support from the Premier was greatly appreciated and acknowledged by my community. There has been, and will continue to be, concern around the lack of scrutiny of the emergency measures, as we debated at our last sitting. I will not revisit those comments other than to say that as a member of the inquiry in the Public Accounts Committee, I will do my best to ensure that all decisions made with an impact on the state's financial position or expenditure of public funds as a result of these matters will be considered along with the financial impact. I encourage members to encourage their constituents who may have specific areas they believe require additional scrutiny to put a submission in to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry.

I will now speak to part (4) of the motion and I will join a couple together. Part (4)(a) and (b) recognise changes in response to the pandemic and opportunities to work from home and flexible work hours and places. Working from home provides greater flexibility for many workers. Of course, there are many, such as essential workers in health, who are required to turn up to work at a range of healthcare settings, including caring for COVID-19-positive patients, putting themselves and potentially their families at risk.

Likewise, many police officers could not work from home. They had to check on the people in quarantine for a start. Also, delivery drivers, those who work in mining and manufacturing and so on. However, I am aware of many people, often for family reasons, who had requested to work from home pre-pandemic who were told their jobs could not be done from home, only to find they actually could. While this was not always easy - especially if parents were also educating their children at home as well as working - it was possible for many workers to work in this way. The

flexibility and opportunities this presents for many families, especially women seeking to re-enter the workforce after having a child, should remain one of the live options.

For workers with long commute times, this can enhance worker productivity. We should actively avoid just returning to the way our work practices were pre-pandemic without question. Use of flexible hours can also greatly assist families. Women particularly benefit from these arrangements, as can men, who may be able to schedule work around day care, early education and care, and school drop-off and pick-up times, for example. Flexible work hours and places reduce the gender stereotyping of parenting roles, enabling men to be more engaged in the care of children and providing greater flexibility for the whole family.

The Australian Government's business website has this to say about the benefit of flexible work hours. This is before the COVID-19 pandemic and obviously persists beyond that -

If you employ people, consider how your business can offer flexibility to achieve a work/life balance for your employees.

There are a number of benefits of work life and family flexibilities, such as:

- reduced absenteeism
- increased productivity
- retaining skilled staff and reduced training costs
- reduced staff turnover
- attracting new employees
- being recognised as an employer of choice
- increased morale and job satisfaction.

With the right approach, workplaces with flexible working arrangements and a family-friendly culture help your employees achieve a work/life balance. If you support your employee, in this way, they continue to support and be an asset in your business.

Further, the federal government's Education, Skills and Employment website also noted the benefits of flexible work arrangements, also pre-COVID-19, saying -

Poor access to flexible work is a significant barrier to women's workforce participation and is a particular challenge for working parents. Access to flexible work arrangements can help mothers stay in the workforce or come back to work after a caring-related break.

The benefits of incorporating flexible work arrangements into your business are:

- attracting a wider pool of applicants when hiring staff;
- creating staff flexibility;
- improving staff work life balance;
- creating a positive and healthy culture for staff and shared sense of community (personal and working lives);

- achieving greater productivity as staff experience less burnout and stress;
- creating a distributed workforce which can result in savings on accommodation; and
- reducing staff turnover and absenteeism.

Now that we have seen this with a significant number of jobs, more than previously thought, by both the employers and the employees, let us not see them lost. Let us not lose the benefits these options can bring, these flexible workplaces and working from home options where they were possible, which is far more than was first thought.

It is not just in terms of productivity but also in progressing gender equality and enhanced health and wellbeing of many employees.

Part (4)(c) of the motion recognises changes in the response to the pandemic in free child care. The decision by the federal government to remove the JobKeeper support and free child care options in July before any other sector receiving support must be called out.

It seems clear from public comment that the Prime Minister was coming under pressure from some of his party to remove this support. He needs to stand up to some of those people. There has been a plethora of comment in all media related to this decision, and rightly so. Publicly funded education is fundamental to the promotion of a civil and just society and access to early education and care should be considered in the same vein.

We always hear the cry, 'But who is going to pay for it?'. Well, it is all about spending priorities. One of the most important investments we can make for our future is the education of our children. Access to early education and care is a crucial part to that, especially for vulnerable children and children from disadvantaged families.

I also wrote about this recently. I firmly believe the cost of not investing in our future in this way far outweighs the cost and lets us down, particularly women and vulnerable children. I note Jay Weatherill heading up - I have forgotten the name of the organisation now - has come out supporting the same things I have been calling for. It was in in our local *Advocate* just the other day. It might have been yesterday. Anyway, a day or two ago.

I will repeat much of what I wrote recently, which was published in an opinion piece, because it is very relevant to this point -

Public policy should always aim for equity, target vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children and support women's participation in the workforce, thus leading to increased productivity.

The support provided to early education and care during the pandemic was welcome for all of these reasons. Private schools and early education care have a role to play however publicly funded early education and care is crucial to a modern, equitable and just society.

The last thirty or so years of uninterrupted growth in the Australian economy has not seen the benefits spread evenly, with housing and childcare costs rising faster than incomes.

The free childcare announced in April, admittedly aimed at helping parents of essential workers who were desperately needed to keep the economy working, was like manna from heaven. But it has been withdrawn before anyone has had a chance to assess the efficacy or flaws of the policy. It's back to the old dysfunctional poorly designed system.

I am not suggesting that the federal government's recently introduced scheme is perfect, because it is not. It was brought in with great haste to meet a real need. However, this has highlighted the urgent need for a radical reform of early education care in Australia that has been long overdue. The current scheme is fragmented, expensive and inefficient, and fails spectacularly when it comes to paying educators appropriately.

Educators do the most important job in the world, caring for the children, and some of the most well-paid members of our society do not see fit to ensure they should be paid commensurate with the responsibility they are giving those people with their children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the need for reform and in doing so has accelerated and exacerbated deficiencies in our current approach to early education care.

If we experience what is predicted - that is, high unemployment and an economic slump - noting that we are already in a recession, without reform, this will spell failure, likely closure of many regional centres and a risk of the collapse of a vital sector.

As I have said, I am not suggesting the rapid rollout of the free childcare arrangements during the pandemic has been without flaws. What I am suggesting is we should not revert to the way things were and effectively throw the baby - and possibly the mother - out with the bathwater.

The decision to remove the JobKeeper payment in this sector two months before other sectors will disadvantage women from every angle. Childcare workers are predominantly women, as are those in the margin requiring child care before going back to work.

Many small regional centres will find it hard to keep operating, with many families who use these services having lost employment and income. The risk of further job losses in the sector is real, especially without consideration of the long-term benefits of public funding. Women are more likely to stay home to care for the children when child care becomes unaffordable, further impacting their capacity to participate in work and benefit from the economic recovery.

Children from vulnerable households, many in regional areas, will be further disadvantaged, falling further behind if these centres close and no other options exist. We are letting the opportunity to overhaul the childcare system slip by. It should certainly take precedence over providing middle class welfare of \$25 000 per family to those in a position to spend \$150 000 on a new kitchen or bathroom.

A not-for-profit organisation, The Parenthood, is Australia's leading parent advocacy group, with a reach of over 68 000 parents across Australia. In a report of a survey of 2200 Australian families released on 1 June 2020, they found that more than half - that is, 60 per cent - of Australian

households currently using child care will have a parent forced to reduce work when full childcare fees return. They also found that in 28 per cent of those households the parent who will stop or reduce work will be a woman.

I will quote from sections of the media release published on its website and encourage members to visit that website for more detail. I quote –

A snap-back to out of pocket fees will undermine the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison's stated ambition to ensure women's workforce participation in Australia remains high in the COVID-19 economic recovery ... 'Given increasing women's workforce participation is one of the most effective ways to boost a nation's GDP, we cannot afford a mass exodus of women at this point,' Georgie Dent, The Parenthood's National Campaign Director said.

Almost half (42%) of families reported at least one parent earning less as a result of COVID, with 16% of respondents reporting both parents have seen income reduced. A third of parents (34%) reported that they will need to reduce days or remove their children altogether if out-of-pocket fees come back to what they were pre-COVID. The vast majority of families (70%) reported the government's move to make childcare fee-free for parents had had a positive impact on their family's finances. Among parents who have lost income, 63 percent will be forced to reduce days or remove altogether if fees go back.

...

ECEC services could not operate viably if a third of families pull their children from care, meaning mass closures will result.

These will be in our regions predominantly -

That puts Australia's economic future in both the short and long term in jeopardy.

We must think more broadly here and look at the overall cost. Participation of women in the workforce benefits the children, particularly those who are at risk, and benefits from access to early education care in our regions where the risks of closure are greatest.

Ms Dent, from The Parenthood, stated -

A PWC report commissioned by The Front Project published last year concluded that \$2 of benefits flow from every \$1 spent on early childhood education. In 2017, for example, there were \$2.34 billion in costs associated with the provision of 15 hours of early childhood education in the year before school. From that, \$4.74 billion in benefits were associated with providing this one year of early childhood education.

Let us not lose the benefits that have clearly been demonstrated through this measure, and push for meaningful and real reform of this sector, and publicly fund early education and care as we do education. Clearly, the costs of not doing so were much greater. Let us not lose this opportunity.

Part (4)(d) recognises changes in response to the pandemic, with a greater focus on housing those who are homeless. Being homeless increases not only the risk of contracting COVID-19, but

also means that the illness is more likely to be more severe. Homelessness meant it was impossible for these people to self-isolate at home. It was a matter that required urgent attention. I note the Government did respond, with nearly \$4.3 million funding for additional housing and homelessness announced on 29 April 2020. That included providing funds to expand the current Safe Night Space pilot, extending the program for an overnight service into a 24/7 full wraparound support operating in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

The package also included extra funding to expand Housing Connect's package to provide emergency accommodation in hotels, motels and cabins statewide and increased mental health support services for clients who need this.

The minister's media release stated -

These measures will ensure more Tasmanians have somewhere safe to stay, with the supports they need to follow public health advice and help save lives as we continue to contain the spread of coronavirus.

...

These projects, together with the hundreds of new homes and units being delivered under our Affordable Housing Strategy, will provide secure, longer-term accommodation for clients entering the Housing Connect system to the Safe Night Space and brokered accommodation services.

These measures are welcome and necessary. Anglicare's Rental Affordability Snapshot 2020 data was collected just as Tasmania and the rest of Australia were experiencing an escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I acknowledge the action taken by the Premier and the Government to assist people living on low incomes who often struggle to maintain safe and affordable secure housing. The state Government's protection from eviction and expanded family violence services and the federal government's coronavirus supplement to selected income support recipients has been welcome and needed. However, before withdrawing some of these measures, we really need to understand the benefits of these measures and the risks of their withdrawal.

Anglicare's snapshot describes some of the impacts and I quote from its report -

Other responses, such as the closure of many public spaces and the requirement to "stay at home", will negatively impact our most vulnerable Tasmanians, those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

On the Snapshot weekend of 21-22 March 2020, there were 1,291 properties listed for rent across Tasmania. This is a 52% reduction in listings since 2013. Of this year's listings, just 145 properties (11%) would have been affordable and appropriate for our households that rely on income support payments. This is a reduction of 67 properties since the same time in 2019. Just a third of the properties listed (444) would have been affordable and appropriate for our households on the minimum wage, which is similar to 2019.

The report looked at the issue relating to positive impacts of retaining a higher rate associated with the coronavirus supplement -

This year's Snapshot also looks at the impact for people seeking rentals if they retained the temporary Coronavirus Supplement permanently. This would considerably increase the amount of money available for some people. Using the same March 2020 listings, 343 properties (more than a quarter of all listings) would have been affordable and appropriate for our households that rely on income support payments, an additional 198 properties.

We did see in some jurisdictions, innovative and sensible options being utilised to home people who were homeless and living on the streets during this period. These people were at high risk of coronavirus and suffering severe symptoms if they did contract the virus. Some were housed in hotels in some states, including five-star hotels.

I appreciate this cannot continue as businesses begin to reopen and tourism resumes but we must not lose the benefit of safe accommodation for these people during a very difficult time. We need to find other ways.

The Anglicare's snapshot noted -

The State Government should also urgently increase funding to Housing Connect front door and support services so they are able to meet demand across the increasingly diverse range of client groups needing crisis, medium and long-term housing and tenancy support. Given the private rental market is unable to provide affordable homes for independent children and young people and children and young people are over-represented in Tasmania's specialist homelessness services, there is urgent need for the State Government to specifically provide sufficient affordable homes for this cohort.

The report notes –

While Tasmanians are being told to do their bit to stop the spread of COVID-19 and “stay at home”, thousands of Tasmanians are homeless, living in crowded conditions or unable to pay all their bills due to excessive rents, all of which makes staying at home during the pandemic more difficult. If COVID-19 has shown us one thing, it is the need for strong community and strong leadership. The strengths currently being shown during the pandemic need to be applied to urgently addressing Tasmania's affordable housing crisis.

Let us not lose the opportunity.

Most believe the Premier has shown strong leadership during this period; however, this strong leadership needs to continue. The problems experienced by low-income and vulnerable Tasmanians, especially those who are homeless or unable to secure safe, affordable housing, will not go away as we begin the economic recovery.

These challenges are likely to become greater with risks of unemployment and many people who have lost employment are finding it hard to now meet their financial obligations.

Whilst the investment in infrastructure and construction is welcome, it needs to be targeted where we can do so as investment that should also build social capital and not only physical structures. In a recent article in *The Conversation*, Elizabeth Mossop, the Dean of the School of Design, Architecture and Building at the University of Technology, Sydney, made some important observations -

Infrastructure spending is great for economic stimulus, but it has to be the right kind of infrastructure.

These are some of our largest public investments, so we want this public money to work a lot harder to create multiple rather than just singular benefits. As well as quickly providing jobs and the economic benefits of solving the problems of transport or energy supply, stimulus projects need to deliver broad, long-term community value, reduce inequality and help counter climate change.

We must be sure the investment in affordable and social housing is part of this stimulus and not lose this opportunity. Anglicare's report also comments and notes -

The Affordable Housing Strategy and its targets may not be enough. Tasmania needs more than 14,000 social housing dwellings over the next 20 years to meet the housing need of the lower end of the market.

Given the importance of housing for health and wellbeing, it must be our state's priority. This will be particularly important in our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, investing substantially in social housing as essential infrastructure will not only create homes for thousands of disadvantaged Tasmanians, it will also create much needed jobs and assist the economy to recover.

Shelter Tasmania, along with the National Shelter, Homelessness Australia, Community Housing Industry Association - CHIA - and the Everybody's Home campaign are all calling for a timely stimulus package that will provide a much-needed investment in social housing, create jobs and improve social outcomes during the pandemic and beyond. We must ensure we do not miss this opportunity to address the unacceptable levels of homelessness in Tasmania.

Point 4(e) recognises changes in responses to the pandemic in developing different ways to identify to respond to domestic abuse and violence. It seems Tasmania has gone against the national trend with a reduction in notifications of family violence. This, however, does not mean there is an actual reduction in incidents. As reported by the ABC on 16 June 2020, Engendered Equality Chief executive officer Alina Thomas said, 'the reality of the restrictions is that victims cannot get away from their abusers to get help.'

It is also clear that even reaching out through other channels - phone, email, Facebook Messenger and so on - may be impossible with a perpetrator in constant attendance in the home. In the ABC report, Ms Thomas stated -

Under these conditions, often people's options would have been to keep quiet, to keep the kids quiet, to do what you're told, to pretend that everything's OK.

Advocates say the lockdown allowed greater levels of abuse.

The reality is coronavirus actually became part of the conditions of family violence,' Ms Thomas said.

Social isolation is a tactic that is used by family violence perpetrators before coronavirus ... [officially sanctioned] social isolation, endorsed by the authorities, definitely brought in a new layer of abuse.

We do need to anticipate that there will be increased ability for financial abuse as the Centrelink benefits roll back, with the ongoing impacts on businesses and economy so we just need to be prepared. We can't be overly prepared to support victims. The more prepared we are, the better we're going to be able to respond.'

There have been many examples of victims of family violence being less able to report and escape family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially women in abusive relationships and particularly during the lockdown period. Whilst it is inappropriate to name innovative and different ways women have used to seek support and advice during this period to protect them and enhance their safety, it is the lived reality for many victims that this period has been additionally frightening and difficult for them. There have been accounts of abusers stating falsely to their partners they have COVID-19 and the whole house is quarantined and no-one must leave the house. This is really happening. Many women have feared for their safety, having to be locked up with their abuser for weeks on end, trying to work from home, care and provide education support for their children.

It is difficult to know the full impact of these abusive relationships. However, we know that calls to or information sought from websites of organisations or services supporting victims of family violence, such as 1800RESPECT or Engender Equality, have increased significantly during this period. It is often in the middle of the night when hits on the website or requests come through. It is important that any important positive aspects of service delivery and access to support are maintained and analysis of the data and service delivery during this period be reviewed to ensure all those impacted with family violence and abuse are recognised.

Point 4(f) recognises changes and response to the pandemic and the greater use of telehealth services. There are many health-related jobs that cannot be done from home and require care providers to turn up and work at a range of healthcare settings. However, we did see a much greater use and rollout of telehealth, which is one of the great benefits of this experience. Telehealth is not possible in all patient care episodes, but it does mean less travelling, greater accessibility and enhanced monitoring of patients when properly resourced and utilised.

Some of our less tech-savvy community members may need a crash course in using it and some of the doctors possibly had to as well, but when it is used effectively, it will significantly reduce their risk of catching something else while sitting in a waiting room. They can avoid leaving the house if they do not need to, if they can be cared for in this way. That is a more federal matter in ensuring that is funded properly but it is a positive outcome we have seen. It should never be considered a cheap option. It should be considered as a legitimate health service and be funded appropriately to promote sustainability, efficacy and longevity of the service.

Point 4(g) recognises changes in response to the pandemic and community support and connection with vulnerable and elderly members of our community. It is interesting to reflect that pre-COVID-19, many elderly people would go for days or weeks without seeing or talking to their loved ones. Now, there are WhatsApp groups checking in on elderly neighbours and grandparents,

all upskilled in Zoom or some other videoconferencing platform, giving them much more meaningful contact more often.

Whilst there is no substitute for a real hug between elderly parents or grandparents and their children or grandchildren, keeping them safe was much more important. I assisted my elderly parents to see and speak to their grandchildren and great grandchildren for my Mum's birthday and Mother's Day, both occurring during the height of the COVID-19 lockdown. It was something that we probably would not have done had it not been for COVID-19. It took a little while to get Mum up to speed on Zoom over the phone, but we got there and it was just delightful to see her reaction when she saw her grandchildren and great grandchildren in Melbourne.

We also saw many wonderful examples of friends and neighbours, and even those with no previous connection, finding ways to assist some of the vulnerable elderly members of our community. Some who had previously been very isolated and lonely were cared for in different ways by our community. Some did not receive the support and care they needed. However, overall, I believe our communities did work together to find new ways to assist many members of our community. We should maintain these connections and support mechanisms and avoid isolation and loneliness of members of our community most at risk. I also appreciate how difficult it was for family and friends with loved ones in aged care. The physical separation was difficult for all involved in those circumstances, including the aged-care workers.

I accept and note the economic challenges like no other seen in our lifetime. We have seen a significant and rapid change to the way we lived pre-COVID-19. We must avoid losing the benefits of some of the changes initiated to support our citizens in a very challenging time.

The need for an economic recovery plan is clear. Many businesses were forced to close and jobs lost at the stroke of the Premier's pen, certainly something he took no joy in. However, there is a real risk our blinkers will give us a distorted view of the real world. Health and education are downplayed as if they are not fair dinkum industries like the building industry that builds things we can all see. Child care and early education are wrongly held in low regard as if they are merely glorified babysitters, which they are certainly not, as they do one of the most important jobs there is; educating and caring for our future through our children.

The economic recovery plan needs to take a broad, long-term approach that is gender-sensitive. To date we have seen anything but a sensitive and equitable response. We can clearly see that state and federal governments have resorted to giving the construction industry preferential treatment to help the economic recovery. These jobs are important but the industry has been and will continue to be male-dominated. Programs aimed at encouraging women to enter the trades have seen limited progress to date. Investment in infrastructure needs to create social value, not just capital value. Building social housing, improving our education and healthcare facilities and improving road safety are all important investments.

Governments must rethink their approach to Australia's economic recovery. The trajectory we are on takes us back to the past, reinforces old views of what industries are important, reopens gender inequality gaps we have started to close and risks further disadvantage to vulnerable Australians. Publicly funded early education and care should be the cornerstone of our recovery, and certainly something that we should not lose the opportunity to address as we continue to effectively invest in our future.

I thank members for listening to my contribution and I welcome their input.

[5.06 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for moving this motion. The coronavirus pandemic has left in its wake a trail of economic destruction and, tied in with that, emotional, mental and social destruction and the lives lost that no amount of money can ever bring back. In the stage we have reached here and now in Tasmania we begin to ask ourselves why. It is a natural human compulsion to try as best we can to link cause with effect, to ask what we can do to understand what happened in terms that we can comprehend.

The sheer scale of the damage and destruction the coronavirus has wreaked will not be fully understood for years and years to come. Not until we can understand the complex factors that have led to this event's occurrence can we have any meaningful appreciation of the entire event, an event which is yet to be over. What we do know, however, is that it has been devastating. Entire workforces and the livelihoods they support have been decimated. The support provided to those who have lost their jobs, their livelihoods, their means to place meals on the table has racked up a bill that will be placed on the shoulders of the youngest and most vulnerable generations to pay.

Our banking system, interest rates, superannuation legislation and tax policy all concede to the magnitude of the issue. Our international borders, the means by which we bring people to our country, particularly our international higher education students, are shut for the foreseeable future, probably until 2021. Our domestic borders are only now in the formative stages of reopening with a great number of caveats attached. To say that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economy has been significant is verging on understatement. This has been a once-in-a-century event, whose effects will be felt for the next century. I acknowledge that while there is much left to be investigated and understood, it is absolutely apparent now that the economic impact has indeed been significant.

I support the need for a nonpartisan, inclusive approach to economic recovery in this state. A nonpartisan and inclusive approach, analysing economic impacts, outcomes and policies, is something which should be done as a matter of course by any parliament. This is why I believe the approach currently being taken is the most appropriate course of action - that is, the Joint Standing Committee of Public Accounts and the Subordinate Legislation Committee, the forthcoming inquiry to be undertaken by the Auditor-General and the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council are the most appropriate vehicles for examining the Government's response to the coronavirus pandemic at this time.

The proactive outreach now being made to the community by these bodies is a very positive development and emphasises how nonpartisan inquiries have the power to cut through the noise and get through to the real issues people are experiencing. The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council is up and running with its own website, with set dates and plans for analysis and consultation with the community. The Public Accounts Committee is currently open for submissions to its inquiry, one which is analysing the timing and efficacy of the Government's economic response to the pandemic and the progress and outcome of the Government's economic recovery plan for the state. In this sense, it is arguable that the PAC is itself a check and balance on PESRAC.

At this time I acknowledge the need for a nonpartisan, inclusive approach to economic recovery in the state, and I am also conscious of the efforts already in place to this end. Rethinking how the state budget and economy is managed is an ever-continuing task. It changes almost from week to week and it is so intricately intertwined with national policy and international events that it is virtually impossible to rethink it all the time as it is. Nothing has highlighted this entire process

more than the advent of the coronavirus pandemic; I see, understand and appreciate the sentiment but I also believe it is already happening all the time.

If nothing else, the advent of the coronavirus pandemic has emphasised how plans, even the most detailed and carefully laid out ones, can be made redundant in an instant. This is not to say we should avoid making plans for the economy and devising budgetary priorities. However, I feel that this, too, is being done on a continuous basis. Indeed, the budget each year is as much of a policy priority document for the government of the day as it is an allocation for fiscal resources.

With regard to the death of 13 Tasmanians to COVID-19 - even one death to this virus is too many. To those who have lost someone to this terrible virus, and throughout this terrible event, I offer my deepest and sincerest condolences. Please know that your whole community is behind you and with you, and we will be here to support you in the weeks, months and years ahead. There are few worse things in life than grief and the loss of one who is dearly loved. There are no words anyone can say nor really anything to be done that can magically alleviate the pain. For anyone experiencing this grief, I encourage them to lean on their families, friends and communities. While this pandemic has stretched some parts of our communities to its limits, it has also revealed all that is positive and benevolent when we pull together and look after one another.

The social distancing and isolation requirements that were rightly implemented in response to flattening the curve have meant that we had to approach the way we usually do things in a much different way. This has had a domino effect on the way we interact with our colleagues, families, neighbours and essential workers. The way we conduct our own daily routines needed to be done more mindfully and from an entirely different perspective. Naturally, this has fed into the way we look at flexible working arrangements including child care, the impact of crime - both public and domestic - and the way we should support the more vulnerable people in our society.

Some of these things may change permanently. For instance, it would certainly be a positive outcome should the advent of this pandemic improve the way we understand domestic or elder abuse and identify and implement better ways of detecting, reporting and preventing it. Other aspects as they relate to how we work and how we manage working arrangements, I believe, are best left to each individual and organisation to manage. As each person's personal circumstances and work requirements differ, it is impossible to take a cookie cutter approach to mandating certain working arrangements.

As far as telehealth arrangements, I will support any means that provide us with better health outcomes. However, I also believe that in order to get better health outcomes, telehealth services ought to be managed properly. I understand the pain felt by our Tasmanian doctors in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic as it has been reported that general practices have seen a drop in revenue of 15 to 30 per cent.

A national survey recently conducted by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners of around 980 practices across Australia further indicates that 43 per cent of these practices experienced a drop in revenue of between 10 and 30 per cent, 27 per cent of these practices experienced a drop of 30 to 60 per cent, and 4 per cent of these practices experienced a loss of between 60 and 90 per cent of revenue since May last year. It is not unfair to say that factors in addition to the impact of coronavirus may have influenced these drops in revenue. However, it also cannot be discounted. My point is that no-one benefits when general practice surgeries are forced to close their doors. It limits access to quality health care and preventative medicine.

In addition to these losses in revenue, I also note the experiences of endorsements for telehealth services that match patrons with doctors who are not their regular primary care providers. While I support greater use of telehealth facilities in principle, I do not believe the positive outcomes that we can hope for can be best reached unless patients are able to properly connect with a practitioner who knows them and their medical background has a good history of proper care. To this end, I believe that the good of telehealth facilities comes from filling the gaps that arise when people cannot, as a first resort, get to see their usual general practitioner in person because there is no substitute for the kind of quality care that they provide. I thank the member for the opportunity to speak on this motion and I certainly note it.

[5.15 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the member for Murchison talked about the arts. I will not read the whole media release but I will let you know what happened. On 25 June 2020, Elise Archer, the Minister for the Arts, posted a media release. It is lengthy in nature so I will not read it all, but she basically said that, as the Tasmanian Minister for the Arts, she had been actively lobbying for further federal government support for many Tasmanian artists and art organisations. The sector is worth \$179 million to the Tasmanian economy. Today, she was delighted to hear that the federal government is providing \$250 million for an arts stimulus package, and that will be delivered as a mixture of grants and loans over 12 months.

The Government acknowledges the good faith sentiment behind this motion from the member for Murchison. We also acknowledge the tragic loss of 13 Tasmanians as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of the Government, I add our condolences and send our thoughts to their families and friends.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected us - we need only to look around or talk to our friends and family. The health, safety and wellbeing of Tasmanians remain the Government's highest priority and we will continue to manage the risk of the virus based on the best and latest evidence and medical advice available. While Tasmania has reached the significant milestone of zero active cases of COVID-19 in the state, the necessary actions taken to reach this milestone have resulted in significant economic and social consequences across Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government's social and economic support packages are unprecedented in the history of our state and they are providing the wide range of support where needed. Through all of this, the Government will remain focused on getting the thousands of Tasmanians who have lost their jobs back to work. These are real people. We all have family members and friends who have lost jobs, had their hours reduced or their shifts cut. The Government is doing everything it can to rebuild our economy and get Tasmanians working again.

Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that we have had to change the way we do many things. I will briefly touch on some of the points the member has referred to in her motion.

Certainly, there have been some positives, especially in things like the uptake of technology to facilitate non-face to face meetings like Zoom, FaceTime and Webex. Telehealth, too, has helped overcome barriers to medical consultations and treatments during the pandemic. Flexibility of workplaces has also taken a big step forward during the pandemic, with work from home opportunities being borne out of necessity to stay home and practice social distancing. We have seen a number of examples of that in the State Service.

The primary consideration will always be the safety of employees and adherence to public health advice and restrictions. In some cases, this may see a continuation of work from home arrangements into the future, even beyond the pandemic, where these arrangements have been effective and agreed to by both the employee and their agency. This may involve arrangements whereby a better work/life balance is sought and employees regularly work from home or remotely for part of the week, while working from their regular workplace for the remainder.

While there may be employees who are able to continue working from home arrangements in some shape or form, there will also continue to be the roles that undertake frontline functions that cannot be performed remotely.

The member also mentioned homelessness. The Government has made significant announcements to support homeless Tasmanians. This included the announcement of a \$4.3 million package to expand homelessness services throughout the state, including by extending the Safe Night Space program from an overnight service into 24/7 assistance and expanding the service to the north and the north-west. We have also provided more funds to expand Housing Connect's capacity to provide emergency accommodation in motels and cabins statewide.

Importantly, this package also provides for significant wraparound services to those utilising brokerage accommodation to ensure they are well supported. The Government has also been progressing well in securing more properties through its Rapid Rehousing and Private Rental Incentives programs which, combined, will deliver almost 100 new places for Tasmanians in need. From the stimulus announced in March, Housing Tasmania was allocated an extra \$5 million in this financial year for maintenance; it is expecting to exhaust all of this budget by the end of the month, showing that we have hit the ground running in this area.

Mr President, we recognise many changes in response to the pandemic. COVID-19 has been the biggest health, economic and societal shock to hit our state in a century and, tragically, it has cost lives. The good news, thanks to the hard work and sacrifices made by Tasmanians, is that we now have the virus under a measure of control. We have been able to bring forward the easing of restrictions as Tasmania carefully re-emerges. Now, we face the second and arguably tougher phase of this fight - to reboot the economy while avoiding a deadly second wave of the virus.

Many of the changes we have seen throughout this pandemic will stand us in good stead to get through this next phase of the fight. Tasmanians have continued to do a great job in helping to stop the spread of coronavirus, enabling the further easing of restrictions, and we look forward to being able to confirm a date when our border restrictions will be lifted. Together we will get through this because we are Tasmanian, we have faced challenges before and we have overcome them. We most certainly support the motion.

[5.21 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I touched on quite a number of these areas in my response to the Premier's State of the State address, but I will mention them again because they are worth dwelling on. I agree so much with what the member for Murchison said with regard to the impact COVID-19 has had on our community, how so many jobs and freedoms have been lost.

When you think back over time, about World War I, the Spanish flu and World War II - each one of those experiences would have brought home to the community the need for good coordination and cooperation. Imagine how hard it would have been back then without the communication features we have today. I think of the stress people must have gone through; it was horrific. You think of today, and having those sorts of communication channels brings other

problems and issues. We have heard people put their hands up and say that this is all a hoax. I have had a couple on my Facebook page. There are people who really think this is a hoax and you think, 'Don't you look at the science?'.

Ms Forrest - It is funny when you get a relative of one of those people ring and apologise on behalf of the rest of the family for their post on your Facebook page. It did happen.

Mr VALENTINE - Oh, dear. Anyway, we all have to say that it has been character-building for each of us. It has helped us to look at what matters and it has helped the community to decide what is important. I reiterate that: it is an opportunity lost if we do not learn from the experiences we have had.

The Premier was the man of the moment. I have stated that before. It is not that others could not have done the job - I am sure they could have - but he had this really firm approach and he was on the money. He has been under immense pressure. I do not know how many news media events he has held or how often he has been in front of the press.

Ms Forrest - It was 70-something, I think he said, when he said he wasn't going to do them twice a week anymore.

Mr VALENTINE - It was amazing, with the amount of pressure and the questions. All those who were with him -

Ms Rattray - And phone calls and contact from the member for Murchison.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, and I contacted him -

Ms Forrest - He used to ring me, too, you know.

Mr VALENTINE - I contacted him a few times and he was always available. That was the point.

We did lose 13 Tasmanians. People say that people lose people in their lives all the time, but to have it happen so suddenly, without any warning, is awful. Yes, car accidents can do that to people -

Ms Rattray - Not to be able to be with those people must have been the hardest. Not to be by their side -

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, and not to be able to visit, to be by their side and hold their hand as they pass. It really has been difficult and I, too, offer my condolences to those families who have been through that. Having a previously fit and healthy person pass away like that, looking on helplessly, really, must have been so difficult.

We have all learnt to face life in a different way and going back to normal is not really, or should not be, an option. If we do not learn from this, we are passing up a major opportunity.

I also said in my response to the State of the State address that the pandemic has shone a bright light for most people on those things that are really important to them, and it has been a wake-up call as to how much more we, as a state, need to address certain issues. I talked about food and

product security and the importance of good community cohesion in order to continue to operate at the local level as a state and a nation, for that matter. We have realised how much we need to rely on each other to get by and it has been community-building. I want to reiterate a couple of those things and will leave members with the words of Franklin D Roosevelt -

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have little.

We have to look at how the budget is structured and how we approach life in this state. Are we simply aiming to get back to normal, or the way it was before COVID-19? No, I do not think so. I think we need to learn from this. I think the Premier, through his whole experience, has shown such a human face, as well, in the way the Government has put more money into some of those social things that are needed. It goes to show there are vulnerable people in our community and we need to pay attention to their vulnerabilities and do our best as a parliament to try to improve their lot as well as keep the economy rolling over.

That economy, and I mentioned it then - this growth paradigm is something that needs attention; we do not need to concentrate totally on growth all the time. We have to look at life differently.

Ms Forrest - That is the next motion.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, it probably is. Well, I might not speak on that, but it needs to happen. Someone has to start - it has to start somewhere, and why wouldn't little old Tasmania be able to look at a different way forward, rather than this growth paradigm all the time?

Ms Rattray - Tasmania, which always or often punches above its weight.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes; it is an old cliché but it is true.

The last thing is a national living wage. What goes around, comes around, and it would reduce people's draw on the public purse. I understand they are receiving it from the public purse with a national living wage, but there are so many services people would be accessing now that they might not have to if they were paid a living wage. The stress that would be reduced, the access to mental health services that might be reduced, the access to hospital services that might be reduced - there are all sorts of paybacks. What goes around, comes around. I thank the member for Murchison for bringing this motion forward. Yes, I had my say earlier, but I wanted to reiterate a couple of those things.

[6.29 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, I make a brief contribution in support of the motion, acknowledging the member for Murchison for bringing it before us and starting this conversation, and for the thorough way she has outlined many of those issues, points and different parts to the motion. The member has done a really great job interrogating all of those in a great deal of detail. I will not revisit them in the same level of detail -

Ms Rattray - Forensic.

Ms LOVELL - That is a very good word for it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had the greatest social and economic impact on this state in a generation. We are not through it yet; we are still to see a great deal of the impact to come over the coming months and, potentially, years, particularly when we look at the economic impact and the way the people are starting to feeling that now and will continue to.

We were very fortunate to be able to control the spread of the virus as well as we did. With the exception of the outbreak in the north-west, our numbers across the state were very good in comparison to other parts of the country and the world. In dealing with the outbreak in the north-west, the steps taken allowed that to be controlled and we have been able to get to the very fortunate position of no confirmed cases for over a month now, which is a very positive position to be in.

I think it is due to the action taken by all Tasmanians, the willingness to listen to Public Health advice, to follow the advice given and to accept the restrictions put in place without too much fuss, to accommodate all the really significant changes we all had to make in our lives every day, working from home where we could and keeping children home from schools when schools asked us to accommodate that. It became a bit of a catchcry, 'Stay home, save lives'. It was very true and that is why we were able to get to the position we are in now. It is due to the actions of all Tasmanians that we are in the position we are in today.

I acknowledge the tragic deaths of 13 Tasmanians and add my condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives. Other members have spoken about that. I was checking social media and waiting for the update to come through from the Government, hoping every time that there was not another confirmed death and every time there was, I think we all felt that. It is certainly a loss and a sadness shared by the entire community.

We now have an opportunity to look at the changes that have been made and look at which of those changes we want to adopt and move into the future with, and we can look at in a number of areas. The member for Murchison has identified opportunities to work from home and that is one of the most wide-reaching outcomes of the pandemic. People are recognising, and in a lot of instances it is employers, that people are able to work from home.

Ms Forrest - And they are productive when they are there.

Ms LOVELL - Exactly right. I know it does not work for everyone. I cannot stand working from home. I much prefer to be in an office. I am not productive at all at home but I know a lot of people are. A lot of people prefer to work at home because it enables them to participate more fully in other aspects of their life. It enables them to spend more time with their families, to pursue other interests and other aspects of their life that they do not have the time to do when they are travelling to and from work every day or dropping kids off to sport after school, all the things we rush around doing and pack into our day. When you take out a lot of that extra travel time and time spent that is often unproductive in a workplace, people have been able to do a lot more with their lives every day.

Free child care is a big one. I could not condemn more strongly the federal government's decision to remove the JobKeeper allowance and reinstate childcare fees at the same time. In an industry where the impact will be felt far more greatly by women, both those who rely on being able to have their children in care so they can participate in the workforce, do volunteer work, study or the many other things that women and men chose to do, and those who are in a workforce dominated by women. This change is very much going to affect women disproportionately. It is

not only free child care and JobKeeper in the early years education sector; a number of impacts of the pandemic will be felt far more greatly by women.

Some people do not like to talk about that, but there is no escaping it. Many terms have thrown around - pink recession, shecession and all of these cutesie names to describe it. We should call it what it is - we do not need a cute name to acknowledge that women are disproportionately affected by this.

The member for Murchison spoke about a greater focus on housing those who are homeless. We have had an issue with homelessness in Tasmania for a very long time. Every winter it comes up again because we see people living in tents, living on the street and not in safe shelter. People become more aware of it in winter because we get so bitterly cold at night here.

One of the first issues raised throughout the pandemic was when people were asked to stay home. As the member for Murchison said, you cannot stay home if you do not have a home to stay in. You cannot quarantine, you cannot isolate, you cannot keep yourself away from vulnerable members of the community when you are one of those vulnerable members of the community and you do not have somewhere safe to be. One of the opportunities in this is to highlight and continue to highlight that need for greater investment in housing - safe housing and safe shelter - for more Tasmanians.

Point 4(e) is -

developing different ways to identify and respond to domestic abuse and violence;

The member for Murchison identified that, particularly early on, there were reports that demand on family violence services had decreased. This was concerning in itself. It was not necessarily an indicator that there was less violence taking place but that it was more difficult for people to seek help.

When you are required to stay at home, you have to work at home, you have to be at home from school - and being home means you are with the perpetrator of violence against you. It then it becomes very difficult to reach out for help. This is an area we need to look at. We needed to look at it before, let us be honest. There is a whole lot we need to do in the area of family violence, but we need to be mindful of this if we are ever faced with this situation again. How do we better support people - again, mostly women and children - who are in a position where they are not safe at home?

The greater use of telehealth services is a really positive outcome of the pandemic. This is something doctors have been advocating for a very long time. The pandemic has shown us that when we need to act, when we need to implement change, we can. So often change is incremental and happens over such a long time because there is so much resistance when, really, when it needs to be done, it can be done and it can be done quickly.

The federal government in particular implemented a number of measures to enable telehealth services to be more available for members of the public, and this has been a great advantage for many people. We need to be careful to make sure there is a balance and that face-to-face services are still available when needed, and that telehealth services are not replacing the relationship you have with a family doctor or a doctor you see regularly. There is an opportunity for more people to

access medical services, particularly in primary care and general practice, which is becoming a bigger challenge in Tasmania, particularly in our regional areas.

Point 4(g) noted community support and connection with vulnerable and elderly members of the community. I have been spending a lot of time working with neighbourhood centres in my electorate, particularly in Clarendon Vale, Risdon Vale and Rokeby. What I have heard consistently from those neighbourhood centres is that they have had a massive increase in demand.

Clarendon Vale has a program on Tuesdays in which they used to have Soul Kitchen, and Soul is a shared dinner. People can come to the centre in the evening and share a meal. Before the pandemic, they had around 80 people turn up each week for Soul, and a number of people would take some takeaway food home to members of the community who could not come to the centre.

Since the pandemic and the lockdown started, they started to engage and reach out to members of the community and offer to deliver those meals. They have gone from having around 80 per week turn up to delivering over 300 meals every Tuesday night. They are incredible at that centre. The manager, the team of volunteers and the other staff members will get to the centre around 7 a.m. and some weeks they were not leaving until after 1 a.m. They would cook all day long, prepare over 300 meals, and package them. I have seen them do it. I helped and I have seen them. It is quite incredible. They package them up and they have teams come in and pick them up - they take meals out, deliver them, and they come back, drop off the eskies and other things they use; they clean up, they wash up, they pack up and go home.

What I have heard from those centres is that they are engaging with people who have never engaged with a neighbourhood centre before. They are people who have never been involved in their community in that way. So, already, these neighbourhood centres are looking at how they can continue that level of engagement once things go back to some sense of normal. When they are able to start offering services at the centre again, how do they continue to engage with those members of the community who have never had to rely on those services before or have never been able to because they have not been able to get there? There are some really innovative and exciting things coming out of those centres. I hope they get the support they need to continue to offer that level of service to the community because it will continue to be needed.

Ms Forrest - It would be good if the federal government worked with them on the DGR status.

Ms LOVELL - Yes, it would. As I said at the beginning, I support the motion and thank the member for Murchison for bringing it before us. This is an important conversation that we need to have, and it is a conversation we should start now, but it is a conversation that will need to continue because the pandemic will have such far-reaching and wide-reaching impacts. We have only just scratched the surface and we need to take the time and really look at how this has impacted on our community in a social way, in an economic way, in a health way, and learn the lessons we can learn from it and move forward. To simply go back to normal would be doing a disservice to ourselves and to our community.

[5.42 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I thank members for their contributions and their input into this debate. I note the member for Launceston's comments on the impact on general practitioners. It is a very real issue in terms of some companies and pharmaceutical businesses, perhaps, who are offering telehealth services and directing their patients to practitioners who do not know those patients. When these things come in quickly, there are often flaws and that is one of

them. Where you can access telehealth services with a GP that knows you, that is what I am talking about - the benefits that brings. We must be sure that in our community messaging we encourage people to go to their GPs when they are not well. People have stayed home for fear of being in a waiting room and catching COVID-19, because that is where you catch things.

Ms Lovell - Or fear of being a burden -

Ms FORREST - Yes, or being a burden. GPs' hours have been quite different and it has been difficult for them as well as for the patients. Please encourage people in your area to make sure they visit their GPs, get on top of their chronic health conditions and seek preventative care. I had a well-but-tired woman check. There is such thing as a well-woman check but I am sure there is a well-but-tired women check as well. I do not have the results of that yet. They are always very cheery at the doctor's reception when I ring. I encourage you all to look after yourselves, too, if you are feeling a bit run-down, which I certainly was.

I also note the comments of other members about the leadership role the Premier has played in this whole pandemic period. I commend him for not succumbing to the pressure of lobbyists and certain interest groups. It would not be easy, I appreciate that. He has and continues to listen to the advice of the Public Health officials. We only have to look across to the United States of America to see how that works when you do not listen to the advice of health officials. I remember watching that one video clip when one of the health advisers was just about tying herself in knots when the President of the United States was talking about drinking bleach. There was also the hydroxychloroquine carry-on. I will call that as well. There have been so many inappropriate comments out of that man's mouth.

Mr Valentine - Stop testing and reduce the numbers.

Ms FORREST - It is frightening. Maybe we should let this one play out.

We have seen great leadership from the Premier in that regard. We have also seen the particularly calm and soothing nature of Dr Mark Veitch. Who could not be anything but calmed and soothed by Dr Veitch when he was at the press conferences every day for a period? Particularly when he had to deliver bad news, which was always difficult.

I agree with members that we should not lose the opportunities we have in picking up those things that have the benefits but also modifying them to suit the future. Bringing things in so rapidly - even the free child care is not without its problems. We need to use this opportunity to completely overhaul that. There was also the additional funding into family violence support, which was not mentioned. I appreciate the Government's commitment to that and the Premier as the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. I note that there still seems to be a significant unmet need for families escaping family violence, looking for accommodation, in response to that question I had today. I am very keen to work with the Premier and the minister, Mr Jaensch, on fixing that. It is not okay that women and families are waiting a year to get housing when they are trying to escape family violence. They could be dead in that time. We need to pay much more attention to that. I will continue to work with that.

I thank members for their contributions and move on to the next motion.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

COVID-19 Pandemic - Economic Impact on Tasmania

[5.47 p.m.]

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

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Tasmania, the Legislative Council acknowledges: -

- (1) The significant economic impact on the State;
- (2) The need for a non-partisan, inclusive approach to economic recovery in the State;
- (3) The opportunity to re-think how the State budget and economy is managed and prioritised in the future; and
- (4) The need to initiate a review of fiscal sustainability, to prioritise future spending and establish a funding plan to manage the State's finances into the future.

Mr President, I will be more brief with this motion. It is a much more succinct motion. It is my intention, regardless of where we get to with this motion, to conclude the debate around 6.30 p.m even if we have to adjourn the debate until August. Other members may wish to speak on another matter before we finish up -

A member - What would that be?

Ms FORREST - The departure of the member for Rosevears!

I will move on. There is little doubt in my mind that the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on all the problems Tasmanians are facing, but the first reality we need to acknowledge is that the pandemic has not caused most of the problems we are facing. The pandemic has simply exacerbated existing problems - problems that have slowly manifested over the years.

The state budget was never fixed, as the Government was forever telling us. The Revised Estimates Report in February this year, before the pandemic was felt, outlined how the General Government cash deficit for this year and the next three years of forward Estimates were estimated to be \$1.8 billion. That was the total cash deficits for the four years, \$1.8 billion, and that includes all government spending - not just the bits the Treasurer includes in this surplus calculation - but all infrastructure spending and equity contributions that go into government businesses.

Those of us on the Public Accounts Committee have been coming to grips with the problem of the state's long-term fiscal sustainability. There is not one single year beyond next year under any of the four possible scenarios modelled by Treasury through this process where we were not spending more than we were receiving. After the pandemic, it is safe to assume there will be no years in the short-to-medium term which will have cash surpluses. Treasury has pointed out that new sources of revenue were required to meet the needs of the government, whose job as a critical service deliverer at the coalface not only delivers services in areas of past underfunding, as has

become manifestly obvious in the health area when the pandemic struck, but also in areas where future needs are growing faster than expected income.

We were going to have to start borrowing probably in 2020-21; that was before the pandemic. Do not get me wrong, I do not mind borrowing money, but all the scenarios have suggested that the interest on the borrowings would have to be borrowed as well, and that is a bit of a problem.

The state is like a household. The federal government is not. We do not have a bank like the federal government's Reserve Bank, which can put money into the federal government's bank account with the click of a mouse. You do not have to go to the printing press. Just click the mouse.

That is the problem we were facing prior to the pandemic. The pandemic has made a big problem a lot worse. Instead of looking at cash deficits of \$1.8 billion over four years, the cash deficit for just one year, for the 2020-21 year, is estimated to be \$1.7 million. That is all government spending. You may recall the Treasurer said next year's deficit will be \$1 billion. That did not include all the infrastructure spending which, paradoxically, is what is going to lead us out of the wilderness. The spending we need to get to the other side is not actually included.

As all of you know, from the Premier's answer to a question on notice on 4 June this year, the Government will be borrowing between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion next year. That is what the General Government will need. We are in uncharted waters and we need to understand what is happening.

Tasmanians are relying on us in this Chamber to shine a light into these dark corners. We need to be cognisant of our role, not only to review specific bills that land on our Table but also a much broader purview of government policies and processes. I know I run the risk of labouring the point about the Government's misleading spin on our financial position, but how is it possible to find a way and a path out of the wilderness if you are not clear where you are? There is no point heading south if it is going to take you over a cliff.

The federal government is so preoccupied with its own fiscal position that the problems of the states have been pushed to one side. Federal Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, has made it clear that states cannot expect the Australian Government to bail them out. Tim Wilson, the Liberal chair of the House of Representatives' economics committee, who led the campaign against the reform of the franking credits system, said the states and territories should have moved much earlier on tax reform. He was reported in *The Age* on Saturday 20 June as saying -

The states have wasted the last 30 years behaving like petulant teenagers, structuring their spending on windfall gains, assuming it's a sustainable revenue base. They keep blaming Canberra for their fiscal woes but almost all solutions rest with themselves ...

It is a sloppy historical analysis of our federal system, quite frankly, but it highlights the points ahead when such a prominent federal Liberal voices such sentiments.

This is why we Tasmanians need to reach a nonpartisan agreement on the path ahead. We will not get a universal agreement about every song in the songbook but we need a consensual approach if we are to progress the interests of Tasmania.

I have alluded to our precarious financial position but that really needs to be seen as just one aspect of an appropriate public policy in this state. For starters, having a place to call home is a fundamental right for everyone. In a civilised society such as ours, there is no excuse not to attend to this need. For those who wish to remind us that we cannot afford it and that money does not grow on trees, please explain where the money does come from and why there is not enough to house everybody. We know that there are record amounts of private debt in the economy. That means there must also be record amounts of cash and deposits out there as well. There are two sides to a balance sheet.

If most people do not get to see much of it, that is because it is pretty unevenly spread. The inequities are growing: wages were slowing before the pandemic, and increased unemployment and underemployment and opting out altogether leading to lower participation rates are features of the latest jobs statistics.

It was always going to happen when the seriousness of COVID-19 became apparent. That is why I was a little flummoxed when one of the earliest assistance measures was to raise the level for instant asset write-off to \$150 000. Why would anyone buy new equipment when they are in the midst of losing income at the greatest rate of knots we have seen in our lifetime? Why would they buy new gear when the current stuff is underutilised? Why would they borrow more money when they have lost a heap of customers?

Then came the home build top-up. There is no doubt the building industry is an important contributor to the economy. At a time of increasing demand for social housing due to the prolonged rises in house prices at a much faster rate than real wages, what does the federal government do? It offered \$25 000 for people wanting to spend \$150 000 on a new kitchen or bathroom upgrade, or some other substantial improvement, or to spend up to \$750 000 on a new house. One catch: the time frame is so tight that the only people who will end up qualifying are those who plan to spend the money anyway - people who have jobs and have the necessary bank finance in place.

Is that where we should be directing government assistance? I realise some of the policy matters I have referred to are the responsibility of the federal government, but as with much of the public policy these days, the state government is inevitably involved. The federal government gets involved in the big announcements but is happy to leave the states to sort out the mess. The states are left to deal with the fallout from the imbalances and inequities the federal policies promote.

Just as housing is fundamental to a modern, equitable, just and fair society, so too is access to publicly afforded early education. I do not know whether you saw the recent media reports about gender diversity leading to more productive workplaces. I often say to people when the subject arises, look at the Legislative Council, for instance. There are now a majority of women in this place. We did not get there by accident, the voters chose to put us here. Personally, I think we are more productive than we used to be - voters are not stupid, Mr President.

Ms Rattray - I will reserve my judgment on that, given that my dad was the former member. I will be mindful.

Ms FORREST - Yes, but we are talking about the overall numbers. I will not earbash you about gender issues; I have done a bit of that lately. They concern me, as I think you all know.

Childcare workers are predominantly women, as are those at the margin - requiring child care before going back to work. Yet child care is not about somewhere to park the kids while parents

go off to work. Child care is about early education for our most precious asset - our children and grandchildren. The free child care announced in April immediately aimed at helping parents and essential workers who were desperately needed to help the economy working was welcome, but it has been withdrawn before anyone has had a chance to assess efficacy or flaws in the policy. Back to the old dysfunctional, poorly designed system.

The JobKeeper payment is sectioned, and for some unfathomable reason will cease two months before other sectors, predominantly disadvantaging women. Many small regional centres will find it hard to keep operating, with many families who use their services having lost employment or income. The risk of further job losses in this sector is real without consideration of the longer term benefits of public funding. Children from vulnerable households, many in regional areas, will be further disadvantaged, falling further behind if these centres close and no other options exist. I know I am repeating some of this stuff, but it is important. This is the economic impact we are particularly looking at here. We should not be letting the opportunity to overhaul the childcare system slip by. As I said, it should certainly take precedence over providing middle class welfare of \$25 000 per family to those in positions to spend \$150 000 on a new kitchen or bathroom.

My third area of public policy exacerbated by the pandemic is youth unemployment. The latest employment statistics make very sober reading. There has been a massive fall in the participation rate for teenagers aged from 15 to 19 years. This means many unemployed are not counted as such because they have given up searching because there are no jobs and they have decided to go back to study. Even with the reduced participation rate, youth unemployment is still 20 per cent. Add back all those who have dropped out since the pandemic and the rate is 40 per cent. This is horrifying.

Ms Rattray - Mr President, I am just reading a post from 28 minutes ago that says there is a 47 per cent decrease in job vacancies in Tasmania.

Ms FORREST - Yes, it is frightening. We have to be really cognisant of young people's mental health around this. There is evidence of the increase of self-harm and suicide around such significant economic downturns and we have to be really cognisant of that and watchful of the young people who simply cannot get a job. When I heard a federal member say on the radio that they all should get a job - well, they could not get a job before - I just wanted to bash my head against the wall.

Even with the reduced participation rate, youth unemployment is still 20 per cent; for those who have dropped out since the pandemic, the rate is 40 per cent. We simply cannot turn a blind eye to this at the same time as handing over \$25 000 to a few lucky enough to have a kitchen or bathroom renovation ready to roll. It is about priorities.

I will not even bother to mention health. It is no news to anyone with clear eyes who is willing to look at the evidence that we have had an underfunded health system and there is a lot of catching up to do.

There are plenty of challenges and, as I said at the outset, there always have been. The pandemic has made the problems a whole lot bigger and, I would argue, a lot clearer. What can we do? We have to show a willingness to get our own house in order. We have to be willing to set out the problems we face without any finger-pointing as to who may be to blame. We need to reach a consensual Tasmanian view of the changes we need to make to the federal system. We need to review the tired, old process of once a year theatre with the budget and Estimates crammed into a

couple of weeks and then largely forgotten for the rest of the year. We need better and more frequent reviews of government budgetary plans and those of significant government businesses. We need a significant government business to report earlier and more regularly and, say, biannual parliamentary scrutiny. We need to monitor and report on fiscal sustainability matters at least once a year, not the currently mandated five-year review, particularly with the challenges we are facing.

We all need to be aware of what is going on. We need to monitor and report Grants Commission crucial findings on the state's needs and performance at least once a year, so we can have a better informed policy discussion. I have mentioned many times in the past that we need a parliamentary budget office, independent of the executive arm, to assist the parliament to understand. We need a well-resourced parliamentary budget office to address the imbalances between the executive and the parliament. I would even suggest that some of the resources currently appropriated to ministers for economic advice and so on could be allocated to this office. The parliament needs that support and advice. None of us is a financial expert in this place as far as I am aware. I am certainly not and I do not believe that anyone else has a finance and economics degree in this place.

There is occasional talk of a snapback or a V-shape recovery. I strongly feel this is wishful thinking at best. For me, the day of reckoning has arrived. The chickens, in fact the whole flock, have come home to roost.

I always thought that we as a state have been constantly deferring important decisions, putting off until tomorrow what we can avoid doing today. We cannot keep putting off things any longer; change is needed.

We also need to look at the assets we have and what we can do more of and do better. We need to look at enhanced evaluation of our locally produced foods and other primary products. We need to invest in and support workers in our healthcare, social assistance and service sectors to ensure economic and social opportunity and value. We need to support and resource innovation that captures the natural values and benefits of the state. In doing this, we must prioritise investment to promote and enhance diversity across all sectors.

If done well, we will see progress in gender equality, but we have to run the gender lens across every decision being made because at the moment we fail comprehensively when we do that.

Many may be aware of the Stepping In program I have been involved with, establishing it in the north-west. It was on the front page of *The Advocate* on Monday this week. It is a great program that was established by a guy in my electorate, Shannon Bakes. I will not tell you the whole story of how he got to this point, but Shannon realised that he perhaps needed to focus on getting women involved in some of these very male-dominated workplaces.

I would like to read from an *Advocate* article that talked about this program. We established it late last year and early this year had some funding, then COVID-19 happened and we could not progress it at the time. It required on-site visits to Elphinstone and Grange, Savage River mine and places like that, which obviously could not have visitors at the time. The article noted that -

Up to 30 women have applied for 20 positions in a new 'taster' program in South Burnie, aimed at giving them the confidence and skills to apply for roles in the mining, engineering and energy sectors.

Shannon Bakes of labour hire firm Protech Group said he could see a problem looming with workers needed for the big projects starting or under way.

'They're looking for up to 5000 more employees across the North-West Coast like the Marinus (Bass Strait link) and the big windfarms and we've already got gaps in the market.

Let us hope that these jobs do come to fruition. The article goes on -

'There's a real gap in the quality of candidates coming through. You get a lot of the same people applying for and getting jobs even though they're not suitable.

'We realised there was 50 per cent of talent in the other sex, and if we opened up that group we could offer better quality candidates.'

He spoke to me, he says in here, and after other talks with industry groups they decided to put on a course for the women. He goes on -

Mr Bakes said there were young applicants and a group of older women who had finished raising their families and wanted to do something for themselves.

'We've called the course 'Stepping In' because that's what women had to do in World War II when the men went off to fight.

'There are many roles they can have: road workers, confined space watchers, the trades, boilermakers, fitters, electricians. Hydraulics is another big one, given all the wind turbines.'

The women will get real qualifications during the course, including a confined space ticket, a gas detection ticket, working at heights tickets, practise at rescues in harness and entry level welding.

They will tour Elphinstones at Wivenhoe and look at electrical harness building and hydraulics.

'Women are rightfully part of these generational infrastructure projects that are out there,' Mr Bakes said.

I could not agree with him more, so I commend Shannon for his work in progressing that. He is the only man among a number of women who are progressing this. It will take a while for these women to get into the workplaces but this is where we have to start.

We must build on our skills, including advanced manufacturing, engineering and innovative agricultural and land management practices that we have already been leaders of in many areas, particularly on the north-west coast.

We must capture the value of our energy security. There is much to be done, but we must take a considered and inclusive approach. None of the areas I have mentioned are any more important than the others. We need a diversified economy. We need to value the contribution of our health,

social assistance and education sectors, and recognise the positive contribution these sectors make to the economy. They do not just take from the economy, they give to the economy - and we need to make sure people see it that way.

I welcome other members' comments on this important motion and I look forward to the Government's response, and hope for a desire of Government, opposition and other members for a nonpartisan response and approach to the economic recovery of the state.

[6.08 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the Government acknowledges the good faith sentiment behind this motion. I trust also that the member will be reassured that the Government has a strongly structured plan for recovery and for rebuilding our wonderful state. Yes, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected us; we only need to look around or talk to friends and family to see the significant impact that COVID-19 has had on our economy.

The health, safety and wellbeing of Tasmanians remains the Government's highest priority and it will continue to manage the risk of the virus based on the best and latest evidence and the medical advice available. While Tasmania has now reached the significant milestone of zero active cases of COVID-19 in the state, the necessary actions taken to reach this milestone have resulted in economic and social consequences across Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government's social and economic support packages are unprecedented in the history of our state. The packages total over \$1 billion, complementing the federal government's multibillion dollar response, and are of a scale not seen in the history of our state in both the amount of funding and the breadth of measures. The Government's response includes initiatives to support the health sector, businesses and jobs, households, individuals and the community. The Government's focus has been on saving lives and livelihoods.

As we recover and reboot our economy, we are undertaking the most aggressive construction program in the history of our state. As we move toward rebuilding a stronger Tasmania, yes, we need to acknowledge that things will be different and factor this into the way we plan for the future.

The Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council has been established to provide advice to the Government on strategies and initiatives to support the short- to medium- and longer term recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Premier has already met with the council to discuss the important steps we are taking as a state toward economic recovery and rebuilding. PESRAC will provide advice and recommendations on how best to mitigate the economic and social impacts of the pandemic. It will also identify opportunities for economic and social renewal. Importantly, this will be done in consultation with all Tasmanians, with the council undertaking a three-stage consultation process, which aligns with the member's point of view about the inclusive recovery process.

The consultation process will include initial targeted consultation with government agencies, existing recovery networks and peak bodies as part of stage 1, followed by extended consultation with the Tasmanian community in stage 2. The Premier expects to receive the council's stage 1 report at the end of this month. The stage 1 report will include high-level immediate initiatives and responses we can put in place reasonably quickly, and well before the budget in November, to ensure our economic and social recovery progresses swiftly.

The council is keen to hear the ideas and concerns and understands the challenges being experienced by all members of our community. Details of the consultation process are provided on the PESRAC website, www.pesrac.tas.gov.au. The once-in-a-generation economic shock caused by COVID-19 means we must continue to manage the budget sensibly and responsibly. That is a hallmark of this Liberal Government. The Government knows that only a strong and growing economy can deliver the revenue we need to deliver essential services for Tasmanians.

The 2020-21 Budget in November will consider all fiscal and economic measures to enable our recovery and ensure strong budget management. The Government's fiscal strategy ensures that a competitive tax environment will be maintained, with state taxes being efficient, fair, simple, stable and sustainable. On the member's point about a review of fiscal sustainability and prioritisation of future spending to manage state fiscals into the future, this is called budget management and the Treasurer will continue his strong management of the state's finances through the budget process.

Through all this, the Government will remain focused on getting our society back to normal and the thousands of Tasmanians who have lost their jobs back to work. We have rebuilt our economy once before, when we first came to government in 2014 - and over five years we took Tasmania from economic laggard to leader. We have supported the most confident businesses in the nation and the most engaged community, and we will do it again. The Tasmanian Government's social and economic support package is unprecedented in the state's history, but we are living in unprecedented times. We have moved quickly to implement the support packages so that those in our community who are in need - individuals, households and businesses - can receive the support they require during this difficult time.

Tasmanians are incredibly resilient. We will face challenges; we will rise to the occasion. We have seen this when facing bushfires and floods in Tasmania. Together we will get through this because we are Tasmanians. We have faced challenges before and we have overcome them. This will be no different. It has impacted on all of us so, importantly, we all need to work together and make our number one priority protecting and caring for all Tasmanians and getting through this together.

The Government acknowledges the good sentiment behind these motions.

[6.14 p.m.]

Ms FORREST - Mr President, I thank the Leader for her contribution, a little bit of politicking there. There will be a lot more to be said about this as we progress. There is much work to do. I hope that nonpartisan approach can be part of it. There has been a little bit of a glitch in the last few days, perhaps, in the other place, but certainly for myself - and I cannot speak for other members - I am always willing to work with whatever kind of government we have to get the best outcomes for Tasmanians, which includes the management of our finances and our prioritisation of where the money is spent.

I acknowledge that the state is a service deliverer - it is up to the state to deliver health, education, justice and other services. The important thing is that the state Treasurer and Premier calls on the federal government to do their bit. It is in control of the currency and it has the capacity to put money into the economy - as we have seen. It did not suddenly have to go to this big vault somewhere, pull out all this cash and pop it over to the government's bank account. It was a click of a mouse and when you look at the Reserve Bank of Australia - RBA - and the government's financial statements, when there is a negative here, there is a positive there. It goes into the community and can be used as needed, and we have seen that. No-one asked, during the period of

when all this money was put into JobKeeper, JobSeeker and all the other areas it was put, 'Where is the money coming from?'.

We need to get past this catchcry of paying off the debt for generations; it is not the case that we need to bother about that. We need to focus on putting the money in through the economy through the federal government, so the states can provide the services and that was then repaid. I encourage all members to buy and read the book, *The Deficit Myth* by Stephanie Kelton. It is out in a week or so's time - the Audible book is already out - and it explains simply how that works. When we have a sovereign currency as Australia does, we do not need to become fixated on paying the national debt back. We need to focus on looking after our people - and that is what we have seen the Government do. Let us keep reminding the Government that is its role. As the economy picks back up, the Government will be able to pull back and it should.

Ms Rattray - Does the member believe you can have some of both? You draw on some debt and you put that into infrastructure. I do not know we are going to get out of this trying to -

Ms FORREST - Are you talking about state or federal?

Ms Rattray - A bit of both, because we rely on the federal -

Ms FORREST - The state needs to manage its budget. The state does. We are a service deliverer - we do not issue the currency and we rely, as you would know, heavily on the Commonwealth for support in that. We have seen that flowthrough, but we need to focus on what our priorities are and not be distracted by some of those who keep wanting to drag us back to those discussions that have little value and distract from the priorities of both state and federal governments. Let us look at how the federal system actually works, how it is supposed to work. As I said in my contribution, it is disappointing when you have senior Liberals having a very convenient recollection of the history of federalism, to the point that they say that the states need to fix up their mess.

We need to get our own house in order, but we are a federation. We have our own sovereign currency as a nation, like the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and others. We owe it ourselves to understand that system a little better. It all comes back to prioritising where the needs are, not undervaluing the economic input of the health, education, care and services sectors. Some people see them as soft areas, but they create economic activity on their own. The member for Hobart talked about this fixation on economic growth or growth, growth, growth. You have to focus on what growth looks like in that. With more highly valued built things you can see - like bridges, roads - over some of the social infrastructure, providing social housing for people, educating our children for the future, supporting new business opportunities through innovation and things such as that are just as important as building a road.

Ms Rattray - Bob Rutherford would be proud of that economics lesson.

Ms FORREST - Yes, he might be. I thank the Leader for her contribution and look forward to her next little bit.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[6.20 p.m.]

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

That the Council at its rising adjourns until 9.00 a.m. on Friday 21 August 2020
for a quorum call.

Mr President, before I moved the motion I said I would table any questions that arrived to me this afternoon. I received one answer for the member for Mersey, Mr Gaffney, about TT-Line. I seek leave to have the answer tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted; the document incorporated as follows -

38. COVID-19 - TT-LINE - EMPLOYEES STOOD DOWN

- (1) What is the Government's response to TT-Line (as a GBE) standing down employees due to the pandemic?
- (2) Have any other GBEs stood down employees?
- (3) What is being done to:
 - (a) assist TT-Line to find alternative work for employees, and/or
 - (b) provide financial support to TT-Line so that they can retain employees?
- (4) Have the CEO, leadership team and board members at TT-Line opted or been required to take reduced salaries and/or hours in an effort to alleviate some of the financial burden that the company is under?
- (5) As a high portion of employees who have been impacted by the standdowns and call for reduced hours are Tasmanian, what action has been taken by the Government to assist Tasmanian employees?
- (6) The Prime Minister in his address to the National Press Club stated that GBEs were not eligible for JobKeeper as the onus is on the state Government to look after its own employees. What action is being taken to financially support affected TT-Line employees?

ANSWER

- (1) The Government has allowed TT-Line to manage its operations in a manner that is consistent with sound commercial practice.

TT-Line's passenger numbers have decreased significantly with the restrictions placed on persons coming into the state due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has significantly reduced the amount of work required on both ship and shore.

Sailings between Melbourne and Davenport have had as few as 12 passengers with a crew of 70 on the vessel.

To address the lack of work required, TT-Line implemented standdowns of some shore employees, and reached agreement with the MUA on reduced staffing levels on the vessels which resulted in impacted seagoing employees accessing their leave entitlements.

In addition, passenger revenue, which accounts for approximately 60 per cent of overall revenue, has been substantially impacted causing stress on cash flows. To maintain the critical freight transport in and out of the state, TT-Line continued to operate sailings, at a material cost, despite the lack of passenger revenue.

To compensate for this loss of revenue the company has put in place a number of measures to reduce its cash outflows. These include reducing fuel costs by cancelling Sunday sailings and increasing the voyage time thereby reducing fuel consumption, and cutting mainstream advertising from March through to July.

The company is also working with its contractors and suppliers to reduce costs wherever possible without compromising safety.

TT-Line continues to work with employees and unions to ensure that when full services return with the lifting of border restrictions, all employees will return to work to provide the services for which TT-Line is renowned.

- (2) The governance arrangements of government businesses are designed to enable them to operate in accordance with sound commercial practice and as efficiently as possible.

As a government business the TT-Line Board is responsible for decisions relating to the employment arrangements of its employees.

Further details for government businesses will become available in annual reporting later this year.

- (3) The company has looked for other opportunities within its operations to employ staff that would otherwise be stood down.

An example of this is the employment of the shore-based ship cleaners who have been redeployed to clean both the Devonport and Melbourne terminals, which are normally serviced by outside contractors. In addition TT-Line has worked with both GBEs and SOCs in Tasmania to investigate

further work for the contact centre and also worked with the Department of Health to provide resources to assist in the cleaning of the hospitals in the north-west during the recent outbreak.

- (4) TT-Line's chief executive officer and some members of the leadership team have elected to take leave during the COVID-19 pandemic in line with company-wide policy.

There has been no change to the working schedule of directors. They continue to meet (remotely via teleconferencing) on a monthly basis in line with their pre-COVID-19 meeting schedule.

At the TT-Line board meeting on 16 April 2020, the board agreed unanimously, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to defer the back payment of a requested 2.35 per cent increase in the current directors' fees from 1 July 2019 until October 2019.

- (5) The Government's number one priority has been the health and safety of Tasmanians. However, the coronavirus pandemic has caused significant economic impacts, including job losses, around Australia, and Tasmania has not been immune.

This is why the Tasmanian Government has implemented two social and economic support packages which total \$1 billion. The support packages complement the federal government's multi-billion dollar response and are of a scale not seen in the history of our state in both the amount of funding and the breadth of measures.

Support includes measures designed to support all Tasmanians, including households and individuals, community organisations, health organisations, and businesses and jobs.

- (6) Many of TT-Line's employees have access to leave entitlements which they have been using when they have either been stood down or decided not to return to work at this time.

The company has made some temporary administrative changes to the way leave is managed to enable employees to access leave entitlement they may not normally be able to access, and allowing this to happen in shorter time frames.

Those employees who have been stood down and do not have access to leave entitlements may be eligible for the federal government's JobSeeker payment.

TT-Line's employees are not eligible for the federal government's JobKeeper payment as the company is a state-owned company.

Mrs HISCUTT - Mr President, I wish good luck to the member for Huon and a great retirement to the member for Rosevears.

Mr President, I move -

That the Council does now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

President's Statement - Member for Rosevears

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before the Council adjourns, this is a very special occasion - it is the last time we will be joined by the member for Rosevears, as he is intending to retire, or that was what he told me this morning. We have had a tribute to the honourable member previously. I welcome the honourable member's son, Adrian, and Kerry's granddaughters, Mila and Frankie, to the President's Reserve. Welcome to the Chamber. They are all very proud of their pop and are here to hear members' kind contributions.

Member for Rosevears - Retirement

[6.23 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I might give the member for Rosevears a little bit of time to gather himself. I have seen this happen before, Mr President - he needs a moment to gather himself.

My contribution is a very brief contribution on adjournment to acknowledge the extraordinary service of Mr Kerry Finch, independent member for Rosevears, in this place. He will be a loss to this place. He retires and is leaving us. We will have a chance to talk more about that aspect when we have a bit of a roasting later on. I am lucky enough to be participating in that.

I just want to wish him all the best. It is a huge achievement, 18 years - I have been here 15 - so 18 years, it is a long time. We will talk about some of the member's history perhaps later tonight. It is an honour to have served with him. I thank him for his friendship and his camaraderie. Some of the pranks, yes. We will talk about some of those things later on.

I commend the member for Rosevears' commitment to doing the best at all times for his constituents, and also for the state of Tasmania. All the best. It has been a pleasure, most of the time. We really appreciate your commitment.

I also wish the member for Huon the best for his upcoming election as well; it is always a stressful time.

I want to wish the member for Rosevears all the very best for his retirement. We look forward to chatting more after we adjourn.

Members - Hear, hear.

[6.25 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - One could not let this occasion go by without identifying the great service this man has given to this state and his electorate over the last 18 years and a few months, in fact. He has always been a great contributor in this place and has been extremely articulate. I have tried to follow him from time to time but I have not been anywhere near him and I am not likely to be able to. A lot of his ABC background comes out in his contributions in this place. I thank you, Kerry, for the positive discussion you and I had a few days after I announced I was going to have a look at this place. You might not recall it but we had a discussion in your office about things that were happening here, what to expect and all of those things, so I thank you for that because it helped me, moving forward.

Mr Finch - If only I had known.

Mr DEAN - I have not forgotten.

Mr Valentine - We have you to thank.

Mr DEAN - In making a few statements tonight, I do not want to give too much away because I will be speaking shortly at another function and I do not want to pass on too much of that. It is great to see Adrian. It is great to see Kerry's grandchildren here as well, welcome. It is great to have family present on an occasion like this.

Kerry, you have been very strong in your presentations and there were times when you were on a high and it was not always a wise idea to interrupt you. I learned that very early in the piece, as a learner in this place. I still had my learner plates on and I remember interrupting Kerry on one occasion when he was on a high and was being very strong in his presentation and he looked at me and he said, if you think you can do better, you come up here and do it, or words to that effect. It really set me back and I thought, oh, what have I said, what have I done? If it happened now I might get up, but certainly not back then, not in those times.

Kerry and I, it is fair to say, we have had our differences in this place and I think we all do, but the one thing that we have been able to do is to put that behind us when we have walked out of here. We have retained, and I hope this is right, Kerry, a good relationship and a good friendship for a long time. I am going to miss that but you and your family will be welcome back to our place and the offices at Launceston at any time, and welcome at my home as well, in fact.

Kerry has been a great contributor. There has been no doubt about that, an assistance to me and a lot of members in this place. It is wonderful to know that. This is a time when it is going to be extremely emotional for Kerry. It is going to be a very difficult time for him as well. He is putting behind him a large period of time, when he has served or contributed to this state, with the ABC and over 18 years in this place.

All of a sudden, to find yourself moving into another era has to be a huge challenge, but Kerry will enjoy a long, good, healthy and happy retirement, and we wish the same to Kerry and Carole's whole family, that they will have a great time to enjoy life together. I am sure Brian is going to appreciate your retirement, Kerry. Thank you and congratulations for what you have done for this state and country.

Members - Hear, hear.

[6.20 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - I think we have done this before. I remember we did this back in May.

Mr Willie - Kerry planned that.

Ms ARMITAGE - He did. Two bites at the cherry. It is lovely to see your family and your grandchildren here today. I am quite sure, Kerry, you will have some wonderful times with your grandchildren now that you have more time.

Ivan, Kerry and I share an office in Launceston and we are almost like a little bit of a family there. Sometimes we argue, sometimes we get on. There is one thing I will say about you, Kerry, if you are asked for some information or help, you are always willing and I think that is really great. It does not matter what time, you are always prepared to give some advice and information. Even in the latest thing we have been discussing, it is really good that you can ask Kerry about an issue you might be dealing with or something you are looking at. You are never too busy and you always take the time. I think that is something that is really nice.

It is nice to have that relationship in Launceston. We do share an office, we do not always vote the same, sometimes we do. We often do not agree but it does not make any difference. As Ivan said, when it is over, that is over and you move on to your next issue. I do enjoy Kerry's orations sometimes when he thumps the lectern -

Ms Rattray - And raises his voice.

Ms ARMITAGE - He does, but it is good. Sometimes, life in the Chamber can be a little bit dull but Kerry can bring a little bit of life to it. A bit of theatrics is often quite good. It is appreciated. I am not going to go on, I am sure people want to make some comments. It is lovely to see some of your family here. I am not sure whether Carole is going to be overly delighted to have you home all the time.

Mrs Hiscutt - She might pack his lunch and send him off to work every day.

Ms ARMITAGE - I am sure she is very pleased when he comes to Hobart. I always remember Greg Hall saying that the power that be there was always very pleased when he was heading to Hobart.

Ms Rattray - The head of the war office.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, the war office. The war office was always glad to see him head down when parliament was sitting. She knew where he was and what he was doing. It is like my husband looks and says, I know you are in the Chamber, I can see your legs. It is interesting that some people do watch us in parliament.

Ms Forrest - Some people are sad, aren't they?

Ms ARMITAGE - It is pretty sad, when you retire and you had such a life that you need to have a look at parliament.

Ms Forrest - There are quite a few who do, actually, you would be surprised how many.

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, and see what you are doing. Look, you have made a great contribution, Kerry, and 18 years is wonderful. The really nice thing is that you have decided when you felt ready to leave. That is really important. It is great that you have been able to stay as long as you wanted. As you said only earlier, you feel comfortable now. You have done everything you wanted to do, you are ready to leave and you will not have any regrets. I think that is really great. I wish you, the family, and particularly Carole, all the best. See how it goes, but well done.

[6.32 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - This is going to be tougher than I thought, with the kids here. It is a real surprise but great to share. Mr President, thank you and fellow members for your kind words about me from several weeks ago and the reprieves. I am happy to have this opportunity for my final speech, face to face. Last year I announced that I would not stand for the 2020 election to give independents, particularly, the opportunity to establish their teams, to get out in the community, establish their credentials and have the best chance of being in the mix on election night, which we now know is 1 August. I felt it was time to bring a fresh face, you would all appreciate that, and fresh energy into the Chamber. It is the right time for me, too, after 18 years, to move onto the next phase of my professional life. I am not thinking of it as retirement.

I commend, also, all the candidates on the way in which they have had to deal with this interruption caused by the COVID-19 global health pandemic - it must have been very, very frustrating for them during this time. My best wishes go to my successor. I trust that person's journey will be as enjoyable as mine. Best wishes to the member for Huon in his campaign to return.

After a little over 18 years, I am the longest serving current member of parliament, referred to as the father of the parliament, and I was asked whether there was ever a mother of parliament. I said, just stay tuned, there has been one in the British Parliament. I will talk more about women in parliament later. Whilst I have become known for my current role and my media career, so much of who I am can be sheeted home to pretty humble beginnings in Ferntree, on kunanyi/Mt Wellington. What would those people of my childhood, let alone Mum and Dad, think of me being portrayed here as number 725 in the Long Room? Unbelievable. An honour.

I was the youngest of six children and life growing up might have been viewed as not easy by outsiders. My Dad, Clive, served in the Navy for 12 years from 1932, the Depression years, through the Second World War, and returned home in 1945, damaged, as were many. We lived with that reality as a family. Those challenges, I believe, add to your strengths, your resilience, your understanding that hurdles can be overcome. Mum, Beryl - Jo, as we called her - was able to forge a family life for us despite adversity.

But life was like that for the baby boomers and their parents. We were not Robinson Crusoes. Interestingly, growing up in Tasmania at that time gave me a sense that I could be whatever I wanted to be. Isn't that interesting? I always felt that if I wanted to be the prime minister of Australia I could do that. It was up to me. That would be a mindset that I would like to instil into every young Tasmanian.

I clearly remember as a 13- or 14-year-old not concerning myself with ambition in any way, but wanting just to be a personal success. I wanted to be happy about who I am. That would have been the reason why I was hired for my first job at 7HT. Bruce Klein, when I was departing after five years to travel and broaden my horizons said to me, 'You know, Kerry, when you applied here

there were 40 people applied for this job. Did you know that?', and I said, 'No, I didn't'. He said, 'You know what made you stand out?', and I said, 'No.' He said, 'You were the only one without ambition.' Isn't that interesting? I think it was because I would have said what I have just told you, that when asked as a 15-year-old, 'What do you want to be?', I said, 'Well, I just want to be a personal success. I just want to be happy with me.' I will talk more about 7HT soon.

I followed in the footsteps of Errol Flynn by going to Macquarie Street Primary School, passing the ability test, as it was then, and going on to Hobart High School. The headmaster was C. Dwight Brown. He was a wonderful educator. When he came to an agreement with me that I should leave the school, he said, 'It's between you and me, Kerry, and I like it here!' He told me that he was at Hobart High with Errol Flynn when he was expelled at 15 for dropping two eggs from the landing of the quadrangle onto the headmaster's lectern below as he was conducting an assembly. I did not emulate that, but that was the final straw for Errol Flynn.

So, here I am at 15, down to the CES for the offer of three jobs - one which was a control operator at 7HT Hobart. I said I will take that job until something better comes up. I was not cocky or anything; that was just the way it was then. Jobs were not an issue for young people in the early 1960s. We were leaving school and getting jobs straight away. But it is not something, of course, that you would recommend for today's youngsters. I am very pleased all three boys made it through to year 12 with our encouragement and on to university.

My early mentor at 7HT was Barry Furber, an excellent broadcaster. He ran an announcing school and he instructed me, 'Don't try to be anybody else, don't try to be something that you're not'. It was good advice.

Another lesson that has served me well, particularly when I nominated to stand for Rosevears, was reinforced at my first gathering of my team of friends who had gathered all from all walks of life and all political persuasions, just friends to come and be my team. Two came out of the woodwork to offer help: journalist Mike Howe - who I have mentioned in the House - had retired from the ABC; and Phil Martin, who, at that time, was head of news and current affairs at SBS television based in Sydney. He flew down for that first meeting. When I sought advice from the gathering, because I was really a novice, I was not a student of politics, both of those gentlemen said, 'Be yourself', and that helped to relax me. I then thought, yes, I can do that, because I am not going to try to be somebody else.

History shows that I was elected in 2002 ahead of eight other candidates, so the new learning curve begins. I did not really see myself as a politician - more as a parliamentarian and a representative of the people of Rosevears. As an Independent I could keep an open mind on issues until I heard all the arguments. There is no point in making up your mind until you have heard all the facts and the ramifications. If you lock yourself into a position, whether you do it through the media or publicly, you will not hear from those people in your electorate who have a contrary position to you. You have to give them that chance.

The big issue which began not long after my election was the pulp mill. It was to pervade my career for the next 10 or 12 years. I was not opposed entirely to a pulp mill in Tasmania; close loop, chlorine-free, it had a pretty good ring to it. Rather, I was opposed initially to the government and Gunns moving away from the RBDC process and bringing it here through parliament, and then the issue of the location in the Tamar Valley. 'Do a plan B, put it at Hampshire', was my mantra. At one stage I delivered the largest petition ever presented to the Tasmanian Parliament of people opposed to the location - 21 360 signatures. Whatever you do, don't try to beat it because the staff have to count and verify every signatory.

Ms Forrest - That would have been before e-petitions, too.

Mr FINCH - Quite a job, absolutely. David, our Clerk, is shuddering at the memory of it.

As a follow-on, later we spent four years on the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, which attempted to draw together all the players in the forestry industry. Some of you will remember the part of the debate when the member for Huon moved a motion to send the result off to committee. Sitting over there, I had had an absolute gutful of the issue, so divisive for our Tasmanian community, and I spoke vociferously against the motion. I was very lucky because I was sitting there, steam coming out of my ears, and luckily the member for Mersey got the call. He was the first to speak and it gave me a chance to stop my heart beating out of my chest. When I got up I still was vociferous but it helped to calm me down a modicum.

It was interesting because I said, during that short, sharp speech, that if the committee gets up I would not be on it. Well, it got up and I had a break. In the January everyone else went through that political process and it was a very strange process for me to be at home knowing that there was work to be done. Suffice to say that we do not have a pulp mill and we have a restructured forestry industry which offers a different future.

In 2006 we had the Beaconsfield Mine rockfall when Larry Knight died, and Todd Russell and Brant Webb were rescued. That unfortunate event put Beaconsfield on the map around the world, particularly for the stoicism of the mine people and the community, and has resulted in the magnificent museum at Beaky as a tribute to the mining in the area and that event. As we have recently heard it could be mined again - the allure of gold.

One of the special debates here was the Same-Sex Marriage Bill in 2012 to 2013. I was happy to stand up for the principles of tolerance and a fair go. Social justice has been a very big theme of my work here with support for the civil relationships bill 10 years ago, anti-discrimination, expungement of criminal records, and support for gender diversity. For me, no-brainers.

My election in 2014 against a candidate who strongly opposed the marriage bill showed that people of Rosevears and Tasmania agreed with those values. 2014 was a demanding but very interesting campaign. One of the reasons was that my opponent signalled a challenge in November so it was a long campaign. Carole and I put together a letter for distribution. We wanted that distributed to as many households as possible. We printed and folded 15 000 of those and we personally delivered 10 000 door to door. I posted it on social media - some of you may have seen it - a photo of the shoes I wore during that campaign. The holes were right through the soles of those shoes, but it was a bit of a badge, it was good.

As was mentioned at the declaration, I won the pre-polling votes, the postal votes, and every booth in the electorate - even Agfest, where all the heavies of the opposing party person were on display.

I have always been supportive of the Indigenous community and reconciliation. There are strong recollections for me of the Cape Barren handover, one of Jim Bacon's visions and fulfilled by Paul Lennon. Chairing the inquiry into the handover of Irapuna and Rebecca Creek was an honour and was always going to be difficult, and that is the way it worked out. Then there was my desire to rename my electorate to kanamaluka. What a good name. That is the palawa kani name for the Tamar Estuary which covers the length of my electorate from Launceston to Bass Strait. It

was unsuccessful and very disappointing for me. Rosevears is simply a hamlet where the *Rebecca* was built that Batman and Fawcner took off to found Melbourne. It is an historic moment but people think I live at Rosevears; people think I represent the people who live in Rosevears, just Rosevears itself. So, it is a little source of frustration and I think kanamaluka would have been symbolic and would have been a terrific name. It is easy to say and easy to spell.

I presented speeches here and I recently gave my take on the Uluru Statement from the Heart. There is a line that resonates with me -

Don't think about losing 200 years of your history; think about sharing 60,000 years of our history.

Well, we are moving slowly towards reconciliation but out of little things, big things grow.

There was the sadness of Vanessa Goodwin's passing. I remember calling on her when I wanted to discuss elder abuse. She made the trip to Launceston as attorney-general to meet some of my constituents, and we had a long conversation about that. Another time we had problems with wombat mange in Narawntapu, on the West Tamar. She came to investigate, spent half a day with us, and secured a grant for the people at Kelso who were working on the issue. Vanessa, as you know, worked quietly on issues, not banging the drum or pumping up her own tyres. There is a raft of words to describe the type of person she was. We know the quality she had. She was an exemplar for the work that we do and the type of people we need in parliament to set an example of how we should conduct ourselves. We are very low in the trust levels when assessed by the public.

Don Wing and I reminisced recently about how special she was to work with, and recalled our trips to investigate our select committee inquiry into tourism -

Members laughing.

Mr FINCH - Laugh though you may, she was wonderful company, particularly on the trip to New Zealand. Which, I might add, was very fruitful to our report. It was no junket. We had terrific access to the tourism bureaucrats in New Zealand who reported to the then minister for tourism, who was their prime minister. Many of the recommendations we have put in place have come to be.

One particular memory was being in Wellington at the same time as Australia's first female prime minister, Julia Gillard. Vanessa found out where she was staying and she was excited. She wanted to catch a glimpse of her as she returned from the New Zealand Parliament. So, there we were, Vanessa, Don and myself, we were like three groupies. We were sitting on a bench waiting for her car to arrive. It did, we just saw her go into the hotel and it was too quick for us to call out to her. We missed a really great moment. It would have been a great chat. Vanessa was happy just to see her. With the very human and down to earth way she conducted herself, Vanessa set the bar very high. We will not always reach the Vanessa bar, but it is a good thing to strive for.

My parliamentary mentor was Don Wing. What an independent exemplar he was. He was the president here for six years from when I first arrived. I recall his frustration during those six years at not being able to represent his electorate fully on the Floor of the Chamber. And how, when he decided to relinquish the position, he spent the next three years doing exactly that as a wonderful Independent, and with that lawyer's mind and the experience he had in his kitbag it was wonderful to watch. A great example to us.

Now that Don has gone from the Chamber and I am about to go, I think it is pretty safe to tell the story of a very special night here featuring the Scottish group, Fiddlers' Bid, and the former treasurer, David Crean. The six-piece Fiddlers' Bid from the Shetland Islands were in Tasmania for Ten Days on the Island and were staying at Wrest Point. Don stayed there too. In the lift he met them, invited them to come to Parliament House the next night for dinner, and bring your instruments. Most of us gathered in the Dining Room and not only were we entertained by them, but also a good old country song or two by David Crean. He loved entertaining, he loved an audience. We adjourned to the President's Rooms, but because David had access to this Chamber, in we came. Fiddlers' Bid gathered up there –

Ms Rattray - The Clerk is still here.

Members laughing.

Mr FINCH - I am giving you some ideas, folks. They played their traditional Shetland fiddle tunes whilst we relaxed and soaked up the atmosphere that this theatre provided. We behaved. Imagine how sunny it was, I think the lights were taken down a bit. Then that music wafting through this Chamber was out of this world. They were absolutely world-class entertainers, but very unassuming, wonderful company.

The celebration, of course, did not continue here, it continued back in the rooms. It was really quite hilarious when, the next morning, the Usher of the Black Rod - we are standing here, still all with a glow on about the wonderful night that we had had - and the Usher of the Black Rod stood at the door and said, 'Honourable members, the Deputy President.' We were all left wondering what fate might have befallen our beloved host. But he has assured me time and time again that it was a faulty alarm clock back in his bedroom! As I say, that music was out of this world and music that subsequently was heard all over the world.

There has been so much committee work to detail here, which I will not do. One highlight for me was as Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Community Development. When the member for Murchison initiated those Government Administration Committees, much to her credit, there was often a reference to the problems of combining the two Houses for committee work. But I can say to you that it was not a problem for me, as Chair of the community development committee, even when, at one stage, I had Cassy O'Connor, Brett Whiteley and Brenton Best as members of that committee. What a mix! They were terrific in that setting, and they were productive; we were productive as a committee.

That is not decrying what we have now. I appreciate the committee work that we do. I never objected, I never spoke against it, I just was happy to move on and give the new committee work a try. It has worked. Another would be my select committee inquiry with Don Wing and the member for Windermere into the statutory management authority for the Tamar Estuary and catchments. It did not get traction then, but it has been put under the spotlight lately.

Mr Dean - It is still being referred to.

Mr FINCH - Yes. But suffice to say a lot of committee work, always enjoyable, and albeit at times challenging.

Mr Valentine - Finding your way to hearings?

Mr FINCH - That is one of the problems!

Constituent work has always been a high priority for me. Medicinal cannabis, palliative care, wombat mange, West Tamar Highway safety - the highway safety, but safety generally. I have always been a passionate supporter of the tourism industry, the health of the Tasmanian devils, and the Deviot landslip issue has been close to home. Of course, I strongly support the arts community, and education in all its facets. My connection with the sporting club for people with disabilities, New Horizons, has been a very important part of my parliamentary and personal life.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has always been prominent in my thinking of the enhancement of our roles here, whether promoting, being on the executive, or representing the Tasmanian Parliament in Australia and overseas. The highlight, of course, being that wonderful trip to Westminster for the 100th celebration of the CPA. The theme was Women as Agents of Change. I presented a speech with that title at the conference. We had a slow start to female representation in Tasmania after Dame Enid Lyons went to federal parliament in 1943. Two women, Amelia Best and Mabel Miller, were elected to the House of Assembly in 1955. We now elect women to all tiers of government as a matter of course. I am very proud that we were the first parliament in Australia to have over 50 per cent of female representation. Voters of both genders trust women candidates now and we must encourage women into politics and elsewhere in the Tasmanian community where important decisions are made. It worth noting too that of the six candidates for Rosevears, four are women.

Improving public health has been a focus and I particularly enjoyed supporting Dr Gary Fettke and his concern about our intake of sugar through his website No Fructose. A low-carbohydrate, high-fat diet was his push - get into it, way to go. Agreed, Mr President?

Mr PRESIDENT - Absolutely.

Mr FINCH - Thanks must go to the many sporting clubs that have included me as a board member, supporter, patron and spectator. The Launceston Football Club, Launceston Little Athletics, the Tornadoes, Bridgenorth Football Club, the Three Peaks Race, the Birralee and Districts Pony club and so many more.

Another momentous development in Rosevears was the Beaconsfield Child and Family Centre. We were the beneficiaries, being the first in Australia, and it has been a huge success story for us. I was pleased to be involved on the committee almost from the get-go. I came on board when we missed out on the mine disaster money and the committee was then able to convince the federal Labor government of its need. As I say, the first in Australia and to go there now and witness what is being achieved is just wonderful for our community.

Being a representative of the community has given me some great opportunities in promoting our talented people. Most notably, this was achieved through the Tasmanian talent team, which comprised Don Wing, the indefatigable Susie Clarke, Di Bucknell, my EA at that time and myself. We sent Di Brither, John De Jong, Tom Ward and Ben Austin to the World Expo in Japan 15 years ago and then assisted pianist, Ben Austin, a remarkable pianist, and countertenor, Nic Tolputt, with the most incredible voice you will ever hear. We helped them with their individual music careers. Sportspeople include boxer and world champion Daniel Geale and Commonwealth Games weightlifter Jenna Myers, and through the Exeter RSL community and sports club with me as patron, we have assisted a lot of promising young sportspeople to travel around Australia for competitions.

Last year was made very special for me with my appointment as the parliamentary representative on the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize, which is a wonderful involvement between the RSL and the Education department, taking six grade 9 students to the Western Front in Belgium and France to embrace the history of World War I, Australia's contribution and the aftermath. One thing from that trip, and there were many, many things to remember, that stood out in my mind was that first day of the Battle of the Somme. British troops suffered 57 470 casualties and there were 19 240 killed - 37 sets of brothers died that day, day one. Terrible.

Those six young people, the two teachers, our RSL representative, our leader and our guide were of the highest order and will be forever in our collective thoughts. I must also highlight the honour I have had to organise and be the guest speaker at the ANZAC Day ceremonies at the Exeter RSL for about the last 15 years, it could even be longer. Thanks to president Arthur Kingston and his committee for allowing me to do that. I very much enjoyed coaching the leadership group at Exeter High in public speaking, to be our junior guest speakers each year at Exeter and Beaconsfield for ANZAC Day, the dawn and the 11 o'clock services.

One point I must make, too, in coming back here to parliament is the benefit of electorate tours. They have gone off the radar a bit lately. I have always found those tours most beneficial in broadening our understanding of what is occurring in other members' electorates around Tasmania. I would encourage members who have not organised one to find out how it is achieved and it will pay immense dividends for you in your community connection. Those with experience, particularly the members for Murchison and McIntyre, have organised a couple apiece. They know -

Ms Rattray - I have had three now.

Mr FINCH - Greedy. They know how it works.

I could not pass this opportunity without reflecting on the special interest speeches. When I first came here I looked to see where I could project my electorate, my special people and myself into the Chamber. I felt the obvious one was through the special interest speeches. Since I started on them I have only missed one in 18 years and that was the day of my heart attack. I had to phone the member for Hobart to present my speech and to host the family who had travelled south for it to lunch. It was Michael Booth of Riverside, you might remember? He was the first Tasmanian to run a marathon on the seven continents of the world, including Antarctica, and it was to promote organ and tissue donations as a tribute to his daughter, Alison.

I am so pleased that others have now recognised the value of the special interest speeches and supported that increase of presentations from four to six, nearly always full now. I record mine, as you know, and post them on social media and share with the people that I talk about. It is a great way to promote the more human side of the work we do in the Legislative Council and to salute our electorates and our people.

I am going to wrap up now, Mr President. First, by repeating what Don Wing said here on his departure. It has been an honour to be part of the Legislative Council family. Thanks to my friends from all walks of life and political persuasions, who supported me during my campaigns in 2002, 2008 and 2014. We are coming together on election night 2020 to reminisce. When I was first elected, Tasma Howell guided me but only for a short time. She came from a time when she was the EA for six northern members. It was 0.6 of an FTE in 2002, and over time it was increased to one FTE and that was a blessing for us all.

Diane Bucknell was with me until 2014, a good friend, then I have been lucky to have Suzie Somann-Crawford as my EA. Thank you to those people for running my office so brilliantly as I would like it to be run, as friendly and warm. I have had tremendous assistance from my very special friend, Mike Howe, and his daughter described him at his service recently as the erudite intellectual. He was terrific. Jim Anderson, the esteemed Launceston lawyer, was a guiding light with his wife, Bunny, until a couple of years ago, and thanks to my technical supporter, Ross Somann-Crawford.

This is where it gets hard, by mentioning names and worrying about inadvertently leaving someone out. Sufficient, I hope, to thank our unflappable and solid Clerk, David Pearce, and all the excellent staff you have with you, David, who support us so generously with their friendship, their courtesy, support, care and management during our time here.

Our Hansard people, who will be relieved of the duty of chasing up my quotes. The Library and research staff, always on call with the best timely and accurate information. The catering staff, both in the dining room and the bistro, with the legendary Mandie Donnelly at the helm, and our often unsung heroes downstairs in the IT department, with Peter Hancox, always helpful.

During my time there have been four outstanding presidents, each with their own skills, knowledge and passion for the job: Don Wing; Sue Smith, our first female president; our all-round good bloke, Jim Wilkinson; and of course, our gregarious Craig Farrell, notably the first president from a political party. That is a feather in your cap, sir.

To my constituents of Rosevears, thank you for trusting the novice who put his hand up in 2002, and enabling me to grow as a community representative in state parliament. I have always felt welcomed, safe and accepted for what I have tried to achieve for the betterment of your lives in Rosevears, in our special part of Tassie, the West Tamar, and for Tasmania generally.

The future, well, it is about Carole. I am going to be her carer, it is her time. I have said to you, and I have started practising it during the pandemic, that I have turned my life over to her. Her call is what I do. She has given me that opportunity to have a lot of freedom during my media and political career. I have never had a handbrake. Now, it is my time to give to her and the family, Brian, Adrian and David, and more quality time with my grandchildren. We have four now and one more on the way, up on the Sunshine Coast. These two champions won their cross country yesterday; they are pretty proud. We have that to share. We will be sharing a lot of Little Athletics with the kids, as we have done over the past couple of years.

Shoring up my superannuation is going to be an issue with our property development in West Launceston, to stop us being a drain on the public purse, of course. That has taken 10 long, hard years. If we want to talk about planning - far out! The hurdles and the hoops, you know, it has been a long journey. But we have had a breakthrough and we are ready to proceed with that. It is timely because I can take that on.

And of course, reflecting on the enriched life in Tasmania, that Tasmania, Tasmanians and its people have given me. Thank you for that. Thanks, colleagues.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr PRESIDENT - Thank you very much. I am sure we all pass on our best wishes to you, Kerry, for your retirement. Thank you very much for the work that you have done for the people

of Rosevears and the Parliament of Tasmania. You have been a tremendous member. It is going to be very, very odd the next Tuesday that we have that there will be no special interest from the honourable Kerry Finch. It is going to take some time to get used to that.

I am sure we will keep that going. Every time we have a special interest matter people will think of you and will miss the 'thank you very much, Mr President' delivered so beautifully.

Pat Blood - Tribute

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before we adjourn, I would just like to note the retirement of Pat Blood from our Hansard service. Pat started in our parliament - I have either 1979 or 1980, so somewhere around there, which is a time before probably a couple of our members were even born.

She had been assisting Peter Hancox build the IT department, and was appointed permanent full-time clerical officer for Hansard and IT support officer for computer services on non-sitting days. Pat had an enormous learning curve for IT and picked up computer support very easily. Peter Hancox used to send her out to fix a problem and nine times out of 10 the issue was resolved without any follow up call to Peter.

She moved into the typing room as supervisor in 2000 and became the supervisor of typists and office manager in 2005. Jenny Batchelor once described her in a letter to Peter Alcock, dated 25 July 2005 -

Mrs Blood is an excellent office manager cum supervisor. Her extensive knowledge of IT, her familiarity of the day-to-day workings of the Hansard operation and her highly developed interpersonal skills make her an outstanding employee in both her demanding roles. I do believe that she is more than qualified to Level 6, and that her diligence and competence are deserving of recognition.

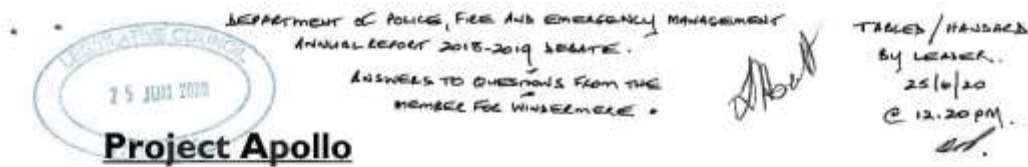
Pat is well respected by all the staff at parliament that she worked with. She has always been a tremendously helpful person. I am sure all honourable members will join me in thanking Pat for her service to the parliament and wish her all the very best in her retirement.

Members - Hear, hear.

Mr PRESIDENT - I also wish the honourable member for Huon all the best in the upcoming election.

The Council adjourned at 7.16 p.m.

APPENDIX 1



Project Apollo

In response to the Member for Windermere's questions regarding Project Apollo, I am advised that the Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, or drones, are situated throughout the state, with nine in Hobart, four in Launceston, two in Devonport and two in Burnie.

The drones have been used successfully in a number of traffic enforcement activities including monitoring police traffic operations and searching for offenders after traffic evades. For example, an arrest was made in the south of the state for driver of a stolen motor vehicle ^{the} ~~that~~ ^{who} had evaded police. A drone was used to assist in locating and arresting the offender who had ran into bush.

The drones have also been involved in a number of other successful operations, including searching for missing persons, searching for stolen vehicles and other property, mapping crash scenes and reconnaissance in high-risk situations and environments.

In relation to whether the evidence has been tested in court, I am advised that evidence in the form of aerial images, video and 3D computerised models have been submitted as evidence on some, largely coronial, matters.

There have been no evidential issues. This is because the evidence is no different to images or video recorded in other ways, if it is relevant to the case, it is admissible. Because of the infancy of the drone project there has been no feedback as to the weight applied by the court to the evidence. However, feedback from investigators is that it is a valuable investigative tool.

The use of drones in instances of 'burn out' activity is challenging given the importance of timing, the impact of weather conditions, the battery life of the drones, and flight restrictions in urban environments. However, planning remains underway to identify trends regarding the timing and location of this type of activity, to consider the capacity to use drones in a proactive and targeted way.

Body worn cameras

The Member for Windermere has sought advice on the progress of the implementation of the body worn camera project.

All frontline police officers are now equipped with body worn cameras

There have been no significant issues reported regarding the use of body worn cameras. The body worn cameras provide an accountability mechanism for all parties and have streamlined the investigation process into complaints against police officers. Anecdotally, the use of body worn cameras has also positively contributed to officer safety.

I am advised that no significant evidentiary issues have been reported, however this will continue to be monitored.

In relation to the Member for Windermere's question regarding an increase in pleas of guilty through the courts, I am advised that this is difficult to quantify at this early stage of the project. The Department will be in a better position to assess this once the project has been in operation for a longer period of time.

Policing at Risk Youth Strategy

The Member for Windermere requested advice on the progress and success of the *Policing at Risk Youth Strategy*.

The *Policing at Risk Youth Strategy* is an operational strategy which aims to intervene earlier to disrupt repeat youth offending. I am advised that the implementation of the Strategy is still under development, and that consultation is occurring with the Department of Education to consider what an earlier intervention model will look like in practice, and how the agencies can work together.

Whilst implementation of the Strategy is still under development, the Tasmania Police youth intervention teams have continued to work collaboratively with both government and non-government organisations to address the needs of the young person and their families, as well as building positive relationships with youth.

I am advised that the number of first time youth crime offenders has decreased, from 190 first time offenders charged yearly between 2014 to 2018, to 151 first time offenders charged in 2019. The youth crime recidivism rate has remained steady at 64 per cent.

Comparison of crime figures

The Member for Windermere requested clarification on the comparability of police positions per 1,000 population rates across Annual Reports.

The police per population rates published in the Annual Report are based on a police headcount as at the end of the reporting year, and on estimated population figures at the local government area published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

A number of police officers work part-time and this number may fluctuate from year to year. For this reason, police per population rates between different Annual Reports are not directly comparable, and care should be taken in making comparisons between reports.

accoutrement

Police officer accoutrements

The Member for Windermere noted the update in the Annual Report that as a result of a review on the use of force, a second set of handcuffs have been issued to motorcycle police officers and officers at isolated or country stations. The Member for Windermere requested advice on the list of equipment required to be carried by these officers.

Aside from a second set of handcuffs, the equipment issued to these officers is consistent with the equipment issued to all frontline police officers. The Multiuse Integrated Protection Vest allows for the carriage of OC spray, spare firearm magazine, expandable baton, radio, handcuffs, Individual First Aid Kits and tourniquets and body worn camera. Police officers also wear a utility belt, which allows carriage of a firearm and a Personal Protection Kit. Carrying of additional items is discouraged because of weight and the loss of flexibility.

Wellness Program

The Member for Windermere requested further information on the Wellness Program and whether it will work.

The Government has committed \$6m over four years to the MyPulse program, a significant commitment that shows just how seriously it treats the health and wellbeing of emergency services worker.

The health and wellbeing program has been developed by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, in conjunction with Ambulance Tasmania.

The program recognises that emergency services workers are susceptible to post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental illness. The program therefore provides a mix of proactive and preventative measures that build capacity to detect and respond early to health and wellbeing risks.

The program is supported by the creation of a new business unit called Wellbeing Support, which has offices located in Hobart, Launceston and Ulverstone. The service delivery model includes a number of key functions, including Critical Incident Stress Management, Clinical Psychological Services and Mental Health and Wellbeing Checks.

As part of the program, *MyPulse* has been launched as a central online 'hub' for wellbeing. *MyPulse* includes physical and mental health screens, e-learn modules and face-to-face wellbeing training. There has been a strong uptake of *MyPulse* since its launch in September 2019.

In addition, a senior executive level Wellbeing Leaders Group has been established to champion the importance of positive wellbeing and to provide strategic level support and decision-making for all wellbeing matters.

A Wellbeing Strategy is also being developed to support the program, with consultation to occur following feedback from the Wellbeing Leaders Group.

The Edith Cowan University has been appointed to independently evaluate the effectiveness of the health and wellbeing program and associated wellbeing services. The evaluation will be delivered over a three-year period.

The Department has every confidence that this program will provide a quality health and wellbeing service to its staff.

Project Vigilance

Project Vigilance is the trial of electronic monitoring of high-risk family violence perpetrators. The Member for Windermere has asked a number of questions in relation to the progress of the trial.

The trial phase of Project Vigilance is scheduled to conclude on 30 June 2020.

There are currently 30 devices fitted to perpetrators and being monitored, with another 16 to be fitted to perpetrators following their release from custody.

Since the commencement of the trial, 75 orders have been granted by the court.

Overall, the use of devices appears to be an effective tool to prevent physical contact between a perpetrator and a victim. I am advised that there has been a steady uptake of victims opting to be bi-laterally monitored.

Most breaches to date have been minor technical breaches, for example failing to charge the device. Fewer breaches have related to proximity.

The Member for Windermere also asked whether the electronic monitoring devices have impacted the release of offenders from jail or avoidance of jail. I am advised that this is a question for the Department of Justice.

Tasmanian Government Radio Network (TasGRN)

The Member for Windermere has requested information on the progress of the TasGRN project. The project remains in the procurement phase, with preliminary negotiations continuing with the preferred tenderer. I am advised that it is not possible to provide further information until negotiations are finalised.

Whilst the outcomes of any future contract negotiations may change the expected timeframes of the project, the build of the TasGRN is expected later in 2020 with users planned to commence transitioning to the new network in late 2021.

Nant investigation

The Member for Windermere requested advice on how many police are engaged in the fraud investigation in relation to the Nant Whisky Barrel Buy Back Program.

I am advised that there are four investigators and an analyst engaged in the investigation, with the support of an external part-time forensic accountant. South Australia Police is also providing technical assistance regarding bulk data analysis.

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs

In relation to Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs, the Annual Report notes that 87 official warning notices were served on a total of 24 convicted offenders in 2018-19. The Member for Windermere sought clarification regarding whether this meant multiple notices were served on the same offenders.

I am advised that an official warning notice issued to an offender only restricts them from consorting against one other person. If an offender is directed not to consort with multiple persons, they will receive one notice for each person. One convicted person may therefore receive multiple notices.

Up to 23 June 2020, Tasmania Police had issued 254 official warning notices, to cohorts consisting of 43 convicted offenders.

In response to the question regarding the breach of these notices, I am advised that three offenders have been found to breach an official warning notice. They have each been charged by police and the matters are now before the court.

Firearm theft/crime

The Member for Windermere requested statistics on the stealing of firearms and the use of them in crime, including in property shoot-ups and/or suicides, for the past three financial years.

I am advised that it is not possible to report statistically on property shoot-ups or suicides involving firearms.

This is because property shoot-ups do not align with legislative offences, and suicides do not represent core police business, although police often provide operational support to these tragic incidents.

However, it is possible to outline the number of firearm thefts and the number of incidents involving firearm use.

Firearm theft

Firearm Theft	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Firearm Theft Incidents	60	36	50
Firearms Stolen	207	123	143
Stolen Firearms Recovered	41	32	29

[Source: Tasmania Police Offence Reporting System]

Incidents involving firearm use

Incidents Involving Firearms Use	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Unlawful Discharge Incidents	22	16	31
Firearm used as Weapon Incidents	68	59	86
Total *	86	74	114

*Categories may exceed totals as one incident may involve multiple uses of a firearm.

[Source: Tasmania Police Offence Reporting System]

Evade police

In 2018-19, police clamped or confiscated 451 vehicles, primarily for evade offences. The Member for Windermere asked how many of these were second time offenders, and were any vehicles taken permanently.

Of the 451 vehicles, 68 had 28 day penalties for a first offence, and 383 had longer penalties for a second or subsequent offence. It is not currently possible to statistically report on the number of vehicles permanently confiscated by offence type committed.

The Member for Windermere also asked how many of these offences related to hooning and burnouts. I am advised that in 2018-19, the number of vehicles clamped or confiscated for offences under section 37J of the *Police Offences Act 1935*, which are sometimes also referred to as 'hooning' or 'burnout' offences, was 76.

Vehicles Clamped and Confiscated in 2018-19 for Primary Offences under Section 37J of the Police Offences Act 1935

Offence Type	Vehicles Clamped or Confiscated
Operate vehicle in a public place in a race against another vehicle	5
Operate vehicle in a public place in an unnecessary execution of speed, acceleration or loss of traction	65
Operate vehicle in a public place making unnecessary/unreasonable noise	6
Total Vehicles Clamped/Confiscated for Selected Offences	76

[Source: Police Vehicle Clamping and Confiscation System, 16 March 2020]

Police Women

Albert

- The gender split is approximately 34% females and 66% males across Tasmania Police.
- In terms of recruitment, the 'You got this' campaign was developed in 2017 using a focus group which included trainees and serving members. It was aimed at encouraging more female applicants to consider policing as a potential career. It jumped on the back of 100 years of women in policing so the marketing campaign took a path towards encouraging more female to consider policing hence the slogan 'you got this' The campaign focused on working mothers, young women and rural woman.
- As a result of the campaign there was an increase in female applicants which allows Tasmania Police to maintain a 50/50 gender balance on recruit courses.
- Since 2017 Police Recruiting have conducted approximately 50 information sessions state-wide, this includes public information sessions as well as visits to schools, colleges and public events, including female sporting clubs etc.
- In 2019, Tasmania Police commenced female only information sessions – 131 people attend the female only

sessions state wide and another 443 attend the open sessions state wide at the four venues.

- There is no longer a live in requirement for recruits at the police academy. This was previously a barrier for some female applicants who felt they were unable to leave the family while undertaking the training.