



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

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**REVISED EDITION**



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**Wednesday, 17 August 2022**

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

## **RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I acknowledge the presence of students from Years 5 and 6 of the Windermere Primary School.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Cost of Living Pressures - Power Prices**

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

[10.02 a.m.]

Yesterday you tried to claim that power prices have gone down. Households forced to choose between heating and eating can see that it is not true. Businesses forced to pass on costs to customers who are already struggling know that is not true. Tasmania's major industrials, facing hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra costs because of your broken promise, think you are trying to take them for fools. Are you so out of touch that you think Tasmanians will actually believe that power prices are going down?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I again recognise the cost of living pressures facing Tasmanians, indeed, Australians nationally. Globally we have inflation challenges and challenges as well such as the fuel price. I am very interested in the federal government's commitment to reducing power prices by \$275. If you get permission from Nick and Dougie to ask that question of your colleagues -

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I understood that you made a ruling yesterday regarding how we refer to current and former members of parliament in this place. I draw to your attention the Premier's failure to do that. I ask that you formally draw him into line.

**Mr SPEAKER** - What I indicated yesterday is that we should pay respect to everybody. There is no standing order as far as past members go but we should respect everybody, whether they have been in the Chamber or not.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. When I referred to Nick and Dougie I did it with great affection. I have known Mr Sherry for many years and respect him. I have called him 'Nick'. I address him as Mr Sherry. He is in control of your party along with his colleague, Mr Cameron. We know why because there was an intervention -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - They had to step in and intervene in what has really been a battle zone for many years with respect to the Labor Party.

What I said yesterday reflected history in terms of 65 per cent increase in power prices when the Labor Party had the Treasury benches. This will be a government that will always put downward pressure on electricity prices. We understand the pressures around the cost of living. What you are not telling the Tasmanian people is that our \$180 bill-buster payment provides a better outcome for most concession customers than your 2.5 per cent cap, Mr Winter.

I recognise that power prices have gone down over the course of the last eight years. There has been a lift in the last 12 months -

**Mr Winter** - Are you really going there? You think they are going down?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You are just being ridiculous. You know there has been a decrease in lower prices over the course of the last eight years and there has been an increase this year. That is why we are very mindful of the cost of living pressures and the impact power prices and energy prices have on small businesses, particularly Tasmanians doing it tough on fixed and low incomes. That is why we have targeted our assistance to support low income Tasmanians.

I was very pleased to again be at the Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre yesterday talking with Ben Cooper who was reflecting on the challenges and the increased need in the local community when it comes to the provision of food, for example, emergency food relief. The package we released yesterday, part of our \$5 million package that Mr Street and our new member for Franklin, Mr Young joined me in presenting, was part of much needed assistance. If you reflect on some of the feedback around that \$5 million investment to support people in need and vulnerable Tasmanians, I believe it was warmly welcomed by TasCOSS, by Neighbourhood Houses. It is a \$1.75 million commitment; \$50 000 to each of the 35 Neighbourhood Houses. I know that is very much welcomed. They work with and provide much-needed assistance to Tasmanians who I know are doing it tough when it comes to increased cost of living pressures.

### **Cost of Living Pressures - Power Prices**

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

[10.08 a.m.]

Your Energy minister claims Tasmanians have to pay 12 per cent more on their power bills to prop up the health system. Are you saying if Tasmanians pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power as they should, the health system would run out of money?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for her question. The member, a minister who, as do all of our team and frankly most Tasmanians, lives in fear of the Labor Party ever

getting back into government given not only do you decimate budgets but also the economy as well as jobs.

**Ms O'Connor** - We made hard decisions.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If my memory serves me correctly - and you were part of this, Ms O'Connor - Tasmanians lost 10 000 jobs in Tasmania. You want to talk about cost of living and you want to talk about people doing it tough. How tough was it between 2010 and 2014 when you were trying to power-share a deal with the Greens when you lost your job, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania? Tasmanians will not forget it and they still have not forgotten it.

**Dr Broad** - What about the people in tents?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - They have not forgotten the accumulated deficits either. They have not forgotten the fact that you cannot manage money. They have not forgotten your \$3.4 billion worth of commitments at the last election, of which you graciously informed the Tasmanian community \$7 million of that \$3.4 billion -

**Dr Broad** - Labor paid off the Liberal debt and you put it up again.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am more than happy to talk about investment, Dr Broad, into our health system, which is increasing.

**Dr Broad** - Talk about the \$3.5 million you are borrowing every day.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, member for Braddon, order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What about the fact we have been through a pandemic? You tell me, Dr Broad, what would you have not spent money on? Keeping people alive and in work.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Premier. This is question time. It is a one-way conversation. A question is asked and then answered. Any questions that are put by the Premier or the members on this side are rhetorical questions and should not be answered. Please do not interject.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - On the point of order, Mr Speaker, it is very clear to most people in the House that the Premier was inciting interjections. That is something he should be made aware of.

**Mr SPEAKER** - That is not a point of order but I accept your point. That is what happens in the Chamber.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Ms O'Connor, for making me aware of inciting interjections. I was explaining that Dr Broad's interjection was counter to the question that his Leader has asked. Dr Broad is very simply saying -

**Ms White** - You are gouging energy users to prop up the health system.

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

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Dr Broad is pointing to debt, which is manageable but necessary due to the investment we have had to make to keep people alive and in work in Tasmania. If you want to get on the adjournment debate tonight or the Health MPI and explain to Tasmanians what you would not have spent money on, then fill your boots.

**Ms White** - Can you answer the question? The question was about why you are gouging energy users to prop up the health system?

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

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What the member was referring to was the \$50 million so-called uncostered commitment from Mr Winter. What I am referring to is that we have \$11.2 billion of health expenditure over the course of the next four years, increasing targeted investment. Investment that is working.

When you look at our investment in elective surgery, for example - our four-year elective surgery plan - we have reduced waiting lists by almost 16 per cent over the course of the last 12 months. That has been because we have been working with people on the ground on a clinician-led, patient-focused elective surgery plan. It is working. We have more work to do.

You need to sort out yourselves when it comes to question time. All you want is for us to spend less. No wonder the Labor Party federally has taken you over.

### **Salmon Industry - Foreign Investment**

**Dr WOODRUFF to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.13 a.m.]

After years of unchecked expansion and worsening environmental and social impacts, Tasmania's fish farming industry is about to enter its darkest phase. All three of the state's industrial fish farm operators are now owned by mega international corporations. Corporations such as JBS and the latest, Cooke, are drawn here by the lack of regulation of our industry. Their criminal track records give us no confidence that they will be responsible stewards of marine health.

Yesterday the Government tabled its response to the Legislative Council inquiry into finfish farming. It shows you are refusing to act to legislate and protect our public waterways. Why are you prioritising the profits of massive multinational corporations over protecting our fragile and unique waterways?

## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. We welcome foreign investment in Tasmania. We are very proud of our salmon industry. We are very proud of our independent environmental regulator, newly made more independent and given an extra \$10 million over the forward Estimates to prosecute its work, including in the area of regulated fin-fish farming. We have recently been out for consultation on a discussion paper for a new environmental standard for finfish farming in Tasmania, which has been internationally peer reviewed. We look forward to finalising that over the coming months. We look forward to working with our new Primary Industry minister, Jo Palmer, to finalise our new 10-year salmon plan. It is a plan for the future for our sustainable industry, appropriately regulated, meeting international standards and creating jobs for Tasmanians and businesses in our economy.

We believe that we are attracting investment because we have a good reputation and we have appropriate regulation. Social licence and brand are important for high-value products like farmed salmon. People are coming to Tasmania because they know that this place where they can operate has a reputation. It is regarded as a well-regulated area in terms of the environment. They know the Government is committed to sustainable growth of this industry.

### Port of Hobart - Redevelopment

**Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT,  
Mr FERGUSON**

[10.17 a.m.]

The Government wants to make Hobart the world's premier Antarctic gateway. Are you aware of mounting concerns in the Antarctic community that the poor condition of Hobart's working port at Macquarie Point could see the icebreaker *Nuyina* decamp to better facilities in Fremantle in Western Australia, or Christchurch, New Zealand? Hobart's entire Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector, worth \$160 million to our economy, and 950 well-paid jobs, could disappear over the horizon as well. Half the wharves at Macquarie Point, Hobart's last working port, are basically unusable. This deterioration did not happen overnight but over years.

When will TasPorts submit its business case for the \$240 million wharf upgrade to Infrastructure Australia, which has listed the project as national priority? Given the urgency of this upgrade and fears we could lose *Nuyina* and Hobart's Antarctic gateway status for better ports in Western Australia and New Zealand, why has the state Government not formerly raised a Hobart port upgrade with the new federal government?

## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. Regarding the last part of the question, that matter has been raised with the new federal government, in professional and collegial style, with Catherine King who, apart from being federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, and with whom I served in the House of Representatives in 2004, also has the Hobart City build in her portfolio which Mr Barnett is very capably representing on behalf of the state of Tasmania. That matter has been raised on more than one occasion. I would never put words in another minister's mouth, but those discussions have been very worthwhile.

The master plan that has been developed by our Government and TasPorts for the whole of the state has been released and is publicly available. The vision for a port of Hobart, developed by TasPorts under this Government was released in March 2021. I am pleased that the Port of Hobart redevelopment is a national priority. That is a result of that work. That shortlists for Commonwealth consideration future funding priorities. We are red-hot for that major redevelopment. I would not be talking up other ports around Australia in trying to dismiss the value of ours. It is the case that the Australian Antarctic Division has nominated and locked in Hobart as the home port for *RV Nuyina*, and that is a very good thing.

The AAD does not have its long-term infrastructure preferred in place with TasPorts. That matter is ongoing and is part of the very redevelopment we have been discussing. However, in advance of the *Nuyina* arriving in Hobart, I think late last year, AAD and TasPorts agreed to a joint investment of \$3 million for minor infrastructure upgrades to allow Macquarie Wharf No. 6 to be fit for purpose for the *Nuyina*. That includes fenders, bollards and lighting upgrades to ensure the berth's suitability for the new vessel. Those works were completed in time for the *Nuyina*'s arrival. They were completed in spring of last year. That is a demonstration of the pre-eminence of Hobart as Australia's Antarctic gateway and for many countries in our region.

Thank you for the question. As to the earlier part of your question which asked about the final business case, I can assure the House that is in its advanced stages and we look forward to submitting it to the Commonwealth Government. As I have said publicly in recent weeks, we would be hopeful of a federal funding commitment towards that important infrastructure for the long-term security and improvement of the Port of Hobart if not in the October budget, then certainly as a strong case for next year's federal budget.

### **Health - Improving Outcomes**

#### **Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.21 a.m.]

Can you outline for the House what our Government is doing to invest and deliver innovation in our health system to improve health outcomes for Tasmanians and to recognise our resilient and hardworking health workforce?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I know he has considerable interest in this matter. As well as being Premier, I am very proud to retain the portfolio responsibilities of Health and Mental Health and Wellbeing because I have had the opportunity to shine a spotlight on health at a national level and advocate very strongly to ensure Tasmania gets its fair share of federal funding.

Our Government continues to prioritise and invest in health with our 2022-23 State Budget delivering record health funding of \$11.2 billion over four years, which will see us spend on average \$7.3 million every single day on our health system.

We are continuing to increase capacity in our health system and have opened around 105 new public beds and enabled access to 41 new public and private partnership beds since

May last year. We have also recruited more than 1500 full-time equivalent health staff since July 2022, with the majority of these positions in frontline service delivery including nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health professionals. We are continuing to recruit.

We are starting to see positive results from our investment with the elective surgery wait list decreasing by 15.9 per cent in the 12 months to June 2022 thanks to increased surgical endoscopy activity under our \$196.4 million statewide four-year elective surgery plan, which is clinician-led and patient-focused.

Staffing is just one component. We also have an infrastructure plan that forecasts investment of more than \$1.5 billion over 10 years into critical health infrastructure to deliver upgrades and new facilities that improve patient amenity and increase capacity.

We also understand the value of innovation to secure our health services into the future and to attract and retain a highly-skilled health workforce. One of these areas of health innovation I am most excited about is our \$150 million commitment over the next four years to upgrade our digital health infrastructure, with a projected investment of \$475 million over the next 10 years to transform patient experience wherever people live in Tasmania.

We are also investing \$4.7 million over the next two years to support the bedside medication management initiative which increases patient safety, frees up nurses and midwives to focus on patient care and is strongly supported by the ANMF. Alongside this we are also innovating with services that care for people in their own homes and keep them out of hospital. We have established ComRRS, PACER, community paramedics, COVID@homeplus, and are developing a statewide virtual primary care service.

We recognise the challenges our health system faces. The hard work and resilience of our health workforce throughout the pandemic has kept our health system functioning during what is possibly the most difficult period that Tasmania has ever experienced.

Recently we put forward a strong proposal to workers to address recruitment and workforce issues. In addition, yesterday in this place I announced our Government's further offer to recognise the significant contributions of our frontline health workers who have worked in public hospitals, inpatient and ancillary health care areas during the pandemic. Yesterday we put an offer of a \$2000 retention payment to health unions. Our Government has made this offer in good faith to reflect our immense gratitude for our health workforce. As I have said before in this place, they are our health system's greatest asset and we will continue to strongly engage to understand how we can continue to support them.

### **COVID-19 - Frontline Health Worker Allowance**

**Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.26 a.m.]

On 2 August you announced a return-to-work bonus payment for health workers who had left the workforce. When you announced that scheme you were heavily criticised for ignoring all the current staff who have kept our health system afloat in some of the toughest of times.

Yesterday in a response to a question from me, you backflipped and announced a goodwill bonus payment that would be paid for health workers, but it is clear all that glitters is not gold. Details emerged overnight of the sting in the tail of this offer. You have attached significant caveats to your offer, one being that you want to deduct any money due to be paid to workers under the COVID-19 escalation allowances, a separate and specific entitlement agreed to be paid for a very different purpose. Any goodwill with health workers you may have restored has been wasted by your cynical approach in what should have been a genuine gesture of thanks to our health workforce on behalf of the Tasmanian people. It is now simply just a negotiation leverage point. Will you remove the caveats, strings and cynical demands attached to this offer?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question. Following discussions with the ANMF and acknowledging that nurses are not in a formal negotiating period at the moment, we have recognised their concerns about workload, recruitment and retention. We have put an offer to health unions of a new one-off \$2000 frontline health COVID-19 allowance. This would replace the previously agreed COVID-19 escalation allowance which was registered by the TIC on 25 July this year.

To be clear, this is not part of any wage negotiations or bargaining. We believe the new frontline health allowance is a better way of supporting our nurses and health workers who have done it tough during the pandemic. It is also fairer because it extends to more frontline health staff and removes any uncertainty about the payment due to the escalation and de-escalation of hospitals and health services.

The new frontline health COVID-19 allowance would include Tasmanian Health Service nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health professionals, and pharmacists, as well as orderlies, ward clerks, food services and cleaners. It will also cover paramedic, inpatient and ancillary health care areas - in other words, patient-facing staff. We estimate it would apply to around 9500 full-time equivalent staff in the Tasmanian Health Service or around 11 500, and it would be paid on a pro-rata basis. This means it would cover an additional 3500 FTE staff over the previously agreed, but limited, COVID-19 escalation allowance which is subject to escalation protocols, of which you would be aware.

**Mr O'Byrne** - What about the ban on industrial action if they do not accept this?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If unions accept this offer it will replace the COVID-19 escalation allowance to be paid on the basis that all relevant industrial action ceases and the plan previously laid out to the ANMF and HACSU is agreed. Our offer to bring forward wage negotiations for the next round of nursing and midwifery agreement also stands. This includes reforming of the statewide nursing transition to a practice model; providing a fast-track pathway to a job for all UTAS nursing graduates; making a permanent job available to all of them; accelerated probationary periods and streamlining selection processes, significantly saving the time of our senior nursing staff. This will be supported by a trial of clinical coaches on public hospital wards which has been a long-held request by the ANMF and establishing a strategic nursing recruitment and retention working group to drive reform; comprising health officials, union representatives from the ANMF and HACSU to prepare new workforce modelling to manage pandemic peaks and recruitment initiatives. That is an offer on the table in good faith.

We have always said that we will work with our industrial advocates in good faith.

**Ms O'Byrne** - You are not. You are bribing the staff.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Also, it is a very different environment when you are recruiting more people to your health workforce than when you were last in government. When you were last in government we were decreasing the number of people in our health workforce and decreasing investment in our health system, which many people on the frontline will never forget.

### **Cost of Living Pressure - Wages Policy**

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

[10.31 a.m.]

The cost of living has increased 6.5 per cent in the last year - the highest jump in three decades. Power prices are soaring 12 per cent because of your broken promise. Your unfair new bin tax is increasing council rates and you have allowed water prices to increase nearly 15 per cent over the next four years. With Tasmanian households under such unprecedented costs of living pressure, caused in large part by your failure to get the basics right, how can you continue to maintain your 2.5 per cent wages policy?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I am always willing to talk about the cost of living pressures on Tasmanians and as a government being agile in responding to the needs of Tasmanians in what is a very challenging time, particularly for our many people on low and fixed incomes in Tasmania. That is why yesterday we announced \$5 million in additional support.

I have mentioned previously in this place the \$17 million investment on the winter bill buster discount - \$180 - which will support many thousands of Tasmanians. Yesterday, I was pleased to again, in responding to need, announce a further investment.

It is also worth acknowledging that the number one cost of living pressure for most is the increase in fuel prices -

**Ms White** - It is rent; it is energy; it is groceries.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I recognise it is a range of matters but fuel price is one of those. That is why we will be asking the federal government to step up when it comes to that matter.

Yesterday, we announced our cost of living booster package. We have a strong track record of targeted support to those in need. This is reflected in the actions of our Government: the \$17 million to power price relief to eligible Tasmanians and yesterday as part of the

\$5 million investment of \$1.75 million to our 35 Neighbourhood Houses receiving \$50 000 each; \$1 million in addition to support the Family Assistance Program, allowing The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul, Anglicare and -

**Ms White** - Tedious repetition.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is not tedious. The cost of living is a very important issue.

**Ms White** - You are not talking about wages.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Leader of the Opposition, I officially warn you for continually interjecting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Launceston and Hobart City Mission is to extend more support for vulnerable Tasmanians, doubling the current funding. There is \$1 million in additional funding to Aurora Energy for its hardship program to provide assistance to any customers experiencing financial difficulty, bringing that total investment to some \$2.7 million; \$500 000 in additional funding to emergency relief providers, Foodbank, Loaves and Fishes to help purchase food as well as support to help them upgrade their distribution vehicles; \$250 000 in additional funding to provide grants of up to \$1000 to help community organisations with rising fuel costs - again fuel; \$350 000 in additional funding for the successful school lunch pilot, which will include a further 30 schools in the next 12 months; and \$150 000 into investment into the NILS scheme to allow organisations to provide no-interest loans to more Tasmanians.

On that note, NILS Tasmania CEO John Hooper said yesterday:

NILS Tasmania cannot thank the state Government enough for announcing today that our organisation will receive a one-off extra funding amount of \$150 000 to help meet the rising cost and wages and other expenses for this year. Today of course in so many community organisations assisting Tasmanians in need there will be great relief.

TasCOSS CEO Ms Adrienne Picone said:

This additional \$5 million in funding will enable the community services industry -

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It goes to standing order 45. The question to the Premier - and I asked you to draw his attention to it - is about why he is maintaining a 2.5 per cent wages cap in his negotiations. He has not once talked about wages. I ask you to draw attention to that point.

**Mr SPEAKER** - That was not a point of order. To bring you back to point and to reiterate the fact there is always a lot of leniency given to members asking questions, in their preamble and so on. In so doing, the quid pro quo is that I allow that leniency to the member answering the question. I will allow the Premier to continue his answer.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a number of quotes from people who welcomed our \$5 million package yesterday. I was about to quote the CEO of TasCOSS. I will

finish that quote. Perhaps there will be an opportunity at a later time to reflect on other people's views of our package yesterday.

TasCOSS CEO Ms Adrienne Picone said:

This additional \$5 million in funding will enable the community services industry to support and empower more Tasmanians to participate in life, be that socially, economically or culturally. ... The announcement of additional funding for Tasmania's Neighbourhood Houses, emergency food relief providers, family assistance program providers and Aurora Energy's hardship program is positive news for those struggling to afford the basics.

Our Government used its balance sheet through COVID-19 to shield Tasmanians, protect their jobs and the economy and keep people alive. Dr Broad disagrees with that investment. He does not support the investment. He has made that very clear today counter, I am assuming, to his Leader.

The 2022-23 Budget and forward Estimates provides for wage indexation of 2.5 per cent. But be very clear, that level of wage indexation is an assumption for the purposes of developing the Budget. It is not the Government's wages policy. The Government is committed to ensuring negotiated wage outcomes are fair, that they are affordable, and they are reasonable.

As we have said on many occasions, we are committed to negotiating with all the unions in the upcoming bargaining round in good faith to deliver wage increases for our workforce.

### **State of the Environment Report**

**Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.39 a.m.]

Your Government has missed two statutory deadlines for the State of the Environment Report, much like your mainland colleagues. Since 2009, three serious fires have devastated the TWWHA, and we have had the longest ever documented marine heatwave in east coast waters that killed almost all of our giant kelp communities. The number of species close to extinction has dramatically expanded and these are just the ones that we know about. Your colleague, minister Ferguson, has palmed off this critical work to get another review. As Minister for Environment and Climate Change, you should know we do not have time to waste because we are in a climate and biodiversity crisis. Will you recognise the urgency and commit to ensuring we have an independently produced state of the environment report, as legislated, by 2024?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

**Dr Woodruff** - Are you getting talking points from the Deputy Premier?

**Mr Ferguson** - We're a team, unlike that side.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Absolutely, we are a team.

**Dr Woodruff** - He should be able to talk for himself.

**Mr Ferguson** - We help each other.

**Mr Tucker** - We're a team.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms O'Connor** - Who runs this show?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I understand there is also a reference in here to a matter that is an order of the day for later today so I will aim not to enter into that area. However, I want to make it clear in terms of the matters Dr Woodruff has raised that a State of the Environment report is typically a backwards-looking update on a range of parameters in the performance of our environment and our regulatory systems. When it comes to questions about how we plan for, manage and acquit our responsibilities under legislation to management of our environment, we are dealing with real-time data and advice from a wide range of government agencies who are working every day to ensure that we have up-to-date science, advice and policies to address the climate and environment challenges facing Tasmania.

I reject the assertion that somehow the absence of a State of the Environment report -

**Ms O'Connor** - Two of them - two!

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

**Mr JAENSCH** - affects the Government's ability to successfully manage environmental priorities at all. As we have said previously, there has been an independent review of the roles of the Tasmanian Planning Commission which identified that the commission is not the appropriate body to prepare updates of the State of the Environment Report in the future.

**Dr Woodruff** - It used to be in 2009. It just had no money.

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

**Mr JAENSCH** - An independent review found that. Sometimes the Greens like independent reviews but sometimes if they do not come out the way they want, they want us to be able to intervene. It is a bit like independent regulation of environmental matters. It is very important that it is done at arm's length from the Government, but as soon as it does not look like what they want, they want us to intervene, so there is some hypocrisy in that.

We are commissioning advice on where the State of the Environment Report should best sit within the machinery of government and what the purpose of a future state of the environment report should be and we will have more to say on that in coming weeks.

## **Workers - Industrial Action**

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

[10.43 a.m.]

Around Tasmania today we see exhausted, frustrated and desperate public sector workers feeling that they have been left with no choice but to commence industrial action. Nurses are walking out of hospitals, including today at the North West Regional Hospital. Firefighters, child safety officers, teachers and paramedics are also taking industrial action. Just today, your deputy had to apologise to firefighters after he lied about them walking away from the negotiating table. You are clearly struggling to get the basics right across virtually the entire -

**Government members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. To use the word 'lie' in this Chamber, as you know, is unparliamentary. Whether you are going to use the excuse that you were quoting or not, it is still not appropriate to accuse a member of lying. I am sure members have the intelligence and the ability to put another word in there. I ask you to withdraw that comment and continue with your question.

**Ms FINLAY** - Mr Speaker, I withdraw. Just today your deputy had to apologise to firefighters after failing to tell the truth about them walking away from the negotiating table. You are clearly struggling to get the basics right across virtually the entire public service. As the Tasmanian president of the Australian Education Union said:

After a year of so-called negotiations you have accepted none of our solutions and the problems of excessive workload and teacher shortages are getting worse.

Do you acknowledge that you have to do much more than you are currently doing to ensure our workplaces are safe and our schools, hospitals and other public services can function effectively?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for her question. However, I will say that Tasmanians expect more from members of parliament who go around with personal attacks. With some of the language coming from those opposite in media releases in recent times, quite frankly, Tasmanians would be appalled.

I very much agree with the Prime Minister, Mr Albanese, when he very clearly said that Australians are sick of the conflict and sick of the politics. I would like those opposite, who are members of the same party, to take a leaf out of the new Prime Minister's book and his words. Some of those words you are using are quite frankly appalling. Tasmanians would expect better from members of parliament. I have always believed that when you go for the personal attack, you have lost the argument.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, order. It is not a joke, it is a serious question. It is a serious issue within the state and if the Opposition cannot bring themselves to listen to the answer in silence then I will start ejecting them.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - This side of the House will be rising above the nastiness and focusing on the issues that concern Tasmanians, which are access to timely health care, quality education, housing affordability and protecting our biosecurity status from FMD and other incursions. There is a range of areas that we are focused on and committed to and that includes working with our public sector and negotiating in good faith when it comes to wage negotiations and responding to their needs when it comes to the workforce pressures, whether it be in the health system or in a school environment.

What we can point to as a government is very clear investments in all of those areas. There are many more teachers in our schools now than there were when we first came to government. There are many more health professionals in our hospitals and across our health settings now than there were when we came to government in 2014, and those investments will continue. With paramedics, for example, and the work they are doing day in and day out, there are 270 more FTEs across Ambulance Tasmania. These are the investments that this Government has made and committed to increasing. We will stay out of your politics and your nasty name-calling and we will get on with the job. That is what Tasmanians expect.

### **Electric Vehicles**

**Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT and CLIMATE CHANGE, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.49 a.m.]

We have had significant discussions around cost of living and especially fuel costs.

Can you provide an update on how the Government's support of electric vehicles will be assisting Tasmanians and businesses to go electric, reduce imported fuel costs and emissions and take advantage of our renewable energy?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank Mrs Alexander for her question and her interest in what we are doing on climate change and electric vehicles in particular.

The Government is committed to supporting the uptake of electric vehicles in Tasmania. This will reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels, reduce fuel costs and increase demand for our renewable energy while reducing emissions and air pollution. While Tasmania's net emissions have fallen by 121 per cent over the 30 years to 2020, our emissions from transport have continued to grow and are now 8 per cent higher than they were in 1990.

That is why supporting zero emissions transport through electric vehicles and support for our nascent hydrogen industry is critical in our state's ambitious journey towards a low-emissions economy and our 2030 net zero emissions target.

To reduce the up-front costs for Tasmanian families and businesses to take advantage of electric vehicles, the Government is waiving stamp duty on new and used electric vehicles for two years. I am pleased to report that as at the 31 July this year, the Government has waived duty on 676 electric vehicles, saving Tasmanians around \$2500 on average. In just one year of the waiver, electric vehicle registrations have nearly doubled, growing by 94.5 per cent, demonstrating the success of this policy so far.

As at 31 July, there are now more than 1100 EVs in Tasmania, including two electric buses. The Government has waived duty on the purchase of over half of them.

This afternoon I will be visiting Tasfast Airfreight, and its managing director, Colin Tucker, which has been among the beneficiaries of the Government's duty waiver. Tasfast specialises in door-to-door overnight air freight between Melbourne and Tasmania and is committed to using renewable energy and reducing the carbon footprint of its on-ground operations in Tasmania. It is the first Tasmanian freight company that I am aware of using electric vans to deliver freight with two state-of-the-art Skywell EC11 electric vans purchased in April this year. Tasfast is considering further plans to reduce emissions in its own businesses and its customer supply chains with more electric vans, installing solar panels and in time investing in electric trucks on the Devonport to Hobart route. I congratulate Colin Tucker and Tasfast for these important and exciting initiatives.

The Government continues to roll out other policies to support the transition to electric vehicles. We are building on our comprehensive statewide charging network, which the Australian Electric Vehicle Association Tasmania branch has said will be the best EV network in the country, with an additional 43 EV fast and destination chargers being installed this year throughout regional Tasmania. We are providing a two-year waiver on registration costs for EVs purchased by hire car and coach companies and we are supporting Metro Tasmania with up to \$18.3 million to trial zero-emission electric and hydrogen buses in both the north and the south of the state.

The government fleet is transitioning to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030, which will not only reduce fuel costs and emissions but contribute a greater number of EVs to the second-hand car market for the Tasmanian community sooner. While market challenges remain in delivery of electric vehicles, I am pleased to advise that as at 30 June, the government fleet now includes 39 electric vehicles with more on order. We have a target to reach 75 this financial year.

The Climate Change (State Action) Amendment Bill 2021 prescribes the development of an emissions reduction and resilience plan for the transport sector. Following the passage of the bill I look forward to progressing this plan as a matter of priority. The plan will outline further measures to support EV uptake and reduce emissions, including how best to support businesses like Tasfast to further reduce their transport-related emissions.

The Government is working with Tasmanian businesses, industries and households to build on our world-leading emissions profile and make Tasmania a successful, growing low-emissions economy, protecting our environment and jobs for future generations. That is what the bill is about and we encourage all parties to support it.

## **Cost of Living Pressures - Wages Policy**

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

[10.55 a.m.]

Tasmania's workers, including public sector workers, are paid an average of \$10 000 less than people doing the same job on the mainland. We have a huge number of vacant nursing, correctional officer, child safety and teaching positions. Those workers we do have are being offered relocation incentives, better pay and better working conditions if they move interstate.

Without essential workers we do not have essential services. As an ED nurse at the Royal Hobart Hospital, who wrote to you recently said:

We are simply not seeing any real tangible action. Our department is stretched so far beyond our limitations that it is quite frankly a dangerous and terrifying place to work. We are the lowest paid nurses in the entire country. We are, to put it bluntly, heartbroken.

Do you acknowledge that what you are currently offering nurses, paramedics, firefighters, teachers and child safety officers is nowhere near enough to prevent more people leaving Tasmania?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I have never not acknowledged the challenges on the front-line. Whether that be firefighters or nurses, allied health professionals or education staff, it has been a challenging and tough few years.

We continue to invest in all those services. I have highlighted a range of those investments today, which I will not repeat, except to say to the member, the shadow minister for health, that when it comes to the health professionals, our nurses, our allied health professionals, our paramedics, we listen and respond. We keep talking and work these matters out in good faith.

The offer I put on the table yesterday is an example of how the Government is willing to listen and respond to the needs of our workforce, not only when it comes to wages and conditions but also our workforce capacity and building our workforce numbers.

Unlike when you were last in government and you were decreasing the front-line, we have increased it. We responded to increases in health demand but also highlighted a number of pressures across the health system. That is why we are coming up with innovative solutions like our Community Rapid Response Service, like our PACER initiative, COVID@homeplus, other key investments that are taking pressure off the acute care health system. Secondary triage is another example of that.

There are Premiers and Health ministers across the country, Liberal, Labor, all experiencing the same pressures in their health systems as we have as a result of the disruption and the pandemic.

We have clearly demonstrated in recent weeks, and throughout our time in Government, that we have responded to the need for more resources within our education system, within our health system, within our police service as well, Mr Ellis, given the numbers of police cut under your government. We are building our workforces. What we have had to do as a result of the time between 2010 and 2014 is rebuild the front line in our health and education systems and our police service as well. We will continue to do that and continue to respond to the needs of people working at the front line, acknowledging the pressures they are under. The example of our offer in good faith to nurses and others across our health settings and health workforce is a perfect example of that.

### **Police - Traffic Compliance and Enforcement Support**

**Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS**

[11.00 a.m.]

First, I congratulate our new minister and it is a great pleasure to give him his first question. Can you provide details of how the Tasmanian Government is supporting Tasmania Police, the focus on traffic compliance and enforcement to keep our community safe?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for his question. I know that for him the safety of people on rural and regional roads in Tasmania is a key part of what brings him to this place and I thank him for his service.

With the indulgence of the House, I also pay tribute to my predecessor in this role, Jacquie Petrusma. She was a fantastic minister, a fantastic servant of our democracy, and she has had an extraordinary career. To Jacquie, Tim, the kids and the grandkids, thank you for your service and your sacrifice together.

Mr Speaker, this has been a tragic time on our roads. We have had 36 deaths on our roads in Tasmania, up from 21 this time last year, and I have to say to our community that enough is enough. We need to take strong action on this because road safety is everyone's responsibility. It is about families talking to families, friends talking to friends and colleagues to colleagues.

Our Government has invested in a major new service, a new highway patrol called the Road Policing Service, which aims to bring that number down and to keep our roads safe in Tasmania. This Government has increased police numbers by 329 dedicated officers who are out there keeping us safe. Part of our new Road Policing Service is to invest in 68 police officers who are dedicated to getting out there in our community and keeping our roads safe. It was a real pleasure to join some of those officers last week at the Police Academy for the launch of this.

We have also invested in new high-visibility vehicles which will be a real presence to remind all Tasmanians that when they are on the roads if there is dangerous driving occurring our police force will catch them. We want to stamp out hooning. We want to crack down on people doing the wrong thing because it is not just them who are dying on our roads, it is people

getting about their business and families. Any dangerous driving puts everyone at risk. The new vehicles we have will have the ability for high-speed intercepts and that will enable them to catch and prosecute more people driving dangerously on our roads.

We have also made major investments into advanced technology such as our drones, which are already affecting major prosecutions of people who are doing the wrong thing on our roads and are driving dangerously in remote areas, places we have not been able to reach before. It is an investment of \$860 000 into 30 new drones as part of our Road Policing Service. This is vital because it will enable us to catch more people doing the wrong thing and keep Tasmanians safe. They will be featuring on our roads as a really strong presence, seven days a week, 365 days a year. I know many members have commented to me already in the last week about the number of people they have seen being pulled over by police on our highways and rural and regional roads to make sure they are doing the right thing. People doing the wrong thing can be brought to justice.

We are investing in valuable frontline services. We have invested in 329 new police in this role. We all remember what happened under the last Labor government, where they broke the bank and shut down the forest industry and then they had to start sacking staff. They sacked one in 10 police officers in Tasmania. That is what happens when you cannot manage a budget. You fundamentally fail to keep the community safe.

Amongst those 108 was a dedicated road policing service. We have not only rebuilt numbers in our police force but we have rebuilt services to keep Tasmanians safe. That is what happens when you have a politically bankrupt side running the state. People can see the pattern of behaviour from the Labor Party, who cannot even govern themselves anymore.

We are really proud of the investments we are making to keep Tasmanians safe and I have a strong message, as do all of our police, that enough is enough, road safety is everyone's responsibility, and I am really proud of the work that our officers are doing to keep us safe.

### **Bullying in Ministerial Offices - Government Action**

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

[11.05 a.m.]

There have been significant concerns raised around the country both at a state and federal level about the treatment of staff in ministerial offices. New South Wales Premier Dominic Perrottet recently had to sack one of his ministers, Eleni Petinos, for allowing a culture of bullying in her office. She denied the allegations but Mr Perrottet said he could not be sure her office was a safe workplace. Will you today commit to taking the same action if credible allegations are made against any of your ministers?

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### **Recognition of Visitors**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable membes, as the Premier is coming to the lectern, I welcome the second group of the Windermere Primary School grades 5 and 6.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I have to say, though, that you have had members of parliament resign not even halfway through their term because of the toxic culture in your office, so I would be very careful about what you say in this place.

I expect and am very committed to an inclusive and supportive working environment across ministerial offices where people are encouraged and valued for the work they do. I appreciate everyone across MaPS and that includes the state Opposition. I have been in opposition for 12 years and I know it is a hard grind. I very much appreciate the work that our team did in opposition as well. They are very challenging environments, but I expect that people in your offices, Ms White, and in our offices are respected and valued for the work they do.

As you know, in July 2021 Ms Sarah Bolt, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, was appointed as the reviewer for the independent review into parliamentary practices and procedures to support workplace culture. The review is focused on workplaces across the parliament, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services staff and electorate officers, including parliamentary practices and procedures to ensure a safe, respectful workplace and will reflect best practice in preventing and dealing with any workplace discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying. The terms of reference are publicly available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Equal Opportunity Tasmania websites.

In November last year the commissioner in her capacity as reviewer announced the opening of an anonymous and confidential survey as the first stage of the review process. The survey into workplace culture asked participants about their experiences with discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying, using internal complaint and reporting processes, witnessing unsafe workplace conduct and their perceptions of workplace culture.

The survey was distributed to all staff across these workplaces from 19 July to the present and was open from 22 November 2021 until 17 December 2021. I am advised the results of the survey and the audit of internal policies, procedures and practices are currently being analysed and will inform the recommendations made in the final report. The independent reviewer has been provided with data, information on the various onboarding processes for staff and reviewable procedures on grievances and complaints handling.

Members will be aware of a letter -

**Ms White** - You shouldn't need any notes. The question was whether you would act like Premier Perrottet and only you know the answer to that. A very simple question.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Members would be aware that a letter from Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Sarah Bolt referred to the update on the independent review into workplace culture in Tasmania, ministerial and parliamentary services.

She is quoted in that as saying:

Following the release of the report there may be temptation for some to politicise aspects of the report. There was a real danger that attempts to politicise or weaponise the report will undermine the integrity of the report and would demonstrate disrespect towards the review of participants who have shared their personal experiences, observations and insights.

**Ms White** - That was a private and confidential letter. The Premier is now sharing it publicly. That is a breach of the trust that I think has been demonstrated.

**Ms Archer** - You are playing politics.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms Archer** - Disgraceful.

**Ms White** - That was a private and confidential piece of correspondence.

**Ms Archer** - You cannot be trusted with anything confidential.

**Ms White** - You sound a little bit defensive over there.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I said before, whether it is the Opposition offices or ministerial offices, we have a culture where people are valued and respected for the work that they do.

### **Ministerial Staff Turnover**

**Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for WORKPLACE SAFETY and CONSUMER AFFAIRS, Ms ARCHER**

[11.11 a.m.]

There has been an extraordinary turnover of staff in your ministerial office over the past three years. For example, in 2019-20, seven staff members joined your office and eight left. The following year, 2020-21, you welcomed five new staff members but saw four of them walk out the door. Finally, last year, eight new staff members were appointed to your office but then six said 'goodbye'. What is going on in your office, minister? Isn't it a fact that the culture in your office is so unbearable you have created a virtual turnstile for your staff who walk in only to quickly turn around and run out?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, it is a disappointing question from the Opposition. It shows their lack of understanding that when there are portfolio changes, staff may move offices because they have specialisation in portfolios. I have a wonderful team. Yes, I have had quite a few staff. I make no secret of the fact - I said it at Budget Estimates - the work in my office is complex. It is difficult work. I regularly take on people on secondment from the department.

I never stand -

**Members** interjecting.

**Ms ARCHER** - Let me answer the question. I would never, ever, stand in the way of a staff member who frequently come from the department to go back to their substantive role or, indeed, as is often the case, a higher position. It shows a lack of understanding by the Opposition that those situations arise within the State Service quite frequently. As I said, I would never, ever stand in the way of a staff member choosing to go into a higher position back in the department. Also, they often come to get experience within a ministerial office.

I take this opportunity to thank my incredible team in my office, who are dedicated to all of my portfolios of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Members opposite will know that there is an incredibly large law reform agenda that I am driving; therefore I need specialist teams in that regard.

I also have staff within my Workplace Safety and my Consumer Affairs portfolios, Corrections and Rehabilitation and, of course, the Arts.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. I cannot hear the Attorney-General, so please be quiet.

**Ms ARCHER** - I deny any sort of allegation that the Opposition is trying to make by RTI-ing how many people have been in my office at various stages. I have been a minister since September 2017. I have held most of those portfolios within that time as well. It comes as no surprise. Staff come from specialty areas and then return to their substantive positions. They take up other offers within the State Service or, indeed, follow a portfolio when there are changes.

If that is all the Opposition can produce as their seventh question on their second day back after an eight-week break, it says more about the Opposition than it does about the Government.

### **Ticket to Play Voucher Program**

**Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for SPORT and RECREATION, Mr STREET**

[11.15 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering our strong plan to get more young Tasmanians active and into sports?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, the Tasmanian Liberal Government believes every Tasmanian deserves to lead an active and healthy lifestyle and we are doing everything we can to encourage and support this. We are working hard to get more young Tasmanians moving and into sport. One of my key priorities as Minister for Sport and Recreation has been and will be increasing participation at the grassroots and community level.

One important way, that we have been doing this is through our Ticket to Play vouchers program. Ticket to Play reduces the cost of participation in sport by providing eligible children aged between five and 18 years with two \$100 vouchers to use for registration costs. These vouchers provide vital assistance for families on low or fixed income that may struggle with the costs associated with joining a sporting club.

I was very pleased to recently announce that the 2022-23 Ticket to Play program has been expanded to include dance programs from 1 August. Just two weeks since dance was included in the program, 20 schools have applied and successfully become approved activity providers including 14 dance schools in the south, five in the north and one in the north-west, showing that this program is working across the state.

Since dance was included, there has also been an increase in the number of females applying for the program, which is fantastic to see. Thanks to this important initiative which was established in 2018 as Tasmania's first sports voucher program, thousands of young Tasmanians who may not have had the opportunity to take up sport due to financial barriers have been able to do so.

After seeing how it was benefiting families and communities, our Government committed \$1 million per year in 2020 to extend the program for another four years and then in 2021, during the pandemic, the Government doubled funding for the program with an additional \$3 million committed, which allowed each eligible participant to receive two \$100 vouchers.

Importantly, the two vouchers can be used to two different activity providers, meaning a young Tasmanian has the opportunity to try two different sports and, in doing so, experience the social and community benefits that come with being connected to a sporting club.

The response to Ticket to Play from the community and activity providers has been overwhelmingly positive. While the program may well help to create some sporting stars of the future, its true purpose is to show young Tasmanians the benefits of leading an active and healthy lifestyle.

Mr Speaker, that is why we will continue to invest in this vital program going forward.

**Time expired.**

## **PETITION**

### **Community Opposition to Private Development in National Parks**

[11.18 a.m.]

**Ms O'Connor** presented a petition from approximately 2673 residents of Tasmania, requesting that the House call on the Government to abandon the expressions of interest process and halt all proposals currently being considered under the Reserve Activity Assessment process until a statutory assessment and approval process for private tourism developments in Tasmania's national parks is implemented.

**Petition received.**

## MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

### Health

[11.21 a.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: Health.

The focus is primarily around the strike action that is being taken today at the North West Regional Hospital, where our nurses and midwives, out of sheer desperation, are taking strike action. This will be the fourth strike action in as many weeks across Tasmania.

Over that time, we have seen some incremental and pretty dismal actions from this Government about showing goodwill and putting things on the table to improve the pay and conditions of our nurses and midwives across the state. You say that you are listening but you are not. You were not at the ANMF conference. There was no representation yesterday at the CPSU event held at Parliament House. There is no excuse for no one attending that event to hear first hand from workers about the pressures they are facing and the changes they would like to see.

Yesterday in this place, in response to a question during question time, the Premier and part-time Health minister announced a \$2000 payment for healthcare workers across Tasmania. It is something healthcare workers have been calling for for a very long time from this Government. Other states are doing that. Other jurisdictions around the country have provided a greater payment for their healthcare workforce in recognition of the hard slog that it has been for them over the last two-and-a-half years with COVID-19 in our community and our hospital settings.

Until yesterday, the Government had refused to do anything about that. A package was presented to the ANMF prior to the strike action at the Launceston General Hospital a week ago that did not go anywhere near retention. That is the most significant issue that our nurses, midwives and other health care workers and public sector workers in general have been raising for a long time. There was nothing in that package about retention. That is an indictment on this Government, this minister and this Premier.

It is the modus operandi of this Government. It is the way this Government acts. The \$2000 announced yesterday is only to stop them from taking further strike action. It is so disingenuous. They are not doing this because they want to, Premier, they are doing it because they feel they have to. It is the only way they can be heard. You said you would have to deduct the COVID-19 allowance payment, which in itself was never near enough and was not what the Health Unions had presented to you and had wanted from the outset.

You came to the party late on that, and you have come to the party late on this offer. Do you expect the health care workers at the Royal Hobart Hospital now to pay back their coffee and chocolate? Will that be the next step? It is simply outrageous. What does it tell you about the way the Government treats our health care workers? It is appalling that you would announce it during question time and only come to that point after thinking it is the only way to stop strike action. You do not like the bad publicity that it is presenting for the Government.

The response with chocolates and coffee was mediocre: it was not even offered to healthcare workers across the state, it was only at the Royal.

They felt it was insulting. It did nothing to reassure them, to show that they are valued. What they want is better pay and conditions and a Government that is willing to work with them, not offer them a gag payment to stop striking. It is extraordinary that you would take those measures.

My colleague Janie Finlay yesterday read into the *Hansard* a couple of quotes from nurses who have written to you recently, minister. I want to read into the *Hansard* a couple from registered nurses from the north west, which is our electorate. This one says:

I'm a junior nurse on a busy medical ward. I have just completed two double shifts back to back with five hours of sleep and need to return again in the morning for my next short-staffed shift. This isn't fair for patients and it isn't fair for my family.

That's from a registered nurse. The second one says:

Working short-staffed repeatedly, going home tired, pressured and unsupported, dealing with frustrated patients when they have their surgery cancelled after extended time on the waitlist, or having no post-op bed to go. Constant payroll mistakes, unrealistic goals that are not achievable with current pressures on the health system, especially with the added impact of COVID-19.

These are the stories that you would have been receiving. I have been receiving them. Are you reading them? Are you responding to them? Are you listening to them? Are you acting on them? Right now it feels like you are not. Nurses are taking this fourth lot of industrial action, with paramedics taking industrial action tomorrow. They want to feel like their concerns are being listened to, and that the Government will act upon the things that they want to see changed, about the place where they work. They want safe staff levels, they want better mental health and wellbeing support, they want better pay and conditions.

I listened to an RN from the Launceston General Hospital talk about her experience and about the fact that nurses were leaving to work at Coles. She made this point with no disrespect to people who work at Coles but to point out that people are leaving because they cannot stand the pressure anymore. They cannot cope. That must be heartbreaking for nurses who have given their life service to working with patients, providing care to their community for years. I spoke to nurses at the strike at Royal Hobart Hospital and they shared how much over the years their workplace has changed. They cannot manage it anymore.

**Time expired.**

[11.28 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I always welcome the opportunity to speak on the health system in Tasmania and the opportunity to commend our hardworking staff on the front line.

Health is a top priority of mine as Premier. That was proved in the Budget where we continue to prioritise Health with record funding of \$11.2 billion over the next four years. There is an average spend of around \$7.25 million to \$7.3 million a day in our health system, representing one-third of the Budget's total operating expenditure. We are continuing to increase capacity in our health system. We have opened about 105 new public beds, provide access to 41 new public-private partnership beds since May 2021, recruited over 1500 additional FTE health staff between July 2020 and August this year. The majority of these positions are in front line service delivery, including our nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health professionals. We are continuing to recruit.

I want to again thank all our dedicated staff across our health system for the work they do every day. We are working with our staff on the challenges they face and have provided a strong proposal to workers to address recruitment and workforce issues. As members would be aware, I announced yesterday a further offer to recognise the contribution of our frontline health workers who have worked in public hospitals, inpatient and ancillary care areas during the pandemic and this one-off \$2000 payment has been put to our health unions.

I am pleased, when it comes to investment, that we have put \$196.4 million into our four-year elective surgery plan. Why am I pleased? Because we are listening to people on the ground delivering these services. It is pleasing that when we have a clinician-led investment backed up and patient-focused plan, we see the results. We have seen the results over the last 12 months of some 15.9 per cent reduction in our elective surgery waiting list and since January 2021 we have seen an almost 3000 reduction in numbers of our elective surgery waiting lists.

These are good investments that we make through talking and working with people on the front line delivering these services. The four-year elective surgery plan is complemented by a \$20 million fund we established in 2021 with the budget committing a further \$12 million to deliver care sooner by enabling private hospitals to take pressure off our public hospital system.

More recently we have turned our focus to the outpatient waitlist as well, which I accept is unacceptably high. We are developing a similar four-year plan to transform the way outpatient services are delivered. The budget also includes a \$7 million investment over four years to implement the outpatient plan to ensure Tasmanians can access specialist health services when and where they need them.

I want to assure all Tasmanians that our objective through these investments and system improvements is about people getting access to the right health care in the right place at the right time. That is not necessarily an acute care setting or a hospital bed. We know that when people are treated in the community when appropriate, they recover sooner. That is why we have introduced Hospital in the Home which can deliver acute care services. We also have our Mental Health Hospital in the Home program and have made our Community Rapid Response Service a permanent statewide service - referred to as the ComRRS program - providing quality care in the community for people with a range of conditions including chronic and complex illnesses and reducing hospitalisation.

The emergency department is not the best place for everyone to be, particularly when it comes to people with complex mental health challenges. That is why earlier this year we introduced the innovative program PACER, which sees mental health workers travel with our paramedics and police to attend mental health-specific 000 calls. That initiative has seen

around 75 per cent of people who have been treated in the community who would have otherwise had to have been supported in an emergency department, which as you would appreciate, is not the most appropriate place to be for people with complex mental health issues. Following the success of the southern pilot of PACER, I am pleased that this year's budget confirms that a PACER pilot will commence in the north-west early next year as well.

We have also recently deployed nine new community paramedics across the state who will attend non-emergency 000 callouts and we have a new plan to treat more patients in the community and keep Tasmanians out of hospital. Our community paramedics, the GP after-hours initiative, PACER and the ambulance secondary triage are just some of the measures we are working on which I hope will start to ease the pressure on our emergency departments and our paramedics as well. These are very good initiatives backed up with resources, both people and investment.

We are well aware of the challenges in our health system. What is important, though, is working together to implement innovative solutions and respond to need, as we have demonstrated we have done consistently over the course of a number of years. Tasmanians expect people to work together, as we are doing at a state and federal level, in coming up with innovative solutions again to address the dire need for access to primary care health services and GPs as well, which is clearly a federal responsibility.

#### **Time expired.**

[11.35 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, it is very hard to see the emotions pouring out of our nursing and paramedic workers, people who are striking and taking action on the streets and speaking in the community, standing up essentially on behalf of themselves and their colleagues but ultimately, they are speaking for the people who they care for every day. It is tragic if you have had conversations, as I have, with individuals who have spent their lives dedicated to caring for people as nurses or midwives or paramedics and who have simply burnt out.

They are burnt out because they had survived for the first period of time under the Liberals and the incredible successive pressure as budget on budget did not provide the necessary resources for the hospital and ambulance systems, but they have been brought undone by COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic, which started two years ago in 2020, was in the initial acute phase of that first wave hard enough but the period since the borders were opened in December last year has seen an increase of hundreds of thousands of cases of people being infected in Tasmania and tens of thousands of people needing acute health care. I do not have the figure but a very large number of people have been admitted to hospital or have needed home care.

This has had an incredible burden on the staff themselves because the numbers of people being absent - colleagues not able to work because they have been infected with COVID-19 and the extra pressure on people to turn up for work each day with less staff than they had even prior to COVID-19 but it has also had a flow-on effect to other parts of the health system.

Clearly, we have had a terrible reduction in elective surgeries that have been done but also in so many other areas. It has had a ramped-up effect on people who need access to the emergency department and who need emergency lifesaving care, and that is being seen every

single day with the extensive ramping, the highest in Tasmania and higher than it has ever been. There are also the people who are not able to get lifesaving operations when they need them and who have been on the elective waiting list. Many people on the priority elective waiting list are also not seen on time.

We really hear the pain of doctors, nurses, midwives and paramedics and what frustrates us so much is that the Government has things it can do. It is not only required to be done, it can be done. I know many people had hoped that this Minister for Health would be the person who would be strong enough in the position of also being Premier to do what needs to be done, because it is clear that the funds can be found available if it is just a matter of priorities.

The Greens' alternative budget which we tabled this year makes it really clear that the Government still, despite the burden on the health system, despite the incredible strain on nurses, midwives and paramedics who are leaving Tasmania or leaving their career forever, refuses to do what can be done. That is unforgiveable. The Premier and Minister for Health needs to understand that there are choices here. We do have funds that are going to other places in the Budget that can no longer be prioritised if they ever could have been.

We cannot continue to make choices, to charge such low mining royalties. We are lower than any other state in Australia in the royalties that we charge mining companies. We have to stop thinking that Tasmania is a place that people do not come to unless we do not have laws and we do not charge a commensurate tax on profits and royalties which is what other states are doing. Just the minimum. We could be making \$250 million in the Budget simply by looking at that area.

We also know that the land cuts that the Premier has introduced is costing this Budget \$220 million over the forward Estimates. That is \$220 million that should be going into the Health budget.

It is a choice that the Liberals are making to prioritise the needs of the wealthier people in the community over the desperate need for people to get lifesaving treatment in a timely manner. We know that there are opportunities for a rezoning profits tax, which other states have introduced, that would also provide the forward Estimates with \$640 million. These are large figures at the Government's disposal if the Premier saw fit to make these decisions. Let us not pretend that nothing can be done.

I put it to the Premier and Minister for Health to stop talking about the things that you have funded. It is clearly not enough. It is not enough to talk about 247 paramedics who have been funded by this Government since 2014 when the Paramedics Association is very clear that there needs to be far more than that - 224 full-time equivalents are required to bring us up to standards. This is what the Greens have shown can be done in our alternative budget. The Premier needs to do it now.

**Time expired.**

[11.43 a.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise this morning to speak on our health system in Tasmania. I want to reflect on a couple comments that were made this morning in question time - one about our incredible health care workers and one about the health care system. There was a reference this morning that our nurses, our midwives, our paramedics are resilient. There

was another comment made this morning about keeping people out of hospital. I want to open with a comment on that.

Anyone who has worked in an environment or has had a personal experience of trauma or fatigue or exhaustion, or just trouble, they like to support themselves and say 'we're resilient, we can be resilient, we encourage people to be resilient'. But when time on time, trauma on trauma, tough on tough, hard on hard, someone says to you, 'It's so good that you are resilient' and celebrates that you are resilient when you are completely spent, is so disrespectful. It is so outside the realm of understanding how hard and how horrible life is for the person that is then celebrated to be resilient.

Yesterday, I read into the parliamentary records some personal experiences and personal letters from nurses and midwives who work within our system. Today we have nurses and midwives striking on the north-west. They have had to, in complete frustration, walk out and strike this afternoon. This letter is from one of those members on the north-west, one that had already been written and had raised their concerns to the attention of the Premier and Minister for Health but with no response that adequately addressed their concerns. They said:

Premier,

Yesterday I left work in tears. I physically walked out of my shift once again in tears at the poor workload I had walked into at the commencement of my shift at 7 a.m. We were working two staff down that day, again, with highly vulnerable patients. No meal breaks were taken. Only one at 1.30 when I was mentally exhausted and I walked out crying.

The workload pressure of double shifts, working staff down, is a mental strain no one should have to face. We, as all nurses, are beyond exhausted. How can we look after acutely unwell patients when all your workforce is burnt out? We're going on strike.

These are people that are burnt out, who are emotionally exhausted and in tears before, during and after a shift. They do not want to be called 'resilient'. They do not want chocolates and a cuppa. They want a government that is going to respond to the realities of the concerns they are raising around being able to recruit, retain and look after the staff in the system.

As others have said this morning, people do not want to take this type of action. People go into these careers, committing their life time, dedicating their hours away from their families to caring for Tasmanians. That is what they want to be doing but they want to be doing it in a safe way. They want to be doing it in a way that is recognised and supported so they can deliver the reasonable care, to look after the basics of care for Tasmanians.

This morning there was also a comment about we are working to keep people out of hospital. Tasmanian Labor have been committed to raising their concerns about the cost of living, the pressures in our community and whether it be fuel, whether it be groceries, but we are really committed to highlighting the concerns around the increase in energy prices.

We had the energy conversation and then we had a health conversation with the Government saying, 'We have to keep people out of hospitals'. I do not know whether this Government is in touch enough to hear the stories from people. Just recently in the northern

suburbs of Launceston, I was told that families, multiple people - not just one person but multiple households - are going to bed at five o'clock so they do not have to turn the lights on, so they do not have to have heating. They are not using power at the moment in their community.

This raises illness, this heightens the need for health services in our community when all of these things intersect. You cannot, as someone just said, list out all of the things that you are doing and the new services that you are offering without caring for the core of the service, which is the people.

This letter was written by a midwife on the north-west coast:

I am a midwife and our conditions are shocking. On the majority of our shifts, we do not get breaks and the care we are able to give our patients is average. We have new midwives coming through, working and learning in these conditions and it is a huge concern because these junior midwives are required to learn and try their best in these conditions but are unable to. And we're unable to give them the support and education they need and therefore, this will be detrimental in the future of nursing and midwifery in Tasmania.

Not only is this unsafe for our patients, it also means that we have midwives that have just trained and then leave the industry straight away because who wants to work in these horrible, stressful environments.

Most of the midwives I work with discuss, on a daily basis, how they just want to leave the industry. If the Government doesn't do more there won't be midwives left to deliver safe care to women and babies and therefore there will be highly morbidity and mortality rates in maternity areas.

When we are having this information shared with us directly, when we are out in the community and hearing from or taken note of the messages that are shared, you get to understand what is needed in response but it feels like this Government is protected away in some sort of bubble where this information is not getting through, where an understanding of the realities in the community is no longer just vulnerable low-income workers. People across all demographics in our community are struggling from the lack of health service to support themselves to live a good life and from the increasing cost of living, which is seeing them being more and more unwell in the community.

We do not need to celebrate our health workers and say that they are resilient, we need to celebrate the great work that they do but, more importantly, what they want is they want support with recruitment, with retention and with support for them while they are at work. They want to be heard and understood so they do not have to be anxious about the idea of waking up and going to work. Someone I know in my community has stopped taking shifts and is now doing fewer and fewer hours because they cannot cope with the thought of going to work and going back into that environment. We do not want people to break down in the middle of the shift and cry, or to go home and cry, stressed, unable to connect with their family.

We need a government that supports our health care workers, that puts in place a great system to support Tasmanians and we need that action today.

[11.50 a.m.]

**Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass)** - Mr Speaker, while the Premier has outlined all the areas of health service delivery improvements, I would like to focus on our Government's significant investment in health infrastructure in every region of the state to deliver better health facilities to meet the future health needs of Tasmanians. This is very important because, whilst we are working through issues associated with workforce and all the other aspects that have been discussed today around the workforce, we also owe it to ourselves, to the state and to the people of Tasmania to have the correct infrastructure that is reflective of twenty-first century expectations.

We have a plan that forecasts an investment of more than \$1.5 billion over 10 years into critical health infrastructure, including digital health infrastructure which improves patient amenity and increases capacity. Digital health infrastructure is absolutely paramount to ensure that we are stepping into the future in an interconnected way of all the services that we provide to people who seek health assistance.

A key announcement in the 2022-23 budget was our investment of \$150 million over four years to upgrade our digital health infrastructure and transform the way we deliver patient care across Tasmania. We cannot continue doing investigations for patients and complex assessments just by shifting paper.

When I was part of a peak health group, a consumer health forum based in Canberra, quite often we heard reports and stories from patients, especially patients living in rural and remote areas in Australia, and we know Tasmania has many rural and remote areas which are impacted in a health access way. We heard stories where they had to travel in a car with a printout of their ECGs and other results because there was not an opportunity to have that transfer of medical information through digital infrastructure. The \$150 million over four years for digital infrastructure upgrade is actually a down-payment on the anticipated \$475 million investment over the next 10 years as we further develop the digital health strategy.

The 2022-23 Budget allocates approximately \$654.4 million over the budget and forward Estimates period for capital investment in health infrastructure. This includes \$208.2 million for the Royal Hobart Hospital stage 2 redevelopment, including refurbishment of A Block and expansion of the emergency department, intensive care unit, pharmacy expansion, air conditioning upgrades and a new angiography unit. The angiography unit is important because our population is ageing and we also have complex issues associated with obesity and bariatric patients, so having the capacity for early investigation of potential cardiovascular diseases is extremely important.

An amount of \$38.2 million has also been allocated towards implementing the remaining stage 1 projects of the Launceston General Hospital redevelopment, which again is absolutely critical for Bass. There is \$50 million from a total commitment of \$580 million for a commencement of the LGH stage 2, including a new mental health precinct; \$40.7 million towards a statewide hospital rural health facility and ambulance facility, fleet and equipment upgrades, including the Midlands Multipurpose Health Centre upgrade, and the new helipads at Dover and St Helens; \$42.8 million towards the Mersey Community Hospital capital upgrades, including the completion of outpatient clinics and operating theatres, new kitchens, a new subacute ward and the rural medical workforce centre; \$44 million towards the North West Regional Hospital, including the completion of the maternity services antenatal clinic, stage 1 of the mental health precinct to replace the ageing Spencer Clinic and the

commencement of master planning activities; \$10 million towards the NWRH for replacement of heating, cooling and ventilation systems in the day surgery, operating theatres and ICUs; and \$21.3 million towards completion of 27 new mental health beds across the Peacock and St Johns Park sites, including \$7.5 million for the St Johns Park Eating Disorder Centre.

An amount of \$20 million has also been allocated to commence stage 2 of the Kingston Health Centre and Kings Meadows Community Centre; and \$17.3 million towards the construction of new ambulance stations and training facilities to be located at Glenorchy and Burnie.

The Department of Health is delivering a significant program of works and notwithstanding the high demand for contractors and materials, we have continued to deliver significant projects over the last financial year, completing the refurbishment of Royal Hobart Hospital Ward 6A for the trauma and acute surgical unit; New Norfolk Hospital nurse corps and body protection; Campbell Town nurses' accommodation refurbishment; refurbishment of Ward 3 at the LGH; refurbishment of Royal Hobart Hospital Ward 3A for the rapid assessment medical unit; New Norfolk Hospital hydraulic upgrades; Central Highlands Community Health Centre hydraulic upgrade; digital dentist clinical upgrades in Launceston and Hobart; MCH critical infrastructure upgrades; and at the LGH acute medical unit, delivery of nine negative pressure rooms.

We also have a number of projects currently under construction which include the Royal Hobart Hospital ICU expansion which is scheduled for completion in January 2023; A Block endoscopy suite which is scheduled for completion in March 2023; J Block cardiology unit and medical ward scheduled for completion this year in October; and stage 1 emergency department expansion which has delivered 28 additional treatment points scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

**Time expired.**

**Matter noted.**

## **MOTION**

### **Joint Sessional Gender and Equality Committee - Consideration of Message from the Legislative Council**

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

- (1) That the resolution of the Legislative Council be agreed to.
- (2) Tuesday, 13 September next at 1.15 p.m. be the time and Committee Room 1 be the place, for holding the first meeting of the said committee; and
- (3) the members to serve on the part of the House be the Leader of the House, Mrs Alexander, Ms O'Byrne and Dr Woodruff.

This was the agreed membership when it was set up as a sessional committee last time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE (STATE ACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 63)**

### **Second Reading**

**Resumed from 16 August 2022 (page 110).**

[11.59 a.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, it is very important that action is taken to limit the impacts of climate change on our environment, society and economy. We have a responsibility to develop a comprehensive understanding of how our changing climate will affect Tasmania, our communities and our regions and to develop climate adaptation strategies.

Successful adaptation of climate change is proactive, inclusive, and well-communicated to ensure long-term success. We need to change the way we do business, planning and the construction of infrastructure. We need to build resilient communities and take the pressure off our ecosystem and all of this must be done in a way that monitors and evaluates progress in a publicly accountable way.

Tasmania has a proud reputation as a renewable energy powerhouse but there is more that needs to be done to decarbonise the economy and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on our environment.

**Debate adjourned.**

### **MOTION**

#### **Select Committee - Private Rental Market - Motion Negatived**

[12.00 p.m.]

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

That -

- (1) A select committee be appointed, with power to send for persons and papers and records to inquire into and report upon the current private rental market in Tasmania, including:
  - (a) supply and demand challenges;
  - (b) mechanisms to support Tasmanians experiencing housing stress in or attempting to enter the private rental market;

- (c) any necessary reform of, or amendments to, the Residential Tenancy Act;
  - (d) personal experiences that could inform consideration of any of the above; and
  - (e) other matters incidental thereto.
- (2) The Members to serve on the Committee be:
- (a) two from the Government, nominated by the Leader of the House;
  - (b) one from the Opposition, nominated by the Leader of the Opposition;
  - (c) one from the Tasmanian Greens, nominated by the Leader of the Greens; and
  - (d) the Mover.
- (3) The Committee report by 30 April 2023.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I indicate that I will be requiring a vote.

There is an overwhelming need for the select committee that I propose today. As housing researcher Professor Peter Phibbs said just last month in describing Tasmania's housing market as dysfunctional, 'You can't run a society where people can't move to a place to be a teacher or a doctor because they can't get a house'. That is where we are at now. When the private rental market falls over, the knock-on effect reverberates around all aspects of our life.

As members of parliament, it is our duty to act when we see dysfunction in society. Without an affordable and accessible private rental market there cannot be a functional housing sector. We need this committee to give us some clear pathways out of this mess. That is what the people of Tasmania expect. It is not just a job for the minister and the Government, it is the responsibility of all of us here elected to the parliament.

Describing aspects of our civil life as being in crisis is certainly getting a run at the moment. That is because it is a fact. The provision of even basic health, education and housing services, for example, are arguably at their most perilous since the end of the Second World War.

How did it get to this? We live in a prosperous country and it is hard not to get the feeling that our generation has blown it, that we are handing to our children and grandchildren a society in worse condition than when we received it.

I am not here today to solve all the world's problems but hopefully to make just a start on one - the residential rental crisis. As I have said, fix that and you will go a long way to fixing the rest of society, because affordable housing underpins everything we do. What I propose here, and seek your support for, is a committee of this House that looks specifically and closely

into the private rental market in Tasmania, which can only and legitimately be described as in crisis, a serious crisis.

The electoral offices of all members here no doubt have, like mine, been inundated with the most heart-wrenching tales from ordinary Tasmanians falling foul of an out-of-control private rental market. Spiralling private rents are forcing families onto social housing waiting lists where many languish for years.

Make no mistake, it is not just a problem for those on welfare or low incomes. This is also a problem for many tenants who would normally be thought of as quite comfortably off because they too are being priced out of the market and struggling to find a home when vacancies rates are at a record low.

While the state Budget did make investments in social housing, it unfortunately did not sufficiently prioritise ways to get private rentals under some sort of control. It could have included common sense measures like limiting short stay accommodation to rooms in the owner's principal place of residence, or an empty house tax to incentivise property house owners to either sell or rent their empty homes. This is an initiative that has been adopted in cities as diverse as Vancouver and Melbourne where homes left empty for more than six months without a reasonable excuse are charged one per cent of the value of the property.

The Tenants' Union recently released data that identified that 192 residential properties across Hobart City Council municipality at a high chance of vacancy, 115 in neighbouring Glenorchy City Council and 256 in Launceston City Council. That is 563 residential properties that sit empty during a housing crisis. By extrapolation, there are around 2000 Tasmanian homes empty right now.

I quote these figures at every chance I get but it is important to remind us that within our grasp we have the ability to put roofs over Tasmanians' heads. It is not all too hard. If these were released to the rental market, some of the demand would be soaked up and pressure on rents would be eased. The Government does not see it. Instead we have housing initiatives that are in the Budget that are doomed to failure.

Chief of these is the first home owners grant, which simply is economic stupidity, piling mistake on mistake by extending the \$30 000 grant for another year. As any economist would tell you, these types of incentives do little more than inflate property prices by the amount of the grant. In other words, such schemes make housing less accessible, not more - the exact opposite of an affordable housing strategy. Higher property prices force more people into the rental market which pushes up rents, and we are on repeat again.

As respected Tasmanian economist Saul Eslake said recently:

First home buyer incentives do nothing to increase the home ownership rate but inflate the price of existing houses and end up in the pocket of either vendors or the profit margins of builders and land developers.

More people are price-saver private rentals and the social housing waiting list just grows and grows.

What really gets on my goat is that while governments of all persuasions dangle carrots for first home owners, it rubs salt into the wounds of private renters who would love nothing more than to be a first home owner but who simply cannot afford to save up for that deposit because of the astronomical amount of rent they are paying, because of demand and supply issues in the private rental market, and because of Government policies. It makes me want to scream.

We have all be overwhelmed by desperate people grappling with soaring rentals. I am constantly hearing from people who cannot keep up because the cost of private rental has sky-rocketed. People live in fear of rent increases that are coming in the hundreds of dollars. I hear from people where rent takes so much of their income, there is nothing left at the end of the week to save for a house deposit, let alone anything else like food, electricity, fuel or medication. Families that we would otherwise consider middle class are now trapped in poverty. Nothing in life is more heartbreaking than listening to those who are sleeping rough, couch surfing or being shifted from shelter to shelter because a private rental is just a pipe dream. There is seemingly no prospect of a home from Housing Tasmania.

The ripple effect of homelessness cannot be understated. Someone who is homeless is more likely to have poor health. Someone who is homeless is less likely to engage in education and training. Someone who is homeless is more likely to be caught in the criminal justice system. This is all taxpayers' resources, something that is avoidable.

We desperately need a private rental market that provides an affordable housing option for all families. Currently the Government has failed here. This committee is desperately needed to give parliament a direction to beat this problem.

Let me add a bit more statistical background from the 2021 census which further supports the need for this committee. In the five years since the 2016 census, the Tasmanian population grew by 9.3 per cent while the number of private dwellings increased by only seven per cent. To exacerbate matters, the number of households renting increased from 52 000 to 58 000, an increase of 11 per cent.

A stark contrast is a cost for housing between owners with a mortgage and tenants. In many areas now it is far more affordable to have a mortgage, even with interest rates on the rise, than it is to rent. The Tenants' Union collects data on rent increases. It is worth reading into *Hansard* the comparisons between March 2017 and March 2022 because it gives an indication of the scale of the crisis. As I read these figures out, I ask members to keep in mind that many Tasmanians are living on Centrelink payments.

The weighted median rent for three-bedroom properties in Tasmanian regions between March 2017 and March 2022: Greater Burnie, March 2017, \$255 increased \$350 in 2022, an increase of 37 per cent; Central Coast, \$280 up to \$400 a week, 42 per cent increase; Greater Devonport, \$270 up to \$363, a 34 per cent increase; rural north-west, \$263 up to \$350 a week, a 33 per cent increase; west coast, \$170 up to \$255 per week, a 50 per cent increase; Inner Launceston, \$328 up to \$470 a week, a 43 per cent increase, Outer Launceston, \$300 up to \$425, a 41 per cent increase; north-east, \$220 up to \$350 a week, a 59 per cent increase. The poor people in the central north, \$278 in 2017 up to \$450 in 2020, a 61 per cent increase. Central south, \$270 up to \$420, a 55 per cent increase; south-east, \$328 up to \$470, a 43 per cent increase; Eastern Shore, \$330, up to \$518 a week in 2022, 56 per cent increase; Hobart city, \$450 a week up to \$600 a week, a 33 per cent increase; Kingston area, \$380 up to \$540,

a 42 per cent increase; Glenorchy city, \$330 up to \$495 a week, a 50 per cent increase, far south, \$293 up to \$420 a week, a 43 per cent increase. The Tasmanian average in March 2017 was \$300 a week. In March 2022, it was \$450. That is a 50 per cent increase.

As we near the end of 2022 I guarantee that weekly rents are even higher now. It is no wonder that housing stress is more prevalent in rental households than in mortgaged households. Of households renting in Tasmania, 34.2 per cent pay more than 30 per cent of their income in rent whereas only 10.1 per cent of households with a mortgage pay more than 30 per cent towards their mortgage.

What is the outcome of skyrocketing rents? Skyrocketing demand for social housing. The waiting social housing list, as we know, has blown out from 2310 applicants in 2012-13 to 4453 in June 2022. That is a 92 per cent increase in nine years.

The Government's main focus is to see 10 000 new homes built over the next 10 years. Laudable as far as it goes but I can only agree with the TasCOSS CEO who points out we are not able to get those homes on the ground quickly enough so much more needs to be done to make sure we get people housed.

Affordability is only one aspect of the crisis in private rental that this committee can inquire into. I am sure that if we went around this Chamber every member of this House could speak of constituents who have come to them in desperate and worrying situations with their private rental.

People tell me they are living in substandard conditions because they are too frightened to ask their landlords to fix something because they are worried it might prompt a rent increase or at the end of their lease they will be asked to leave and they will struggle to find somewhere else. I constantly hear of people trying to justify to themselves, living in the most appalling situations and conditions, that that is better than having no roof over their heads.

This is Tasmania, not a third world country. We must do better. Disturbingly, I have been hearing about people in our multicultural community who have been subjected to intimidation and harassment from their landlords because of their ethnicity. While this contravenes so many laws including a tenant's right to quiet enjoyment to their property, these families are too frightened to speak out. They say they put up with racial harassment because it is better than being homeless.

Not good enough. The market is so competitive. If you leave or lose your existing rental property, finding another is damn near impossible. We have all heard of 50 plus tenants rocking up to an open home, all desperately seeking to be a successful applicant. This committee, if established, could look at how we protect these very vulnerable Tasmanians. How can we strengthen our residential tenancy laws so tenants can have the basic human right to housing without having to compromise on third world conditions or being subjected to disgusting acts of racism? This is where the select committee can make its contribution: it can ask the tough questions and get the answers to find, as its terms of references requires, reports on mechanisms to support Tasmanians experiencing housing stress and attempting to enter the private rental market.

There should be no doubt in any of our minds that the private rental market is in crisis. We must act now to fix it. I am sure, in other members' contributions here today, they could

also give examples of people they have spoken to. I am also aware that a number of my colleagues here have been calling for a review of the Residential Tenancy Act. This is a committee which would make a very good start and help inform where there are gaps, with experiences of ordinary Tasmanians. Every day that we delay, is another day on a freezing park bench or the backseat of a car, or someone worrying about their housing security for a fellow Tasmanian.

Of course, there is no silver bullet; no one bright idea that suddenly makes private rentals more affordable and accessible. That is what makes the committee's work so important and necessary. We can come up with a strategy to get on top of this problem and that is a lot more than we have right now.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the motion to the house.

[12.16 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** (Clark - Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this motion because nobody seemed too keen to jump which I am quite surprised about.

**Ms O'Connor** - I was waiting for you, Attorney-General.

**Ms ARCHER** - No. I would have liked to have heard from members of the House. I do not have to go next. There is certainly no order.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms ARCHER** - They are laughing at a very serious matter.

I speak on this motion on behalf of the Government and I will state from the outset that we will not be supporting this motion. This is not because we do not believe Tasmanians are doing it tough at the moment because they are. I acknowledge that.

It is because I am a little disappointed that a motion such as this is put forward that does not address an issue and provide for immediate action, which is what the Government is doing. It is not a time to political wedge on serious issues such as this. We are about real solutions to address very complex and difficult problems. There is no one silver bullet to fix this issue. I think members will at least acknowledge that.

We do not need another parliamentary inquiry that will drag on for another 12 months to know what many Tasmanian households are experiencing at the moment: that is that they are doing it tough. We know there are significant global and other issues, especially related to the pandemic, which is why we remain committed to reducing the cost of living for all Tasmanians.

Our Government is absolutely committed to taking action on housing and homelessness. We have a strong and ambitious plan investing in a record \$1.5 billion housing package to deliver more than 10 000 new and social affordable homes in the next decade. We are also committed to improving the supply and affordability of housing.

The cornerstone of our plan is creating a new housing authority to build those houses: ensuring it can be more responsive, agile and address some of the barriers currently being experienced to getting houses built quickly. The new authority will also deliver the most cohesive approach to homelessness and housing services in the country. This is taking action now.

As Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs minister, I also continue to support both landlords and tenants by striking a fair balance for both parties under the Residential Tenancy Act 1997. That is what we are about: striking that balance. It cannot be weighted in favour of one party or the other. It is a difficult balance to reach at times.

Our Government has stood shoulder to shoulder with tenants and landlords during the significant challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. I appreciated the stakeholder input during that period and the significant support we received from the Tenants' Union of Tasmania. I look forward to continuing the relationship with them on these issues.

I am very proud that we were the first jurisdiction to legislate significant protections for tenants as the risks of COVID-19 became known in March 2020 and to have provided one of the most generous financial support packages for tenants and landlords. During the pandemic our Government took swift action to manage the impact the pandemic had on our businesses, our community and our economy. Key amendments that were made at the time to protect tenants and landlords included but were not limited to preventing residential rental evictions, protecting residential tenants experiencing hardship from a loss of income as a result of COVID-19, limiting property inspections and certain repairs from taking place to support social distancing and introducing rent reductions and a freeze on rent increases for commercial tenancies. I am immensely proud that we kept Tasmanians safe and in their homes during the pandemic.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic our Government provided one of the most generous assistance packages to the private rental market to support both landlords and tenants with hardship caused by the pandemic. Indeed, we provided a total of more than \$4.356 million to tenants and landlords out of the specially created COVID-19 fund, namely the Rent Relief Fund for tenants and the COVID-19 Landlord Support Fund. In this year's Budget our Government invested \$538 million into social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, with \$204 million for this financial year alone. This is in addition to the 1105 social housing and supported accommodation properties that have already been built by our Government since 2015. Tasmania's new housing authority, Homes Tasmania, will be tasked with building and acquiring these homes, as well as partnering with other community housing partner organisations to increase supply and deliver more affordable homes than ever before.

Our Government also wants to make it easier to get into the housing market, which will in turn reduce the reliance on renting for those wishing to purchase their own home, which is why we extended the \$30 000 First Home Owner Grant until 30 June next year. We also continue to underpin the Ancillary Dwelling Grant Program with \$2.5 million to the program to add 250 new homes to the rental stock.

Our Government has increased the property value threshold for stamp duty concessions to \$600 000 to reflect increases in property prices and ensure assistance is available to those entering the market. We are expanding access to safe and affordable credit to cover rental bonds and initial rental payments through the No Interest Loans Scheme, and we are also

helping Tasmanians on lower incomes to buy their own home with enhancements to our shared equity program which reduces the deposit needed for a home loan to only 2 per cent.

As I have said, our Government continues to support both tenants and landlords by striking a fair balance to both parties under the Residential Tenancy Act. For the benefit of members I would like to outline the existing protections regarding rent increases in the act, which are namely -

**Ms O'Connor** - Which do nothing for tenants.

**Ms ARCHER** - Ms O'Connor, I will sit in silence while you make your contribution. I would like to get on this record.

**Ms O'Connor** - It frustrates me when you pretend something positive is happening. Talk to more tenants.

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

**Ms ARCHER** - There were a lot of unfair allegations made by Ms Johnston that our Government was doing nothing in this space, which is so contrary to the truth. The existing protections under the Residential Tenancy Act are namely that a rent increase must be given in writing with a minimum of 60 days' notice before it is to take effect; rent can only be increased once in a 12-month period; and a tenant who considers that a rent increase is unreasonable can apply to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner for an order declaring the rent increase unreasonable.

**Ms O'Connor** - How many times has the commissioner found that?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms ARCHER** - I will run through a few of those statistics shortly. If a tenant believes a rent increase is too high they can apply to the commissioner to determine if the increase is unreasonable, and the commissioner may in turn order the increase is unreasonable and prevent it entirely, or determine it is partially unreasonable and reduce the value of the increase. In many cases in the 2021-22 financial year the commissioner reduced the amount of the increase committed. In that financial year the Residential Tenancy Commissioner received 36 applications for unreasonable rent increases, an increase on the previous two years where the COVID-19 protections were put in place by our Government preventing rent increases, but is consistent with the 2018-19 financial year in which 33 applications were received.

Of the applications I referred to, two were found to be reasonable, six were found to be unreasonable, 19 were found to be partially unreasonable, one related to an invalid increase during the COVID-19 emergency period, six were withdrawn or lodged outside the prescribed time, two remain under assessment and two of the outcomes have been appealed, one of which has been discontinued. I urge any tenant who believes a rent increase to be unreasonable to apply to the commissioner.

**Ms O'Connor** - They're too scared of being evicted.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Ms O'Connor. Please let the minister be heard in silence.

**Ms ARCHER** - They have every right and should take that action, Ms O'Connor; the protection is there. Then they will complain that there is no time left to debate because they have been interjecting, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The protection is there to be used by tenants and they should feel able to use it. Tasmania was also the first state to introduce minimum standards for rental properties, a fact lost on many in this House, and these became a model for other jurisdictions. The minimum standards amendments were the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders.

The Residential Tenancy Act's introduction of minimum standards for rental properties, together with an increase to the commissioner's powers to consider unreasonable rent increase applications and applications for orders for repairs, continues to ensure constant compliance-based activities. Minimum standards for rental properties include that a home must be weatherproof and structurally sound, not subject to significant dampness and must contain an electric heater or a gas heater as a fixture.

The commissioner's office investigates complaints to establish breaches of the legislation and facilitates resolution between parties where necessary and possible. The Office of the Residential Tenancy Commissioner investigated 104 complaints in the 2021-22 financial year resulting in 43 compliance actions and 11 penalties; 58 per cent of these complaints related to repairs, 23 per cent for non-lodgement of bonds and 13 per cent to quiet enjoyment or rights of entry. Our Government continues to support both landlords and tenants with a clear mechanism to resolve disputes.

I would like to address progress on further reforms of the Residential Tenancy Act now that I have set the scene in terms of what is currently available under the act. Our Government remains committed to further improvements to residential tenancy legislation, including forms of tenancy not covered by the Residential Tenancy Act. We continue to work with and listen to stakeholders, including Shelter Tasmania. Communities Tasmania and the Tenants Union of Tasmania. That is why I have recently announced that our Government will consider amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act such as introducing pet bonds. It is something I am looking at at the moment and looking at what other jurisdictions' models are.

We can keep the costs of that down. This is about striking the right balance in terms of insuring that the few tenants who might abuse that special privilege of having a pet do not cause damage to a property. All members acknowledge and have seen reports in newspapers of late that that can be a problem for landlords as well, so we need to look at these things carefully and consult with stakeholders.

Our Government recognises how important it is for people to have their pets. I understand that some tenants also rely, as we all do, on the comfort, interaction and companionship of our pets for mental health and wellbeing not least of all. With the owner's approval, Tasmanian tenants at the moment are able to have their pets in residential properties and many pleasingly do. I have asked my department to consider how we can best achieve this, including any potential amendments to the act, so that we can strike the right balance between landlords' and tenants' rights.

Importantly, this work will not be done in 12 months, which is probably what another inquiry might recommend. It is being done now. Our Government listens to Tasmanians and

will consult, as I do with all my legislative reform, to allow all Tasmanians, should they wish, to have their say on this very important matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, our Government also invests more than \$33 million in specialist homelessness services each year. We will also look at tenancy agreements for a duration greater than three months for homeless people or those escaping family violence. Due to COVID-19, further amendments were put on hold to prioritise keeping Tasmanians in their homes.

As part of any review into the Residential Tenancy Act, our Government will consider modernising the definition of 'tenancy' to include other forms of tenancies and introduce subletting provisions. I know that that is a significant problem from the feedback I have received. We will also consider providing altered rental payment options where rental property damage is due to events outside the control of the tenants or the landlord. Amendments would provide further protections to group homes and specialist supported accommodation, including specialist disability accommodation under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and also things such as an expansion of the exemption from holding an occupational licence for property managers of social housing properties or residential premises subject to a specialist disability accommodation management agreement. Again, any changes to the Residential Tenancy Act will be informed by our stakeholders and consultation with the Tasmanian community.

In summary, our Government is taking steps at the moment to further protect and support Tasmanian renters. As I said, we are providing \$1.5 billion to improve the supply of affordable housing for the next 10 years. That is a strategy, that is a plan. We are providing support to Tasmanians looking to enter the property market and delivering targeted economic and social support to Tasmanian renters. We have listened to Tasmanian pet owners and will ensure that more pet-friendly properties become available. We are investing in specialist homelessness services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this motion calling on a parliamentary inquiry is another unnecessary attempt for another talkfest when we are taking action on these matters. I would prefer that members support the Government's action that is happening now and vote with the Government when we bring amendments to the act before the House and not stand in our way, but I fear that these matters will keep being politicised.

This motion will not help any Tasmanian into a home right now. Instead, the Government is taking immediate action to address these very complex issues, as I have set out in my contribution, and accordingly the Government will not support the motion.

[12.33 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank my colleague, Ms Johnston, for bringing on this motion. We will be supporting this inquiry because we do not think action to enable more people to have a home, let alone an affordable one, and a parliamentary inquiry that examines why rents are soaring and what we can do about it, are mutually exclusive. It should be possible for parliament to do both.

I was reminded, when the Attorney-General was talking about striking the right balance, of the notorious Cabinet minute we had in this place back in late 2020 where it was revealed that the Government, in response to the Gregory Parsons case which came before the Supreme Court, had a secret plan to remove the need for evictions from rental properties to be genuine

or just. This is a government that not more than two years ago was prepared to weaken tenancy protections, and we had a minister in this place prepared to mislead the House, even though a Cabinet minute made it really clear that that was the plan.

Ms Johnston laid out the rationale for moving for this inquiry, but every member in this place has had constituents contact their office in stress or in tears because their rent increases are unjustifiable and financially unsustainable.

I listened with great interest to the numbers put forward by the Attorney-General - 36 applications from tenants to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner seeking an examination of their rent increase. Just 36 people.

Why is it that so few tenants are approaching the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to seek some justice or relief? Fundamentally, it is because they are afraid of losing their tenancy. If they go to the commissioner, having been notified of a rent increase, and whichever way the commissioner finds, their landlord will know they have done that. Because you can evict people in this state simply because their lease has expired, that makes tenants fearful.

The balance is not right. The balance is weighted towards landlords and against tenants. We have tried in this place a number of times to get parliament to take the issue of soaring, unjustifiable rent increases seriously. I am convinced we have a housing and homelessness crisis as a result of Government policy and inaction.

Last year, we brought forward the Residential Tenancy (Rent Control) Amendment Bill 2021. It was not some novel idea. It sought to put in place a similar system here to what they have in the Australian Capital Territory, which is that landlords have to make the case for a rent increase that goes up more than the consumer price index plus 10 per cent. It is a fair system. It has placed some downward pressure on rents in the Australian Capital Territory. It works. Yet, in this place, both the Liberal and Labor parties voted against our legislation and then proceeded to do absolutely nothing to rein in rents.

We know that rents right now in Tasmania, whether it is in a capital city, a major centre or a regional centre, are soaring and are crushing tenants. Rents are crushing individuals and families in the private rental market. I remember Dr Broad laying out some information late last year about people who are leaving the island. We have net migration now. Some of that will be because Tasmanians cannot afford to rent on their own island. Tasmanians are being priced out of their own paradise. The Government is actively working against reining in rents. The Government is actively suppressing wages while inflation inexorably creeps up.

We want to see reform in this area. I remind the Attorney-General of an example that was written in the *Mercury* newspaper in March last year by Ben Bartl from the Tenants' Union where he retells the story that was in the *Mercury* of a 63-year-old woman who had lived in her West Hobart home for 15 years and received a 70 per cent rent increase notice. The Residential Tenancy Commissioner found it was a reasonable increase in rent. Remember that the Residential Tenancy Commissioner will look at market rents. What is the rest of the market doing? The rest of the market is overheating and rents are increasing. When a landlord goes to a tenant and says you are going to pay an extra \$100 a week on your rent a month from now, because that pressure is happening across that region, the Residential Tenancy Commissioner in all likelihood will say, look at what the market is doing and that rent increase is reasonable.

The Residential Tenancy Commissioner has stated to tenants:

The Act does not require or enable me to regulate the market simply to assess rents in line with what the market is currently achieving.

It is an ineffective system. It does not encourage tenants to come forward because tenants are so fearful of losing their tenancy.

We tried with our Residential Tenancy (Rent Control) Amendment Bill 2021 to get this parliament to take seriously the need to place some downward pressure on rents. We tried it in the previous parliament with a notice of motion in support of a fairer rent-setting system and more rights for tenants. Again, voted down. Liberal, Labor parties and your predecessor in the Chair, Mr Deputy Speaker, the current Glenorchy alderman, Sue Hickey.

We have tried. We have also tried to get this Government to take seriously the need to rein in short stay accommodation. Information provided to us by the Tenants' Union states that in June 2022 a major report was released titled 'Monitoring the Impact of Short-Term Rentals on Tasmanian Housing Markets'. The report found 47 per cent of short-term rental properties also had a rental history from the long-term rental market and that the density of Air BNB in greater Hobart is, 'almost seven times greater than Sydney and about four-and-a-half times greater than Melbourne'. The report states:

In greater Hobart with a private rental market of about 19 500 dwellings, to move from a vacancy rate of two per cent where rent rises are manageable to one per cent, where rent rises are likely to be double digit, would only need the withdrawal of 195 properties from the private rental market.

That is 0.2 per cent of the total dwellings in greater Hobart. In other words there is a very strong correlation between the more than 480 whole properties now listed with Hobart City Council as short-stay visitor accommodation and significant rental increases.

Last year in July, the deputy mayor of Launceston City Council told the *Sunday Examiner*:

We are calling on the state Government to help us out in this space. There is not enough regulation. There is simply not enough control and we find ourselves in these situations time and time again.

The Bicheno Community Development Association president, Tony McLeod, said:

We see every other week a house gets sold where a family used to live and straight away an investor has bought it and it goes onto the short-term market.

Every time that happens, a Tasmanian family misses out on a home. The Government refuses to take on private enterprise - absolutely refuses - and then pretends through changes to land tax that their gift to the property class will somehow bring downward pressure on rents, which as we know is demonstrably bollocks. The state Government announced in February 2022 that it was taking:

Further action to ease the cost of living for Tasmania families and put downward pressure on rents.

They did this by reducing land tax for 70 000 Tasmanians who saved, on average, \$800 each year up to a maximum of \$1625.

As far as the Tenants' Union is aware, no tenant has contacted the Tenants' Union to say that the cut to land tax led to lower rents, because it has not and it will not. That was a lie. It is one thing to come into this place with legislation and mislead about its intent and effect but it is quite another to give false hope to the tenants of Tasmania who are struggling with rents that they simply cannot afford.

In closing, because I am sure Labor's Ms Haddad wants to speak on this, and I hope Labor gives its support, we now have a bill on the table, the Residential Tenancy (Rental Market Reform) Amendment Bill 2021. It sets an ACT-modelled system of fairer rents. It establishes energy efficiency standards for rental properties, with replacement of white goods and the like. It ends no cause evictions which cause such stress and trauma, and do contribute towards housing insecurity and homelessness. It allows for pets. It creates a system where the landlord will have to give cause for not allowing a pet into a home.

I know that the Attorney General has a very weighty legislative responsibility; I get that, but it is not acceptable - Ms Johnston laid out the data. We know the scale of the rent increases. We know how scared tenants are. The minister's data on the Residential Tenancy Commissioner of just 36 people coming to get some relief from their rents should tell her that we know that the system is under enormous stress. We know that it is possible to make these reforms without further delay. You do not need to extensively consult on simply making life fairer and less stressful for tenants.

I might just note in passing, after I was on ABC Radio the other morning talking about our proposed Residential Tenancy Act reforms, I got a most peculiar - I can only describe it as a rant - from Mr Mark Berry at the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania, who accused us of being childish and uninformed because we are simply trying to reset the balance a bit in favour of tenants. I do not think that the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania, through that sort of action, is effectively representing landlords. I know people who are landlords, and overwhelmingly they are fair-minded people. I think most landlords would rather have a happy tenant who has their pet there, who is paying their rent on time and looking after the place. I encourage Mr Berry to get a grip and spend less time talking to the propertied class and more time out in the community, talking to everyday Tasmanians, not just low-income earners, as Ms Johnston said, low to modest income earners who are stressed in this private rental market. They know the system is stacked against them. It does the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania no credit at all to so overtly want to move against the interests of tenants, knowing that some of them are the most marginalised and vulnerable Tasmanians.

I do encourage members to support this inquiry. It is one step we can take to start dealing with the rental affordability crisis.

[12.48 p.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will speak briefly because I know there are other speakers and I imagine that the mover would like some time to sum up on the motion as well.

I have spoken many times about the housing crisis in this place and in the public, so I do not propose to go over the same ground that I have done before, other than to recognise that it is a major crisis of our time, and one that is worsening by the month. We see figures increase month on month when it comes to the Government's social and government housing waitlist and wait time and shelter turnaways. Everything in the government and community services provided housing sector is becoming increasingly pressured, to the point where staff working in that sector are almost giving up hope because of how disheartening it is when they just cannot do what they know they want and need to do to assist their clients.

Similarly, when we see national and state data released on figures in the private sector market, things are going in the wrong direction there too - certainly, if you are someone trying to get into the private rental or sale market. Private sale prices are going through the roof, and with increased astronomical levels in the last two years; around 50 per cent a year, to the point where houses are selling for sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars above the top asking price. Similarly, private rents are increasing to unaffordable levels. CoreLogic data released just recently shows that the median rent in Hobart alone is now \$549, which represents an annual increase in just one year of around \$25000 on average. Those pressures are being felt right around the state.

We often talk about the fact that pressure in the private rental market puts increased pressure on the social housing register, and that is true. Some of those families who are priced out of the private rental market will end up on the social housing register where they will wait an average of 68 weeks to be housed, along with around 4500 other families who are waiting on that list.

However, some people who are being squeezed out of the private rental market do not qualify for social or government housing. They are not eligible to be added to that list at all. Those people are working people. Sometimes they are working people with two incomes and families to feed but they simply cannot afford the huge increases in private rents. It is affecting people in every demographic and in every part of the state. These are the people who we talk about who are genuinely making the choice between turning their heater on at night or buying food and groceries to feed the family, or choosing to buy fuel for their car or medications that they need.

I had a text message from a friend of mine just this morning - two working people, two incomes in that family. She said she has just bought new Ugg boots for the winter because she knows she is not going to be able to turn on her heater this winter. It is affecting everyone.

The minister alluded to the fact that there was already a parliamentary inquiry, and there was. I want to pay tribute to my former colleague, Alison Standen, who chaired that committee in 2020. It is an easy out to say that this work has already been done by the parliament but that is not my view. We will be supporting the motion to establish this committee today, partly because that previous committee's work focused predominantly on public and social housing and the proposal for this committee is to focus on the private rental market.

While the 2020 report feels like a recent memory, things have changed so dramatically in those short two-and-a-bit years it means that a second committee is warranted. It is very dismissive of the Government to suggest that it would be a talkfest or a waste of time. That is very dismissive, not just to the idea of running this committee but it is actually dismissive of the work of parliament. Committees, select committees and standing committees are a

fundamental pillar of the way that our parliament works and the work of those committees should be respected. That said, the then housing minister in a revolving door of housing ministers that this Government has churned out, Roger Jaensch, completely dismissed it when this report was tabled. He completely dismissed the many recommendations that were put forward by the committee, those parliamentarians who worked on it, including government members but also all the people who spoke to that committee.

I had hoped to move to amendments but I am not going to because I know we are going to run out of time. I might just put one on the record for consideration by the mover. I was going to insert a new subclause (2) which would be that the committee should have regard to the report produced by the House of Assembly Select Committee on Housing Affordability in 2020 because there are recommendations - that I will not go through - around things like the review of the Residential Tenancy Act that we have been calling on for some time, and the regulation of the short-stay market. Those things are recommendations from that report but they are also things that Labor continues to call for.

I will conclude my comments there so there is time for others.

[12.54 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will be brief as I understand that the mover wants to sum up. I think that is important given the Government's points.

Other members have put on the record the statistics, the data and the real world that renters in Tasmania are facing. The impact it is having, not only on those with the least ability to have any sort of leverage in a rental market is absolutely profound and it is also having a massive impact on the broader economy in attracting staff to Tasmania, in attracting people to move down here. It is very difficult for them to find a rental property to commence a base of creating a better life in Tasmania.

Those with the least capacity in a rental market are feeling the brunt of it, but it really does impact a whole section of our communities which I think in some areas is not fully understood. The impacts are absolutely profound and will echo through people's lives. As a young man living interstate and having to couch-surf for a period of time in between a couple of rentals, I know exactly the kind of decisions you have to make. I was very lucky; I had a good friendship group that could hold up, there was a share house that fell through, and then we had to line up the next accommodation, so I know the kind of things that flash through your mind about where you going to put your stuff, how are you going to turn up to jobs, how are you going to turn up to university, or how are you going to get on with the next day. These are significant decisions.

The member who just resumed her seat referred to the work of the former member for Franklin, Alison Standen. That work and that report was substantial and it is important that is also referred to and not forgotten. It was a body of work that could assist in dealing with the current crisis we are in.

There is no doubt that the minister has outlined the things they are doing, and they are doing something. I do not think anyone is denying that or saying that you are just sitting on your hands. There is an acknowledgement you are doing things, but the problem is that it is

not working, and it is actually getting worse. The trajectory and the arc of the problem is not heading towards resolution; it is heading toward further crisis and that is the problem.

This is not an ebb and flow of a market. This is not something we can soak up and say, 'Well, it's just a moment in time, things will sort themselves out and we can take some small measures to alleviate some of the pressures on the fringes'. This is now a crisis of proportions in rentals that we have not seen for over a generation. It is not just in the capital city or the urban areas. It is across the state.

I support the creation of this committee because it is important that people are able to provide input into government policy and produce work and recommendations that will be of substance. I have not had any conversation with the independent member for Clark about the membership but I have not been offered a role on it. I get that, but it is a bit disappointing because I have been talking a lot about housing over the last six to 12 months. It is a key issue for people in my electorate and I would have liked to have had the opportunity to be on the committee but that is what it is.

In saying that, and allowing the member time to sum up, I formally put on the record that I will be supporting the creation of this select committee.

[12.58 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, in the short time I have left, I thank the Opposition, the Greens and the independent member for Franklin for their support of this motion, and will address some of the issues raised by the Attorney-General.

Attorney-General, this is not intended to be a political wedge. The complete opposite in fact: it is a collaborative approach to deal with a very real problem that many Tasmanians are facing at the moment. It is meant to build on the work of the committee from 2020 and the report there recognising that substantially life for renters has changed. Since that time we have had a pandemic and the situation has got exponentially worse. It was meant to be a collaborative way of getting some evidence to inform what is the best practice and the best reforms and policy we could possibly make as a parliament to make sure that Tasmanians are protected and have the most basic of human rights to have a roof over their heads.

I raise the issue again that the Attorney-General indicated the number of complaints made to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner. From my experience, and I am sure most electorate offices' experiences, we have all suggested to people that they make complaints to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner, only be told, 'I am too frightened to do that, I will lose my home. It might not be now but it will be at the end of my lease'. I have heard that over and over again. I do not have an answer to that, because that is what will happen. If a landlord has an adverse finding, or even finds out that a tenant has complained about them, they are likely to say, 'This is more trouble than its worth. I can get far more money from the next lease. I can probably hike it up another \$100-odd and I will simply evict my tenant at the end of their lease'.

That is the reality for so many Tasmanians. We have Tasmanians at the moment living in private rentals who are petrified. They are nervous. They do not have security of tenure so they are worried. I hope the Government, if they cannot support this motion today, takes a hard look at the Greens' bill when it comes on.

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

**The House divided -**

**AYES 12**

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

**NOES 12**

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - There being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 167, I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Motion negatived.**

**Sitting suspended from 1.06 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Waiver of Private Government Members' Business**

**Mrs ALEXANDER** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 42 (e), I indicate that Government Private Members' Business is waived for this day's sitting.

**SITTING TIMES**

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That for this day's sitting the House shall not stand adjourned at 6 p.m. and that the House continue to sit past 6 p.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

**CLIMATE CHANGE (STATE ACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 63)**

**Second Reading**

**Resumed from page 32.**

[2.31 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I will continue from where I was interrupted before lunch.

Tasmania has a proud reputation as a renewable energy powerhouse but there is more that needs to be done to decarbonise the economy and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on our environment. Tasmania was reported to have first achieved net-zero emissions in 2013 and maintained that for six out of the next seven years but the most recent State and Territory Greenhouse Gas Inventories has revised this back by one year to 2014. Nonetheless, the Government's announcement has set a target to reach net-zero by 2030 is like saying you will set a target to complete your homework after you have already handed it in.

Tasmanians should be rightly proud that we have achieved such a milestone and it is disingenuous for the Liberal Government to pretend it is a new idea or achievement. There is no doubt there is still work that needs to be done and the review by Point Advisory that was provided to Government indicates that without further action to limit emissions we may not maintain our net-zero status.

The most recent example that demonstrates we cannot take our renewable energy status for granted was uncovered in last year's Estimates hearing when it was found Tasmania imported energy to meet our state's needs in that financial year.

One of the first iterations of the second reading speech for this bill had to be amended because it had incorrectly stated Tasmania was 100 per cent self-sufficient in electricity from renewable sources. Even today, that is still not the case, although it might be true at this very moment as Basslink is not operational.

The opportunity this parliament has is to update the Climate Change Act to set in legislation some clear parameters to reduce emissions and to show progress in order to sustain our net-zero target.

The Labor Party believes that the bill must provide greater detail about the plan for communities, industries, jobs and workers, as our state adapts to climate change and decarbonises the economy. Labor will be supporting this bill but I intend to move a number of amendments to improve the rigour of the bill and to ensure that the objectives of the act better reflect community expectations.

There is no doubt that the climate is changing and we are seeing that right now with the floods across wide parts of our state and the country. We see it with the growing number of extreme weather events that strike each year. We see it with the change to our natural environment and ecosystem. We see it in the way it impacts the most vulnerable in our community who struggle in extreme heat and extreme cold. We need to ensure we have a rigorous framework in place to support our community and industry transition.

Labor will be moving a number of amendments to the bill to strengthen it and achieve three key things:

- (1) protect those who are most vulnerable;
- (2) set out clear plans for a just transition for workers and communities; and

- (3) ensure there is an independent oversight to measure progress and to evaluate.

We need to ensure that the bill sets out appropriate actions for our state to address climate change that are in the best interests of our children and future generations.

It has taken the Government a long time to commence debate on this bill. There have been changes to ministers and at least three changes to the second reading speech that the parliament is aware of, including a notable change to the second paragraph of the second reading speech from the version first issued in Peter Gutwein's name where it said:

Compared to the 1990 baseline our emissions have reduced by 108.6 per cent, while our economy has more than doubled in size and over 60 000 jobs have been created.

To the version read by the minister upon debate commencing on this bill where it now says:

From 1990 to 2020, our net emissions reduced by 120.9 per cent, while our economy has nearly doubled in size and more than 50 000 jobs have been created.

That is a loss of 10 000 jobs across the economy in the time that it has taken Peter Gutwein to leave the ministry and the parliament. It is also a significant change in a figure quoted for the reduction in Tasmania's emissions. The significant discrepancy in figures is evidence of the need for independent oversight of climate policy to avoid any temptation for political interference in the interpretation and use of data.

It is worth remembering that following the 2016 review of the Climate Change Act, which recommended a number of changes be made to the act, the Government took until November 2021 to finally table the climate change amendment bill. Progress on the bill was further delayed because the then Gutwein Government did not leave adequate time in the parliamentary calendar for this important matter to be debated in the 2021 year.

More concerningly, at the time the Government had failed to take onboard a number of sensible suggestions that were put forward through the consultation process, including the AMA Tasmania submission to recognise the impact climate change has on people's health. In the Government's rush to make it look like they were doing something about climate change towards the end of 2021, they tabled a bill in the parliament just 10 days after the closing date for submissions on the draft bill. The Government cannot claim to be serious about listening to the views of the community on climate change, given there were over 60 written submissions on the draft bill. The fact the Government will be moving to amend its own bill is evidence of the poor process the Government undertook when pulling together the final bill.

Climate change is the biggest challenge facing our state and our planet, and the climate change amendment bill and all those who made submissions deserve to be treated with more respect by the Government.

I thank all the businesses, unions, research bodies, peak groups, community organisations, and department staff who provided feedback to me on this bill and on

improvements that could be made to strengthen it. I have appreciated the conversations and have gained a deeper understanding of the actions many are already taking to lower their greenhouse gas emissions. There is undoubtedly a universal commitment to do more to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, and a real urgency to progress changes that will make a difference sooner. It is a relief to see a Labor Government elected federally which has a clear aim and intention to act on climate change and support to progress legislation through the federal parliament to reduce Australia's emissions by 43 per cent by 2030.

One of the motivations for me early on in my involvement with the Labor Party was to see more urgent action taken to address climate change. I was inspired by the clear commitment given by the former prime minister Kevin Rudd and the Australian Labor Party in the lead up to the 2007 election to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, after the Howard government had refused to take any action for years. It was an international embarrassment, and locally, it left many of us with a feeling of despair. Prime minister Rudd's first official action in government was to sign the instrument of ratification and send it to the United Nations. Once again in 2022, it has taken a federal Labor Government to progress climate action through the parliament and to repair our reputation globally.

In Tasmania, we are uniquely positioned to lead the country when it comes to action on climate change, building on the work that generations before us have already undertaken. Tasmania's most recent greenhouse gas emissions inventory shows that for 2020, our net emissions were once again negative. We are at a distinct advantage to many other places because our energy comes primarily from renewable sources. The other significant shift in Tasmania has occurred due to changes in land use, land use change, and forestry sector, the LULUCF. The whole picture for Tasmania shows that emissions from non-LULUCF sources have remained essentially stable for the past 30 years. The challenge our state has is to lower the emissions profile for those non-LULUCF sectors. The latest inventory tells us that for 2020, Tasmania's carbon balance was made up in the following ways from the following sectors: 5 per cent waste, 34 per cent agriculture, 19 per cent industrial processes, 21 per cent transport; 21 per cent non-transport energy.

Our non-transport energy emissions are lower than anywhere else in the country due mostly to the state's hydroelectricity assets. These investments occurred generations ago and continue to benefit us today. Tasmanians renewable energy and brand reputation places it at the forefront for opportunities to capitalise on new investments in our state that leverage these benefits. However, one of the real opportunities for Tasmania is to make sure we can offer training and courses that align so that our young people can take advantage of these emerging industries.

For Tasmania to capitalise on the renewable energy we generate, we must invest in our people and their skills to help transform our industries and support the decarbonisation of the global economy. As an island that has been net zero for the majority of the past seven years, we have what the rest of the world wants and that will prove attractive for investment from industries and companies that want to lower their emissions' profile.

The greatest benefit for Tasmanians from our renewable energy is when we use it to create jobs here and not just export them offshore. There are many reasons for Tasmania to continue to invest in renewable energy opportunities. Primarily, investments like these are now seen through the prism of responsible global stewardship in our effort to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, but that was not how Tasmania's investment in renewable energy

started under former governments. Those decisions revolutionised Tasmania with massive investments in hydroelectricity, driving economic opportunity for our state and providing cheap power.

Hydroelectricity generation started at Waddamana Power Station in 1916 and within 20 years electricity had largely replaced kerosene lamps, candles and steam engines. The benefit of cheap power was the lure for major industrial companies to set up in Tasmania, creating employment and adding to the diversity of our economy. Many of these major industrials remain operating in Tasmania to this day. The allure of cheap power has been enhanced by the allure of green power with new industries now eyeing off Tasmania as a place to invest to capitalise on our clean power.

The benefit to companies now is in the value they can extract from the brand proposition. It also helps them demonstrate to their investors and shareholders that they have taken tangible steps to lower their emissions profile and meet environmental and social governance obligations. Board rooms across the globe are looking at places like Tasmania and working out if they can extract some benefit from locating some of their operations here.

The challenge for our Government and our state is to make sure that Tasmanians can realise this benefit too. The opportunity for our state is in making sure we have world-standard training opportunities for Tasmanians to take advantage of the jobs that are possible. In a state like Tasmania that has such a proud and well-known reputation for renewable energy we should have a centre of excellence in renewable energy to grow our expertise and train young Tasmanians.

Tasmania should be at the forefront for new innovation in renewable energy, leading research and development into new technology and engineering and its application right across the globe. When a country wants to know more about how to decarbonise their energy grid they should automatically think of Tasmania. We should be engaging with our primary school students to teach them how renewable energy works and sparking an interest in ways they can pursue careers in a sector from a young age.

We must ensure that for every investment that is made with Tasmania's renewable energy there is a return to the Tasmanian people that makes it worthwhile. It will be easy for Tasmania to export our energy in forms such as electricity, hydrogen or ammonia without thinking very hard but with it we export the jobs and the opportunities for innovative new industries. The harder task is to value add our renewable energy on our island to make sure we extract the greatest value for the investment that has been made over generations. There is nothing stopping us from doing both but that decision must be a conscious one and it has to start now.

Tasmania's renewable energy advantage only arose because of the visionary leadership of former Labor premiers. It helped to grow our communities, our regional economies and to diversify our state. Tasmanians should be able to enjoy the cheapest power in the country, the cleanest power in the world and the most exciting job opportunities our young ones can imagine. That is why debates like this one must also consider our responsibility to ensure there is the just transition principle embedded in legislation so that as sectors decarbonise, the jobs and communities that rely on them do not go too. The amendments we have to this bill not only embed a just transition clause to ensure it is a fundamental part of this legislation, it also states it as an objective of the bill.

As I outlined earlier, there are improvements that need to be made to this bill to ensure that vulnerable people do not bear a disproportionate impact of emissions reduction action, and that nobody is left behind. As articulated in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, women, children, youth and other persons, peoples, groups and communities in vulnerable situations and to ensure workers, communities and regions are supported through a fair and equitable transition to manage the risks and grasp the opportunities in the transition to a low emissions future and to ensure a fair and equitable transmission for all towards an environmentally sustainable economy is well managed and contributes to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and to ensure that no one person is left worse off.

There is currently no provision in this bill to consult workers or their representatives and that is an oversight. We will be moving amendments to include a requirement that relevant unions be consulted in the development of the climate action plan and a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans.

To effectively understand how any transition will impact on an industry, the voice of the workers in those industries must be at the table. The bill must also be improved to ensure there is much greater transparency about progress on the climate action plan and the sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans.

There is no requirement for the Government to commence any of this work within a prescribed time frame. We will propose that this work must commence within two years after the commencement of this act. We will also seek for the bill to establish a joint standing committee on climate change that will act in the same way the joint standing committee on integrity works: to support the role of the integrity commission, and to provide reports to parliament. Further, we will seek for the bill to establish a climate change advisory council, that will report to the relevant minister. The areas of expertise of members of the council are to cover many of the following as possible: environmental and climate change policy; technology development; economic analysis and forecasting; regional development; environmental determinants of health; and civil society.

The advisory council will be responsible for: providing advice to the minister on the preparation of the climate action plan; the preparation of statewide climate change risk assessments; the preparation of sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans; the setting of targets to reduce emissions; and importantly, within 18 months of the commencement of the bill, inquiring into and reporting to the minister of the establishment of a transition authority. The establishment of a transition authority - or you could call it a climate change commission; the name is less important than its function - is critical so that people and communities are considered when action is taken to address climate change.

This work will be assisted with guiding principles for fair and equitable transition to be set out in the legislation stating that, in determining whether the transition towards low carbon economy and a low emissions future is fair and equitable, regard must be had to the following principles: community engagement, the provision of appropriate information to members of affected communities, especially Aboriginal, vulnerable or marginalised communities; the pursuit of sustainable economic social and ecological solutions for affected communities; equity for households, businesses, workers, communities and rural and regional areas, taking into account their social, cultural and economic differences.

These guiding principles would also prioritise employment transition opportunities to new or existing industries within those communities, offering appropriate education and training opportunities for those communities, allowing reasonable time for the implementation of transition solutions for those communities, and for a worker who is unable to pursue transition opportunities, the provision of the mechanism for compensated redundancy or voluntary redeployment of the worker to another site where the worker wishes to continue working, without undermining the incentives for transition.

There must be consideration to maximising economic co-benefits for regional development in Tasmania, and not disadvantaging communities that are required to make an adjustment. In order to meet our obligations under legislation, the Government must apply fair employment transition principles when making or implementing any decision, policy program or process in responding to climate change that may affect employment in an industry or a geographic region.

The fundamental principle guiding the Labor Party in this regard is to ensure that nobody is left behind, and that no one community is disproportionately and negatively affected. It is our view that all Tasmanian Government entities' annual reports through a reporting period must include information about how the entity applied the fair implement transmission principles contained in the act in the performance of the entities' functions, duties, or powers for the period that the accountable authority of the entity considers are material. There needs to be transparency and accountability in order to uphold the intent of a fair and just transition for those sectors, industries and regions that face changes.

There is no doubt that we need to act to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. We cannot stop it. The climate is already changing, but we can protect our community, economy and environment from the worst impacts. There must be greater independent oversight of what the Government is proposing and there must be stronger accountability and reporting mechanisms built in to give the community confidence that what the Government says it will do actually happens.

The debate on this bill has been a long time coming. The act was reviewed way back in 2016 and here we are in 2022 finally discussing updating the act.

I again thank all the different industry groups, community groups and interest groups who have engaged with me to provide insight and feedback on this bill. I received very strong feedback that people are looking for leadership from their government when it comes to action on climate change and there is an opportunity to do more with this bill to strengthen the action government will take as it supports the necessary steps required to lower the state's emissions profile further.

Time after time we hear from young people that they want us to provide leadership on this issue because they know their future and the future of our planet depends on it. Just because Tasmania is already a world leader in many regards when it comes to how we rank against others when you compare our emissions profile, does not mean we should or can be complacent. There are significant improvements we can and need to make in order to help achieve our global commitments.

I expect there will be a lengthy debate on this bill and I welcome that. I hope the Government approaches debate on this bill with an open mind in the knowledge that we all

want the same outcomes here. We want Tasmania to do everything it can to lower our emissions so we can tell our children that we took the necessary action to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change and, in doing so, protected the most vulnerable from bearing a disproportionate impact, helped communities and industries transition toward lower emissions in a way that was respectful and ensured they maintained employment, and set in place a framework that was ambitious enough to make a difference and transparent enough that we can be held accountable.

I have amendments that I will circulate now to members, Mr Speaker.

[2.53 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, in the context of this bill, I reflect on what a dark decade Australians have suffered under and those of us who think about the future - the scientists, the young people, the conservationists - have really suffered emotionally in the last decade as they have watched the sands of time disappearing through the hourglass, which is our planet's survival.

They have seen the science, and instead have had to watch nearly a decade of federal Liberal government doing everything it can to stall and undermine action on climate change whilst, at the same time, they are supporting and furthering the interests and the profits of the fossil fuel industry. We have become an international pariah. Our performance at the 2019 COP in Paris and the international agreement that was struck by all countries left Australia utterly on the sidelines. We have repeatedly ignored the warnings of the IPCC and our own Australian climate scientists, who are world-leading and take very significant roles in the preparation of the International Panel on Climate Change documents. I want to commend the Tasmanian scientists who are part of that work.

We have utterly ignored the warnings from the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, who is crystal-clear about the critical urgency of taking action to reduce global emissions and to prepare ourselves for the inevitable heating consequences to the climate system that are already baked in and will continue for decades and centuries to come.

We have had a federal prime minister who was absolutely deaf to the pleas of 34 of our frontline firefighters, ex-fire chiefs, who spoke up and asked for an interview with the then prime minister in February 2019 and who again went public in May 2019, calling for the then prime minister to listen and heed the upcoming season of devastating drought. The heat in Australia on the mainland was overwhelming and the drought conditions and the drying, as they tragically predicted, led to the greatest firestorms we have ever seen in Australian history. They led to the loss of billions of animals and hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests burnt in that inferno that went for months, yet we know from the climate science that that is a taste of our future, certainly within our lifetime.

The former prime minister, Scott Morrison, refused to listen and was prepared to let Australians suffer the consequences. When they did, he went on holidays. When there were extreme floods in New South Wales and Queensland earlier this year, there was no timely response from the Commonwealth, no intervention, just throwing distractions and pointing fingers at state leaders for not taking action. This is the sort of non-response which climate scientists and people who are intelligent and open and are looking at what is happening get frightened by.

It is not the Greens who are frightening young people or people in the community, it is the reality of what is happening to our climate that is so distressing. We have Schools Strike for Climate students who have been standing and calling this to our attention, doing everything they can to make us wake up as adults. I want to read a couple of students' letters who wrote earlier to Cassy O'Connor from The Friends' School. They are obviously young and said that that despite that, they are aware of the United Nations Environment Program's statement that said the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires globally could increase by a third by 2050 and by more than 50 per cent by the end of the century. They called for standing up for our planet and working to protect our future because if we do not, humans will only become an extinct species of the past.

Rebecca and Zohanas are two young Tasmanian students who are more than aware, sadly, of the reality of the world that they, in all likelihood, will grow up into. They ask us to do everything we can to take these matters into consideration because without them 'bushfires will prevail and our world will turn to ashes'.

We would dearly like our children to be writing a different type of letter to us as members of parliament. It is hard to read those stories and it is also hard to hear young people, like Owen Fitzgerald and Sam Eccleston, who are some of the many young people who have become great leaders of young people in their community standing up for climate action. It is sad to also hear that they have a pretty bleak view of what their future looks like unless we do something much more substantial.

Mr Speaker, why have we had a decade of inaction at the federal level and why have we essentially had inaction from the Liberals in Tasmania? The Liberals came in after a Greens' climate change minister: a Greens' climate change minister, Cassy O'Connor, who introduced the most far reaching measures and legislation in Australia at the time. It set Tasmania up very well for the work that ought to have been done by the next government. The Liberals have dropped the ball. It has obviously been stalling on the State of the Environment report. We have no idea what the conditions and trends of the environment are. There has been no effective action on reducing the emissions that we can control in Tasmania.

The reason we have had such a dark decade was reported by the Australia Institute, which noted recently that fossil fuel subsidies in 2021-22, including support for the so-called gas-fired recovery and carbon capture projects - which are controversial - has risen 12 per cent to \$11.6 billion. That is more than double the federal government's \$4.8 billion emergency response fund and 50 times more than its outlay for the National Recovery and Resilience Agency. Shame on governments Liberal and Labor for putting their priorities behind coal and gas mining industries rather than putting their priorities into bringing down the emissions in the agriculture, transport, coal and gas sectors, and in Tasmania, the forestry sector. These are the big emitting sectors. This is concrete action that we can be taking.

If we do not do that, the IPCC was very clear that we have only a slim chance of avoiding heating above 1.5 degrees Celsius. It seems much more likely that if we do not do everything to reduce emissions in the next couple of decades, then 3 degrees warming is likely. That would be a catastrophe. We are on track for more like 4 degrees to 5 degrees Celsius, which with the current level of emissions in Australia is where we are heading. That is apocalypse territory.

The Arctic has been 30 degrees Celsius and there has been rain there for the first time. The Antarctic has reached 40 degrees Celsius. Most of Europe at the moment is on fire or in the most severe drought that they have ever experienced. Italy's Po River, which provides water to villages and agriculture, is very close to drying up in places.

We have a very likely risk of abrupt and irreversible changes to the Earth's systems. That would have huge impacts on human survival and the survival of all species on the planet. Scientists have said that the collapse of major Atlantic currents and of ice caps or of the Amazon rainforest cannot be ruled out. To prevent these tipping points every tonne of carbon dioxide matters. Everything we can do to remove emissions today will help move us slightly more away from the feedback effects facing us tomorrow.

I want to also mention the mental health and emotional burden of the people who are bearing witness to the changes that are happening, especially the climate scientists, the biologists, the conservationists, and the ecologists who have spent their whole life working in their field. They started their careers at a time when systems appeared to be stable, passed down by educational institutions for hundreds of years. Now these people are recording completely abnormal changes in the distribution of species, the loss of species and the behaviour of natural systems. These are the people who bring us the advice. Many of them are deeply traumatised by what they are experiencing and the dysjunction between the reality of the world as they are observing it and the actions that are not being taken to do something concrete and meaningful to take out emissions and to prepare to make ourselves as resilient as possible.

An independent review of the Climate Change (State Action) Act is meant to occur every four years. The last review was published by Jacobs Group in October of 2016. It made a number of necessary but entirely tepid recommendations to amend legislation. Despite that, it took two years for the Government to provide a discussion paper on its proposed actions and draft amendments. At the end of October 2018 we had the Government response and a discussion paper was released. There is nothing like a discussion paper or a review when you do not want to make a decision.

Two years after we got the review, there was a discussion paper about the recommendations in the review. There was one month for public consultation on that. After that was completed, another two years and it was 2020 and the next review was due. The Liberal Government had still made no action on the recommended legislative amendments from the previous review, despite the fact that we consider them to be inadequate. Not even those very weak amendments were legislated.

We are here today without having had the 2020 review. Another two years have gone by. The act's amendments are six years too late. There have been six years of purposeful stalling, of dithering. We have scientific knowledge that is utterly different from the 2016 review, and completely different from 2008 when the act was prepared. The world has changed.

Some of what Tasmania can do to reduce our emissions is in this bill. We welcome the things that are in here and we will support the legislation. There are huge gaps and huge missed opportunities. It is on that basis that we will be introducing a range of amendments to improve the bill. It does not recognise the urgency with which we need to reduce emissions in Tasmania. It does not legislate a statewide target for net zero emissions. We have been at net zero

emissions for five years, so we reject the lack of ambition in this bill. Setting a target in seven years time in a global crisis is utterly offensive to anybody who understands the reality of the situation we are in. We will be amending that.

It is also deficient regarding the Climate Change Action Plan which is to be reviewed in five years' time without any mandated public consultation. That is offensive, completely ineffective and completely out of scale with the speed of the changes we have seen in the summer of 2020 on the mainland with the types of fires we are getting as a result of the heat in the system. It is completely out of touch with the extremity of the floods that occurred once, twice, three times and four times for some people in the Hawkesbury and Nepean rivers in New South Wales and the rivers in Queensland. It is totally out of touch with the desperate need to attend to some really thorny issues.

It is not a surprise that the Liberals in government would not want to go there, but we have to go there. We have to understand what we do when areas are flooded and all coastlines are inundated and people can no longer live safely in those areas. We must have an approach where we work with local councils to make decisions about no-go areas for planning developments, about resettling houses or possibly communities, about redirecting whole roads as there are in many places in Tasmania. Certainly as a member for Franklin, I know there are many roads which will be dangerously undermined in the next 50 years, if not completely overwhelmed. We have to plan for that infrastructure now. It has to be a whole-of-state response; state and local governments have to be working together. There is no commitment to that work in this bill.

It also, incredibly importantly, does not legislate for sector-based targets. There is no reason given in the minister's second reading speech for why that was the case. It just says the Government will not legislate sector-based targets. Why would you not do that when all of the people who have made submissions to this bill have said to legislate sector wide targets? We have to have sector-specific targets because the current approach does not give us the capacity to deal with the emissions that are rising in sectors such as transport and that are likely to rise such as waste agriculture unless we do something about it.

We have seen from Tasmania's greenhouse gas accounts for 2021 that there are sectors that have industrial processes and product use that have gone up 19.5 per cent since 1990 to 2019. Our emissions from transport went up 17 per cent. There is zero plan for reducing transport emissions except electric vehicles in the government fleet, but when I asked questions about that in Estimates it was pretty clear there is not a real plan for making that happen because there is no money put aside in the budget to make sure that happens.

**Mr Ferguson** - There is, \$4.5 million.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - There is not sufficient for the number of cars that are required in order to meet the target the Government has in place. It is not a target that is able to be achieved on the basis of the amount of money that has been put in by the Government. It is not a commitment that has been backed with anything substantial. We cannot expect that creating a fully electric government vehicle fleet is going to reduce the amount of emissions from transport in Tasmania that we have to be bringing down; it has to be much bigger than that.

The biggest silence in this bill and in the Government's whole approach to accounting greenhouse gas emissions in Tasmania is the failure to disaggregate the land use change and

forestry sector. We have no official state estimate of the contribution of carbon emissions from native forest logging. The work that was just done by Dr Jen Sanger, the Wilderness Society, the Tree Projects and the Tasmanian Climate Collective has been reported. It is not yet peer reviewed, but we challenge the Government to have a response to this.

There has not been any evidence we have heard that would put any question on the figures that have been produced by Dr Sanger and we would relish a conversation with any Liberal ministers about the information that is provided in this report because it is extremely concerning. It shows that native forest logging in Tasmania is the highest emitting industry of all of our industries. That is what the science says, which is why there is complete silence from the Government. Native forest logging is equivalent each year to 1.1 million cars and that is 4.65 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted each year from native forest logging and burning.

It makes it by far the highest emitting sector in Tasmania; 1.1 million cars would be equivalent to two and a half times the emissions that come from our transport sector in Tasmania, and that includes all of Tasmania's cars, trucks, domestic aviation and shipping. That is a massive contribution and something we can do something about immediately. Only 1 per cent of our forest biomass gets turned into sawn timber which is used for building houses and furniture, just 5 per cent goes into what is called LVLs or laminated veneer and plywood, and of the rest of it, 60 per cent of it is left to rot on the forest floor or is burnt, with emissions entering the atmosphere from both of those sources, and the small proportion that is left goes into paper and cardboard which are very short-lived products, so just 1 per cent is so-called locked up as the carbon from our forest industry.

It has to stop. It is literally killing us. It is killing the opportunity for our children to live in a safe world. Through continuing the logging of native forests in Tasmania, we are actively creating the highest emitting sector, something we can stop immediately, unlike the other sectors in Tasmania. It is hard to find solutions to bringing down emissions from transport; it is hard to find solutions to bringing down emissions from agriculture. We can and we must do that, but it is very easy to stop native forest logging and transition people who are working in that industry into a sustainable industry, because at the moment the Government has no plan for them except to leave them on the sidelines in communities.

Tasmania can credibly claim to be one of the few jurisdictions that has achieved and exceeded net zero, and well done, but as we know and have just heard, that is a false estimate if we were to truly account for the emissions occurring from forestry. As a parliament, we have to consider the next climate act. I will read some words from Richard Eccleston, a professor of public policy, and Megan Langridge, a policy intern. They have said:

Our message is we cannot be complacent and we must reduce emissions across the entire economy to meet the net zero at 2030 emissions target. We have, they say, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to establish Tasmania as a leader in climate action and sustainability, but it's an opportunity which is time-bound and will be lost in the absence of a clear commitment on the part of governments, businesses and individuals to decarbonise the economy and address climate change.

The bill we have before us is not a clear commitment to doing that. There are many ways it can be improved. We tabled the Greens' safe climate bill last year. It provides an excellent model for how this bill before us can be improved.

I note that a number of the ideas that we have had tabled and have mentioned over the last 18 months have appeared in various formations from different members and from the Government. We welcome that. We welcome improving legislation. The Greens will always be speaking up for science and the community and doing what we can to improve legislation, as are the Australian Greens in the new parliament in Canberra. We will continue to hold Labor and the Liberal parties to account on this matter. Both Labor and Liberal parties are equally committed at the moment to native forest sector logging and both parties are equally committed to backing and funding coal and gas mining. This has to stop.

Our amendments are principally based on the work of scientists at the University of Tasmania and Climate Tasmania, the volunteer group that has been working since they were officially disbanded in 2014. I thank those two groups of scientists in particular, and Climate Tasmania for all the work they have put into this bill and the many other people who made submissions, the Environmental Defenders Office, and the many individuals who wrote passionately and with a great deal of expertise about clear-sighted helpful things that need to be changed to make this bill the bill that Tasmania needs for the future.

Our amendments to bring forward the 2030 net zero target to 2023 require that there is a declaration of an absolute emissions reduction and require the declaration of sectoral targets. We will establish a joint standing committee and a climate change commission and require, through a number of other amendments, far better consultation from the public on the climate change action plan and a one-year turnaround for the Government to produce that.

This is a critical bill. We look forward to debating the amendments and making it the best bill that Tasmania needs.

[3.23 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak on the climate change amendment bill. As our Leader, Rebecca White, has alluded to, we will be supporting this bill, but I want to make a couple of comments on this legislation, particularly around my portfolio areas of Health and Local Government, which are very important considerations in this bill.

It is great that this bill has finally come before the parliament. Some time has elapsed and a number of ministers have been responsible for it. It is great that it is finally here and being debated today.

As Ms White has said, we will be proposing a number of amendments to this legislation on how we think this bill can be made more robust by having more points in the legislation that we think are important to be covered, particularly independent oversight and our priorities around this bill, which are protecting vulnerable people, a just transition for our community, and also having a clear plan around that.

I note that with the latest circulation of this bill an amendment around health has been included. That is positive but it really should have been in there from the outset. I want to read a couple of points from the AMA's submissions. They are important and they highlight the reason for including Health. In their submission they say that:

Doctors are already seeing the effects of climate change in patients. The elderly are particularly affected by increasing summer temperatures over many more days.

The risk of bushfire is very real, with most summers experiencing some level of bushfire activity which affects air quality and in turn is affecting people's health. For example, people with respiratory conditions struggling to breathe, and pregnant women risk having premature and lower weight babies if exposed to bushfire smoke for prolonged periods of time.

The other important thing is around climate change refugees. We are seeing many more people coming to live in Tasmania for the cooler climate. Many of those people are older, which does bring other challenges when it comes to service provisions, particularly across rural and regional areas. The AMA goes on to say that:

We are also seeing the emergence of climate change refugees, that is, people moving to cooler climates like Tasmania to avoid rising temperatures. That in turn is placing housing pressures in markets like Hobart and Launceston -

and I would add there the rental market particularly and in regional Tasmania as well -

inevitably displacing people and forcing up rates of homelessness, which we are seeing right across Tasmania now.

These are the flow-on effects of climate change. We really need to be looking more holistically as a state, right across government departments, at how we begin to address some of these consequences of climate change - which are indirect consequences, but nonetheless very important in putting considerable pressure on essential services in Tasmania.

The last point that I want to read from their submission is in relation to future planning for natural disasters. In her contribution, Dr Woodruff made reference to a number of natural disasters that have occurred around the country. We are seeing more and more of those. We are even seeing them in Tasmania with unprecedented rainfall and the impact of that across the land, with flooding. Also, there is an increased fire risk.

It is really important that the health sector is involved in planning for natural disasters as well. The impact of climate change on the physical and mental health of communities and the capacity of the work force and health infrastructure - including hospitals - to deal with it are all very important. Therefore, the health sector should be represented at the table in planning for the enormous changes that are going to be forced upon us by the climate emergency. The health sector has much to offer in a planned response to deal with issues from climate distress in our young people, now at 86 per cent, according to recent research by UNICEF, to increase demand on primary and acute health services, including worsening health outcomes from lack of suitable housing or affordable heating and cooling.

Health is a foundational society asset, and climate change and associated harms are its biggest threat. The health sector should be represented at every point in planning for climate change, as floods, fires, droughts, heat waves, storms, sea level rise, population pressures and other related factors occur, the health sector needs to be positioned to meet these challenges, many of which have very long-running effects.

The framework for dealing with all of this should be included in the climate change bill. You would think 'Fostering adaption', one of the goals of the act, would require health planning and input. Thus, disaster planning should also include the health sector.

That brings me to my second point, which is in relation to local government, which government has a very important role in working with the state on natural disasters to manage the impact of climate change across our community, our economy and our environment. It is local government, in partnership with both state and federal governments, that will be responsible for putting in place the infrastructure that is required, like flood levies, for example.

In our electorate of Braddon, I have seen the delays with the Latrobe flood mitigation works. Sea walls that have been constructed around the state show the important role that local government plays. It is important that there is good understanding of the importance of working together on these things, and funding these things together, because that is quite a burden for local governments to carry on their own. We will be moving a number of amendments about including more about local government in this bill, its roles and responsibilities in working with the state.

The other point that I wanted to make was local government's role in response to natural disasters - that immediate response at a local community level. You only have to look more recently at what happened in the Kentish municipality when we had a very severe storm event. When we met with the Kentish Council, as the Labor team recently, they conveyed to us the incredible distress that event had on their community and one of the things that they raised was about mental health.

**Time expired.**

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (PRICE CAP) BILL 2022 (No. 34)**

### **Second Reading - Negatived**

[3.30 p.m.]

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

That the bill be now read the second time.

Labor is committed to keeping cost of living increases for government services as low as possible. Members will be well aware of the impact electricity prices have on household budgets and the cost of doing business. Electricity prices have been increasing nationally due to a number of factors, including the retirement of low-cost coal-fired power stations and their unavailability. In this evolving environment, Labor wants to maximise Tasmania's competitive advantage in renewable energy while ensuring that Tasmanian consumers are protected from increasing prices.

Through the Government's Tasmania First energy policy, the Government was committed to delivering secure and reliable electricity for the lowest possible prices. The

Government had a commitment to have the lowest regulated electricity prices by 2022. It said that while that work was progressing to delink Tasmania from the national market, it was committed to keeping cost of living increases at or below the rate of inflation. This included a cap on the regulated electricity prices for three years from 2018-19. The Government did that and was supported in this place by Labor, and Labor is proposing the parliament do much the same thing for this financial year and coming financial years through this bill.

The bill before us today will take action on the cost of living and provide for increases in regulated electricity prices for small customers to be capped at the rate of change in the Hobart Consumer Price Index or 2.5 per cent, whichever is the lesser.

Some members will recall that in this place in 2017, legislation was passed to amend the Electricity Supply Industry Act 1995 to enable the Treasurer of the day to determine a wholesale electricity price to be used in determining regulated tariffs, thereby protecting residential and small business customers from electricity price volatility. The provisions that were introduced in 2017 remain, and if the Treasurer considers that the market-based mechanism which determines the wholesale electricity price in Tasmania is not delivering a price consistent with the actual wholesale price in the state, the Treasurer may issue a wholesale electricity price order. The Treasurer did not do this in 2022.

While the parliament's aim in 2018 was to ensure the regulated electricity tariffs were affordable and reflective of cost of living increases rather than other factors such as those influencing prices in the National Electricity Market, the amendments made at the time did not apply to any restriction to the level of increase that could apply to regulated tariffs. That is where this bill comes in.

Only this year the Government walked away from its commitment to restrict electricity price increases to no more than the increase of the CPI index. We do not agree with the Government's change in position. I want to make this very clear: Labor has not changed its position; our position is consistent with the position we took in 2018. The only political party in the state that has changed its position is the Tasmanian Liberal Government. It has changed its position from saying in 2018 that it was completely focused on the cost of living and keeping prices low to today saying that they will not support this price cap legislation.

This bill means that for the three financial years from 2022-23 to 2024-25 increases in regulated electricity tariffs will be capped at no more than the increase of Hobart CPI or 2.5 per cent.

What I want to outline now is that most of what I just said is taken from Peter Gutwein's second reading speech in 2018. Some of these are the exact words that the Treasurer of the day, Peter Gutwein, told this parliament. He told this parliament that this Liberal Government was committed to keeping cost of living increases low. He told this parliament that this Liberal Government was committed to a Tasmania First electricity policy. Logic can only tell me one thing: if they were committed to a Tasmania First electricity policy back in 2018 and they walked away from it, where are Tasmanians now? They are not first anymore. It feels like Tasmanians are being put last by this Government when it comes to electricity policy, but more broadly, when it comes to the cost of living.

I am sure the cost of living was a problem in 2018 - I recollect it was - but not only is anecdotal evidence telling us it is worse now in terms of the conversations we are having with

people who are choosing between heating and eating and struggling with a whole raft of cost of living issues, but we can also see the statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics telling us that inflation in Hobart is 6.5 per cent and its pretty likely to be pretty similar right across the state. Hobart CPI is at 6.5 per cent. That is categorical evidence that the cost of living crisis is much worse than it was then. We have wages data out today telling us that real wages are going down, that things are getting worse, that as prices go up, wages are not going up by as much and every household will be feeling the pinch of the current economic situation.

That 2.5 per cent number within this bill is not randomly selected. While the Premier has told the House today that 2.5 per cent is not his wages policy it is certainly the closest thing this Government has to a wages policy. They are saying in their budget that they are allowing for public sector wage increases of 2.5 per cent, so unless they identify a wages policy, that is the only one we have to work with. They are saying to Tasmanians that whilst the cost of living goes up by 6.5 per cent, the closest thing to a wages policy is 2.5 per cent, leaving a gaping hole between the amount wages are going up and the amount the cost of living is going up for Tasmanians.

Former Treasurer Gutwein went on in his speech to say:

Under our lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation policy, the Government will break away from the mainland electricity wholesale contract pricing. This will involve a detailed analysis of options to determine the mechanism which will best meet the Government's objectives. This body of work will take some time, given the need for extensive consultation with key stakeholders and market participants.

The deadline they gave was the middle of last year, 2021. We know, because we have spoken to them as well, what that consultation came back and told this Government, particularly from major industrials, employers, hundreds and thousands of people. This policy to break away from mainland electricity wholesale pricing, as the Treasurer of the day said, was largely driven by Tasmanian industry that has been built on the back of more than 100 years of investment by Tasmanians in Hydro Tasmania, the hydroelectric corporation. They have not just invested in terms of building that, they have also invested their time and passion.

We all remember the late 1990s when the Liberal government of the day was trying to sell Hydro Tasmania and Tasmanians were the ones who stood with Labor to save the Hydro. That decision by Labor to maintain the Hydro has given all governments after it, including this Government, options. We saw the Liberal government in 2018 use that option to cap electricity prices. It has allowed this Government strategic options that are not available to other governments that have privatised electricity generation. It means that this parliament does have direct input and can have important input into the way electricity prices happen in Tasmania.

We are hearing from not just major industrials but from small business and from Tasmanians who are struggling under the weight of price increases that range from having nothing at all to do with this Government: for example, interest rates, to some that are directly within the control of this Government. In Tasmania the one that is directly able to be controlled by this Government and by this parliament is the price of electricity for Tasmanian households and small businesses and major industrials.

This Government chose by breaking its promise on the delinking policy that it took to the 2018 election and still held, as we understand it, at the 2021 election, to break away from its previous position to cap electricity prices. When I talk to Tasmanians about this they believe that Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for electricity. They made that investment, we made that investment to build the Hydro, to save the Hydro from the Liberals and so Tasmanians should receive a benefit from that investment. We should pay Tasmanian prices.

We should not pay for the chaos in the National Electricity Market. We should not pay because there was a federal government for nine years that had no coherent energy policy, that was afraid of talking about climate change, that was afraid of renewable energy, that had to hold up pieces of coal in parliament and pretend as though that was the future for Australia.

That is not Tasmania's fault. Tasmania has made investment in renewable energy. We have advantages that have held us in good stead for hundreds of years. Arguably the advantages that Tasmania has from its investment in hydro are only going to grow in the future and that is our ability to produce clean, green energy.

**Ms O'Connor** - Possibly not because of climate change and lower rainfall and the lakes. You have to be a bit careful. It is more complicated than that.

**Mr WINTER** - I suspect that when Eric Reece was building hydroelectric dams he was not thinking about climate change. What an advantage we have ended up with, to be able to generate clean, green renewable energy. It cannot just be an advantage for the rest of the country and it cannot be an advantage for the rest of the world. It has to be an advantage that is taken up by Tasmanians, that is used by Tasmanian households, Tasmanian businesses and industry. Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for energy.

The Government has spent the last two months trying to talk down this bill and Labor's policy, which has not changed, and attacked its own bill from four years ago. The minister for Energy, Mr Barnett, has used a lot of media releases attacking me personally and attacking Labor for his own policy. The Premier this morning said that when you resort to personal attacks you have lost the argument. Mr Barnett in his attempts to discredit me has discredited the legacy of his own Government, his own bill that he spoke so glowingly about in 2018 when he said:

I am very pleased to be supporting this bill 100 per cent. I am proud of it. It is a key plank in this Government's second-term agenda, a key plank in keeping the cost of living down.

He was very enthusiastic about that bill, which is almost identical to the bill we are debating today. I am looking forward to hearing what Mr Barnett says but there is a key point of difference from this bill to the one before and that is about CPI. The CPI back in 2018 was about two per cent. CPI was quite low and the parliament at the time made the correct decision to cap at CPI. When we developed this bill we could see that capping at CPI was not going to be enough for Tasmanian households. With a 2.5 per cent wages policy from this Government it was not going to be fair to ask then to pay 6.5 per cent. We have made a small change to what they were doing, which is that it is CPI or 2.5 per cent, whichever is the lesser. If this is successful, I suspect that while the bill is enacted prices would be capped at 2.5 per cent.

That is not a number we came up with randomly. That is a number aligned to the Government's wages policy. We do not want to see Tasmanian households go backwards. We want to see Tasmanian households be able to pay their bills and not be stressed about what bill they are going to pay from week to week, to not have to choose between heating and eating. That has been our approach for a very long time. We have not changed our position on this. Only the Government has changed its position.

Mr Barnett has also tried to link, during his passionate attack on his own bill and his own history as Energy minister, the Government's ability to provide essential health services with electricity bills. He has tried to say that Tasmanians need to pay 12 per cent more this year so that when they call an ambulance one will come.

You have to wonder what they are doing over there. That is not how budgets are supposed to work. Unless something has drastically changed in Treasury, it is not right to say that electricity prices are paying to keep the health system going. I hope it is not true. It would require the Government to make a clarification.

Is he just trying to discredit this bill, which is weird because it is almost identical to what his Government did four years ago, or has something drastically changed? Either way, the attacks on the bill are very strange.

I want to go back to where this started in 2018. Mr Barnett on 4 February, 2018 said that power prices will drop by up to 10 per cent under a re-elected Liberal government. He said we would achieve that by acting decisively and breaking the link with the national electricity market to force down power prices for Tasmanians.

That is a position he now relentlessly attacks. He now says that will destroy Tasmania's future renewable energy prospects, that we will not see investment in renewable energy, yet he has claimed that without evidence.

For all the rhetoric of saying that you cannot break the link with the national electricity market and build new renewable energy generation, pumped hydro, he should explain why that is the case. Treasury did a lot of work on this. It was the Government's firm view. Labor supported that view. Parliament, effectively delinking in 2018, also supported that view.

The minister did not announce he was not going ahead with it. It was the Premier, in response to a question from the Leader of the Opposition, who finally admitted they were not going to do it. In Estimates last year, the Minister for Energy said Treasury was still working on it and so, until August or September last year, the Government was still committed to it. We do not know when the Government made the decision to move away so drastically, not just from its energy policy, but from energy policy in Tasmania for generations. Was it a cabinet decision? We have asked this question but have not got an answer.

This is a very large departure for Tasmanians who expected to pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian energy. They are now being told they have to pay for chaos in the national electricity market. This bill does not just cap prices now, because what we are hearing from analysts across the country is that there is no expectation that the current high prices in the market are going to go down to previous levels anytime soon. We have a situation with the National Electricity Market where the former coalition government was not able to get new

generation online. We did not have any coherent energy policy in Australia and in fact it ended the prime ministership of Malcolm Turnbull.

We have only just got a new Labor government in Canberra, thankfully, so it is going to take time to bring new generation online. It is going to take time for the National Electricity Market, if it ever does, to get prices back as they were historically low over the past couple of years in the wholesale market, so the Government's insistence that it cannot cap prices only sends a message to Tasmanians that they can expect more of this, more price rises, and that prices are going to stay high across the market.

We have warnings from the National Energy Regulator that generators could and probably will ask for compensation due to the price cap that was put in place over the June period. The question for Tasmanian consumers and the Tasmanian Government is, what will the impact be in Tasmania from that situation? One of the only beneficiaries in Tasmania from the current higher prices is Hydro Tasmania; in fact they have been the chief beneficiary of this and they will do well out of an inflated National Electricity Market.

The Government has said two things regarding how much this will cost. They have said it is uncoded. The other thing they have said is that it will cost \$50 million. They are actually different things. It is either uncoded or it will cost \$50 million. I will leave it to Peter Gutwein, because he was asked this question. In fact I was in the briefing in 2018 when Labor asked this question because when you are capping power prices the obvious question is who is going to pay. As Mr Gutwein said:

Our businesses are making money and by setting the wholesale electricity price at the level we do and capping the economic regulators ability to increase tariffs for regulated customers to Hobart CPI, that affects the budget bottom line. The businesses, though, are still making money.

The explanation, as the minister for Energy should well know, is that Hydro Tasmania is doing well and has done very well out of inflated prices. What the cap did in 2018 and what this proposed cap does in 2022 is ask for a dividend for Tasmanians so that it is not just Hydro reaping the benefits but it is Tasmanians and their electricity prices can benefit as well.

[3.53 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I am making a contribution on this bill as the Greens' Treasury spokesperson. Across all areas of household expenditure the cost of living is rising, from housing to food to petrol to power. We know that from our own experience but particularly from our contact with constituents who are really feeling the squeeze. We also know that around 120 000 Tasmanians live in poverty, at or below the poverty line, and for them every time there is pressure on those costs of living the stress simply intensifies.

We have 120 000 people living in poverty and we have tens of thousands of people who are on low to moderate incomes who are also really feeling the squeeze. We talked about some of them in the House this morning when we were debating Ms Johnston's motion on rising rents. We all want to see cost of living relief for the people of Tasmania. However, I am not sure this bill does it. I have some questions for Mr Winter about how this bill would have effect. As we know, and as Mr Winter mentioned, about four years ago Mr Barnett introduced the -

**Dr Broad** - Gutwein, actually.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Was it Gutwein back then? As Treasurer? Okay.

**Dr Broad** - It was such good news that he would not let Barnett do it - second fiddle.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Okay. Introduced by former premier and treasurer, Mr Gutwein, four years ago, the Electricity Supply Industry Amendment (Price Cap) Bill 2018 made several amendments to the Electricity Supply Industry Act 1995. The bill made amendments to sections 48A and 41 of the principal act to cap maximum price determinations and standing offer prices. Labor's bill effectively extends these provisions. It is worth noting, however, that the Electricity Supply Industry Amendment (Price Cap) Bill 2018 followed the Electricity Supply Industry Amendment Pricing Bill 2017. The 2017 bill gave the minister the power to set wholesale electricity prices. This power expired in 2020 and Labor's bill does not introduce these provisions, and I think that is a question for Mr Winter.

If we are going to institute a cap on retail electricity prices, short of pulling the plug on our involvement in the National Electricity Market, how do you account for the cost of wholesale electricity, given that this legislation does not mention it and does not apply that power? I am hoping Mr Winter can explain that because it is relevant. The Aurora pricing determination is largely driven by a 37.4 per cent increase in wholesale electricity prices or the cost of wholesale electricity. In effect, as we understand it, Labor wants to cap the prices that energy retailers charge but has not put forward measures to deal with the wholesale prices that these retailers have to pay.

Adding to this is that Labor has been complaining about Tasmania's involvement in the national energy market, and I have some very strong sympathy for that grumbling. I do not know that life has improved for Tasmanian electricity consumers as a result of being a part of the National Electricity Market. Labor raises our connection to the NEM when this affects our wholesale energy price but does not directly affect pricing determinations, so I do not think Labor is addressing the problem in this legislation that they are complaining about but I am very interested to hear Mr Winter's response to that.

We are also six weeks into the 2022-23 financial year, and it is worth noting that the bill in front of us aims to set a price cap for 2022-23. This pricing determination has already been made. The principal act does not contain a mechanism for varying this and nor does Labor's bill propose any mechanism to resolve this. That is another outstanding question we have. How can you legislate a price cap when a determination has already been made for this year, and there is nothing in your bill that revokes that determination?

Labor's bill does not address or do anything to change the pricing determination they have been complaining about to the exclusion of almost any other policy matter in the state in recent weeks. As we all know, there is a whole suite of achievable, affordable and effective cost of living measures that are not being dealt with by this parliament, are not being resolved or put forward by government, and are not being raised as policy issues by the Labor Opposition. A cynical part of me thinks that this bill is a bit disingenuous because it will not resolve any of the issues I have mentioned previously. In fact, I am interested to understand the statements that Mr Winter and Labor have made about this bill and what it might be able to achieve because we cannot see that.

I am also interested in what Labor thinks would happen if wholesale prices go up by 37.4 per cent and retailers have their cap. Retailers cannot increase the prices that they charge. As we know that ends up hitting the hip pocket of everyday Tasmanians. Wholesale prices, as they do, will go up and down but sometimes they can go up by more than a third. If retailers cannot cover the costs of their wholesale electricity purchases, something has to give in the system. From Aurora's position, would that be Aurora workers? How will Aurora cover the gap between the wholesale electricity costs that they have to bear and the retail costs that they can charge. Potentially, in some years the gap covered by this bill would be very wide.

I take on board what the former Treasurer said in Estimates about our GBEs making money but if you have pressure on your energy retailer and you are not dealing with wholesale power costs, then something has to give. A GBE like Aurora does not have many mechanisms for cutting costs, other than cutting staff costs. Perhaps Mr Winter could address that question because we would be very concerned if the effect of this bill was job losses at Aurora. It is particularly the case if Aurora, or any other retailer, is faced with potentially three years of not being able to recover costs associated with wholesale price increases. At some point something has to give and someone will have to pay. Ultimately, it will either be electricity consumers or tax payers who will have to pay. That is our reading on it.

It is also worth noting that the current wholesale electricity price of 8.12 cents a kilowatt hour is lower than two out of the three years for which the Treasurer exercised their power to make a wholesale electricity price order back in 2017. Indeed, in the six years under the 2016 standing offer to termination the three highest wholesale electricity price years were in the three years for which a wholesale electricity price order was in place.

For some additional context the 35 per cent increase in the annual value of the wholesale electricity price in 2022-23 follows on from a 24 per cent decrease in the wholesale electricity price in 2021-22 and a 9 per cent decrease in 2020-21. I acknowledge that the average Tasmanian who is getting their power bill and sees only financial pain, these sorts of numbers are meaningless, but they are a hard, economic fact.

According to our research, in 2022-23 the wholesale electricity price is 6.5 per cent lower than the 2019-20 price, which was set under a wholesale electricity price order by the former Treasurer. This was matched by a 7 per cent decrease in all residential standing offer tariffs and 11 per cent for business standing offer tariffs by Aurora in 2021-22, and a 1.38 per cent decrease in all tariffs in 2020-21. In this longer-term context, the last financial year - 2021-22 - represented a significant price dip in the wholesale electricity price rather than 2022-23 representing a hike when you smear it across a few years.

This variability in costs also highlights a significant issue with retail price capping. If price increases are capped at the consumer price index, every time there is a substantial decrease in costs, like we saw in 2021-22, prices would be permanently significantly lowered with no regard for increasing input costs. We do not see that as a sustainable model.

Ultimately, this is a cost that someone has to pay. That is how money works. I am very interested in hearing Mr Winter's response to some of the issues that have arisen for us in having looked at this bill. To be honest, we very much want to support this bill because we want to see people's power bills come down but, if we are going to, as a state, make sustained cost of living relief imbedded in government policy, why would we not be looking at expanding the rollout of energy efficient upgrades for low-income households and community groups.

The Labor-Greens government, which so often gets pooh-poohed by people in government now, rolled out 9500 free energy efficiency upgrades. As minister for climate and housing, I would talk to households about the effect on their electricity bills and, for some households, it added up to about \$800 in a year. That is a massive saving. It is not just a saving that is made in one year or two; it is a perpetual saving on your household electricity because you have a house that is better insulated, sealed up, has power-saving devices in it. That is really good cost of living relief policy. It is tried. It is tested and it is affordable. It makes people's lives healthier. They live in healthier homes. It really does help the family or the individual budget bottom line.

We took a policy to the last state election, which had a suite of cost of living measures detailed in it, including a fairer rent setting system, which I have talked about in here earlier today and any number of times, so that we can rein in unreasonable rent increases. We talked about increased investment in brokerage funding for emergency accommodation, free public transport. We recently had a month of free Metro. Patronage goes up, even though people are very wary about getting on buses where people are unmasked. That is the feedback that I am getting from constituents and friends but if you provide free public transport, you bring down the cost of living and you unlock enormous human potential.

In the city of Portland, Oregon, which is one of the most wonderful cities in the world, they have a complete commitment to a greener city. They have an inner-city free light rail system called the MAX. It has activated the city of Portland where there is a poverty and disadvantage issue, as there is in every big city. It has taken cars out of the centre of Portland. It has mobilised people and it has brought down the cost of living as well as being hugely popular.

They are those sorts of things we could be doing for sustained cost of living relief but one of the problems with the approach in this bill, and the approach back in 2018, is that at some point, you are going to have to come back in here and deal with it. Or at some point, the provisions in a price cap bill end. The relief is so short term. I am sure it means a lot to people who get lower power bills in the years that they do, but in the end, they will pay.

We should be increasing concessions in Tasmania, particularly when we know 120 000 live at or below the poverty line. We can fund school costs for children and young people from households in poverty, and this could include levies, uniforms, stationary, excursions and textbooks. We can top up funding to those outstanding food relief organisations so that they can increase their outreach to households that really struggle to buy nutritious food or to people who live in parts of Tasmania where there are supply chain issues getting affordable food on the table. We can ramp up the capacity of our neighbourhood houses to provide that food relief and support. We can expand community gardens and education facilities, community houses and child and family centres.

As a state, we can afford to make TasTAFE free. We can afford to give people of all ages, particularly young people from rural and regional areas, a real crack at it by making TasTAFE free.

It is the choices that we make, and, ultimately, that the Government makes. As a parliament, we have a capacity to work together on some of these things and make a real, substantial difference. We should. It is our responsibility to do that. I am quite sure that everyone in this House is empathetic. It is part of the reason we go into politics, because we

care about people and we want to help our communities so there are things that we can do and agree on. Surely, on the cost of living, there are things that are beyond partisanship that we know would make a difference.

We will listen to Mr Winter's response to the questions that we have raised. I will say, points for effort. We have some concerns about how it would work and we want to hear Mr Winter's response to our concerns.

[4.12.p.m]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for introducing his bill and the contribution from the Leader of the Greens, with her eloquent response and some very incisive questions to Mr Winter, which I will talk more about. In short, we will not be supporting this bill because it is fatally flawed. It is uncosted, certainly unbudgeted, and it will cost \$50 million.

We hear some moans from the shadow minister for finance. I draw to your attention that in all the time Labor has been in Opposition, not once have they delivered an alternative budget. It is fatally flawed in so many ways. Let us be very clear that this is part of a long running publicity effort on behalf of the Labor Party and, specifically, Mr Winter, who has been caught out. This effort is designed to scare Tasmanians. It is part of the scaremongering effort and I will provide evidence to prove that. It is part of their cheap publicity stunt to put at risk and throw into doubt our energy security in this state. It would damage our economy and cost jobs. It would take Tasmania back into the dark ages, destroying jobs and investment prospects, with no plan at all of how he would pay for that.

Our approach as a Government is to provide targeted relief to vulnerable Tasmanians, those that most need it. We have provided evidence and an initiative with the winter bill buster payment to offset the increase for concession card holders. I will outline in more detail why that approach is by far preferred.

The bill that has been introduced by Mr Winter is flawed for a range of reasons. There is no mechanism in the bill to support the delivery of the intended price cap. The Leader of the Greens eloquently asked the appropriate question: how does this work? There is no provision for a wholesale electricity price order. You have had plenty of time over the winter break to do the homework but you have not. There is only one element of that workable legislation that has been dealt with by Mr Winter. You have done less than half the job.

When the question was put by the Leader of the Greens with respect to the retailers - for example, Aurora Energy, and in 2018 we had two retailers and now we have seven. We are talking about seven retailers. What would happen to them? How would they cover the cost? You are effectively saying that they would be forced to provide electricity at a rate that is below the cost of purchasing the electricity. You would send those retailers to the wall. You would force job losses on those retailers and ultimately, they could not continue to operate. This is under your flawed bill. You have not done the homework and you are imposing a great cost on the Tasmanian people. This is not like the legislation that we introduced in 2018 and have complied with during the course of that term of government.

I will tell you what it is like. It is like the 2010 Labor 5 per cent price cap bill. You probably do not even know about it because it was your Labor bill that you took to the election in 2010. Then, after the election, you said, 'Oh, we cannot do it, we cannot introduce this

legislation, it will not work'. You had not done your sums and the costs were too high. You made the promise and you broke the promise. You broke the promise in 2010. It is on the public record - have a look and check for yourself. Why did you not do a bit of homework? Look in the history and you will see the proposal by the Labor Party prior to the election for a 5 per cent price cap in 2010. I draw that to your attention. It is on the public record and then after election it was not able to be implemented.

There was no price cap imposed. The various flaws in this bill are substantial and you have been caught out. You are attempting to put a cap on retail, not wholesale prices. The moaning and groaning from the other side is palpable. I have asked the question in this place, and in public, who is going to pay for our teachers? Who is going to pay for our nurses? You have questions you need to answer from both the Leader of the Greens and from me. If you cannot, you simply come in here and apologise for this, or you could withdraw the bill all together.

They have been caught out, and in terms of taking us back to the dark ages, destroying jobs and investment, let me outline your thoughts on that. You cannot have it both ways. You have Mr Winter who says he wants to support this policy, but on the other hand he heads up to the north-west coast to Robbins Island, standing there with UPC and the construction of jobs in the region producing clean energy and of course requiring Marinus Link to be in operation. You said that the project would create hundreds of construction jobs in the region and produce clean energy for Tasmania and the rest of the country.

Again you have been caught out. On the one hand you are supporting being part of the National Electricity Market and supporting Marinus Link on the north-west coast just because it is convenient to you and perhaps your north-west coast colleagues, but then you come back down to Hobart and here you are saying, 'Let's not be part of the National Electricity Market'. You have been caught out. I ask the question: what is Labor's position with respect to exiting the National Electricity Market?

**Dr Broad** - It was your position.

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

**Mr BARNETT** - What is your position? I wonder what your federal counterpart, Chris Bowen, who I have had quite a bit to do with in recent weeks and days, would say about your position with respect to being part of the National Electricity Market. What would federal Labor say about your position of supporting the exit from the National Electricity Market? I draw that to your attention and hope you explain your position, because you did not want to when you were asked yesterday in the parliament. I asked, 'What is your position?', and you were mute, you said nothing.

**Ms O'Connor** - You are not allowed to respond.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - Order. Please just quieten down and let the minister finish his contribution.

**Mr BARNETT** - Labor could not even indicate whether it was a yes or no, so we look forward to the response from Mr Winter in that regard.

I referred in my opening remarks to scaremongering by Mr Winter, so let us just look at the evidence in recent days. On Tuesday 16 August you said that over the coming weeks and months these bills will keep rising -

**Mr Winter** - They will.

**Mr BARNETT** - Okay, so you have again confirmed on the record that they will keep rising.

**Mr Winter** - I can explain it to you if you like.

**Mr BARNETT** - Wow. Mr Deputy Speaker, through you, I am very concerned at his scaremongering again. This is reckless and you should be ashamed of yourself. You know that the independent economic regulator has set the price for 12 months right through to 30 June next year, and yet you are going out into the public arena saying prices will continue to go up. That is shameful and you should apologise on the public record. The independent economic regulator has set the price, so why do you do it, Mr Winter?

With respect to more scaremongering, I have had a customer on life support who has communicated with my office about their concerns at what Mr Winter has said based on his feedback and public statements on 14 June, a media release with the headline 'Lights potentially out for Tasmania'. In the first paragraph you say 'Tasmanians are being warned the lights could go off'. You are scaring the Tasmanian people. It is shameless, it is reckless, it is reprehensible and you should be ashamed. This is just not on. I notice of all the media releases you have had on your website you have either removed this from your website or you did not put it up because you have been caught out, because I have picked you up the very next day and now you have removed it from your website. I draw that to your attention.

From 14 June 2022, 'Lights potentially out for Tasmania as Barnett fails on energy policy' - that is your headline media release. You are scaring the Tasmanian people and you are doing it again. Part of your strategy is to run publicity stunts week in, week out, and you have been caught out again today with two pieces of evidence to back that in.

We are not going to put up with it. I want to pick up on some comments from the Leader of the Greens with respect to energy efficiency and I will do that in a minute, but we have a targeted approach and that is the \$180 bill buster discount for eligible concession card holders. We have made that clear, it is on the public record. In terms of support for those customers, let me make it clear that according to the latest advice there are 94 230 Tasmanians on concession cards, including those in embedded networks, caravan parks and the like, with an \$180 bill buster payment at a cost of \$17 million. Under our plan, concession card holders with lower to medium energy use are better off. Likewise, under our plan, most of those concession card holders would be better off than under Labor's 2.5 per cent electricity price cap. Eligible concession card holders would have started to see the one-off bill credit of \$119 in addition to the \$61 concession increase included in their August electricity bills, helping them offset any bill shock. In addition, eligible pensioners will continue to receive a payment of \$56 for a year as part of that heating allowance and that obviously continues.

In terms of electricity prices there was debate about it this morning; you were asking the Premier the question and he answered, but let us be very clear. Since coming to office in 2014, the Government has ensured electricity prices for Tasmanian residential customers have only increased by 5.8 per cent in nominal terms and actually decreased by 15.4 per cent in real terms. These are the facts that are on the public record. In terms of small business - and there is no greater supporter of small business in Tasmania than this majority Rockliff Liberal Government - since 2014, electricity prices have decreased 5.8 per cent in nominal terms and decreased by 25 per cent in real terms - 38 000 small businesses over that period of time.

The Leader of the Greens referred in her remarks to energy efficiency measures and there is a whole range of those, but the main one as part of that package was a boosted and expanded \$50 million Energy Saver Loan Scheme for residential customers and small business customers. The 38 000-plus small businesses out there will benefit as well with up to \$10 000 in terms of that loan to help them invest in energy efficiency measures to help future bill shock.

I was the minister some years ago when we had a similar energy saver loan scheme. It was a \$30 million scheme at the time over a number of years and that was really appreciated by those residential customers. I met many of them over the course of that period. I met many small businesses who really appreciated this. On the weekend I met someone who signed up and registered for one of those loans of up to \$10 000 because they want to improve energy efficiency. That loan will be over a number of years with no interest. You will see those benefits will flow and help save on cost of living and help save on the cost of doing business.

Thank you to Aurora Energy for rolling out the app out and to the Government for making sure there is no charge for the aurora+ app.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr BARNETT** - I am glad you support this. That is encouraging. It is a good initiative and it is good that there is support around the parliament for this initiative. It will help manage bill shock and keep downward pressure on prices depending on how they manage their electricity using the aurora+ app.

I congratulate the new member for Franklin, Dean Young, on his appointment. I was talking about small business. There is someone who knows about small business and who will be a champion for small business and a terrific family man. With Mr Young at the Neighbourhood House at Warrane we announced cost of living measures. One of those was providing \$1 million in extra support for vulnerable Tasmanians who are able to apply for the Aurora Energy customer support fund.

**Mr O'Byrne** - What about Gregory Brown?

**Mr BARNETT** - Gregory Brown was attending with me. Brownie would be very supportive of these measures to support and address the cost of living concerns. I am glad you made mention of Brownie. He is no doubt a champion for his community and the people of Pembroke. I look forward to catching up with Brownie very soon. I know he is held in high regard on the eastern shore and is a real champion for the local community.

Much of what we have done is a targeted response to support concession card holders and those vulnerable Tasmanians most in need. The electricity concession moves in line with

the change in retail prices, providing a shield for our most vulnerable electricity customers. It has increased to \$574.73 up \$61 per year. We are supporting those in need with more than \$65 million in electricity concessions to assist with cost of living pressures, including the \$17 million specifically related to the electricity price increases. As well as a reduction in the daily tariff rate eligible concession account holders have started seeing that one-off payment of \$119 appearing on their bill from this month.

The average concession customer bill has risen from about \$2.75 per week and non-concession customers have risen by \$4.73 per week. Labor is not telling Tasmanians that our \$180 bill buster provides a better outcome for most concession customers than Labor's 2.5 per cent price cap proposal. When you are out there with a concession card holder, you might mention that there is the \$180 winter bill buster payment for the concession card holder. Have you ever mentioned it to a concession card holder?

**Ms Butler** - I have. They said it will not even scratch the surface.

**Mr BARNETT** - I am pleased that one member of the Opposition has. I hope that Mr Winter follows.

Mr Winter asked me about our policy in 2018. The policy was to have the lowest regulated electricity prices in Australia or among the lowest by 2022. Our policy was to deliver 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy by 2022. We delivered that ahead of time.

**Dr Broad** - It is in print. The 'lowest' not 'among the lowest'.

**Mr Winter** - You said the lowest. It is 2022.

**Dr Broad** - You just said 'amongst the lowest'. It is the lowest.

**Mr BARNETT** - No, it is the lowest and we delivered the lowest in 2021 -

**Mr Winter** - No, this says 2022.

**Mr BARNETT** - We did it ahead of time. They are holding up the policy and we delivered it ahead of time. We delivered it in 2021. Being 100 per cent, fully self-sufficient in renewable energy was, from memory, November 2020. We were way ahead of time. I was at one of our totally new windfarms at Granville Harbour at the time, Capitol Hill being the other. These are changes that have occurred since 2018. We had two retailers at the time, and we now have seven. We now have two extra windfarms and are more energy secure than ever. We achieved those objectives in the 2018 policy.

Then in 2021, we took to the election a policy to grow our renewable energy future, to create more opportunities in providing affordable, reliable and clean electricity. We ensured that Marinus Link would progress through to financial investment decision in 2024, that we would support Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen.

They were all on the agenda and we are implementing that agenda. Whatever the views are for and against, we are implementing that agenda.

We are very pleased with the collaboration with your federal colleagues. I want to thank Chris Bowen for his collaborative and positive approach to our renewable energy policies in Tasmania, specifically Marinus Link.

The Labor policy of exiting the NEM would risk Marinus Link, it would damage our prospects to grow our economy and impact on our plans for Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. There is a very fast transition to renewable energy across the nation. I was in Canberra last week, meeting with the energy ministers from around Australia, and we know it is a fast-moving transition. The national transformation plan for Australia, which was signed off and agreed by all the energy ministers was that transmission of national significance included Marinus Link, VNI link, and Hume Link will be identified as transmission of national significance. This is a major step forward for Tasmania and for those transmission systems and projects. We already know that Infrastructure Australia has identified Marinus Link as a priority project. We already know that AMO, Australian Energy Market Operator, has identified Marinus Link as an actionable project that is 'urgent'.

This is good news for Tasmania and my fellow colleague Energy ministers have signed off on that and are backing this in. It says Marinus Link is front and centre. Federal Labor has a position. The other energy ministers around Australia have a position but state Labor seem to be all at sea. They do not know their position with respect to Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. I say come on board as soon as you possibly can. Get with the times because you are still stuck in the Dark Ages. You are still not up with the latest, and it is fast moving.

You know what they were saying in the parliament when I was there the week before? 'Renewable energy is the cheapest form of energy for Australia'. Guess what? We are the renewable energy power house in Tasmania. Come on board with the Government, with the people of Tasmania, with the community and get on board behind our renewable energy plans. Guess what? It is all based on growing the economy, creating more jobs, and delivering affordable, reliable 100 per cent clean electricity. It is a very exciting place to be. We are at the front end of that. We are a renewable energy power house in Tasmania and we have big plans.

We have legislated to go from 100 per cent to 200 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy by 2040. I have introduced that through the parliament. It has been supported across the parliament and we are on the way. I am confident we can achieve that by 2040. The feedback has been very positive. It is setting us up for green hydrogen. We have secured the funding from the federal government for Bell Bay to be a green hydrogen hub for Australia. It is very encouraging.

**Ms O'Connor** - You would not want any other sort of hydrogen, would you?

**Mr BARNETT** - There is brown hydrogen, there is blue hydrogen, there is grey hydrogen and there is green hydrogen. In Tasmania we have the best of the best. We are pleased about that. We are proud of that. It can attract industry to Tasmania. Whether it is green aluminium, green iron ore, green manufacturing. Tasmania is a very exciting place to be. We are ready and we are delivering. We are on the way but we want everyone on board including state Labor.

Federal Labor is on board. They provided funding support. I thank Chris Bowen and the federal Labor Government for backing the former coalition government's commitment to the \$70 million which matches ours for Bell Bay. There is a lot of work to do. Let me make it very clear. There is much work going on behind the scenes. I thank my department and across government for all their support. I thank the stakeholders for their commitment. I thank the Bell Bay advanced manufacturing zone for the work they are doing. This is very exciting stuff. We are on board. It is all go.

The Battery of the Nation was one of the matters we discussed when I met with Chris Bowen last week at the ministerial council. Part of that is Tarraleah. I thank the federal government for backing in with \$65 million with Tarraleah in our electorate, Mr Acting Speaker, in Ms Butler's electorate and my electorate of Lyons, in Tarraleah setting us up, doing the preliminary work to take it to financial investment decision for a \$700 million project. This is going to be enhanced by Marinus Link. Of course, this is going to be enhanced by Marinus Link. Come on board.

I thank Hydro Tasmania for their efforts to progress Tarraleah and plans for Lake Cethana in the Mersey Valley as a pumped hydro power station. That is very exciting. There is a lot of work going on. They are doing feasibility work on Lake Cethana. That is the first one; it is the first cab off the rank. The estimate is about 700 MW, \$1.2 billion or more, again, tied to Marinus Link. Come on, if you get the drift. It is happening. We want you to come on board. Come on board with us, please. Happy to have further discussions with you if you want. I know you have had briefings in recent times. You should be up to date with respect to at least electricity prices, but it seems you have not quite got up to speed on that.

What's your position on Nextera in Bass Strait? This is a major windfarm in the Bass Strait. What about the other billions of dollars in wind and solar? What about the \$2.7 billion windfarm for north-east Tasmania - 210 turbines, 1230 megawatts? We are talking about hundreds of jobs during construction and jobs ongoing. This is part of Tasmania's natural benefit and competitive advantage. We have a world-class wind resource. We have a world-class water resource. We are backing it in and we are playing to our strengths in Tasmania. That is what we are doing.

This will create opportunities for not just months or years ahead but decades ahead. Jobs, jobs and jobs: opportunities for families for new types of smart exciting jobs, but more than that there's going to be a cleaner world.

I go back to Marinus Link. I am talking about 140 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> that will be removed from the atmosphere by 2050. That is a million cars that will be taken off the road. There are environmental benefits, economic benefits and social benefits and so, come on board and support the Government's renewable energy policy agenda.

We do not want all this put at risk by state Labor. That is what is happening as a result of its position. Why would you want to exit the National Electricity Market and put all that at risk? Why would you do that? There is no point. I have made it very clear.

There is no government in recent history that is more committed to addressing cost of living than this majority Rockliff Liberal Government. Mr Rockliff, the Premier, has made it very clear. He is very concerned, like we all are in Tasmania on behalf of Tasmanians, about the increase in fuel prices. He has had discussions with the Prime Minister, I understand, and

federal government colleagues with respect to the fuel excise, cost of living. This is front and centre.

The federal government has also promised to reduce electricity prices by \$275 per year by 2025. Part of their plan is through the rewiring of the national \$20 billion fund to support projects like Marinus Link, like the NI Link, like the Hume Link. They have a \$20 billion fund and they want to be able to share those benefits. With respect to Marinus Link again, that is downward pressure on prices - \$4.5 billion of a benefit for Australia, including Tasmania, improved energy security, more jobs.

As I say, \$4.5 billion-worth of benefit in Tasmania, downward pressure on prices, improved energy security, more jobs, and a cleaner world. A million cars off the road, through you, Mr Acting Speaker, to the Leader for the Greens.

I thank this House for the opportunity to share a few remarks as to why we strongly oppose the bill put forward by my opposition's spokesperson.

Regarding the cost of living, as I said, there is nothing more important for Tasmanians at the moment. That is why we take it seriously. That is why we have made further announcements yesterday which really support Tasmanians who are most vulnerable and most in need through those neighbourhood houses, the family assistance program, the Aurora Energy hardship program, supporting organisations like Food Bank and Loaves and Fishes. I caught up with them just a week or so ago, and that was great with Royce Fairbrother and his team in Devonport. Supporting the NILS scheme - and you heard the quote earlier today from our general manager John, who said he was supportive of that \$150 000 investment in the NILS scheme. All up, that is some \$305 million in our budget - the 2022-23 budget - and forward Estimates providing \$305 million in concessions to help vulnerable Tasmanians with day to day living expenses, and we are very excited about that.

We want to work quite hard to support Tasmanians in need: cost of living, cost of doing business, and top priority issues for every day Tasmanians. As a government, we will leave no stone unturned. To continue to provide support we will monitor this situation carefully, and we will continue to do so. In the meantime, we do not want any more publicity stunts from the Labor opposition.

[5.42 p.m.]

**Dr BROAD** (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, the cost of living is a massive problem for households in Tasmania. We know that. We have been talking about that since parliament came back. It is also a problem for businesses that are really struggling. Their costs are increasing, and they are struggling to pass those increased costs onto customers who are already struggling. On top of that, we have major industrial customers - big, big employers in this state - that are renegotiating power contracts and seeing massive increases in their energy charges.

We have come into parliament today simply to ask through the legislation that we have proposed today to simply get the Liberals to stick with the policy that they had that they secretly walked away from. All we are asking for today is for the Government to do what they did in 2018 and cap electricity prices. It is not as if it has not been done before. All we want is for the Liberals to do what they have done before in 2018 - it cannot be that hard.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what is the difference between now and 2018? We know that 2018 was just before an election when it was announced that they were going to cut power prices. The difference that we are seeing now is that they are not interested because guess what? There is not an election coming. All we are asking for is the Government to stick with their plan for the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation. They said they would deliver the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation by 2022. Not 2021, the fudge that the minister was talking about.

**Mr Barnett** - We did it by 2021.

**Dr BROAD** - This document says 2022, which I might add is this year.

Much has changed since this document was put out. For example, there are a few people who have gone. There is premier Gutwein gone, premier Hodgman gone, and Ms Courtney is gone. If it was not for Elise Archer being photoshopped into this document the now Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, would be sitting there by himself. We did not hear from the minister in his 40 minutes that he was on his feet, an explanation, why is he denying that he could not do what this plan says? This plan talks about capping power prices and exiting the national energy market. That is what all these documents that he has been producing over the years have stated; that he could exit the national energy market and cap prices. In these same documents, he was spruiking the same projects that he is spruiking now. He was spruiking Marinus, he was spruiking pumped hydro at the same time as he was saying that Tasmania was going to exit the national energy market at the same time as they were capping power prices!

If indeed the minister now says that that was impossible, in his 40 minutes he should have been apologising to the Tasmanians he has been misleading since 2018. In 2018 he said you could exit the national energy market and cap power prices and have Marinus and pumped hydro and windfarms. I know after hearing your 40-minute whatever-that-was, that simply repeating 'you have been caught out' 10 times does not make a good argument, whereas I actually point out where you have been caught out in terms of all the stuff you have been spruiking since 2018, all the many speeches we have heard in this place, talking about how you could do exactly what you are now criticising Labor for bringing forward.

We know cost of living is a major problem, but the thing is, what are you doing about it? What are you doing about it for those mums and dads who are struggling with mortgage repayments, who are struggling with the increase in food prices, and who are now opening up their electricity bills and going, 'Oh my goodness, how come it has gone up?' It has gone up because power prices are going up 12 per cent when you said you would cap power prices and stop these increases on the mainland from flowing through to Tasmanians.

All we are asking for is for Tasmanians to pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. Keep your promises, minister. You are the one who has been caught out. Why do you not simply do what you did back in 2018, or are these sorts of policies and plans only election stunts? If that is the case, it is you, minister, who has been caught out. You have been caught out by your trickery, you have been caught out by your own words, and it is a disgrace.

[4.57 p.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I have only a brief period of time left but I will try to get to some things. This debate deserves more than an hour and a half. Energy policy in Tasmania is very important but we are constrained by the fact that we are the Opposition and

we only have an hour and a half. I appreciated Ms O'Connor's contribution. I did not agree with everything she said but she made some good points. She is obviously clearly well-versed, potentially from being part of the debate in 2018 in terms of the WEP order and the legislation that enables it.

As I said in my speech, I think it is 15 May when the Government needs to put the order in place and legislation needs to be enacted to allow them to do that. The Government announced eight weeks ago that it was not going to support this legislation; this legislation is not going to happen. If hypothetically they had a change of heart, they would need to enact the order for this to occur, and they could. The point is they have done it before so it is very difficult for this minister to argue that he cannot do it, because he has done it before. That is 12 times now you have been called out; I still have not been.

There was a lot to annoy me in that speech, but to put on the record regarding scaremongering, it was not Labor that said Tasmania could lose power on its own. We do not just make things up. It came from the Australian Energy Market Operator that said on Wednesday that jurisdictions, including Tasmania, could face a situation which has helped trigger warnings of blackouts in all NEM states, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

We did not make it up. It was from the national regulator. In fact, we asked for a briefing from the minister just because of these warnings and we were concerned about them, and so were Tasmanians. We got the briefing eight weeks later. I appreciate that we did eventually get the briefing after we had to ask repeatedly for them. It was originally cancelled, but we got the briefing and we appreciate that we eventually got it.

In my very brief time, Ms O'Connor, the bill is going to go down anyway but I am happy to discuss the general points of your question in energy policy in Tasmania at any time. Perhaps we can do an MPI at some stage and further discuss it. The point I wanted to make is that this Government long had an energy policy. It was an energy policy that Labor supported. We supported it through its first action, which was to cap electricity prices in 2018. So did the Greens.

**Time expired.**

**Mr SPEAKER** - The question is that the bill be read the second time.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 12**

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

**NOES 13**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Street  
Mr Tucker

Mr Winter  
Dr Woodruff

Mr Wood (Teller)  
Mr Young

**Mr SPEAKER** - There being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, in accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the noes. The Noes have it.

**Second reading negatived.**

## **MOTION**

### **State of the Environment Report - Motion Negatived**

[5.05 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House: -

- (1) Recognises the critical importance of regular State of the Environment reports to alert Tasmanians to the condition, trends and changes in our natural world.
- (2) Notes the Morrison government sat on the 2021 Australian State of the Environment report for over three months to avoid publication before the 2022 federal election.
- (3) Recognises the state Liberal Government has been even more negligent, and has missed the last two statutory deadlines - 2014 and 2019 - to produce a State of the Environment report.
- (4) Understands in the 13 years since the last report there have been enormous impacts on our state's natural systems and species from climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution, and intensive industrial extraction.
- (5) Understands the Government is currently undertaking a review of reporting requirements, the format of the report, and the most suitable authority for the work.
- (6) Calls on the Government to:
  - (a) commit to ensuring - at a minimum - that the next State of the Environment report, due in 2024, is delivered on time;
  - (b) commit to fully resourcing the Tasmanian Planning Commission to undertake this independent scientific assessment;
  - (c) commit to not reducing the frequency or detail of current legislative reporting requirements; and

- (d) ensure State of the Environment reports are produced independent of government, using robust and credible environmental data and scientific assessment.

The Greens know that the natural world holds the key to human wellbeing and survival. It is an absolute truth that without a healthy environment the Tasmania we know and love and the gifts that give us everything we need to sustain our lives are in a dire predicament.

The Australian State of the Environment report was released by the Labor government in July. The previous Liberal federal government received the report last year but Scott Morrison's government delayed the bad news until after the election. Playing politics with the environment is a very Liberal thing to do.

The national report paints a bleak picture of our ecosystems and biodiversity. The health of Australia's environment is poor and has deteriorated substantially over the past five years. The federal Liberals' inaction on climate change, reckless habitat destruction for development and resource extraction, a failure to properly act on invasive species and pollution, and woefully inadequate monitoring and environmental laws - these have all perpetuated a disastrous environmental decline across the Australian landscape including in the state of Tasmania.

The state Liberals are no better. The previous resources minister, Guy Barnett, tried to hide a report on the health of our waterways and a report on evasive species in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area appears to have gone missing. Our do-nothing Environment minister -

**Mr BARNETT** - Point of order, that allegation is untrue, and the member knows that.

**Ms O'Connor** - Do not withdraw it.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - I am not withdrawing it. It is a fact. The minister can stand up in adjournment and make a defence of that if he thinks so but that is a fact that we are putting on the record.

A report on invasive species in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area appears to have gone missing. Our do-nothing Environment minister has shown no appetite to fix our broken Crop Protection Permit system which enables the legal slaughter of hundreds of thousands of native animals every year. The minister, Mr Jaensch, also promised at the Estimates scrutiny table a year ago to legislate for an independent Environment Protection Authority (EPA) but he has never done that. The EPA continues to be hamstrung by being required to conform to Liberal policies and is under the direction and control of the minister and is required to facilitate productivity.

Maybe, worst of all, Tasmania has not released an official State of the Environment report since 2009. The last one was due eight years ago. The reports that should have been prepared by the Liberal Government - that are mandated by law - for 2014 and 2019 have not materialised. We have absolutely no idea how much damage Liberal policies are doing to our environment.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission failed to produce these crucial reports which by law it is supposed to undertake every five years. So, since 2009, no Government minister has intervened to kick-start the process - not the environment minister - we do not have evidence that we have an environment minister except in name; not the justice minister; not the planning minister; and not the Premier.

As it stands, there is still no plan on how this State of the Environment report will be produced, despite multiple reviews that have been conducted so far on whether some other body would be better placed to do that task. Worse still, there is no commitment to produce one at any particular time in the future, including by the next legislated five-year deadline of 2024.

State of the Environment reports give consolidated information on the condition and trends and changes in Tasmania's environment. Without them we have no information to tell us what we are overusing, abusing or losing altogether.

Since the last report in 2009 our environment has been pummelled with three high-impact bushfires, the salmon industry has doubled its industrial production in inshore and offshore waterways, our east coast waters have warmed more than four times faster than the global average. There have been massive changes, but we have no idea how far we have been pushing our natural systems. The Government is eight years overdue to produce a State of the Environment report. This is core business and it is critical advice to govern the budgets, the operations and the future planning of state and local governments, and also businesses and civil society.

That is why we are calling on the Liberal Government to uphold the law. Our motion calls on the Government to commit to ensuring at minimum that the next State of the Environment report is due in 2024 and is delivered on time. All we are asking for is the law. We also call for a commitment to fully resource the Tasmanian Planning Commission to undertake this independent scientific assessment and to commit to not reducing the frequency or detail of the current legislated reporting requirements and to make sure that the State of the Environment reports are produced independent of government using robust and credible environmental data and a scientific assessment process.

The Deputy Premier said last week he intends to delay this legally required work to do yet another unnecessary review. This shows his arrogant and dismissive attitude to our most important natural asset. In a climate and biodiversity crisis, we need immediate action to produce the report and not more stalling and roadblocks.

Any review into what mechanism and body ought best be responsible for producing a Tasmanian State of the Environment report can be conducted if the Deputy Premier sees fit as parallel process. We have no time to let the perfect be the enemy of the good. The Tasmanian Planning Commission did a perfectly satisfactory job in 2009 and it can do it again. It has overseen similar state-wide biodiversity assessments for our planning processes and is more than capable of appointing an appropriate and independent scientific panel to undertake the assessment. What it needs is to be fully funded by the Liberals to do that work. They have failed to do that since taking office in 2014.

You have to ask, why have the Liberals failed, despite the request from the Tasmanian Planning Commission, to provide the funding necessary for them to undertake their

independent assessment? It is obvious that the Liberals in government, like their federal colleagues, have been purposely breaking the law so that they do not have to justify their anti-environment policies. They seem more than happy to continue to do that. It is actually the way the world is, Mr Barnett.

**Mr Barnett** - That's a terrible allegation.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - It is true. You have broken the law twice, minister. You have broken the law twice.

Let us recount for people listening some of the environment-destroying activities of this Government and their future fantasies. Old growth logging continues unabated. It is the habitat for critically endangered species, so many of them: the masked owl and the swift parrot are just two that are very close to extinction.

The foreign-owned salmon industry has doubled over the past decade. The Liberal plan, supported thoroughly by Labor, is to double the salmon industry again. Algae blooms and seaweed growth is choking inland waterways. There is extensive land clearing from industries and developments because of a complete absence of effective environmental safeguards in our Tasmanian planning scheme, mineral exploration occurring in ancient Huon pine forests, and there's a plan for ancient rainforests to be sacrificed for a toxic tailings dam established by the CCP-owned MMG company. The autumn air is spoiled every year by incendiary forestry fires which emit hundreds of millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide and cause extreme health risks to people who have asthma and other respiratory conditions.

There are helicopter tourism and construction sites in pristine wilderness and a secretive EOI process which has more planned than the community does not know about. The Government is disrespecting Aboriginal heritage across land, sea and sky country. We have feral deer in plague proportions across the state. The waterways are polluted by salmon hatcheries and antiquated agricultural practices. The Government turns a blind eye to threatened and endangered species at best and at worst is developing policies or has policies which effectively oversee their pathway to extinction.

Marine debris is piling up on the west coast and salmon farm debris covers coastlines and waterway edges around all fish farm leases. Our rivers are being befouled by poor planning in the farming sector and there are invasive weed species lining thousands of kilometres of logging roads and elsewhere. These are all serious matters of fact that are well documented. There have been substantial changes in these areas since 2009 but we have no idea of the extent and the detail and the location of this damage because the Government refuses to produce a State of the Environment report. We are in the dark about the impacts that the Government is trying to hide.

We do not know what species are on the precipice of extinction. We do not know how our activities are affecting vulnerable species. There are many species that are not being documented that may well be at the point or beyond of being critically endangered. We do not know because their data has not been collected. We do not know what impact climate change is having on our unique mountain vegetation. Although it seems very probable, we do not know whether mass tourism is going to kill the golden egg.

It is a case of see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil and report no evil from the Rockliff Government. Our last State of the Environment report was 13 years ago. Since then there has been widespread environmental deregulation and key environmental bureaucracies have been politicised. The EPA's mandate to protect the environment has been eroded and replaced with top-down ministerial directors to facilitate business growth. Tasmania's iconic endangered species include the swift parrot, the masked owl, the maugean skate, the Tasmanian devil, the orange bellied parrot, wedge tailed eagles and red hand fish. These are all being threatened by ineffectual national and state environmental laws.

The threat to these species and their habitat is coming predominantly from industrial-scale native logging in Tasmania, inshore salmon farming, inappropriately placed windfarms, small- and large-scale developments that do not account for habitat impacts and property protection permits that allow wildlife to be legally killed. These are just some top line examples of failed laws in action. They sketch out the things a Tasmanian State of the Environment report would cover. There is so much more. A State of the Environment report like the federal State of the Environment report provides the state of the environment relative to all the parts of human societies that depend on it.

A proper State of the Environment report ought to tell us how we are tracking in food security, industry and resource use and the other aspects of life that are required from the environment that provide us with health and wellbeing; the quality of our air, the quality of the water that we drink. When the Liberal and Labor parties jointly support international corporations to raid our natural places, as they have done by our flag-waving JBS and Cooke Canada entering into Tasmania's waterways to farm salmon, they effectively allow them to monitor and report on their own impacts. Both those companies have been convicted and found to be criminally negligent on a range of environmental pollution offences. Both have suffered massive fines for their pollution of the environment and their purposeful hiding of information so that the community and governments are not aware of the impacts that they are having.

The special carve-out we have for native forest industries, in which the regional forest agreement is exempt from EBPC assessment, has precipitated the broad-scale clearing of native habitat and it is a core reason for the rapid decline of threatened species in Tasmania. The failure to include climate impacts in any state or federal assessments for developments or for resource extraction means that there is no capacity at the moment to effectively account for carbon emissions. We are very hopeful that the Greens, in our important position in the federal Senate, will make this a strong condition for the Labor Party who, without that leverage, would likely be very disinclined to want to add a 'climate trigger' into the EBPC and other environmental laws. It is essential. We need to have the same sorts of climate impact assessments required as part of developments in Tasmania and that is something that we will continue to advocate for.

We have no state documentation through a state of the environment report to tell us how much we are eroding our natural capital, but we do know from the many Tasmanians who are on the frontline witnessing and documenting that there is extensive damage and loss of species.

The palawa pakana, who are traditional and original custodians of lutruwita, have been caring for this island for tens of thousands of years. They never ceded that responsibility and we hear their pain and outrage at the destruction and exploitation of their heritage, which is ongoing. Also, scientists, especially climate scientists, biologists, psychologists, and people in environmental management research, as well as land care volunteers, conservationists,

wilderness walkers and guides, and photographers, all struggle to come to terms with the massive changes that are occurring in our natural systems that, 30 years ago, they understood were stable.

For many people, what they have researched or spent their life conserving is changing or disappearing entirely. Whether they work for UTAS, as government employees, privately, or as volunteers, they know, they see, they document, and they grieve. For many, it is an intolerable emotional burden. The Greens thank them for the work they are doing in keeping track of where we are. The least the Government can do is to recognise the reality of what is occurring and take the essential step of hastening an assessment of the condition and trends of our environment. We are in a climate and biodiversity crisis, but our current laws make it impossible to protect our life systems in Tasmania.

The multiple agency failures to deliver a report for 13 years are a deliberate tactic to hide the evidence of the impact of Liberal policies on the health of Tasmania's environment. With obvious government threats to climate and biodiversity, this is truly scandalous behaviour from multiple Liberal premiers. Past premiers Hodgman, Gutwein, and now Premier, Mr Rockliff, are all failing to deliver for the environment. Given Environment minister Mr Jaensch's reputation for doing nothing in this space, it is not surprising he has not demanded action.

Not only are the Liberals' policies a crime against nature, they are also breaking the law to cover it up. Let us not waste more time delaying a State of the Environment report. Our island's biodiversity needs are beyond urgent. This motion ensures that we expedite the State of the Environment report by 2024 at minimum. The Government has missed two already and we cannot delay any longer. The argument that we need to do another review when three have already been conducted is a purposeful red herring.

**Ms O'Connor** - Another delay tactic.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, it is stalling. What we need to do is do what past governments have done and resource the Planning Commission, which is an independent body. They have the planning expertise. They have the capacity, as they do regularly, with planning hearings to bring in experts. They would bring in experts with the appropriate scientific credentials. They would require the departments or the agencies to provide the data sets. The Government ought to fund the accumulation of information by those agencies, so that they can be assessed by the independent panel commissioned by the TPC.

Importantly, Mr Ferguson has mentioned another review and mentioned the reporting time frames within that. This motion calls on the Government to commit to not reducing the frequency or the detail of the current legislative reporting requirements. Five years is a very long time between drinks when there is a climate and biodiversity crisis. In our opinion, it is too long and we would propose to change that time period. At the very minimum, we cannot have longer than that. Three years is a much more realistic time frame. We are not calling on that at the moment. We are simply calling on the report to be conducted, by 2024.

We are also calling on the Government to commit that they will make sure that State of the Environment reports are produced independently of government. That means independently of the EPA, which is not a statutory body, as I said before. The legislation has not been provided. The EPA sits with a statement of expectations. It is required to facilitate

the productivity of businesses and to make sure that the activities and the decisions of the EPA board and director fit within the Government's policies.

The Government's policies in the space of the salmon industry is to double the size of the salmon industry. What a surprise that we find time and time again that the EPA continues to find a workaround in the weak legislation to make sure that there is effectively no level of biomass or nitrogen that will be capped, even in inshore waters.

Even though Mark Ryan, I think he still is the CEO of Tassal, before the name legally changes to Cooke Canada, made a commitment in 2017 that Tassal would move out of inshore waters, would move out of Brabazon Park, would move out of Tinderbox. Instead, what we have seen is that they have gone back into Brabazon Park, which at the time was empty of leases and they have expanded the biomass in Tinderbox. Also they have now moved into Long Bay and have been there for long enough to utterly change that marine landscape.

We have seagrass that has disappeared. It has been replaced with a snot algae and slimy green seaweed. Everything else, the beauty of those seagrass meadows, which supports a whole range of beautiful animals like handfish, potentially of all sorts, is disappearing or gone.

We cannot leave it up to the corporates and we cannot leave it up to the Liberals to get away with making policies that have an impact on the environment. If you have nothing to hide, then do the report and show us the state of the environment. If you are so happy with what you are doing, then give us the information and we can make that assessment. The Liberals should provide a State of the Environment report before the next election, because you are obviously proud of what you are doing, you are fully committed. It needs to be here before the date of the next election, 2025.

If you have nothing to hide and you are proud of it, then provide a State of the Environment report, make sure it is independent, make sure it has a proper scientific-credentialled panel doing the work, and that the TPC is in charge of the job.

[5.31 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Deputy Premier) - Mr Speaker, I am happy to rise on behalf of the Government and speak to this motion and indicate from the outset that the Government does not support the motion.

**Ms O'Connor** - Why not?

**Mr FERGUSON** - For reasons that I will fully articulate in a moment. Suffice to say that, listening very carefully as I did in total silence and hanging off each sentence that Dr Woodruff was highlighting, I was surprised at how many inaccurate statements one speech can contain, the most obvious one being that the EPA is not an independent statutory authority. It surprised me greatly. It was something I thought every member here would know. That is precisely what it is and set up by this House. I believe the former government established the EPA as an independent statutory authority before I was elected to this place. For a member of the Greens to get that statement about the EPA wrong really surprised me. I would have thought that a Greens' politician would be all over the EPA, would be intimate with its governance and legislation.

**Ms O'Connor** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ms O'Connor, order. Your member has been heard in silence. I expect the same for the Deputy Premier.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I did not expect it to be heard in silence. It is the truth that it is independent and it is a statutory authority. That is established in an act of this parliament. I would have thought that a Greens' member would know that. I would have thought a Greens' member would be all over its legislation, its governance, its annual reports.

To hear you, Dr Woodruff, make those statements-

**Dr Woodruff** - It is amusing that you are talking about acts of parliament when you are breaking the law.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Dr Woodruff, if you are not happy to sit there and listen to what the minister has to say, then I will ask you to leave. Not at the moment, but if you are not happy - stay there and listen.

**Dr Woodruff** - I was talking a bit loudly to Ms O'Connor.

**Mr SPEAKER** - That response, in itself, is enough for me to throw you out. I will allow you to stay there, but if you say any more, I will ask you to leave.

**Mr FERGUSON** - That was enough to throw the whole debate off course for people who may be listening or members of the House who would trust Dr Woodruff's statements. It misleads the debate.

Also, a rather offensive statement was made a few times. I believe it is unparliamentary to be accusing any minister of breaking the law. That is false, it is unfounded, and it is wrong. I will come to this later in my contribution to make the point that the act does say that the Tasmanian Planning Commission shall do this report and has clearly not done the report. There will be no disputing the facts on that point, but that will obviously be a claim that the member could make against the commission, not against Mr Barnett, Mr Jaensch, or me, or indeed the Government.

I understand the emotion; I understand where it is coming from. I understand why the Greens and many Tasmanians, including those who are not members of the Greens or in environmental politics, would want to see and expect to see this report conducted. The way it has been brought before the House today is pretty unprofessional and thoroughly unhelpful.

We are aware that the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission, which is another independent statutory authority, has not prepared a State of the Environment report since 2009. It is correct when you say twice missing the five-year review period that the act provides for - the act being the State Policies and Projects Act. It is the case, I understand, that the last report was produced in 2009. You might have expected one to be produced in 2014. There was an election in 2014, a change of government in March. It had not been commissioned because this Government had no role in telling the commission not to do one nor to stop one if it had started one. It had not been started in the term of the previous government but I dare say it is not something that the previous Labor minister - I think it was Mr Green - would have had a role in commissioning because it was not his duty to do so. It was the Planning Commission.

It is equally the case that under our Government, the same report has also not been commissioned but it is not commissioned by the Government. You are reflecting, of course, who was in office at the time as the government, noting that government is independent of the statutory authorities. That is the whole point. We are aware of it. We are all of the view that it is unsatisfactory and it needs to be resolved.

I am also aware that the independent review of the commission that was conducted, and I believe Mr Jaensch has detailed this at previous Budget Estimates hearings, concluded that given its other statutory functions and roles and responsibilities, the Planning Commission is not the appropriate body to prepare the State of the Environment report.

Members around the Chamber might have a different opinion on that but it would seem to me to make a lot of sense that you have a range of organisations across government - departments; agencies; some independent, some not; it would be an odd choice to choose the Planning Commission to undertake the State of the Environment Report. That is precisely what the independent review found.

It is for that reason that the Government then tasked the Deputy Secretary Steering Committee to undertake a review of the current State of the Environment reporting requirements with the aim of providing advice to Government on who should be responsible for its preparation and then to get on with it and do it.

As the new Minister for Planning since April of this year, that work had already commenced, Dr Woodruff. I requested that that work be given higher priority and I expect to be in a position to make an announcement in the coming weeks. I am aiming for September. I have said as much in the media in response to other stakeholders. It is not a new review; it is not a further review; it is not a delay, as I believe Dr Woodruff said. It is the opposite. I have sought that it be dealt with. I am looking for clarity. All members here should expect that. I intend to find a solution and share it with the House.

In the meantime, we have to remember that the Planning Commission is an independent statutory authority with a number of important assessment and review roles and functions within our land use planning system. It is undertaking a range of tasks.

The commission has reported various issues in relation to the State of the Environment report within its own annual reports dating back to at least 2013-14, if not earlier. The commission has been raising that it has concerns with the costs and the limited benefits of the report under the current methodology and reporting requirements. I imagine that may explain why no report has been conducted in that time.

I am advised that preparation of the 2009 report was considered an expensive and time-consuming exercise, yet going by the overview, which I understand is the only part of the report currently available online, we ended up with a backwards looking scorecard as the minister, Mr Jaensch, reflected in his answer this morning - a backwards looking scorecard of various environmental matters with little or no application or functional purpose.

You do not often hear the 2009 report - I would be very surprised if this was a real point of order.

**Ms O'CONNOR** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is confused. The State of the Environment report by its nature looks backward at the state of the environment. He does not seem to know what he is talking about.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is not a point of order, and you know it, Ms O'Connor. The minister is allowed to make his contribution. I have asked for it to be heard in silence without interjection or points of orders that just make a point.

**Mr FERGUSON** - They cannot do it, Mr Speaker. All they can do is rattle off their own inaccuracies and completely misleading statements about the EPA, but they do not like to hear a different point of view. My point of view is to let people know that whatever the value that they attach to that 2009 report - well, it is not even referred to by the northern and southern regional land use strategies, not a single reference. It is referred to in the Cradle Coast strategy, but it is only a single reference, and it is in the bibliography, not in the actual strategy.

A bit of context might be useful here, but the Greens seem to have misunderstood their own argument on this. I will say again, it is not good enough, it is not satisfactory that the agency expected under law to produce the report has not. I do not deny that. It is unsatisfactory. We are going to address it, and we are going to have a solution identified in the coming weeks. I am aiming for September.

As for discussions around legal manoeuvres to force the matter in court, I will not comment. Agencies or individuals can make their own mind up on that. It is common knowledge in both Houses that the idea of me directing the TPC to do a report which it is already required to do strikes me as nonsense. How would a direction from a minister have any greater effect on the commission than the very act of parliament that requires it to do anyway?

To the best of my knowledge, no minister for planning, Liberal or Labor, has ever given the commission a direction under section 7 in relation to this, or indeed any other matter. At the end of the day the commission - I am speaking of the Planning Commission - just like the EPA, is a completely independent statutory body. It does operate at arm's length from government, it is governed by legislation and appropriately so.

In relation to the EPA I will point out that the Government is moving to have a greater level of separation from government. That is something the Government has committed to in the last 12 months. Already, a forward facing payment has been made in the Budget and forward Estimates of \$10 million to achieve structural and organisational separation and legislation is coming. I hope that Dr Woodruff has the grace to acknowledge that the minister, Mr Jaensch, is pioneering this work, and rather than constantly running him down, she should be praising him for doing that work which will include consultation with the public before it comes to this House. The Government respects and values that independence, and not just on those occasions when it suits us. I have already made it clear that we are making progress on this.

When you take it as a whole, what the motion proposes is problematic. One of the things it does, apart from all of its free advice in parts (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5), it calls on the Government to again confirm the role of the Tasmanian Planning Commission to undertake the independent scientific assessment. For the reasons I have already outlined, and the

recommendation from the independent review, that is not supported by the Government. Others can make up their own minds.

The other thing I would like to say, because we ought to be able to have some agreement, I am noting that Dr Woodruff is calling for the next report to not miss its deadline in 2024. I do not have a problem with that. That is a deadline that we would be happy to take on as a challenge. I do not see that as unreasonable and I would seek to beat that deadline. We will be announcing who will be responsible for preparing Tasmania's State of the Environment report, how it will be achieved, time lines for completion and the way in which it will be released. There may be need to change the legislation. I think it is self-evident that the legislation is somewhat redundant and we will need to address that. I hope to go some way towards satisfying anybody who continues to have concerns around these matters that I have moved. The Government has moved swiftly on this.

I look forward to the advice that would allow us to be open and explain who will do the report, when it will be done by, the structure of that report and its usefulness, not just from an environmental knowledge point of view but also for any role that it may have for the planning system. As I have indicated, even the report that we do have has not been picked up in the regional land use strategies. I do not think you can count the north-west Cradle Coast strategy as a particularly useful contribution when it is only mentioned in the bibliography.

I will leave my remarks there to make sure that others have the opportunity to speak. I could go on but this is a poorly framed motion and I am not able to support it. The Government does not support it. With those comments, Tasmanians can look forward to progress being made on this matter which has obviously been a problem for the Planning Commission for many years.

[5.46 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward this matter for debate in the House today, particularly in light of the actions that have been taken by the newly elected federal Labor Government to publicly release the State of the Environment report after it was not released by the former Liberal government.

The Labor Party is comfortable with paragraphs up until (6)(b) and that is only because in the member's motion she writes:

- (5) Understands the Government is currently undertaking a review of reporting requirements, the format of the report, and the most suitable authority for the work.

Then (6)(b) calls on the Government to fully resource the TPC to undertake this independent scientific assessment. The documents that I have been able to source, including those through right to information requests that have been made publicly available, and in conversations that have occurred at the Estimates table, it is very clear that the Tasmanian Planning Commission does not think it is the right place to conduct this work and will not conduct this work.

**Dr Woodruff** - That is not actually true.

**Ms WHITE** - In the RTI documents that I have in front of me, it is very much explicitly stated. There is a ministerial which is from 2019 that goes to the minister for planning and its recommendation states that you:

1. **Note** that the Commission has a statutory obligation to produce a State of the Environment (SoE) and a Report has not been able to be produced since 2009;
2. **Note** that the Commission has insufficient resources to produce a report capable of meeting requirements of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*;
3. **Approve** a review of the SoE reporting in Tasmania specifically addressing:
  - which agency should be responsible, and
  - the content of the report;
4. **Agree** that the Department of Justice (DoJ) undertake the review and that a representative of the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) be included in the Governance arrangements for the review; and
5. **Note** that a briefing from the Acting Executive Commissioner of the TPC will follow the presentation of this Minute.

**Dr Woodruff** - None of those things are a problem with our amendment.

**Ms O'Connor** - You should have a look at the 2004 State of the Environment report.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Ms WHITE** - I have not finished, should I be allowed to continue. There are clear exchanges between the Executive Commissioner of the Tasmanian Planning Commission, John Ramsay and members of the Department of Justice. As well, there are exchanges between ministerial advisers, together with advice that was provided to help with answers that were sought through the Estimates process, which make it pretty clear that the Tasmania Planning Commission does not think it is the right place to do the State of the Environment report.

There is no doubt that the report needs to be completed. The Labor Party is very happy to support the motion with respect to every other element except for that one. I will be moving to amend it to remove paragraph (6)(b) of the motion as it stands with all the other elements, maintaining the integrity of what you intend, which is that the State of the Environment reports are produced independent of government using robust and credible environmental data and scientific assessment, that they are delivered in the time frame necessary, and that there is no reduction in the frequency or detail currently expected of reporting requirements. There will need to be a change made to the act. The minister has referenced that in his statement.

I am interested to learn from the minister's contribution that he intends to provide a full update, hopefully by September, based on the review that commenced in 2018. The State of

the Environment report has been ongoing for some time now. In that same minute that went to the Minister for Planning, it is very clear that the Tasmanian Planning Commission was in a vexed situation. It said:

**KEY ISSUES:**

1. The TPC is in a quandary.

That is in a minute to the minister. It says:

1. The TPC is in a quandary.
2. The TPC *must* produce a SoE report.
3. The TPC cannot produce the SoE report because it:
  - a) cannot finance production of the report; and
  - b) it is now the wrong agency to have responsibility for the report.

**Ms O'Connor** - Because they never get any money.

**Ms WHITE** - That is in the minute. 'It is now the wrong agency to have responsibility for the report'. My interpretation of that is not that it is strictly because they have not got the resources. It is because they do not believe they are the right agency to have responsibility for the report. It is useful to note that this minute outlines the total cost of producing the 2009 State of the Environment report was in excess of \$1 million over five years. With CPI, this figure would now be in excess of \$1.25 million. This would amount to additional \$250 000 a year for the budget. The commission is also seeking additional funding for the assessment of the draft local provisions schedule.

It goes on to more fully explain why the TPC is the wrong agency to have carriage of the report. I will share that with the parliament too. It states:

There are two reasons for this predicament.

1. SoE reporting in Tasmania was established to:
  - provide an assessment of environmental condition;
  - provide a means by which the effectiveness of actions taken to protect the environment could be evaluated;
  - report environmental progress on a State, regional or catchment basis;
  - identify environmental issues that would require policy, planning, management or resource allocation decisions;

- provide an active management tool by which resources could be allocated on the basis of priority, or can be redirected to minimise adverse environmental effects; and
- supplement any national report which may be produced.

These objectives were consistent with, and applicable to, the functions of the authority then responsible for producing the SoE report - the Sustainable Development Advisory Council (SDAC).

The objectives are no longer applicable to the remit and functions of the TPC. The TPC performs a range of statutory and advisory functions for the use of land, including the assessment of planning schemes and planning scheme amendments.

Relevantly, the TPC has produced only one SoE report, in 2009. In a subsequent review of the report it was found to be:

- Unconnected and of little or no utility to policy or government decision making;
- A questionable use of the human and financial resources of, primarily government, data holders; and
- An out-of-date collation of information that is available, in more and better detail elsewhere.

It goes on, I will not read all of it. It is publicly available, published as a story that is available through the ABC online news service and the department's RTI log.

We should be able to conclude from the review that has been ongoing from 2018, and which has dragged on, that we will hopefully identify the best place within government agency for this report to be developed. I am pleased to hear the Government commit they will seek to deliver one by 2024, which is the next statutory time line for the delivery of State of the Environment report.

I agree with the mover of the motion that the State of the Environment report should be produced based on independent, robust, credible environmental data and scientific assessment. I note in Estimates this year, I asked the minister for the Environment about the delay in the delivery of the State of the Environment report and where he thought the State of the Environment report should be developed within government. I will quote him. I asked:

Minister, do you have a view on where responsibility for the State of the Environment report should sit within government?"

Mr Jaensch said:

I believe that the responsibility still technically sits with the TPC. That was due to be reviewed and with the Planning Policy Unit, as it was formerly known, now residing in DPAC alongside other areas of state planning policy work I expect that's the right place for it to be reviewed in the context of the

other statewide planning and policy work that's underway, so I don't have a firm view.

I then asked a further question: 'Can I take it from that, minister, that you think that work should remain within the planning agency?'

Mr Jaensch said:

I think we've taken planning and relocated it to DPAC alongside a range of other responsibilities for statewide planning and policy work. I think that's the right area to be considering the future of the State of the Environment report production in Tasmania.

That would indicate that it would be produced from within DPAC which is different from what you have asked for in your motion, Dr Woodruff.

In the limited time I have left, I would like to point again to information that was shared through the Right to Information process in March this year when the Tasmanian Planning Commission was working with the Department of Justice to understand how they might respond to exactly these questions when they are asked in the Budget Estimates process, essentially saying that they are still in a state of flux:

It was a subject of questioning in the Legislative Council Budget Estimates last year. The Executive Commissioner advised that he was not working on the State of the Environment report and he has no doubt the issue will be raised in Budget Estimates again this year and the minister will need to provide a response about the Government's intentions. If asked in Budget Estimates, 'I am not in a position to advise any differently to what I stated last year. Are you able to advise on whether the policy deliberations on this matter have gotten to since last year?'

That illustrates to me that the Government has dropped the ball on this since the review began in 2018. The staff within the TPC and Justice were really rushing to try and find answers to questions they knew would inevitably be asked about where the State of the Environment report is. If the Government really is going to deliver something in September, we probably will not hold our breath because we have been waiting four years already.

I indicate we will support the motion with amendment. I will move an amendment which is to remove (6)(b) from the motion as moved by Dr Woodruff. I do not have a copy of that but I can quickly scribble something down. I am sure everybody understands what I have just said.

[5.58 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Very briefly, Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been an interesting and a really worthwhile debate that this House had to have. We can live with that amendment. However, the reason that the Tasmanian Planning Commission is in a position where it is saying 'we are probably not the right body to do this' is because of resourcing and because of political constraints.

It is really important that this Planning minister understands the State of the Environment report does need to look back. You need to have a look at the state of the environment at the time of the reporting, which means the science has to underpin a backwards look at the State of the Environment report since the last report had been tabled, which is usually, under statute, five years.

I say this to the minister. I have seen State of the Environment reports that were produced, I think, by Tasmania's Department of the Environment back in 2003 or 2004. They were high quality scientific documents, informed by the expertise that we have inside and outside government at places like, for example, CSIRO and IMAS. It is possible to do this with the expertise that we have and we cannot let something as critical as the State of the Environment report be something that is done by a private consultancy that is not informed by the expertise and the science that we have in government and not that far away from us here on the waterfront at nipaluna/Hobart.

I am comfortable and thank you for the amendment. I commend Dr Woodruff for bringing this on and for her relentless dedication to nature and Tasmania's environment.

**Time expired.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The time for debate has expired. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to -

**The House divided -**

**AYES 12**

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

**NOES 12**

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - The result of the division being 12 Ayes and 12 Noes, therefore in accordance with the standing order 167 I cast my vote with Noes.

**Motion, as amended, negatived.**

## CLIMATE CHANGE (STATE ACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 63)

### Second Reading

**Resumed from above (page 62).**

[6.06 p.m.]

**Ms DOW** (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I was talking about the recent terrible storm events in the Kentish municipality and the enormous toll that took on their community. When we met with them as a Labor team, they expressed to us not only the physical toll of having to undertake a clean up, but also the mental load on many people after losing a highly respected member of their community during that event. It shows the importance of local government and the state government working together around the impacts of climate change.

Our amendments are all about the importance of local government and state government working together. Severe weather events are a particular example of where the mental health and wellbeing of a community is impacted significantly by the adverse effects of climate change. In Tasmania we are experiencing more and more of them.

In conclusion, I thank Rebecca White, the Leader of the Opposition, for her contribution and look forward to further debate on this bill and the committee and us having an opportunity to put forward our amendments and seek the support of those in the Chamber to make this a more robust bill.

[6.07 p.m.]

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the bill, to make some comments on the bill obviously, but to express my disappointment that it is not much stronger. I have close experience with this legislation, because I was the minister for climate change between the years 2010 and 2014.

It is important to remind the House of the history. This legislation came about as a result of former premier Paul Lennon's epiphany, where he suddenly discovered climate change. I think it was something to do with spending time with his grandchildren. He established something quite extraordinary at the time, which was a climate change office, a whole-of-government response to emissions reduction and adaptation, Wedges reports so that government agencies were required to feed into this report their emissions and their capacity for emissions savings. Some really good, strong preliminary work was done back in 2007 and 2008 to deliver the legislation that we are tinkering with today.

Paul Lennon, Jeremy Rockliff, Rebecca White, Mr Jaensch just cannot say the F-word. They cannot acknowledge the role of forests in mitigating the worst effects of climate change. It is just something they really struggle to talk about. Ministers and premiers say, 'Look at our climate positive profile' but it is so clear that our accounts started turning positive on a graph as a result of the Tasmanian forest agreement vote and the 576 000 hectares of carbon rich forest which were set aside from logging. That is the reason we have the climate profile that we have. It is the reason that we are now, on paper at least, a carbon sink. It is the reason why aspiring to have an emissions reduction target of net zero by 2030 is weak. That is where we are now. We have had the minister say we are going to grow as a state so we just need to maintain net zero. I hear that. I have heard him say it, but the fact is, it is not particularly

ambitious to say eight years from now we will be in basically the same position on our climate profile as we were in 2022.

There are a number of things that this Government could be doing short of tinkering with the Climate Change (State Action) Act. Why is the Government not proposing to upgrade the amazing climate futures work? Is there any attention being paid to an update of this work? This was work that was initially undertaken by a Labor government and then by two Greens ministers for climate change in a Labor-Greens government. It is comprehensive, easy to read, a tool for everyday Tasmanians, landowners, industries and for government to understand the impact of global heating on this island out to the year 2100 under a range of emission scenarios. As I hope every member in this House has grasped, we are on a high emission trajectory.

I am sure my colleagues have seen the pictures this past week of the drying up of the Rhine River in Germany. In France, the Loire River, drying up; half of England, dirt, dust, brown - that same brown that the Midlands here sometimes go in very hot, dry summers. We are seeing glaciers collapse, and there are fires raging across the planet. That is why Dr Woodruff and I sometimes get so frustrated. We cannot understand how any government, any minister, any opposition - whether it is here, or in Canberra, or in any other part of Australia - cannot see that this is urgent. It requires courage, leadership, clear communication and investment: investment in emissions reduction, investment in helping communities adapt.

It is deeply regrettable that a person who is now the climate minister who was on a climate action council is delivering some amendments to legislation two years late that contain no ambition, no sectoral targets. We have had very little said by this minister about the science of climate change. I hope Mr Jaensch has at least looked at the climate futures work. It is extraordinary. It is world-leading science because we have here on our doorstep world-leading climate, atmospheric and Southern Ocean scientists. They are our advisers to help chart this beautiful island and its community through what is going to be a very hard century.

I encourage the new minister for climate change to have a good look at climate futures because, as a tool for Tasmanians to understand the impacts, there was nothing like it. There is still nothing like it because most of the material in this report, and the associated reports, is still contemporary and relevant today.

I had a very interesting briefing the other day with a senior person connected to Government. We were talking about the climate and this person told me that the highest source of emissions in Tasmania is transport. I said, 'No you are quite wrong, you need to read Dr Jen Sanger's paper'. Fortunately, Mr Jaensch has not been foolish enough to join the pile on, but we have had ministers in here denigrate Dr Sanger's work without having a look at the methodology, the conclusions, the references, without approaching this issue with the necessary open-mindedness.

As a consequence, our new Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management and our minister responsible for logging, who denigrated Dr Sanger's work as he postured around this Chamber, has been fact checked by RMIT and found to be completely wrong on forest carbon.

As Dr Woodruff pointed out, when forests are logged the vast majority of our native forests do not go to hardwood, long term, carbon sequestering products. From a total forest biomass of 100 per cent, about 29 per cent goes to pulp, about 60 per cent is left on site. The

slash that is burnt, 7 per cent to peeler logs, 4 per cent to saw logs, 1 per cent to sawn timber, 24.5 per cent to paper products and a lot of that will be toilet paper. It is very clear that logging native forests is damaging the climate as we speak.

Emissions per sector in Tasmania: waste - 3.9 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent; transport - 1.8 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent; logging, if you count it properly - 4.21 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. The 4.21 million tonnes of carbon emitted by forestry is equivalent to the annual emissions from a million cars, the annual emissions of 237 000 Australian homes, close to six times the emissions of the Tasmanian tourism industry and 388 000 return flights to London.

As Dr Sanger points out, in her outstanding report, which I will be sending to this person who thought that transport was the biggest emitter, the issue here is that:

Forestry emissions are reported in a category called 'land use change and forestry' which has been set up by the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change. This includes all the emissions and carbon removals that occur on land. Emissions from native forest logging and the carbon dioxide drawn down by forests are both included in this category and are reported as a net figure. This net figure makes it impossible to tell how many greenhouse gas emissions are coming from logging and how much carbon dioxide all of the forests are drawing down from the atmosphere.

As Dr Sanger points out we need more detailed reporting that separates logging emissions from the carbon removed by forests so policy makers can make better decisions when it comes to managing our forests. When they see the napalm burn clouds that are a result of our native forest logging industry, everyone knows that that is pollution that is going straight up into the atmosphere and it will be there for more than a century. It will make our children's lives very difficult.

Everyone here, when they are thinking about it rationally and stripping back the politics, knows that native forest logging is unsustainable, if for no other reason, from a climate perspective. If you are not concerned about biodiversity, water quality, soil impacts, if for no other reason, native forest logging is a crime against the climate. Our greatest gift to the world in so many ways is to protect our forests. The carbon in those forests is our great social, economic, moral wealth. We have a moral obligation to keep that in the ground because forests are the best carbon capture technology there is.

Before I close and hand over to Mr Barnett - who am I quite glad does not have the Resources portfolio anymore but I am very glad has Housing - I want to read some of the speech Mr Owen Fitzgerald made at the Protestival, which was on the lawns of Parliament House last Saturday morning. Owen Fitzgerald is an impressive, bright, fiercely passionate young man. This is the speech he gave at Protestival, a part of it that is relevant to this issue, knowing that there is legislation sitting in the upper House which would restrict young people, people like Owen Fitzgerald's right and capacity to protest for a state safe climate.

Owen says:

I am here today fighting for my future and the future of my generation and those to come. I am here fighting to have my voice heard. The fight for the

climate and youth futures go hand in hand. Protests have shaped modern society and that is how my future will be decided.

Without protests, we would not be living in this kind of society. However, I have to protest in a modern society as I am deemed too young, uneducated or brainwashed around topics such as climate crisis. I am ignored by politicians. I am told to go back to school to get an education, that I am ruining my future.

The youth of society have to fight. We have to be loud and we must take action because you, the Government, refuse to listen. The climate crisis is critical and this Government wants to silence those who care enough to fight.

Both the federal and local governments of Australia are still content with killing our world. They still allow the development of coal and gas mines and refuse to begin the phase-out of these developments as they see the economic benefits as a higher priority than the future of the Australian people and the natural environment. They see forestry as a higher priority to their positions within parliament and for the economy. What they fail to see is the environmental impacts and crisis they are supporting and causing. They are failing to see that they are ripping the youth of their future.

This bill makes some quite modest changes to the climate management framework in Tasmania. We have had a Government that has de-prioritised climate and I hope that we are going to see a turn around here. It is the UN decade of ecosystem restoration. We can have climate and biodiversity benefits if we are investing in restoration, like the fantastic work that has been done in the Midlands, led by scientist Neil Davidson in and around Ross, and by farmers such as Roderick O'Connor and Julian von Bibra who are doing fantastic work on carbon farming. We need some more resources in this space.

I commend to every member of this House this production by photographer Rob Blakers. This is the McKimmie Forest, which is the forest that Chinese state-owned mining company MMG wants to put a toxic mine waste dump in. You cannot look at the pictures in this beautiful book and think it is acceptable in a time of climate and biodiversity crisis to approve a project when there are alternatives that would drive a creature like the masked owl to extinction.

Let us, as a parliament, as responsible adults, do better. We will ultimately support this bill but we will be moving some amendments. I encourage all members of this place to acknowledge that it makes the Tasmanian people very happy indeed when they see people working together on issues of this magnitude that will have such an effect on their lives, their future and that of their children. What we can agree on here, we absolutely have to. We owe it to the people who put us here.

[6.24 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to support this bill. It is a proactive approach. Tasmania is a leader in climate change action, having achieved our target of net-zero emissions seven out of the last seven years. It is quite a record.

We have been 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy ahead of time, in November 2020. I was at the Granville windfarm when we made that announcement. One of

our great assets in Tasmania is a world-class wind resource and a world-class water resource. I will share more about that shortly. We are on the right track in harnessing that competitive natural advantage for the benefit of Tasmanians to deliver jobs, growth, opportunities and a cleaner world. We are pleased to support this bill and to identify the emissions reduction target of net-zero emissions by 2030.

I was at the energy ministers meeting in Canberra on Friday last. It was very encouraging because Tasmania is ahead of the pack. I thank Chris Bowen for his collaborative and positive approach to working with Tasmania to achieve very good outcomes for the state. I was able to say on the public record that Tasmania is a renewable energy powerhouse and ahead of the pack when it comes to affordable, reliable, 100 per cent clean renewable energy. That is very encouraging.

We have legislated to go from 100 per cent to 200 per cent by 2040, and 150 per cent by 2030. I am quite confident of that. We are already on track. There are two new windfarms, Cattle Hill and Granville Harbour, in the last number of years. We have a long way to go, and we have a very ambitious renewable energy target.

As Minister for Energy and Renewables, working with the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Mr Jaensch, together with our cabinet and parliamentary colleagues, we want to deliver a nation-leading framework on climate change. We want to deliver action to reduce emissions across all sectors of our economy. We want to do that by ensuring that we can at the same time grow our economy and deliver more jobs. That is part of our plan. I am focused on increasing renewable energy generation, producing green hydrogen, which I will talk more about shortly, supporting the use of renewable energy to reduce emissions across our economy while we grow our jobs.

The response to climate change is more than mitigating and adapting to risks. Climate change presents economic opportunities as part of that global transition to a low-emissions future. We could do that here in Tasmania, as I say, relying on and leveraging off our natural assets in a world-class water resource and a world-class wind resource. In Tasmania we have 1 per cent of Australia's landmass, 12 per cent of Australia's rainfall, but 27 per cent of Australia's water in storage. That is a great asset and we are making the most of it. Not only now, but this all started 100-odd years ago thanks to the pioneers of this great state in living, breathing, and building our hydro-electric dams. We have now 30 power stations and more than 50 lakes. That is why we are the renewable energy powerhouse of this nation. With opportunity to back affordable, reliable and 100 per cent clean electricity, we are leading in Australia. In fact, there are very few jurisdictions in the world that are anywhere in our bailiwick in terms of 100 per cent. I am not aware of any other jurisdiction in the world that has the target to get to 200 per cent by 2040. As I say, we have legislated that. It is a great credit to Tasmania. All of us here can be proud of that and know that we are on the right track for sure.

As a government we have an integrated approach to climate change and to providing a whole-of-government view to strategically capture the opportunities, the jobs and investment that our unique renewable energy and emissions position provides. It will be a centre of excellence in the Tasmanian Government's approach towards Project Marinus, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen and supporting industries to reduce emissions and adapt, capitalising on our carbon stores and managing our renewable and climate brand, monitoring and reducing government submissions.

Economic analysis has shown that taking action to reduce emissions is not only good for the environment but it can boost productivity and greater economic growth. For example, Tasmania's Emissions Pathway Review completed last year developed a best-fit emissions pathway comprising 16 technically and economically feasible emissions reduction opportunities. Those 16 emission reduction actions identified in the review included - and I will not go through all of them; they are on the public record.

They include: energy efficiency and manufacturing; electricity boilers - replacing gas boilers and other fossil fuel boilers - for heat and manufacturing through increased use of bioenergy resources for a high temperature heat; using precision agricultural technology to reduce diesel consumption; renewable hydrogen, as I referred to earlier; the low emissions vehicle uptake for personal motor vehicles - as a state government we have a plan by 2030 to transition to electric vehicles, and/or hydrogen-propelled vehicles which I am very much looking forward to; and innovative feed stock for higher productivity and low methane livestock. I commend our farmers.

I want to shout out to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. I caught up with Dr Mike Rose last night at the Science Meets Parliament dinner hosted by Madeleine Ogilvie. It was attended by many people. It was so good to be touching base with respect to the Elliott Dairy Agricultural Research Farm that is being supported with a multi-million-dollar investment by our Government and \$7 million from Dairy Australia. They are backing in the dairy industry. We are proud of our dairy industry. They are doing research with respect to climate action and with respect to emissions reduction in the dairy sector. This applies across the beef sector as well and that should be acknowledged.

Early this year or late last year I was on the *Sea Forest* vessel just off Triabunna. It was excellent to see the work they are doing in growing opportunities to produce seaweed for beef and/or dairy cattle. Richard Gardner is involved in that particular pilot project. He is a very successful and well-regarded dairy farmer in the southern Midlands.

There is a lot of interest in this space in the agriculture and primary industry sector. That is one reason that we have the Blue Economy CRC based in Tasmania because we took an initiative on behalf of the state Government to support the other stakeholders to base it here. The former Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Dr John Whittington, is the CEO based in Launceston of the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre.

The economic analysis conducted last year found that these actions could increase demand for what we do well. I will summarise. In 2050, Tasmania's economy is likely to be \$475 million larger than it would be under business as usual. Over that period the level of employment is estimated to be 1200 persons higher in 2050. That is what that report explained.

We are not into legislating the sector to those targets but we want to work in consultation and in partnership with the stakeholders in this space to make inroads. The plans we have as a government will identify actions to reduce sector emissions and increase each sector's resilience to climate change. Those plans will be delivered within two years of the proclamation of the act. I look forward to working with those various and relevant sectors in my portfolio areas and I know other ministers in this place who are likewise working with Mr Jaensch to help get that job done.

Those plans will be developed for, for example, renewable energy in the energy sector, which is absolutely on the march in Tasmania with big plans to grow that. I will share more about that shortly. Transport sector, the industrial processes and product use. Agriculture as I referred to already. Land use, land use change and forestry. Waste and any other sector or subsector to be determined in due course.

It has received strong support from the business sector. Michael Bailey CEO of the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry congratulated the Government for what is an Australia-leading policy and said this is a good policy not only for the environment but business as well. He said:

We know Tasmanian businesses will benefit from this policy. We know that there is a distinct market advantage to businesses across the state.

That is encouraging. We want business onside to support our efforts.

I pay a tribute to our forefathers for the vision that they demonstrated in renewing our renewable energy future. It began with a big dream. In 1895, Launceston became the first city in the southern hemisphere, I understand to be powered by hydroelectricity. The switch was turned on in 1895 by Andrew Bowen's grandfather. I met Andrew Bowen at the Master Electricians Association Annual Awards Night just the Saturday before last. He was so proud. He received a special award. He was a bit emotional, and I can understand why. He has contributed so much to the Master Electricians and our business community, but it was his grandfather who flicked the switch in 1895 that electrified all of Launceston, so they were not using gas lights anymore: they used hydroelectricity up the Gorge.

I should declare an interest with my stepfather Sir Raymond Ferrell also involved in doing much work to support hydroelectricity development in those early years with the Port of Launceston. My grandfather, Sinclair Thyne was the Mayor of Launceston in the 1950s and we know how proud he was of the City of Launceston.

We remember Waddamana Power Station. Back in 1916, Hydro Tasmania started its life as a hydroelectric department in 1914. Within 20 years electricity had largely replaced kerosene lamps, candles, steam engines and the like. It took eight decades to create Tasmania's electricity system with 30 power stations and nearly 54 major dams. With over 100 years of innovation, Hydro Tasmania has certainly created employment for more than 5200 direct jobs at the peak of construction. In the past century it has employed I am advised more than 30000 people. Congratulations to Hydro Tasmania. The engineering and technological breakthroughs have helped changed the way the world approaches the challenge of generating energy and still do.

It was great to meet with Tanya Plibersek, the federal Minister for the Environment and Water in Canberra just a couple of weeks ago. When I talked about the Antarctic as minister for the Hobart City Deal and referred to the use of the wind turbine and renewable energy in the Antarctic - at the moment its primarily diesel and fossil fuels that are used - her eyes lit up. She was very interested. I am proud of the fact that Hydro Tasmania is making a contribution through Entura in the Antarctic. This is all happening from Tasmania and we should be proud of that.

Hydro Tasmania, as I said earlier, is the largest water storage manager in Australia and it is the largest generator of clean renewable energy. It currently employs an estimated 13 000 people including almost 800 Tasmanians. Thanks to a century of hard work, invention and innovation we have been at net zero emissions for seven of those past seven years.

We are now moving from 100 per cent to 200 per cent and with the Australian Government's announcement of emissions reduction target of 43 per cent by 2030, there is going to have to be a significant penetration of renewable energy generation. Jurisdictions have agreed to a new national energy transformation partnership, and the first fully integrated National Energy and Emissions agreement under this partnership and emissions objective will be included in the national energy objectives. That was all signed, sealed, and delivered last Friday, as I said, at the energy ministers meeting in Canberra. It ensures that our transformation to net zero is delivered in the long-term interest of consumers guided by affordability. Renewables are now the cheapest form of energy across the national electricity market and Tasmania is in the box seat to deliver.

I encourage all members across this parliament to get on board with our plans for renewable energy in Tasmania. What that means is a recognition of the importance of those policies, the importance of Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, green hydrogen - and this was recognised in the National Energy Transformation partnership. Energy ministers agreed that projects such as VNI link, HumeLink in Victoria, and Marinus Link in Tasmania would be identified as transmission of national significance. It has given us that oomph, that vote of confidence to help accelerate the timely delivery of these critical projects and ensure better community consultation. This was agreed by all the energy ministers around Australia. Not just Tassie, not just Victoria - everyone signed up, led by Chris Bowen, our federal minister, who I thank for his leadership.

TasNetworks reports are very supportive. We know that the Australia Energy Market Operator has identified Marinus Link as an actionable project and as 'urgent' infrastructure. It has been identified as national infrastructure, and a priority project for infrastructure Australia. We are on track and, in terms of the environment, it is going to deliver 140 million tonnes of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere by 2050. That is the equivalent of a million cars coming off the road.

In terms of growing our renewable energy credentials, Tarraleah Power Station redevelopment with funding from the federal government thanks to the former coalition government support for that, and backed in by Chris Bowen and the current Labor government, and Hydro Tasmania, so there is \$65 million, plus the \$58 million from Tassie, to get those early works done leading into a financial investment decision, and all being well, a \$700 million project to double our 110 megawatts output at Tarraleah to 220 megawatts. This is all a part of our renewable energy future, delivering on climate action and climate change, which is what this bill is all about.

In terms of green hydrogen, we have released the Tasmanian hydrogen action plan some years ago. We are working now towards that to implement those policies and we have now secured Bell Bay as a green hydrogen hub for Australia and that funding support is appreciated from the federal government, from our Government, and of course, a number of key players in that space; Fortescue Future Industries, Woodside Energy, Origin Energy, Abel Energy, Align Hydrogen, Country-Wide Renewables and others are all playing a very important role. We have HIF global that has just advised of their plans for a \$1 billion clean fuels development at

the back of the Burnie, about 30 kilometres, close to Hampshire. The Premier and I met with the CO just a couple of weeks ago and it is very exciting.

We have the \$2.7 billion ACEN Australia development proposed as a major project thanks to the minister, deputy premier, and Minister for Planning, as a major project, just the last couple of weeks, and that is a \$2.7 billion project in the northeast up at Waterhouse and Rushy Lagoon, 210 turbines, 1230 megawatts, and \$2.7 billion with many jobs during construction especially. The Dorset Mayor, Greg Howard, is very excited about it, as are many in the local community.

In Tasmania, 15 per cent or thereabouts in terms of wind energy and certainly hydro is the bulk of it, and solar as well. I will indicate through you, Mr Acting Speaker, that there is more to do, and we have a big plan again, but it is consistent with our Tasmanian Renewable Action Plan, our Tasmanian Renewable Hydro Action Plan, and we are on track.

I pay a tribute to Andrew Dyer, the Australian Energy and Infrastructure Commissioner who has been down to Tassie recently and has been on a number of occasions, in terms of helping roll out our renewable energy projects across Tasmania, and his advice is greatly appreciated.

We have plans for a future gas strategy, and a discussion paper was released in November last year for comment, and the final strategy will be public later this year.

In terms of bioenergy, we have the draft bioenergy vision for Tasmania available for public comment from 15 December last year to February this year. That bioenergy is definitely focused on using genuine wastes and residues to produce bioenergy and seeks to accelerate the adoption of bioenergy where it optimises benefits to Tasmanians. I should do a shout out for the Smithton Swimming Pool, Britten Timbers, Smithton. I know the minister knows the Brittens very well -

**Mr Tucker** - Hear hear.

**Mr BARNETT** - and the member for Lyons, John Tucker as well. They do a great job up there.

There has been much said about sustainable forestry. I want to make it very clear that that is part of the solution. Wood is good. When wood is harvested, trees are regrown and young, new, growing forests absorb CO<sub>2</sub> at a high rate, and will contribute more to the uptake of carbon than other older forests. Fifty-eight per cent of the state's native forests are protected in reserves. I should note that particularly with respect to the comments and remarks from the Leader for the Greens. One per cent of native forests on permanent timber production zone land is harvested in a given year. Our renewable and sustainable forest industry supports thousands of jobs and generates hundreds of millions of economic activity every year.

Forestry is part of the solution to climate change. The IPCC special report on climate change and land was released in August 2019 and it said this: 'Sustainable forest management can maintain or enhance forest carbon stocks and can maintain forest carbon sinks including by transferring carbon to wood products.' We need a balanced approach, and that is what we are delivering on behalf of our Government.

The Boiler Replacement Action Plan was an election commitment and that is informing how Government spends \$10 million in this 2022-23 Budget to replace fossil fuel boilers, and I am looking forward to the rollout of that action plan in the months and years ahead.

In conclusion, I wanted to indicate that there is still a lot more to do. I wanted to note that in terms of industry support you have entities such as Liberty Steel up at Bell Bay - formally TEMCO. I caught up with the CO just a week or so ago, and I think the member for Bass who is sitting in that chair was there at the same time when we met with Bell Bay Advance Manufacturing Zone. The general manager for Liberty Bell Bay was at that same meeting with other stakeholders with the Bell Bay Advance Manufacturing Zone, ably led by Suzy Bowe. They want to become carbon neutral by 2030. So does the Australian red meat and livestock industry - carbon neutral by 2030. Rio Tinto Bell Bay is seeking to reduce emissions by 50 per cent by 2030. Norske Skog is seeking to reduce emissions by 55 per cent by the same date. Norske, Tassal, Fonterra, and Cement, Concrete and Aggregates Australia Industry Associations have a target of net zero by 2050.

Over the last year the Government has spoken to many of those major industrials and it is a great honour and pleasure in this new role since April as Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing to be involved and connecting with those major industrials and appreciate the feedback and the relationship that is developing. Cement Australia has said this:

Cement Australia was encouraged by and supports the acts proposed partnership approach with business, industry and the community to reduce emissions and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The Tasmanian Minerals and Energy Council said this. They acknowledge both the benefit and challenge of setting a world leading target of net zero by 2050.

The Tasmanian Forest Products Association said, the TFPA supports the key amendment to the act to legislate an emissions reduction target of net zero by 2030. Forestry is a well-established industry in Tasmania, our forests act as a carbon sink and produce wood-based products that help achieve climate neutrality by storing carbon which offsets most of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Projected climate change means it will be important to sustainably manage our current natural forests and plantations to offset atmospheric greenhouse gases.

There you have it. A very comprehensive, strong argument in support of this bill and I support the bill. I commend Mr Jaensch for his leadership and I thank the Premier for his leadership as well. This is definitely good for the environment and good for the economy.

[6.51 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to make a brief contribution on this bill. I know a number of members will want to say a few words knowing full well that there is a significant number of amendments being proposed by the Greens and the Labor Party, which no doubt will be worked through in Committee. I look forward to that debate.

Regardless of that debate I will support the bill because it is important that this parliament and this Government is given an imprimatur to conduct work although I will acknowledge that it has taken some time and a number of ministers and a number of premiers to get to this point but we are where we are.

There are some legitimate critiques inside this place and in the community about the energy or the depth of commitment and ambition inside this bill and I would echo some of that concern about the lack of ambition and lack of detail in terms of what we could achieve out of action on climate change. It is important that we acknowledge that there has been a lot of politics played on this issue for many years but particularly in the last decade. Politics of the capital P kind because I think this is a political challenge and how we respond as a society is a political challenge. It is a political problem and we need political solutions. That is the task given to political leaders at both state, federal and local level and broadly harnessing the energy and the commitment of the community to respond to what is a major challenge.

Sadly, Australia as a country has been seen as an international laggard in terms of our response to climate change and the capital P politics that are being played. It is with much hope that the new federal government led by Prime Minister Albanese, and there is no wonder he had to make a number of international visits early on in his prime ministerialship to commence to rebuild the country's credibility, not only on a broad political and trust level with some countries but in being a part of a collection of nations challenging and responding to the challenge by climate change.

Having said the capital P politics, it is important that we, as a state, play our role and play our leadership role in harnessing the state's response as a part of a national and global response to what is no longer a future problem. It is a problem that exists now. Effects that scientists have long predicted would result from global climate change are now occurring. Sea ice loss, accelerated sea level rise and longer and more intense heat waves. In fact, some changes as we are seeing it across the country such as droughts, wildfires, extreme rainfall, are happening faster than scientists previously assessed.

For many years, climate change was debated as a future problem although, unfortunately, in this country it was debated as whether it exists or not. I am hopeful that the vast 80 per cent to 90 per cent of community now acknowledge that climate change is a challenge. For many years it was seen as a future problem. It is no longer a future problem. It is here and is having a profound impact on our ecosystems, on our biodiversity, on our economies. We know - and I was having conversations with people in fire prone areas in the south of the state - but you also hear of reports particularly given the floods in New South Wales and Queensland recently, that there are whole areas and communities and businesses that will not be insured. They are uninsurable because of the risk. They are exposed to the risk that climate change has created; extreme weather events in their community. That has a cascading consequence. We know that the window of time for us to create some impact and to save ourselves from irreversible climate change is rapidly closing and for many people they are of the view that it has closed: that we have to deal with this now and we must do what we can to urgently respond.

We know that it is not just about the ecosystems of the environment. It is about the ecosystems of our society because the human, the environmental, the social and economic consequences are profound. We have the challenge and we have the responsibility set before us to respond. Many times, the debate is purely seen as an environmental debate. Of course, that is the fundamental underlying creation of the problem. It is a much broader problem for us. We have a responsibility through bills such as this and through actions in our community, large and small, within our political environment, large and small, to make change. We need to acknowledge that we have to respond environmentally, economically and socially to how we simultaneously create those elements of the argument in a sustainable way.

The problem with the capital P politics being played in Australia around this has meant, the challenge for us to, instead of being laggards internationally but to be global leader - which I think should be the aspiration of each nation - that the steps for us are much steeper. The challenge for us is harder. We are fortunate, and the previous speakers have talked about Tasmania being in a globally - I would argue - it is a unique set of circumstances in terms of our renewable energy but also our carbon footprint. However, that does not absolve us of being responsible citizens globally and playing our role where we can do better. We can lead, not only the nation but we can lead the world in our response. It is a saying I use a lot but we all do better when we all do better and I think that falls on us to do that.

We know the impact of climate change in Tasmania will be significant. Climate change projections by 2050 meant the number of days per year reaching over 30 degrees is expected to double, which we know will have adverse impacts on our agricultural and dairy industry. We know sea level rises are projected to rise 26 centimetres on our coast, the warming sea temperatures could be disastrous for our aquacultural and fishery industries, more algal blooms, and the potential for more invasive marine species to come to our waters. We will have longer fire seasons, with around 40 per cent more days classed as a very high fire risk. We have seen the leadership of some of those chief officers from fire departments and fire services across the country talking about their experiences and seeing the change in the bush and in our rural areas, about how areas that had never seen wildfire, that had never seen patches or sections of land that had historically been so wet and lush that fire could not rip through there: they are seeing those areas ripped through by fire.

I commend the leadership of those fire chiefs in their advocacy around climate change, because not only do landowners feel the brunt and experience the brunt of the extreme weather circumstances, we expect our emergency services and our fire fighters to risk their lives to save life, property, and significant areas in our community. They are the ones who are risking life and limb to protect.

We have an obligation to act on climate change to ensure these events are minimised and mitigated in the future. We know that there will be lower average annual rainfall and increased potential for drought, which raises the fire risk and reduces agricultural productivity. Again, an economic impact. There will be increased potential for extreme rain events which could lead to more flooding like Hobart experienced in 2018. We talked to some communities and they are still cleaning up from 2018. The cost is phenomenal, and the impact has been profound on their life. They will never forget those things. The year 2018 was interesting. I had been re-elected to parliament and worked with communities in response to floods and then heading into 2019 we saw Huonville impacted by significant fire risk, and a fire that behaved in such an unusual way. You talk to the local volunteer fire brigades about how those fires behaved and where they ran at different points of time, they are dealing with a significant, changing risk.

By mid-century - I am not making light of it - the climate of Hobart is projected to be like that in Geelong, and the climate of Launceston is expected to be closer to that of Bathurst in New South Wales. I am not sure if I prefer Geelong or Bathurst. I think I prefer Launceston and Hobart for liveability. The latest IPCC report says that the window to save ourselves from irreversible climate change is rapidly closing. The impacts of climate change are more than environmental, they come with severe economic and human costs. Heat will kill more people each year through heat stroke, and other illnesses, and even in Tasmania. The impacts of

climate change will disproportionately affect lower socio-economic individuals within our state and developing nations as a whole.

The challenge of combating climate change and protecting biodiversity is an environmental, economic, and social sustainability challenge, but it is a simultaneous challenge, because all of these things are interrelated.

We have a responsibility to lead. We cannot close down an industry because they are a heavy carbon user. Most industries now are already ahead of the Australian Government and they are already including a range of initiatives that reduce their carbon footprint. We have an obligation to follow them, not to abandon them, particularly the workers in those blue collar industries, but we have a responsibility to engage at a greater depth and a greater level of support and working partnership.

People talk about climate justice. To me, climate justice is about finding solutions to the climate crisis that not only reduce emissions or protect the natural world, but to do so in a way which creates a fairer, more just and more equal world in the process. It has been referred to as an existential crisis, but very rarely do we live in a time where there are such seismic changes occurring in our environment, in our society, where we have an impact to not only respond to mitigate the challenge of that seismic change but we also have an opportunity to create a better and fairer world. That needs to be at the forefront of what we are thinking.

It is not acceptable to say to communities that have historically relied on carbon-intensive industries, 'Sorry, we have sucked you dry. We have exploited your community. We have exploited your labour. We have made some money but the circus is moving on; the show is moving on'. That is unacceptable. We have a responsibility to deal with the broader context of the challenges that we face.

The bill has been a long time coming. It has been referred to as lacking ambition. I am sure the minister will respond in his own way to that challenge. Let us be clear about the good things about the bill - increased reporting and transparency in almost every instance, there will be an annual greenhouse gas emissions report, climate change activity statement, a sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plan, climate action plan, climate risk assessments, and the legislated net zero target, although we are already there.

Let us not just hold the line, let us move it forward. We know we can do better. By 2030 we can do better than net zero because we are already there. While on paper it is the most ambitious in the country, although the new federal government no doubt will change that legislatively, nowhere else in the country has the renewable assets and the opportunity we do. We should be leading the way.

The whole-of-government policy framework has not been done. I know the Government's approach is to work out the detail with that approach. The minister says the work will now be done but we do not know what it will contain. The bill does not provide any detail about specific measures the Government will be taking.

Some detail is missing. I know this is up for debate but we should have sector-based emission reduction targets and we should be accountable. We should measure them and we need to have those sector-based emission reduction targets connected to an industry and an appropriate connected strategy. We need to plan to transition carbon-intensive industries

towards low-carbon practices. We need to support the workforce with this change and we need concrete policies - excuse the pun - that will reduce emissions.

A number of speakers have referred to a just transition. That is a controversial way to refer to it because for some people it grates because it is a just transition so something ends and something begins. There is an obligation for government to sit down with industry to talk about training, to talk about skills development, to talk about occupational health and safety, to talk about and have a genuine social and industrial dialogue about what the jobs of the future look like, what the existing jobs need to look like, how they can transition and we need to invest in our people to create those career pathways.

The challenge for Australia is that we have had a radical Liberal-National Party Government, radical in the way that the rest of the world was seizing the opportunities around renewable energies, were seizing the opportunities around reducing carbon, using technology, using data-driven evidence to transform industries into more environmentally sustainable practices. The rest of the world has stolen the march, that sort of market leader advantage that can be created if you are at the front of the queue. You can be the innovator.

The irony of a member of the Liberal Party who just resumed his seat, Mr Barnett, talking about the innovations in the late 1800s, the 19<sup>th</sup> century we were at the forefront, yet he is a part of a party that is at basically the end of the line globally in terms of adapting to a low-carbon future. I think the irony was lost on the minister when he used that example because we are no longer that country, particularly when it comes to responding to climate change and the adaptive challenge that is before our industries, our economies and our society.

We are no longer that country. You can bask in the reflective glories of others, minister, but we have a responsibility to lead. We have a responsibility to get back to that point where we can ensure that we have some of the most innovative and dynamic industries that could really be at the forefront. I know that at one stage, hydro consulting Entura was seen as one of our big shining lights. I know that there are some good people working out there, but the nature of climate change policy in Australia has inhibited their ability to really reach their potential and become quite a larger employer, and a large generator of ideas that could be globally leading - the irony of a Liberal minister talking about those days.

Having said that, I know there will be much more discussed about this bill. I am not sure when we will be going into Committee or what stage we will be going into Committee but I look forward to the debate on those amendments. Hopefully, the Government is open to accepting some of those amendments given the journey of time to get to this point. Already, the Government is moving their own amendments because the show has moved on somewhat. I am hopeful that through a collaborative process we can improve the bill, strengthen it up, because our community demands no less of us.

[7.12 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make not a particularly long contribution on this bill but there are a few things that I want to get on the record. It has been a long time coming. We are very pleased to see that it is here. I imagine we will spend a fair whack of time in Committee. This is one of those bills that hopefully we will not see rushed through the parliament and that the Committee process can take its full time. It is too important for us to put a time imperative on. That means we guillotine it, so the earlier the minister can bring this on for a really in-depth debate is actually important for all of us here,

and to give the upper House the time they are going to need. It has certainly taken a while to get here. Let us do this as well as we can, because whilst this will not be the be all and end all of where we stop, let us start from the best base possible. We have to see this as a base.

As has already been said, Labor will be moving a number of amendments and others in the Chamber have indicated that they will be doing the same. The focus of our amendments is three-fold. We do want to have that independent oversight. You have to measure how you are going if you are going to get really good outcomes. That is the only way that you can hold yourself accountable not only to yourself but to our local community and a broader international community. The other two things that we are really focused on are the need to protect those who are more vulnerable and to set out clear plans as well for a just transition. I want to talk about examples of just transition and how that works.

One of the things that the new incoming Australian Government has had to do is to work substantially with our Pacific neighbours to build relationships, to foster that partnership that we have historically had, that working together, as we share the Pacific region. It has fallen away a bit over time and I am not going to go into why and who might be at fault. However, one of the things that is clear is that our attitude towards climate change has impacted on how the Pacific views their relationship with us. I was really fortunate recently to work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a number of small island communities around the impact of climate change. Of course, their story is so much different from ours.

As long as we consider it their story and our story we create significant problems in the way that we respond. I worked with people from Samoa, Belize, Saint Lucia, Armenia, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Kiribati, Seychelles and Sri Lanka. I really wish I could have actually visited some of these places and heard their stories. For some of them, they are dealing with an intensity to climate change that we simply are not giving enough discussion to. The Cayman Islands, the highest point of land is six metres. They are watching their livelihoods and their futures and their sustainability disappear. Whilst it is easy to say, 'Well, that is what they need to deal with when they get to COP26,' and 'That is not what we are dealing with when we get to COP26.' As long as we have that view, as long as we continue to see that as our view, we will fail them. By failing them, apart from the ethical and immoral decisions that that would be, it also does have an impact on us as a nation. As those countries become uninhabitable, we will see significant global displacement of people as they flee climate change. Given how poorly we deal with global displacement due to conflict, my heart does not hold out a lot of hope for how well we will deal with global displacement because of this.

I wanted to talk particularly about the Pacific and with great respect to everybody else who I was with who told the most amazing, heart-wrenching stories and are working so hard on how their countries might be able to participate in negotiations to deal with things particularly important to them, such as climate finance.

For some of those countries to deal with that challenge, they almost need to create industries in order to transition out. However, the creation of those industries will impact on their climate management: such complex transition positions for them, which is why that slogan '1.5 to stay alive' actually means something.

That goes back to where some of our relationship might have fallen apart from that. Everyone would remember that situation where the microphone was on and federal ministers

were heard joking about the climate, the increasing sea levels in the Pacific. That sort of stuff did not place us well and further actions of not working with them made it pretty hard as well.

I recall since the 1980s, and probably earlier, that the Pacific has been calling out and sounding the alarm about the impact of global warming and it has been a significant challenge for them for some time. It is not that we do not know this. We have areas of the Australian National University, the Crawford Policy School, there is a whole host of people who are working on what is happening in the Pacific. Yet as a nation, we have been pretty rough on it.

Some of these are some of the lowest emitting nations in the world, very close to us, not one of the lowest emitting nations in the world. I do have to check. Minister, you might be able to tell me. Is Australia the fourteenth highest emitter at the moment?

**Mr Jaensch** - I could not tell you. I will make a note of it and cover it in my summing up.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - So, they are some of the lowest emitting nations in the world and yet they are bearing the full brunt of climate change. The rising sea temperature is causing sea level rises. We are seeing melting ice sheets. However, what happens to them is that they are low-lying coastal areas, so their aquaculture industries are being impacted, their low-level farming side is being inundated: their family lands, houses, and sacred sites and when you understand a bit about the Pacific, you know the importance with which those islander communities view those places. The very fabric of their economic and their social engagement is being ripped apart.

When they look at countries like Australia that, up until now, have not been saying the sort of things they need to hear and doing the sort of things they need to see being done, it is no wonder that our relationship with the Pacific has been fragmented. They are also having hotter days and nights. Whilst it is always lovely to go to a Pacific island for a holiday, the reality is that the longer days and longer nights are causing hardship. They are causing health problems. They have had longer droughts, bigger floods, saltwater intrusion into fresh water, bleached reefs, storm damage, and all of that means that getting enough food, fresh water, shelter, and maintaining health and wellbeing is becoming increasingly hard.

When we talk about how distressed we might be about climate change, many people who are living in suburban Australia do so in a theoretical way. These people live it every single day. It is up to governments to not only respond to these challenges but to lead our nation in that response so that we all do the right thing and make those stronger steps towards it. I wanted to talk a little bit about that.

Given my portfolio of women, I want to talk about the climate change impact on women and girls and the gendered impact of climate change, because the climate crisis is not gender neutral. There has been a truckload of research. In order to limit it for today, I will talk about what the UN is saying about how women and girls experience greater impacts of climate change, which amplifies that existing gender inequity and inequality which poses to them a unique threat to their livelihood and their health and their safety.

What we do know is that across the world, women depend more on and yet have less access to natural resources. That is just a feature of many countries. In many regions, they bear a disproportionate responsibility to secure food, water.

Agriculture is the most important employment sector for women in low- and middle-income countries. During periods of drought, during periods of crazy rain, women as agricultural workers and primary procurers have to work harder to secure their income and resources. That puts pressure on girls, we see girls leaving school, the cycle continues and then gets harder and harder.

It is a 'threat multiplier', which means that 'it escalates the social and political and economic tensions in fragile, conflict-affected settings'. As climate change drives conflict across the world - which it does, because it is an economic imperative and economic imperatives often lead to conflict - we see that women and girls face increased vulnerabilities to all the forms of gender-based violence. Along with that, climate conflict comes conflict-related sexual violence, human trafficking, child marriage, and other sorts of violence.

When disaster strikes, the reality is that women are less likely to survive and they are more likely to be injured due to the long-standing gender inequalities that have created disparities in information, mobility, decision-making, access to resources, training and knowledge. It is often harder for them to get access to relief and assistance, which further affects their livelihood, wellbeing and recovery, and so we get that cycle going on and on. Their health is endangered by climate change and disasters, because that also limits access to services and healthcare, and increases risks to maternal and child health.

UN research indicates that extreme heat increases the incidence of stillbirth, and climate change is increasing the spread of vector-borne illnesses such as malaria, Dengue fever and the Zika virus, which are linked to worse maternal and neonatal outcomes. They are not things that we are immune from.

We know that even for women, these impacts are not uniform. If you look through the lens of intersectional feminism - and there is a lot of research on this - the way which various forms of inequality often operate together and often exacerbate each other, it is clear climate change risks are acute for indigenous and Afro-descendent women and girls, older women, LGBTQI+ people, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women and those who live in rural/remote/conflict crisis areas. It is really important to recognise that this does have a gender lens, and that this gender lens does need to be reflected for us.

The second thing that I want to talk about is the issue of just transition - the just transition to a low carbon economy. There are many people who are very frightened about what the term 'just transition' means. If you talk to people who work in resource sectors, they say, 'That means I can't be a miner any more, that means I'm going to have to work in an office, and I can't work in an office, I don't have those skills, this is ridiculous'. We have to lead the conversation around just transition. We have to take the responsibility, because you only get a really good conversation if all the parties come together. Governments have to take this on.

Just transition is an international union movement objective. It has been for some time. They pushed it through Copenhagen and as a result we are seeing wanted conversations around it:

A just transition means that the burden of change that benefits everyone will not be placed disproportionately on a few. It means that those most vulnerable to change will be protected. It means that the process of change

will increase social justice for workers, women, the poor, and all oppressed groups.

Such a just transition is essential to produce the 'broad and sustainable political consensus' necessary to make climate protection policy work in the long run.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 170 million workers in unions all over the world, campaigned for language embodying the just transition principle in the negotiating text of the Copenhagen agreement. Such language was submitted by Argentina and proposed as part of the 'shared vision' ...

The language that they used read:

An economic transition is needed that shifts global economic growth patterns towards a low emission economy based on more sustainable production and consumption, promoting sustainable lifestyles and climate-resilient development while ensuring a just transition of the workforce.

Since then, that language has been 'bracketed,' meaning that either at least one government or entity has questioned it or opposed it.

So, there are still issues and people are still really pushing towards this. The APITUC says:

A just transition can be achieved through socially responsible and green investment, local carbon development strategies and by providing decent work and social protection for those whose livelihoods incomes and employment are affected by the need to adapt to climate change and by the need to reduce emissions to levels that are dangerous to climate change circumstances.

Whilst many in the trade union movement want an industrial environmental policy that delivers a good just transition for a world that moves to a greener economy you cannot just have a transition without workers and their communities. Those people who are frightened of change - not being able to pay your mortgage is a pretty scary thing - must have their voice. It requires investments to retain and create good jobs, to modernise industry, to provide education and training and assistance for workers and families. They are going to be different in different countries and communities. We will see that major public and private investment and those long-term sustainable industrial policies around creating green jobs will be really important. We are already seeing that being embraced.

We need to take community with us. The sorts of elements that need to be included are: public/ private investment, identification in the advancement of the, protection for employment effects of climate protection; advancement planning to compensate for adverse effects; social protections including a social safety nets; training and education for new careers; wider consultation of stakeholders and diversification of climate change adaption plan for every region and community at risk; protection for the economic life of communities, including those new energy technologies and economic diversification.

The ITUC also pointed out that climate change is not gender neutral so when we need just transition we also need to have that impact around women. The 2004 Asian tsunami it killed four times as many women as men. The global trade union movement has been working towards that. The reason I wanted to talk about that union push is that people often say that it is workers who are opposing some of this work. We need to say that we have to work together. Western Australia is providing us with a really phenomenal opportunity. I am sure the minister would be aware of the work that is happening in Collie.

I do not think I have ever quoted Alan Kohler in parliament before but I want to talk about an article he wrote recently. It was in relation to the challenges in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. The people of Singleton were driving his attention with the floods and the impact that they have had. He said that they know that even after they clean up the coal mines that have supported them in their forebears for years have a very dark future. He wanted to talk about taking the fight out of coal. I thought I would bring this to the attention to the House. This shows how we can do this and how we can do this well, led by governments but in true and genuine consultation with workforces, with communities and with unions you can take the fear out of just transition and demonstrate what can be achieved.

Alan Kohler says Collie, in Western Australia, has two coal mines and three coal-fired power stations that have been the basis of the town's existence for 100 years. In 2019 the Western Australian government made the first of a series of announcements that the state-owned power stations would close, culminating in a final statement just last month that all coal would be shut down by 2030.

A just transition working group was set up in 2019. The first meeting had about 50 people. That was a bit unwieldy and argumentative so the numbers were cut to 15 and they have met every six weeks for three years. The shire president, Sarah Stanley, said they had to take the fight out of it:

About half of the people on the working group represent various state government departments and the rest come from unions, local businesses and the shire council.

By the way, just transitions is a global movement led by the union movement. The very few transitions around the world have been to be just or smooth and Collie is an exception. The working group has four sub-committees, economic diversity in new industries, workforce planning and training, committing to a just transition and celebrating Collie's history in the future.

In some ways the work of that last committee is as important as the other ones, focusing on attracting new industries to the town and retaining the coal workforce and it is something the governments on the east coast need to get their heads around. The people of Collie are as much on an emotional journey as an economic one, grieving for their town and heritage, almost as if a family member is dying. Many families have been there for generations, proud of supplying WA with electricity, keeping the state's lights on and they are going through the five stages of grief. The leadership shown by Premier Mark McGowan and the work of the ... subcommittee has helped them get to acceptance, the final stage earlier than they would have.

Councillor Stanley says being open, honest and transparent has been the key to making it work and not wasting time and energy with conflict. Greg Busson, local secretary of the CFMEU, agrees that has meant using the local media as well as holding town meetings to keep everyone up to date. As a result, Councillor Stanley says, the mood in the town is optimistic, not glum.

Mr Busson even says that real estate values in Collie are back to where they were four years ago, although, local real estate agent, Mark Bateman, isn't so sure.

Apparently, sale volumes are well up with a lot of people who moved from Perth, moving to Collie, instead of people leaving.

Over the past three years there has been a series of announcements from the state government about what is being done to get businesses to relocate to Collie and also to build renewable energy infrastructure there, specifically pumped hydro storage, in both cases to use the existing power lines to spread out from the town to the rest of the state.

WA Energy Minister Bill Johnston [says] that each of the 1500 state government employees in Collie has, or will have, an individual transition plan, including, those [who] do not actually live in Collie.

Many will get a big redundancy and they will be okay to retire, younger workers and embedded contractors will be retrained for other work. But the important thing is that each person's plan is tailored to them.

What will fill the coal sized gap?

The government is moving its bushfire operations to Collie along with bushfire appliance servicing and occupation licensing. In addition to that, the government will demolish the main power station and rehabilitate the land, which will create 300 jobs over three to five years.

One of the things they are most optimistic about is the zero-carbon magnesium plant being considered by Magnium Australia, which has developed a green magnesium process with which it is planning to take on China where 90 per cent of the world's magnesium is produced using a toxic, carbon-intensive process. The state government is helping to fund Magnium's feasibility study.

Last month Mark McGowen said \$662 million would be committed to Collie's future, including \$200 million to attract new industries to the town. Mr Bussen [said] there's a lot going on in with tourism infrastructure as well. For example, Lake Kepwari, an old open cut mine, has been redeveloped for water skiing and is packed out in summer. Bike trails are being built, murals painted, park facilities upgraded and facades in the main street have been fixed up.

Mr Kohler said that while what's going on in Collie is probably not perfect, he could not prise any negatives from those he spoke to and at least they are trying.

The Premier, Mark McGowan, is providing solid leadership from the top.

Importantly, everyone recognises the emotional toll that the death of coal will have on a town that has relied on coal, and celebrated it, for a century.

This is showing that the conversations we have had about just transitions is about taking jobs away, destroying communities. We need to stop that narrative.

A mate of mine, Alex Cassie from the AMWU, has been heavily involved in this process. I have watched Alex's social media talking about the incredible courage and honesty of people laying bare what they are frightened about, being prepared to work together for the future and having the time to do that and what an amazing thing that they are doing.

When we get to the point of talking about what just transition means, we have to be careful because it is an easy thing to politicise. It is an easy thing to create a war and a conflict over but if the members of this House and the other House are genuinely saying that we want a better climate future, then we have to make sure that we depoliticise this as much as possible.

Everything that we do that creates a better climate environment, a better climate economy, a better climate social structure in Australia, is incredibly important for us. The people who work in Collie are living that right now. There are communities all across Australia that are facing that. It also goes to our broader obligation. When I was at that UNDP piece of work I said we have communities that are frightened of just transition. They said, tell them what it means to us, tell them about what is happening to us. While that should be enough it is not always enough. Demonstrable structures where we can show that just transition works, helps us take people with us on what is a significant journey for many of them.

The impact of climate change, while ignored by many for so long, is something that will cause conflict, it is something that will kill people, it is something that has caused conflict, it is something that has caused people to die. We have a role to play here. I would like to see that when this bill leaves this House that it does not look like the bill - even with only the amendments that the Government moves - I do not want it to look like that. I want us to genuinely engage in making sure this bill can be as good as it is. When we have made it as good as it is, recognise that is our starting point for the next time we talk about what we need to do. That is going to come by understanding the disparate impact of climate change, understanding that we need to protect vulnerable communities, and understanding the way that we will have confidence that our own work in this is to have that independent measurement structure so that we can say not only is there where we said we would be, this is when we have reached it, or even better, when we have gone better than that.

Tasmania has always said we are a net-zero emitter. That may be true, but we are still a participant, we are still part of a significant impact, not only on our community but the broader community. We have to take responsibility for that. If we do not get this right then those of us with children are looking at a future for them that is pretty bleak. I do not think there is a member in this House who wants to consign the future generation to a worse circumstance than we have now. There is a lot that we cannot fix quickly, but there is an awful lot that we can do. Having said I only had a few words to say I have talked for a very long time.

**Mr Jaensch** - You have done very well.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - I thank members for listening to me. I look forward to the passage of the best possible climate change bill that we can do. That means genuinely taking on board the conversations around the amendments and making sure that all of us can go home when we finish this process a little bit prouder of the work that we have done.

[7.37 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Environment and Climate Change) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the debate be adjourned until tomorrow.

Colleagues, I thank all members who have made contributions on this bill. There have been a range of issues raised, including some quite complex policy concepts as well as specific amendments and details and issues that members have sought to have included.

We also have had about 100 new clauses or amendments to clauses brought forward, two-thirds, about 66, of which have been received only today. There are about 55 pages in total. I want the opportunity to consider the issues raised in the debate and in the amendments in more detail than I have had the opportunity to do tonight before presenting my response in this debate and framing our discussion in the Committee stage.

I wanted to offer that explanation for adjourning the debate. We have waited a long time for this bill as many people have commented. I want to spend extra time with some of the concepts, some of which we have only seen for the first time today, to do them justice and to ensure that we can have a full consideration of those in the next phase of the debate of this bill. I will leave it at that with that moved.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

[7.39 p.m.]

**Mr JAENSCH** (Braddon - Minister for Education, Children and Youth) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

### **Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area - Commercial Exploitation**

**Ms O'CONNOR** (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, Tasmania's World Heritage estate is one of the world's great treasures. It is the only World Heritage area with the word 'wilderness' in its name. People the world over have had their lives changed from their immersive explorations of this island's wild places. Wilderness walks like the South Coast Track and the Port Davey Track, bushwalkers will tell you they are hard yakka but the rewards for the adventurous come with every step, every stumble, every sunrise and all the deep breaths of our wild clean air.

These life-affirming foot journeys are hard-earned and entirely unique in the world. To sanitise them, to control and manage them would be a crime against Nature and a wound to the heart for all those adventurers who know the power of the place. That is why so many have stood in defense of Lake Malbena over the past seven years and why we are resolute that we will never, never give up on the defense of wild lutruwita Tasmania.

Part of that defense has seen 2673 Tasmanians sign on to a petition organised by the Tasmanian Wilderness Guides Association demanding a stop to the commercial exploitation of national parks, reserves and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. They passed a petition to Dr Woodruff and me this morning on Parliament Lawns and I had the great honour of tabling it in parliament earlier today. Signatories are calling for a halt to the divisive and ineffective 'Unlock the Parks' policy; the expressions of interest process and a complete rethink of the flawed, secretive reserve activity assessment process for developments in publicly-protected places and of course most of these RAAs are written by developers. We are commercialising and turning our parks into Disneyland.

Processes that include the most bizarre methodologies to assess wilderness quality where the existence of a public toilet in a public campground can be used by wannabe developers, and this is the case, by the way, have been used and are being used to justify the construction of two-storey luxury lodges with helicopter pads, hot showers, jetties and boat sheds that will flatten half a hectare of wilderness and jeopardise priceless Aboriginal heritage. They may as well propose to build a shopping centre. The wilderness value will not change just so long as there is a toilet. These processes are a mess and the policy is a failure. It is also deeply, deeply unpopular.

The passionate, dedicated guides who organised this petition take great care of adventurous tourists all over Tasmania. They are highly skilled and committed nature educators and custodians and they understand much of the history of this island - its flora, its fauna, geology and some of its ancient culture. They impart this knowledge to thousands of visitors every year.

Reading reviews from their guests is enlightening. The guests, of course, rave about the landscape they are guided through but the warmest words are reserved for their hosts - the wonderful guides. Wilderness guides are responsible for cooking, cleaning and entertaining their guests. They are trained in remote area first aid. They work long hours, carry heavy loads and most importantly, they are teachers educating clients on all aspects of a natural landscape and its history. They do this hugely important work that the Tasmanian Government should be doing - imbuing an absolute love for our island's stunningly wild and beautiful wilderness.

The ERI Policy the guides want to have scrapped is one of the biggest threats to Tasmania's wilderness. In fact, IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, has listed two major threats to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The first is climate change, of course, and the second is inappropriate tourism.

What does that mean? On this island it is industrial tourism - an extractive industry. It means building luxury lodges in remote wilderness whose construction will require thousands of hours of helicopter flights, burning millions of litres of jet fuel, their farting turbines shattering the peace and degrading wilderness. It means luxury lodges made of glass and steel that will degrade wilderness values through their very presence. These lodges require constant

provisioning with everything from fresh food and wine to fluffy towels and crisp sheets - all delivered by noisy, polluting helicopters. These things are anathema to wilderness.

Furthermore, the clientele of these luxury lodges will not appreciate rough, muddy bush tracks on their daily walks. They will demand constructed footpaths that will keep their feet dry and nature at arm's length - inappropriate.

There are currently dozens of stalled projects under the expression of interest process going nowhere due to its secretive processes and sustained pushback from Tasmanians who will protect their wild places no matter what.

The helicopter tourism proposal into Lake Malbena and the Walls of Jerusalem National Park has been in the pipeline for seven years. It has been rejected at every level of assessment, and yet the Government continues to back the developer, Mr Hackett, continues to ignore thousands of Tasmanian bushwalkers and back country anglers, and refuses to concede it is a dud project proposed under a dud policy. The proposal for six luxury lodges along the South Coast Track is an affront to Tasmania's brand, an absolute misunderstanding of what that rugged, unspoiled country is all about; adventurous, wilderness exploration, and just for people like me who are not that fit and adventurous necessarily, just to know it is there.

This country holds the creation story of palawa/pakana people, and it is a heartland for the Tasmanian bushwalking community. When a company called Wild Bush Luxury comes along with a view to taming that wild place, we have a problem, and that problem is the Liberals policy. I predict the South Coast Track project will not get up: Tasmanians care about it too much. No Aboriginal Tasmanian I have spoken to or heard from supports it.

The Rockliff Government needs to scrap their EOI policy and admit it is a failure, and save themselves the future political pain. Tourism in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and other protected lands needs to be done with the greatest sensitivity and respect. The guides know that, bushwalkers know that, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community know that, and so do plenty of Tasmanians from every walk of life. It is time the Rockliff Government started listening.

### **Elspeth Wishart - Tribute**

[7.45 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, whilst it is true that everybody who retires does not necessarily get a speech in parliament, I did want to rise this evening to pay tribute to Elspeth Wishart, who was the Senior Curator of Cultural Heritage at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery who retired last month after 40 years service to the heritage and arts sector in Tasmania.

**Ms Ogilvie** - Hear hear.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Thank you. Elspeth Wishart - put simply - was a trailblazer. She arrived in the state from South Australia to take up the position of Curator at the Port Arthur Historic Site in the 1980s. When you visit - and I am sure many of you have visited - the museums in the houses as you go around Port Arthur, that is actually the work that Elspeth did at that time all those years ago. The museum collection which had thousands of artefacts were diligently catalogued and displayed by Elspeth.

She then moved to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston - QVMAG - as Curator of History. Her work included documenting changing ways of life. That included visits to Antarctica and Macquarie Island, to factories, to businesses, and to very remote locations across Tasmania. During this time, she was the project manager for the redevelopment of the Inveresk Railway Workshops, and I am sure all members here have had an opportunity to see that work. That tiny team in a little shed on-site had some pretty big dreams, and we see the fruition of those plans in the transformation that took place in that area. I know I have taken my children. We spent hours and hours at that museum and looking at those interpretations over the years. If any member has not had an opportunity to do so, please take the time. It is a phenomenal collection.

Elspeth's most recent position has been Senior Curator of Cultural Heritage at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. In all her roles she has mentored hundreds of heritage practitioners with grace, good humour, and integrity. She has served on many boards and committees dedicated to promoted cultural heritage.

In a Tasmanian context, Elspeth is a rarity. She has the trifecta having worked in the three major Tasmanian institutions: Port Arthur, QVMAG, and TMAG. She was an early female practitioner in a sector well dominated by men, and her work can still be seen by the public all of these years later.

On behalf of Tasmanian Labor and the Tasmanian community that enjoyed the incredible curatorial work that she has done, I thank Elspeth Wishart for her dedication and her service to Tasmania's cultural heritage sector, and we wish her and her family well.

### **Tassie Mums**

[7.49 p.m.]

**Ms OGILVIE** (Clark - Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries) - Mr Speaker, I concur with that contribution, and say well spoken. That is a fabulous career that you have been able to detail there.

Mr Speaker, recently I had the great pleasure of revisiting Tassie Mums, an organisation with which I have been involved over many years, and which has just completed its move to new and bigger premises in Browns Road in Kingston. Tassie Mums is a great organisation and one I am really proud to be associated with. It is a not-for-profit organisation that relies on its volunteers and support partners to deliver essential babies' and children's items to social service organisations right across Tasmania, organisations that work with vulnerable and at-risk children and mums who need a helping hand.

The items Tassie Mums provides can contain up to 70 to 100 items of clothing and at least two books and two toys - these donations permitting, obviously - and other items could include nappies, play mats, bassinet and cot linen and toiletry packs for new mothers.

Tassie Mums was founded by the marvellous Claire Harris in 2016 and is now chaired by Nigel Clutterbuck. Claire found that there was a need for this type of service and so started Tassie Mums out of her own garage. The number of social service organisations discovering what Tassie Mums provided quickly grew, necessitating a need for expanded premises and so, Tassie Mums moved to an 80 square metre premise in Taroona.

Further awareness meant further growth. Now Tassie Mums has moved its operation down to Browns Road in Kingston, having secured a 600 square metre warehouse including offices. I have been down there. It is a great space for packing, storing and making items for the mums and the kids. It really is a fantastic operation.

This growth meant that Tassie Mums is now supported by over 70 volunteers - it is huge - and 15 organisations including the Tasmanian Government and it supports over 60 different social service organisations around Tasmania. Some of these organisations include the Hobart City Mission, the Launceston City Mission, the Migrant Resource Centre, Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Service, the Geeveston Child and Family Centre, the Beaconsfield Child and Family Centre, Women's Health Tasmania, Catholic Care, the Brave Foundation, just to name a few.

Its reach is clearly significant and it delivers a vital service to all corners of Tasmania. I do know they have outreach programs. People make and create beautiful things for babies that they bring to Tassie Mums and Tassie Mums is able to distribute them. I believe they also work within the prison system with the girls there who are able to sew items to contribute to this great program as well. It is a really good organisation.

Tassie Mums does have plans for future growth. It does, however, need more people and organisations to get involved in this great charity so that it may continue to deliver those much-needed items that give our young Tasmanians that helping hand from prams to car seats, to all the sorts of things that you need to get started. I am proud to continue my advocacy for Tassie Mums and to be part of a government that continues its focus on supporting causes for good, particularly Mums and kids.

Tassie Mums is a cause for good.

### **Jacquie Petrusma - Tribute**

#### **Tasmanian Open DanceSport Championships**

[7.53 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to my dear friend and now former parliamentary Liberal colleague, Jacquie Petrusma. We were co-colleagues of the class of 2010 and it was my privilege together with your own, Mr Speaker, to join with Jacquie Petrusma in that election of 2010 and we joined this House of Assembly as members of the then Liberal Opposition at the beginning of the disastrous Labor/Greens years.

Jacquie has recently announced her resignation and from this House as the member for Franklin, and by reason of that, from the ministry and the Tasmanian Liberal Government. She is already being greatly missed by her former colleagues with a lot of affection that we held for her.

I want to say a few things about my friend, Jacquie Petrusma, in terms of her personally, as well as her professional and parliamentary roles. It will not be possible for me to cover a lot of ground in the time available, only to say that Jacquie has made a major contribution to Tasmanian public life and, therefore, to the state of Tasmania and the families that call it home.

Every Tasmanian can and should be very grateful for her great loyalty to the Liberal Party but, importantly, her great loyalty to this parliament and to the people of Tasmania for the causes that she championed and the successes that she achieved in the many positions that she occupied.

As the former minister for women, she led the way for elevating women into key leadership roles and this has seen a quality for women on boards as well as women in key leadership positions across the State Service.

Plenty of people talked about it. The Hodgman government and Jacquie Petrusma achieved it. As former child safety minister, she oversaw significant investment and reform in the child safety system, through the Strong Families, Safe Kids agenda.

She understood it. She fought for those kids in opposition, like a little terrier, absolutely unrelenting in her pursuit for fairness and justice and safety for vulnerable children in Tasmania. It was not her political position, it was deep in her heart. She then carried that passion into government as minister for human services and did a mighty job. Now there is an area of public policy that is always going to need close focus, and close attention, as we continue to look for ways to support kids who may fall through the gaps. However, her contribution is one of the most substantial for the welfare of children in this state's history and it ought to be recognised which is why I am talking about it this evening. She held a great number of portfolios, and the record stands as testimony to the professionalism with which she grasped all of those.

However, about the person. While I knew her as Jacq, most people would know that we were elected together in the same election, 2010, in Opposition. Many might know that we shared a birthday and often joked that we were the same age. Very few would know that we had been friends since the very early 1990s when we were both at university together studying in Education.

Despite her resignation, Jacquie continues to be a very dear friend. I love her like a sister. I am already really missing her from our parliament and from our parliamentary team. However, I think Tasmanians will miss her as well but they will not miss her legacy, because they are living it now and enjoying the benefits of the many initiatives that she pursued.

There are many lasting changes which are making life better, more prosperous and importantly safer, particularly for vulnerable members of the community and people with disadvantage. A quick one: she was a great parliamentary performer and a lot of fun and often when she would take to this stand as a minister with a question to respond to, I think members on the other side were not aware of what was coming because Jacquie Petrusma was like a velvet glove. She was able to land the blow. I often used to joke with her about her 'kapow' moments where she would land a very unexpected blow. I say it in partial jest but she delivered it with style.

Jacquie has continuing great love for people, a heart for families and, of course, as I have reinforced in my contribution tonight, a real concern for people experiencing disadvantage and more vulnerable members of our community. She served this House for 12 years, and served it with distinction and I believe the public should be able to recognise her as a person and her contribution.

In the short time remaining I wish to also pay tribute tonight to the team that put together the Tasmanian Open DanceSport championships. It was held last weekend at the beautiful Silverdome in my gorgeous electorate of Bass. It followed two years of COVID-19-related cancellations but it celebrated its tenth anniversary, supported financially by the Tasmanian Liberal Government through Events Tasmania. We want to encourage events in the winter to encourage not just tourists to come from outside of Tasmania to visit our state, but also for our local community to enjoy a really special night of entertainment and top quality dance competitions.

Andrew Palmer, the chair of DanceSport Tasmania and the event organiser, is one of the rare creatures who is able with that unmistakeable passion to deliver incredible results by bringing together a wonderful team and creating an event and an atmosphere. I pay tribute to him, in particular all of the volunteers whom he mustered to make that three-day event a huge success. I will say something else about that event.

We do not often hear about dance as a sport, but Andrew Palmer has really brought that concept to Tasmania. We all know what dance is; we all know what sport is, but he has been able to present the dance sport as a form of competitive sport. He has done it really well. There is a whole range of businesses around Tasmania who are providing tuition and coaching and giving a lot of people access to a new way of getting fit and strong and also the mental health and wellbeing benefits that come with that.

So, have a great weekend and congratulations to everybody who made it happen.

**Ms Archer** - Hear, hear.

### **Online Access Centre Network**

[8.00 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, tonight, I rise on the adjournment to talk about the online access centre network, which most people in this House know I have been representing and advocating on behalf of for many years. On 4 July, I wrote to the minister for Education in relation to the St Helens' Online Access Centre. It is a very good example of what I am going to talk about tonight, the insufficient funding for the online access centres across Tasmania. I would like to run through the St Helens one in particular because I have written to the minister about St Helens. I know Deloraine's definitely underfunded, as is the Derwent Valley underfunded. Most of them are underfunded.

We have a situation where the federal fund came from the sale of Telstra. It was organised by Brian Harradine. It was part of the conditions of his agreeing to sell half of Telstra. So, the online access centres were established as a fund because Brian Harradine really wanted to make sure that Tasmanians moving into the new technological evolution, was how he put it at the time, not only had access to it, but also had instruction and advocacy and support throughout Tasmania. Upsprung this amazing network of online access centres. When the federal funding ran out after 20 years or so, it then went to state government to fund and it was allocated to Libraries Tasmania, which is a really bad fit for online access centres. People think that because a computer sitting there, that libraries have them and it is the same function. It is certainly not.

Online access centres are a lot more than just sitting in front of a computer. If you say, for instance, you had looked at the latest census results, 25 per cent of the people of the Meander Valley do not have internet access at home. Online access centres not only serve an opportunity to communities where you have people who are transitioning from not knowing anything at all about technology to everything having to be administered through technology from MyGov websites to census forms to passport applications to Centrelink. Many educational facilities and training capacity are all done through technology these days.

Many people do not have smart phones. Many people do not have a computer at home. Many people also do not understand the function so, what we have now is a situation where the St Helens' online access centre, and just about all other online access centres across Tasmania, have not had the digital connections grant allocation for 2022-25 increased. It has been increased with CPI, but that is it. There has been absolutely no increase in the funding for any of those online access centres for nearly nine years.

St Helens has made an amazing business case, which I wrote to the minister about. They are seeking \$173 000 over a three-year period. That is actually just to make ends meet. That is the employment of a coordinator. This coordinator has an IT background, and it is a really hard fit to find someone with that experience in that community. They also fill in a lot of the gaps that cannot be provided in that community. They do passport applications, and they help people process their MyGov documents and send off documents for court hearings. There is so much that they do and they provide STEM training as well. There are so many things that they are providing.

Their coordinator alone costs \$40 000 a year. Their grant over three years is \$76 000 so the money that the government is giving that online access centre does not even cover the cost of a coordinator, let alone the cost of insurance, the overheads and the cost of cybersecurity for their networks. Their business case is very exhaustive. They have done a fantastic job. Deloraine has the same kind of problem.

My concern is that the Government has provided these online access centre with grant deeds and there are terms and conditions in these grant deeds which they have to adhere to in order to receive their grant funding. They know that the grant funding does not even touch the sides of what is required. From the outside, it really does look like that these online access centres are being starved.

The PESRAC Report highlighted the importance of online access centres. I have a response which took six weeks from Mr Jaensch's office. Come on. That is not protocol. They actually failed to even acknowledge the main points about what that funding is for and said that there is a library there - libraries have nothing to do with online access centres - and said there is a Service Tasmania that people can use. They completely missed the whole point, which they have been doing for many years.

What we would like is for online access centres to be appropriately funded. PESRAC highlighted their importance. You cannot give a community online access centre a grant of \$76 000 over three years when your coordinator cost alone is \$40 000. That is just setting people up for a fail and it is ridiculous. That is the same model that we are seeing right across the state so I will keep pursuing this as I have been doing for many years because it is important. It is a very valuable function. There are 18 online access centres. They are cost-neutral because

the bulk of the contribution comes from voluntary hours and they are an amazing asset to our communities and they touch over 300 000 Tasmanians annually.

### **Live Life Gala Ball - Alex Gadomski Fellowship**

[8.07 p.m.]

**Ms ARCHER** (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I rise on the adjournment tonight to speak about a very important annual fundraising event on the Hobart calendar and that is the Live Life Gala Ball for the Alex Gadomski Fellowship.

I was again fortunate to attend this major fundraiser which is and has been always held at Wrest Point in Hobart and it was on earlier this month. This event as well as increasing awareness, raises vital funds for medical research into new treatments and to help find a cure for bone marrow failure syndromes. It is a sad fact that each year up to 140 Australians are diagnosed with bone marrow failure symptoms - a very rare condition but only 50 per cent of people who are diagnosed do not survive.

The Alex Gadomski Fellowship in collaboration with Maddie Riewoldt's vision was established in 2018 by the Gadomski family to honour the life of Alex Gadomski who passed away at the age of 21 after a five-year battle with aplastic anaemia, followed by myelodysplasia - both as a result of bone marrow failure.

One of the many strengths of the Tasmanian community, as we all know in this Chamber and indeed across our great state, is that we always support each other. This was no more evident than the support shown for the Gadomski family, not only through this annual fundraising event over the last four years but indeed prior to that and through the treatment that Alex endured for quite some time.

At this year's event, it was announced that after four years, this year was the last Live Life Gala Ball with the fellowship reaching its total fundraising target of \$1 million on the night. This is an incredible achievement, especially when you consider that the Gadomski family only expected to raise \$50 000 when they first started the fellowship. That is over a mere four years, so to reach a new target of \$1 million when the original target was \$50 000 is truly extraordinary.

That night the Premier was also present. and there was brilliant emceeing by Jo Palmer as well who has emceed all four balls. On the night, the Premier gave on behalf of not the only the Government but the people of Tasmania, \$40 000 over a two-year period as a contribution to medical research which, of course, helped them push very close to that \$1 million target for the night and after the live auction, of course, they reached the target. There were also other generous sponsors on the night, too many to name but I note that a sizable donation on the night was given by IGA. I understand the fellowship will continue to undertake other types of fundraising in the future and I know Tasmanians will continue to get behind this important cause. I personally congratulate Alex's parents, Paul and Janet, and his brothers, Jordan and Lachlan, for their incredible efforts so far and for what the future holds for their ongoing fundraising efforts and other activities.

It takes a lot to put a large event together. I chaired the Cancer Council fundraising ball for a number of years when I was in your position, Mr Speaker. Putting together a ball,

obviously with a lot of volunteers' assistance, is a very big thing. With 506 people attending this last Live Life Gala Ball it was truly an extraordinary effort to put such a big event together. I also congratulate the volunteers who got behind this event in the lead up to and on the night of the ball and all previous balls as well.

I note another event already held was the Alex Gadomski Cup Gala Day and annual rival football game between St Virgil's College, where Alex was a former student, and the Hutchins School. I am told that St Virgil's came out on top in this year's battle. I congratulate the Gadomski family. People would know Paul from being the head of Cripps Bakery and the president of the Kingston Football Club. He is a very passionate football supporter. He is also a very passionate Carlton supporter like me. I needed to add that.

I congratulate everyone who helped to organise Live Life Gala Ball. It was a tremendous effort to raise awareness and fund, and, importantly, to honour Alex's life. There was not a dry eye in the house. There never is at these balls, but it was a particularly special ball when they announced that it would be the last of the balls. Not the last of their fundraising efforts, they are going to do things in a different way.

Alex was a truly remarkable young man who had a dream of completing his medical degree at UTAS and undertaking research to find a cure for bone marrow failure symptoms. Unfortunately, that very disease took his own life. I am sure he would be incredibly proud of the legacy that has been created in his name.

### **World Scout Scarf Day**

[8.13 p.m.]

**Mr ELLIS** (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, it will be no surprise that I rise tonight to celebrate World Scout Scarf Day, which was on 1 August. The day is an opportunity for active and former Scouts to wear their Scout scarfs in public to make the spirit of Scouting visible and live up to the motto, once a Scout, always a Scout. I was not lucky enough to be a scout growing up but my dad was and was a scout leader. One of my brothers loved going through the Scouts. It was a huge part of his life growing up. The Scout scarf is a symbol for the Scout's promise and for their mission to leave the world a better place than when they found it.

The day aligns with the first day of the first Scout camp 115 years ago on Brown Sea Island in England. It was organised by world famous Lieutenant General Baden Powell: 22 boys from different social backgrounds participating in activities around camping, observation, woodcraft, chivalry, lifesaving and patriotism. Baden Powell would go on to publish the book *Scouting for Boys* in 1908 and from there to worldwide Scout movement would begin. The Scouts, despite their young age, are actually pillars of our community.

The young people who are coming through Joeys and Cubs, Scouts right through to Rangers and Venturers are quite extraordinary young people. The commitment to volunteerism in their communities is extraordinary. It is the kind of thing that we really want to see from our young people as they transition right through as children but then to become the leaders of tomorrow. In my new portfolios, they may become the firemen, the police officers, the SES volunteers who are keeping our community safe every day. I know that the Scouts right across the board have such an interest as well as potentially serving in our armed forces overseas and

fighting for their country. That spirit of Scouting can take you anywhere. With more Scouts I believe the world will be a better place.

In my electorate of Braddon, there are 17 Scout groups with sections catering for those aged between five right up to 25 in our community. Braddon is the home to four Scout campsites as well as the Fraser Creek Hut on the slopes of Mount Dundas on the beautiful and rugged west coast and Baden Powell Memorial Lodge, located in the Cradle Mountain National Park. I know you are looking at me to tell me that is your electorate but we always claim Cradle Mountain as our own in Braddon, I am sorry, Mr Speaker.

On August 1, Scouts Australia announced the recipients of its adult recognition award. One of the most important things about Scouting is the leaders who take part with the Scout, teach them the skills they need to go through the movement and become wonderful human beings. It recognises members for their dedication and the quality of service to Scouting and Scouts over a considerable period. The meritorious service award for excellent service to the association went to Richard Kemp, a scout leader from Burnie Scout Group. Special service awards in recognition of good service to the organisation went to Narelle Ball, a Joey Scout leader and Jaqueline Townsend, the community secretary. Both were from the Rubicon Sea Scout group, and Corey Pilkington, district Cub leader from the Hellyer district. These wonderful people have served the next generation. It is fantastic to see recognition for their work.

I will leave you all with the words of the Chief Scout, an icon for so many young girls and boys growing up who love adventure, the great Bear Grylls:

Every child has the right to an adventure. Life is about grabbing opportunities. The prizes do not always go to the brightest, the best and the strongest, they go to those who persevere.

Scouts everywhere, we salute you.

**The House adjourned at 8.17 p.m.**