



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 18 March 2021

REVISED EDITION

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

QUESTIONS

TasTAFE - Cost of Government Advertising

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.03 a.m.]

Today, as you escalated your plans to blow-up TAFE, you have used taxpayer funds to pay for full-page advertisements in the state's three major newspapers to try to sell your politically motivated attempt to destroy TAFE. This wreaks of the attack you launched on TasWater with taxpayer funds to peddle misinformation and half-truths that ultimately failed. It proved that you could not bully your way to fixing a problem.

Why have you not learned from your past mistakes? You have used statements from respected peak bodies to support your war on TAFE but can you advise if they were even told about the nature of the ad before you quoted them? How much taxpayer money do you intend to spend on advertising to try and sell your war on TAFE and how many advertisements have you already booked and paid for?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. Given the time that the Leader of the Opposition had yesterday, I was actually anticipating that she might ask me about one of their policies first up this morning, but obviously they do not have any.

Mr O'Byrne - Send us an email; we will consider it and we will do it next week.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. Mr O'Byrne. It is not your birthday today.

Mr GUTWEIN - What was quite evident yesterday is it appears that the Leader of the Opposition has simply given up. The shadow treasurer was a little more nimble in his commentary yesterday, setting himself up, no doubt. The commentary from Labor about this was interesting.

It gives me a great opportunity to talk about PESRAC and the very strong recommendations which we have all committed to.

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance. The question was very specific. It was the amount of money - taxpayers' dollars - that this Government is spending.

Madam SPEAKER - Unfortunately, that is not a point of order. Thank you.

Mr GUTWEIN - It surprises me that they would so quickly jump -

The point I was going to make is, in terms of PESRAC, I made it very clear on Tuesday that this Government is going to secure Tasmania's future. We are going to secure Tasmania's future and we have accepted all 52 recommendations of PESRAC.

The lack of commentary by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the PESRAC report yesterday was interesting.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. This is unruly right from the word go. You are making the Premier yell.

Mr GUTWEIN - The point I was making is that the complete absence of any commitment to any of PESRAC recommendations yesterday - not even one on that side of the House -

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - Our policy is to ensure that TAFE is nimble, that TAFE can meet the needs of young Tasmanians and Tasmanians in regional areas, that TAFE can provide jobs for young Tasmanians. I make no apology for letting Tasmanians know about that policy; a policy that is going to ensure -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to standing order 45 on relevance. The question was specifically about how much taxpayer money has been spent on this campaign. If the Premier cannot answer, he should sit down.

Madam SPEAKER - I point out that, given the traditions of this House, I am not able to put words into the Premier's mouth. I draw his attention to the question but I cannot put words in his mouth. Please proceed, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - Regarding the question that was asked, it was much broader than just that particular issue and anyone reading *Hansard* would draw that same conclusion. We make no apologies for letting Tasmanians know that we have a policy that is going to provide jobs for young Tasmanians, is going to ensure that our TAFE is nimble, is more like the businesses it is there to serve, which importantly - and I would have thought on that side of the House they would support this - is going to get more young Tasmanians into tradie jobs, into traineeships, into apprenticeships and will help us secure Tasmania's future.

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Goodness, I hope this is not going to be a day of points of order.

Mr O'BYRNE - The question was clearly about how much taxpayers' money was he spending on advertising campaigns.

Madam SPEAKER - Again, that is not a point of order. I will not take another point of order on this subject.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is quite appropriate that the Government explains its policy to Tasmanians. In fact, I am reminded of the advertising that occurred under the previous Labor-Greens government, which was certainly headed up for Tasmania's forest industry, signed by Lara Giddings and Bryan Green, which led to not securing Tasmania's future but destroying Tasmania's future. It cost jobs and decimated regional communities.

I will come back to the nub of this. PESRAC has brought down a series of recommendations. All 52 of them have been accepted by this side of the House and we are going to get on and implement those recommendations.

The single most important recommendation that they made in terms of securing Tasmania's future is ensuring that we can put young Tasmanians and Tasmanians in regional areas into the jobs that are available. We can make certain that they are skilled up; that they are trained. It beggars belief that that side of the House will not support it.

Housing and Homelessness

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.10 a.m.]

Madam Speaker, what a terrible answer from the Premier.

Your mean-spirited nature knows no bounds with your latest attack on the pay pockets of ambulance paramedics, firefighters, quarantine security guards, your plan to sack Hydro workers, and your new threat to make it harder for jobseekers to get qualifications with your plan to blow up TAFE.

The uncaring 'look the other way' attitude at the core of your Government is no clearer than in housing and the homelessness crisis that you have created and failed to fix, and the desperate situation this has left thousands of Tasmanians in.

Tasmanians want to know why you are so out of touch. They want to know why you have no compassion or understanding of the often-desperate situation that families are finding themselves in. They want to understand why you simply do not care what is happening in this state when almost 3600 families are on the housing waiting list and when even the most urgent of those families needing a roof over their head will have to wait a minimum of 64 weeks to be housed, on average.

Can you show Tasmanians today that you have at least an understanding of the housing crisis you are overseeing, by telling us how many people on average are turned away from each of Tasmania's emergency shelters across the state each day?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, wide ranging as it was. Let me deal with a couple of things. First, I have been advised regarding ambulance staff and the challenge they have been facing in terms of past payments related to travel recovery, that no past payments will need to be recovered. We are in the process of communicating that widely to staff and working with them and so, Madam Speaker, fixed.

Regarding the issue with our firefighters, I understand that 12 out of the 13 have now received their backpay. We will still seek clarity because it is important that on the point of law that we have clarity.

Regarding quarantine hotels, my understanding is the deeds are currently with the hotels themselves. We are waiting on them to come back from them. I believe we have one back already but, as I have said, back payments will occur as soon as we receive those deeds. And so, one, two and three: fixed.

Ms O'Byrne - You forgot about -

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - I do not have that detail in the final point of the question that the member asked but I will say that, on Tuesday of this week, we released a comprehensive housing package that will put downward pressure on rents, that will enable people to put ancilliary dwellings, granny flats in their backyards, with no permit required. It will ensure that landlords are able to put downward pressure on rent because of the significant changes we have made to land tax.

We will continue with our comprehensive program to put roofs over peoples' heads. However, as I have said, the only way you can deal with the demand problem is to build more houses. Last year for the 12 months we have a record level of dwelling approvals. We are doing exactly what is required and that is getting on with the job and building more houses.

That side of the House cannot even make their mind up whether they will agree with anything out of the PESRAC report. That is a plan that will secure Tasmania's future. We make no apologies for agreeing to all 52 recommendations -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, listen.

Mr GUTWEIN - On this side of the House our focus, very clearly, is ensuring that we can get Tasmanians into jobs, that we can grow our economy, that we can put roofs over the heads of people. Importantly, we will work hard to secure Tasmania's future unlike that side of the House who turned up here yesterday, knowing for months that they would have to provide an update themselves of what they stand for and what they would do in our place, and what did they provide? Zip.

Housing and Rental Affordability

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.14 a.m.]

Since we asked you about the housing crisis a fortnight ago, the stories of rental hardship have continued unabated. I am not sure, given your last answer, whether you are paying attention but the heartbreaking stories on our television screens and in the pages of the state's newspaper, and the data, confirm widespread rental stress keeps on piling up. The Real Estate Institute of Australia says Tasmania's rental affordability is now the worst in the nation. Tassie tenants spend on average 29.5 per cent of their income, nearly a third, on rent, 5.5 per cent above the national average. The widely accepted measure for housing stress is 30 per cent of income. Again, 29.5 per cent on average, Premier. Given we are already on the precipice of housing stress being the average, the situation for Tasmanian tenants is particularly terrifying and, as we know, the JobSeeker and JobKeeper supplements end at the end of March.

Premier, we agree with you that we need to build more houses. That is obvious. But houses do not just spring up out of the ground overnight. We need measures that will tackle the housing crisis immediately. That is why today, the Greens will table a bill to amend the Residential Tenancy Act to put stronger limits on unreasonable rent increases. Premier, will you at least consider our bill with an open mind, or do you deny that there is any need for immediate action on Tasmania's housing crisis?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Greens, Ms O'Connor, for that question and her genuine interest in this matter and her hard work on policy, albeit different to what we would look to do. However, she does actually apply herself, unlike Labor. I have read that you are going to introduce a bill to cap residential rents. It does not surprise me that you would view stepping in and attempting to control the market as the right thing to do. I do not think that it is.

In contrast, we are a government that wants to see the market flourishing for houses to come out of the ground. Our Government wants markets to be competitive, but at the same time we will provide support for people in our community who may be struggling.

That is why our Government has provided one of the most generous assistance packages to the private rental market to support both landlords and tenants with any hardship caused by COVID-19. We provided significant financial support - I think the most significant package rolled out in this country. I do not think there is any question about that. More than \$3.6 million has now been provided to landlords and tenants. This has meant tenants have been able to keep up with their rent. My understanding is that 93 per cent, at last count, of rent arrears accumulated during the emergency period has been repaid, Madam Speaker.

I also want to outline protections already in place. Regarding the existing protections for rent increases in the Residential Tenancy Act 1997, a rent increase must be given in writing with a minimum number of 60 days' notice before it is to take effect. It can only be increased once in a 12-month period and a tenant who considers that their rent increase is unreasonable

can apply to the Residential Tenancy Commission for an audit declaring the rent increase unreasonable.

That process is available now. As of 12 March, I am informed that the Residential Tenancy Commissioner had received just five applications for unreasonable rent increases following the expiry of the Emergency Period on 31 January, which is similar to the same period last year. On Tuesday I announced a series of policies to ensure we could provide more supply -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Can I not have conversations across the Chamber, please?

Mr GUTWEIN - For landowners who wish to activate residential zoned land, my advice is that at last count we had around 5000 hectares of residential zoned land available in the state for around 60 000 residential lots.

Now, Madam Speaker, to help move that forward we provided a \$10 million headworks holiday for new residential subdivisions, \$5000 per residential lot for power and up to \$5000 for water and sewerage. We are introducing an apartment code to establish appropriate permitted discretionary assessment pathways for medium density residential development, where that development is near transport routes and services - where we should be building.

It will be interesting to hear the debate in this place over time as proposals come forward. I hope we will see broad support for the sector to get those buildings out of the ground and provide those additional dwellings Madam Speaker. Importantly, the ancillary dwellings I have already mentioned - extra living quarters with a floor area of less than 60 square metres, self-contained but additional to the primary home on a block such as a granny flat - we will provide \$10 000 for the first 250 of those made available for long-term rental for two years. We are taking steps across a multifaceted range of initiatives.

I think we can all agree that HomeShare is a fantastic program. It enables the Government to co-invest with purchasers by taking an equity stake in the home of up to \$100 000 or 30 per cent of the home's value, whichever is the lesser. We are going to put another \$10 million into that, meaning at least another 100 households could realise home ownership. Importantly, we are going to advertise it again. I hope we will not see the same sort of silly nonsense we have seen this morning in terms of a government policy being advertised so that people understand what it is, what it means, and what it means for them -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr GUTWEIN - Again, this is the selective position they take - 'We don't like the government policy and we'll argue against you telling people about it but, if we do like it, we might support it.'. On that side of the House they simply do not know where they stand or what they stand for. I understand the Leader of the Greens will be introducing that bill but we are at policy odds on that.

Tourism and Hospitality - Industry Future

Mr STREET question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.21 a.m.]

Can you outline the Government's clear plan to secure the future of our tourism and hospitality industry and is the Premier aware of any alternative plans?

Ms O'Connor - Tell us about that runaway fire in the Styx impacting on tourism businesses.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, thank you very much.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his interest in this very important issue. I thought I comprehensively answered that question earlier this week, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'Connor - No, you didn't. They were still water-bombing it yesterday.

Mr GUTWEIN - Again, I thought I had comprehensively answered that question.

Madam Speaker, our recovery is underway and our clear plan is working. We are determined to secure Tasmania's future and we have good reasons to be optimistic. I must admit I welcomed the shadow treasurer acknowledging yesterday - albeit he only went to it a little bit, and begrudgingly - that a lot is going on.

We have the lowest unemployment rate of all the states and job numbers are at pre-pandemic levels but I know that industries are still doing it tough. More is to be done and this Government will continue to support confidence and investment in Tasmanian jobs because this side of the House wants to secure Tasmania's future as we come out of this pandemic.

One of the industries hardest hit by the pandemic, which saw borders closed and travel grind to a halt, is tourism. There are, however, positive signs. The support of locals whilst borders were closed has been exceptional and has kept many operators going. Regarding the travel voucher scheme, the number of people who travelled was extraordinary, and those who did not get a voucher still travelled anyway because they wanted to assist Tasmania and Tasmanian businesses. As borders have reopened, travellers and jobs are returning. Payroll jobs data shows our jobs recovery in hospitality and food is leading the states, but we know there is much more work to do to recover that lost ground and we will continue to work hard.

On Tuesday I outlined my Government's clear plan across our industries, including tourism, to secure our future. We will provide further support to the tourism industry, recognising that the industry has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including by providing direct financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses identified as critical to regional visitor attraction. One part of our plan that has received very strong endorsement from tourism leaders is our support for the industry's goal for Tasmania to become a carbon-neutral destination.

This is a massive opportunity for the future of our industry because more travellers than ever are proactively selecting climate-positive destinations. The industry has set a target to achieve this goal by 2025 and to assist businesses to start the journey to carbon-neutrality, \$1.5 million will be provided to support carbon audits and formulate a pathway for those individual businesses to achieve a standard of operation that will be globally recognised.

I have received much positive feedback about this from tourism business operators who have used terms like 'game-changer' and 'this will put us on the global map,'. The CEO of the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT), Luke Martin, said there is a lot of work to do over coming years to achieve the vision of a carbon-neutral visitor destination, but this is something we can do that other destinations can only dream about.

Tasmania as a carbon-neutral destination will position our state as a true global leader in responsible tourism, and this Government will continue to support our critical tourism industry and Luke Martin if the TICT agrees. The state Government has been exceptionally responsive over the past 12 months, consulting industry and responding quickly to priority needs as they have emerged. The state of the state package continues that approach.

We are also going to support Tasmanian travel agents impacted by COVID-19 with a new program to be rolled out shortly through Business Tasmania. We are extending our business advisory support program for the industry and Tourism Tasmania will invest \$3.5 million to deliver our most aggressive winter season campaign ever.

These initiatives will complement the Australian Government's discounted flights to regional Tasmania and Hobart as well as the free vehicle fares on the *Spirits*. I anticipate Tasmania will be absolutely red-hot this winter. We are right behind our tourism industry which employs around 40 000 Tasmanians and contributes around \$3 billion to our state annually.

I must say I was surprised last night, reading through some of the contributions from yesterday, that the Leader of the Opposition did not mention tourism once. I thought that was extraordinary. In a 40-minute contribution to the House, the Leader of the Opposition could not once mention an important industry like tourism. On this side of the House we will get on with securing Tasmania's future and the industries that we need.

I come back to TasTAFE. The single most important recommendation out of Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council and the biggest challenge we face will be having enough skilled and trained people to do the work. We are committed to securing Tasmania's future by giving Tasmanians opportunity.

Incat - Government Support

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.27 a.m.]

The welders are waiting and so too are the rest of the 500 workers connected to the world-renowned family-owned shipbuilding company Incat, located in my electorate of Clark. You said on Tuesday that you would be meeting with Incat that day. Will you now update the

House on exactly what support and opportunities will be provided to Incat to secure contracts to sustain and grow its workforce for jobs in Clark?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Ogilvie, the Independent member for Clark, for that question and her interest in this.

I met with Mr Clifford the other night. He is a colourful character and I enjoyed my discussion with him. The point I made very clearly to Mr Clifford is that we want that business to continue cutting aluminium. We want them to be cutting aluminium and we want them to be employing Tasmanians. Further meetings will be held in coming days where we will work through our plan with that business, but one thing I am certain of, and I am sure Bob is as well, is that business has a great future. Together we will work with them to ensure that not only do we cut aluminium but we also provide jobs for Tasmanians as we move forward.

Housing - Median Rental Increases

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.29 a.m.]

Although you have openly disputed the fact that rents for thousands of Tasmanian families have become so out of reach that they now face a horrible choice between shelter and food, the fact is the median rental for a three-bedroom house in southern Tasmania has risen by 18 per cent in the past three years, to \$450 a week.

Over that same period, rents rose 21 per cent in the north of Tasmania, to \$363 a week, and by 13 per cent in the north-west, to \$300 a week. The Housing Summit your Government held exactly three years ago in March 2018 has amounted to more broken promises and achieved precisely nothing because the housing situation has since then become steadily worse. Now the National Rent Affordability Scheme (NRAS), established by Labor governments, is about to be terminated by Liberal governments. When that happens tenants will face an even more desperate environment with no hope of turning to your Government for help with an already out-of-control housing waiting list. On top of the almost 3600 families on your Government's housing waiting list, can you detail how many families will exit the NRAS in Tasmania this year, and over the following three years, as they lose this critical support and face out-of-reach rents or homelessness?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I could rhetorically ask what is your policy on this; you said nothing in this House about it yesterday when you had the opportunity.

Let me put some facts on the record to begin with. We built around 1138 more long-term homes and supported accommodation and supported applicants on the social housing register since we came to government. This is 450 low income households that came into home ownership for the first time. On Tuesday, we took steps to ensure that there is even more opportunity for those who want to have home ownership. We have added 76 more places in

homeless accommodation. We have released 325 affordable serviced lots in the market, targeting low income buyers and, again, on Tuesday we announced the plan to ensure that we can open up more residential land as well. We brokered 253 private rental tenancies for low income Tasmanians and we placed 324 households into rapid rehousing.

Overall, this means that the Government's affordable housing strategy has delivered a total of 1604 new homes, blocks of land and new places in supported accommodation and homeless services.

We have also assisted an additional 962 households to affordable homes through a range of other initiatives. Contracted right now in the pipeline, there are 552 new dwellings to be added to the social housing and supported accommodation and a further 103 more places in homeless accommodation.

We know that there is always more to do. Importantly, a further 764 new social houses across 20 local government areas have already been locked in as part of our 1000 new homes that we announced last year. On top of that - and it is important to put these facts on the record - there is a new youth foyer in Hobart which will provide 25 units; a new youth foyer in Burnie, another 25 units; a new youth at risk centre in Launceston, eight units; Bethlehem House in Hobart, 50 units; a new men's shelter in Devonport, another seven; and it goes on.

We are fully aware of the impact of NRAS. That will gradually fulfil its obligations and we will continue to monitor that as it moves forward. The Government offers assistance to those who are eligible and encourages any Tasmanians who may be concerned to contact Housing Connect to see what assistance could be available.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to standing order 45, relevance. The question was specifically about how many people are exiting NRAS this year?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. It is dealing with NRAS right now.

Mr GUTWEIN - As I have said, anybody who wants assistance should contact Housing Connect to see what assistance could be available. The Government made changes to the private rental incentive program to enable tenanted properties exiting from NRAS to be considered eligible for assessment for the private rental incentive program. I encourage those needing assistance to contact Housing Tasmania.

There were just over 1500 dwellings built in Tasmania as part of NRAS. More than half of them, or around half, are managed by UTAS. Of the other half, more than 50 per cent of them are now under long-term agreements with the state Government which means their arrangements will continue. This leaves less than 23 per cent of NRAS properties that may possibly be impacted over the next five years as the scheme is wound up.

I encourage anyone who is concerned and remains in that program to contact Housing Connect and work with us in terms of the programs that are available.

Building and Construction Sector - Update

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for STATE GROWTH, Mr FERGUSON

[10.35 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on the Government's clear plans to secure our future in building and construction?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin, Mr Street, for his question and continued interest in the success of our building and construction sector. This Government recognises the important role of that vital sector. It is also a key part of the economic recovery that this state is already enjoying, but we want to turbo charge that.

The Premier said moments ago that this side of the House has agreed to, and has endorsed, all 52 recommendations from the PESRAC report. And so we should because it assists in laying out a future of policy improvement that can help Tasmanians live their best lives and, importantly, the economy.

We have a strong and proud record of achievement; now over 22 000 more Tasmanians employed since coming to office in 2014. Our economy is one of the strongest in the country and we have the lowest unemployment rate of any state. That is not the Tasmania that many people would remember, but there is always more to do.

To address the need identified by PESRAC we agreed to announce and establish the \$30 million Building Construction Support Loan Scheme to bring forward paused commercial construction projects that will support jobs and create new and improved buildings and infrastructure. The scheme will provide loan finance supporting private sector development of stalled or delayed projects at a critical time. How it will work: projects of \$3 million or more will be able to apply for a low interest commercial loan through the Government, through the Office of the Coordinator-General, under this job creating scheme.

The feedback has been great. The executive director of the Master Builders Tasmania, has commented:

The announcement of \$30 million in low-interest commercial loans will help unlock the value in the pipeline where projects have stalled. This funding will help keep the momentum in the construction industry to drive our economic recovery.

The loan scheme will be open to applications in the very near future. I encourage members to let any of their local contacts know about it, get them aware and allow them to know about it so they can prepare their applications.

Mr Gutwein - Using advertising.

Mr FERGUSON - It will be worth getting the word out, because it is a big fund and we want to achieve big things. I agree with you, Premier.

This new initiative is similar to, but builds upon our \$10 million fund announced in the state Budget last year to support stalled projects that will shovel ready the grant fund. That program opened for applications on 2 March. It will also bring forward commercial shovel-ready projects to achieve the same kinds of good things in the economy. This is a merit-based grant program specifically designed to help push forward the Tasmanian construction sector, creating jobs and delivering positive community benefits.

Importantly, I need to emphasise that, to ensure that the money is flowing through the sector and creating jobs as soon as possible, one of the rules is that projects must be able to commence within six months of receiving funding approval. The House will be pleased to know that there has been a strong response to this. Funding will mean the projects that have not already proceeded or have been put on ice or have been held back for some reason, particularly related to the pandemic, can get under way and get the jobs started sooner.

Headworks: we also know that there is currently around 5000 hectares of land around Tasmania that is zoned for housing, it is zoned residential, but for some reason or another it has not been developed. That could be up to 60 000 lots. We want to get it moving, and that is why we are taking immediate action to remove barriers and costs to encourage further land activation. While that means jobs it also means housing; it means homes for people. Landowners who would wish to activate residential zoned land - it is ready to go, but it has not been developed - will benefit from our \$10 million headworks holiday that the Premier announced. In summary, this means up to \$5000 per residential lot for power and up to \$5000 for water and sewerage infrastructure. Rebecca Ellston at the Property Council has commended this. I quote her:

The \$10 million Headworks Holiday for new residential subdivisions is likely to make a significant difference to unlocking the potential of existing residential zoned land and the consequential housing supply.

You should endorse Ms Ellston's words, as I am sure you would have endorsed Mr Wightman's words when he was at the Property Council. He was a big fan of our job-creating policies on this side of the House and our red tape reduction and getting planning improvements in place. He did a great job when he was at the Property Council of Australia.

We need more workers. Previously we had people looking for work, now we have work looking for people. With the growing economy there are local jobs to be had. We want to help more young people get those jobs, which is why we are acting to ensure that TasTAFE has the autonomy and workforce flexibility it needs to continuously align its training offering with what our workforce and industry need. It has been clearly supported by industry, and the HIA's executive director has commented that:

Growing an industry skills base -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 48. The House surely believes the minister has had sufficient time to congratulate himself. I ask you to rein him in. He is nearly at six minutes.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you for your timekeeping, but it is not a point of order. Please proceed.

Mr FERGUSON - I am able to wind up pretty soon but we have some good news for the House. The HIA's executive director has commented that:

Growing an industry skills base was critical to avoiding supply constraints in the delivery of new housing.

We need these reforms. We have jobs for people and let us help them to get into that work.

Ambulance Tasmania - Death of Paramedic

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.41 a.m.]

The evidence presented to the coronial inquiry into the death of an Ambulance Tasmania (AT) paramedic makes shocking reading. It details a workplace culture that is toxic and fails to protect workers. A long-term paramedic wept, describing how her complaint of a rape plan joke by other staff was shut down, with managers warning it would affect her career. She detailed 20 staff in late 2016 who openly discussed their suicide plans and three who are currently really struggling, alongside a lackadaisical approach to securing Ambulance Tasmania's drug stores.

Staff with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or mental illness were not supported and people have been managed out of the workforce if they were 'being difficult' or 'caused any extra work or grief for managers.'. Tasmanians would be shocked to hear our paramedics are not getting the highest quality workplace trauma support and have suffered under a sexist culture. We understand that some positive steps have been taken since 2016, but there is still no specialised pathway to handle sexual harassment complaints, leaving young female paramedics particularly vulnerable. We also understand there are no regular wellbeing assessments conducted by Ambulance Tasmania. Under-resourcing places strain on paramedics in what is already a stressful job and your Government continues to penny-pinch - for example, with travel allowances.

What will you do to correct this unsafe workplace? Why have you not instigated formal trauma support with mandated regular professional debrief support for paramedics? How can you guarantee you are providing safe career security and that you have stamped out this sexist culture?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for her question and concur with her in regard to the horror, shock and concern around the allegations we have heard through the coronial inquest and reported in the media.

Clearly I cannot go to the contents directly of the coronial inquest while it is underway, but I want to make abundantly clear that any allegation about inappropriate behaviour or misconduct is taken incredibly seriously. It is not acceptable in any workplace. Sexual harassment, threats of violence or sexual violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

I confirm I have spoken with the secretary of the department, who has assured me she has contacted all departmental staff to reiterate this message and to provide information on support available. This includes advice on existing actions and reporting procedures in place to deal with such situations as well as advice to anyone who feels that a matter is criminal in nature to report it to police.

As to the historical allegations raised yesterday in the coroner's inquiry as reported in the media, I am advised they were raised with the secretary of the Department of Health earlier this week, and she immediately commenced an examination of the documentation from that time to identify the action undertaken at that time and what subsequent actions have been and may be needed to be taken in this case. Further, I can advise the Department of Health has referred the historical allegation to Tasmania Police.

The secretary of the department has assured me that she will undertake all appropriate steps and action necessary to ensure this matter is handled appropriately. I am advised that all managers will be required to undertake further refresher training in the coming months on the appropriate handling and investigation of sexual abuse and all harassment complaints, and the importance of having respect in the workplace. The secretary has advised me this includes escalation practices and pathways if a member of AT is unsatisfied with the escalation that occurs. All employees are able to access the department's employee assistance program (EAP) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or they may speak with their manager or the human resources team for other support options available.

Madam Speaker, I take the wellbeing and the mental health wellbeing of AT staff seriously. This is why the Government has committed \$6 million over four years for a proactive and preventative health and wellbeing program that supports both the physical and mental health of our emergency service personnel and provides intervention and support when necessary. The health and wellbeing program provides a mix of proactive and preventative measures that build the capacity to detect and respond early to health and wellbeing risks that impact the ability of our emergency service workers to perform at their optimal level. On 10 September 2019, MyPulse was launched, which is a central online hub for wellbeing and includes physical and mental health screens, e-learning modules and face-to-face wellbeing training. MyPulse is targeted at career frontline responders across AT and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM), and offers a range of services that are scalable and are responsive to known risks associated with emergency first responder duties.

I have outlined the EAP program. Furthermore, Ambulance Tasmania will employ a health and wellbeing consultant who will oversee a peer support program. Madam Speaker, you recall that Tasmania was the first jurisdiction in Australia to legislate the presumptive provisions for workers suffering from PTSD.

I take these matters incredibly seriously, as does the secretary of the Department of Health. I assure the member and other members of this Chamber that we will continue to take steps and further action so that all our workplaces are safe and everyone is accountable for their actions, and that is underpinned by a culture of respect.

Community Health Services - Additional Government Support

Mr STREET to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[10.47 a.m.]

Can you provide the House with an update on how the state Government is continuing to invest in local and community-based health services and how the announcements in the Premier's Address provide additional support and protection for Tasmanians?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, and I thank the member for Franklin for his question.

The Tasmanian Government has a clear plan to secure Tasmania's future which includes a better health system, supporting our staff, driving better care and delivering the best possible outcome for our patients. The announcement outlined this week in the Premier's Address is a further testament to this Government's strong commitment to Tasmanians receiving care and support in the community because we know the more support they receive in the community, the less chance they will need to access services within our hospitals.

To make it even easier for Tasmanians to access medical care close to their homes, we will work with the primary health sector with \$3 million in additional support and incentives for primary care services, including GPs, to provide after-hours services for their local communities. The aim of this program is to take pressure off our emergency departments and maximise opportunities for lower level care to be provided outside our hospitals, providing a better patient experience and freeing up hospital resources for those that are more urgent. This is better for patients.

Building upon our significant investment in ambulance services, we are supporting our hardworking paramedics even further with the recruitment of 24 new paramedics. These are additional crews in the urban areas of the north and south of the state. We are delivering on our commitment to ensuring greater access to high-quality palliative care services for Tasmanians across the state - and I know this is a topic that unites the House - with more funds to be provided to support even more home- and community-based care services such as after-hours and hospice-at-home services. A \$5 million oral health package has also been announced to provide about 20 000 more appointments for public patients across emergency, general care, and denture clinics. We will be creating a new medicinal cannabis access scheme, subject to the necessary approval from the TGA, to be in place by 1 July this year.

All of this is being done while we continue to keep on top of COVID-19. It is critical during this time that we do not become complacent despite the roll-out of vaccines. We know that, as a community, we must remain vigilant and ensure we are ready to rapidly identify all contacts should a new case or outbreak emerge. Therefore, to ensure ongoing community safety, changes are being made to strengthen our contact-tracing capability. I can today advise that the Director of Public Health will mandate that from 1 May 2021 the free Check In TAS app will be the only system used for collecting contact-tracing information in Tasmania. This means that businesses and organisations required to collect contact-tracing information under the existing Public Health direction who have not already registered for Check In TAS need to register and ensure their patrons can easily use a Check In TAS QR code at their premises. Check In TAS is the easiest and safest way for Public Health to collect accurate, reliable and

accessible contact-tracing information that can be used to help protect Tasmanian communities from COVID-19.

Strengthening our contact-tracing capability means that when someone is confirmed as having COVID-19 - and we very much hope that does not occur but we need to be prepared - Public Health can rapidly access data about the venues that person attended while they were infectious. As we see new strains emerge, this is becoming even more important.

I thank the many Tasmanian businesses which have already transitioned to this system in order to keep the community safe. I ask every Tasmanian to download the Check In TAS app to be ready to use it as thousands of locations in our state will be displaying their Check In TAS QR codes. I also reassure businesses and those in regional areas that the Department of State Growth will be working with you to help you transition.

Madam Speaker, in closing, we will continue to follow Public Health advice. Our side of the Chamber has a range of policies to deliver outcomes in health. Our side of the Chamber is continuing to deliver for the safety of Tasmanians, unlike the other side. We have seen this week that they have failed to deliver an alternative policy, an alternative project. It is all the same from Labor - continuing to fumble around without coming in with any policy to deliver to the people of Tasmania.

Public Housing - Homelessness

Ms STANDEN question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.53 a.m.]

Two weeks ago in this place you gave an undertaking to have your Housing minister check on the wellbeing of public housing tenants your Government is evicting into homelessness. Clearly, that undertaking was another broken promise. Joanne is a 49-year-old mother of two who has lived in transitional housing in Howrah for the past three years. She suffers from both physical and mental health conditions. Your Government gave her notice this month that you are now evicting her. She has been given until 31 March, which is just two weeks away, to vacate the property with nowhere else to go but onto your waiting list where she will languish for at least another 15 months on average. She has been told to seek accommodation at a shelter when your Government knows only too well there are not enough beds to house her.

Can you explain to Joanne and to all Tasmanians why you are evicting her into homelessness?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, for individual cases I do not have that detail. However, I believe the Housing minister is better placed to provide an update on that.

Mr O'Byrne - He answered these questions last week. What has changed?

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I note Mr O'Byrne's comment that the Premier did answer questions in relation to some of these cases

last week. At the time the Premier said in this place that we do not discuss the details of individual constituent matters here, and he offered the Leader of the Opposition a private briefing on some of the matters of concern she raised on behalf of constituents. My office followed up that offer, reached out to the Opposition and offered a confidential briefing on particular cases from our department and our office. Ms White declined. Ms Standen took up the offer and last week received a briefing in my office on these cases -

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - Labor has no mortgage on compassion or concern for Tasmanians in housing distress whatsoever. We are responsible for our housing system and we take great care and concern for Tasmanians in housing stress. We will not weaponise their individual circumstances by bringing them into this place as Labor continues to do -

Ms O'Byrne - You do not know how many people are turned away from shelters every day.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr JAENSCH - although they have had the opportunity of a confidential briefing on the circumstances of these tenants.

Ms O'Byrne - You haven't done anything. You have done nothing to support these people.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr JAENSCH - We will continue to offer a range of supports to people in housing stress, including the constituents who you referred to now and last week in this place, but we will not discuss their individual circumstances here. I hear cynical and narky comments from those opposite that my advice to them, when they have raised constituent matters with me, asking them to consider the options offered to their constituents to assist their constituents to maximise their chances of getting a home by broadening the range of suburbs they have selected and to consider taking up some of the immediate offers of support that can be provided -

Ms O'Byrne - Is she still being evicted into homelessness, yes or no?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr JAENSCH - to them while they are assisted to secure longer term accommodation.

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Speaker, this goes to relevance. The question was very clear as to whether the minister - or the Premier who has flicked this response to the minister - can confirm that this woman and her children are being evicted into homelessness?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order and the minister is allowed to answer the question as he sees fit.

Mr FERGUSON - On the point of order, my point of order is about the behaviour on the other side of the House. It is a bit rich for them to be raising points of order when they are so disorderly. I can barely hear the minister answering the question. I ask that they allow other members to listen to the answer without overruling and shouting back over him.

Madam SPEAKER - I do not think it is a point of order under our point of order system but I thank you for your contribution.

Mr JAENSCH - As the opposition has been briefed on specific constituent cases, we take a sensitive and compassionate approach to people who are in acute housing stress -

Ms O'Byrne - She is still being evicted into homelessness.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, please.

Mr JAENSCH - Our department and our process will continue to work with people who are applying for housing and crisis accommodation and placement in longer term social housing to help them secure housing that meets their needs and, in the interim, offer a range of supports they can take up to ensure they have a roof over their head.

We will continue to do that and I will continue to resist calls from those opposite to discuss the circumstances of individuals in this place.

Domestic Violence and Homelessness

Ms STANDEN question to PREMIER and MINISTER FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.59 a.m.]

What do you say to a mother of four escaping a domestic violence nightmare who is about to be thrust into homelessness?

Angela and her children have bravely made the break to safety, escaping her violent partner by seeking refuge at a women's shelter in Hobart. As you would be aware, in Tasmania you are only permitted to stay in emergency shelter accommodation for a short period under current law. As a result, Angela and her children are about to be evicted with nowhere else to go, into homelessness, forcing her to uproot her children, including changing their schools for the second time within a period of months.

Too many families like Angela and her children are falling through the cracks because you have failed in your promise to provide shelter for thousands of Tasmanians, who instead are now languishing on your growing wait list. What have you done in the past seven years to address this untenable situation where up to 40 families each day are being turned away from shelter with literally nowhere else to turn?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Standen for that question and her interest in this matter. The first thing is that we are the first government that has ever put in place a whole-of-government

approach to family violence. In fact, under the previous premier the approach we took was nation-leading.

As to the member's question and the individualised nature of it, I will not speak to that but I will make the point that under my premiership over the last 12 months we have invested more than any government before.

In anticipation of increased demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were the first government in the country to invest in additional support. I believe you welcomed that back then. I believe you acknowledged that extra \$2.7 million to respond to family and sexual violence as part of our initial social and economic support package. We also secured an additional \$3.6 million through the COVID-19 domestic and family violence response national partnership agreement. That final 2021 national partnership funding has been allocated across government and non-government services.

A further \$868 000 has been provided to seven specialist family and sexual violence services, matching the initial funding provided under the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 stimulus package. This now brings a total of \$1.3 million provided to these services under that national partnership allocation. A further \$462 000 has been allocated to flexible support packages to provide practical supports to victim survivors of family violence, enhancing their safety and wellbeing when leaving an abusive relationship.

A further \$55 000 was allocated to the Australian Childhood Foundation to deliver additional counselling services for children and young people, and \$304 000 was provided to Colony 47 to resume the delivery of the Step Up adolescent intervention program which aims to assist young people to understand the consequences of violent behaviour, strengthen family relationships, and provide referral pathways.

Ms O'Byrne - Do you know what the wait time is to access counselling? Do you know how long they wait?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - Through Safe Homes, Families and Communities we reallocated a further \$1.289 million to further support victims survivors of family and sexual violence, extending funding provided to Safe at Home from the Tasmanian Government's social economic and support package for additional services from June 2021 to December; a further \$520 000 additional funding to Engender Equality and the Australian Childhood Foundation to address current wait lists; \$150 000 of additional funding to the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program; \$80 000 to develop an Aboriginal family and sexual violence strategy to inform the next family and sexual violence action plan.

Ms STANDEN - Point of order, Madam Speaker, going once again to relevance. None of these funding promises make any difference to Angela, who is being evicted into homelessness this week. Will the Premier commit to review the rules so that people escaping domestic violence are not evicted into homelessness at the end of an arbitrary 12-week period?

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, that is not a point of order, but I am sure the Premier heard.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, the point that I am making, and I think it is well understood by the member, is that this Government, more than any other, has invested in this very important area. We have provided funding across a range of organisations to provide supports, accepting that this is a very difficult and complex set of circumstances we deal with. We partner with our NGOs to ensure we can provide the necessary support.

I make the point again that I am not going to deal with individual cases in this parliament because that would not be fair on them. I hope that in raising those circumstances that the member has not somehow identified that person more publicly because that is the danger of bringing individual circumstances into this place.

I make the point again that this is a difficult and complex set of circumstances that we deal with. It is an abhorrent set of circumstances that we deal with in terms of family violence. This Government is investing more and doing everything it can to reach out and make certain that those supports are there.

Community Housing - Modification to Premises to Assist Accessibility

Ms STANDEN question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN referred to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH

[11.05 a.m.]

I take this opportunity to make the point that we were careful to identify that particular case in order to protect her privacy.

After three years of waiting on your Government's elective surgery waiting list, Craig from Gagebrook is finally booked in to see a surgeon in April to have both of his knees replaced. Craig is a 61-year-old pensioner who was forced to leave his job as a chef many years ago because of chronic pain. While Craig is thankful to at last be receiving the surgical treatment he needs, your Government will literally leave him out in the cold once he returns home. Craig's home where he has lived for the past 18 years has front and back steps which he will be unable to climb post-surgery because he will be confined to a wheelchair or on crutches for several months. The housing provider contracted by your Government has ruled out constructing a simple ramp, so Craig will either not be able to access his home or he will have to drag himself to get inside.

This is simply heartless. Will you intervene and direct your Housing minister to fund the community housing provider to undertake this small build so Craig is at least able to access his home?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I just caught the eye of the Housing minister. I believe he is in a position to answer this particular question.

Mr JAENSCH - Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I will not be discussing the circumstances of individual constituents. I believe that I have -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. I ask members on my left - most of them - to stop interjecting. It is really rude and irritating. I want to hear what the minister has to say.

Mr JAENSCH - At any given time we have people on our social housing register and in social housing properties either managed by us or community housing providers whose circumstances change including their mobility, disability and special needs for their house for themselves or their children. People's needs change and a number of the applications on our social housing register and applications for transfers or modifications to homes come from people whose needs have changed like the case that was referred to.

When that happens there are assessments done. Those people, from their doctors to disability service providers and occupational therapists, provide a rundown on what the person's changed needs are. Some homes in social housing stock, be they in the government's properties or in those that are managed by community housing providers, are able to be adapted to meet the needs of those people.

However, in some cases, it is not structurally possible or feasible to do that for those homes. In those cases, and in some of the cases that the Opposition may have been aware of recently, the alternative has been to offer them transfers to other properties and to have modifications made to those properties. We cannot force people to accept those options and sometimes we know some people want to stay in the house they are in and have it changed, and there are decision-making processes to determine what is feasible.

I am not referring to the individual case raised here because we do not discuss them here, but there have been a number of cases raised recently that the Opposition is aware of where the community housing provider and the Housing Connect staff, my office and my department, are working with families to meet their needs for disability upgrades to their homes or transfers to other homes to ensure that they can meet their needs.

The Opposition has no mortgage on compassion here. In some of the cases that have been referred to, they have had briefings on what is being done, yet they still come in here and use those cases as weapons.

Housing and Homelessness

Ms STANDEN question to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.10 a.m.]

It is now one week since I met with your Housing minister's staff to discuss, amongst other cases, the untenable situation of mother-of-five Megan, who still finds herself in this situation since your Government evicted her into homelessness from transitional housing. You will remember Megan has been on the Housing wait-list for 18 months and she has had to send one of her children to live with relatives while she and her other children couch surf in the lounge room of her mother's two-bedroom unit at Montrose.

Your Housing minister's office undertook to find Megan and her children cabin or motel accommodation, but a week later, nothing has been done. In fact, when Megan called her

support worker this week she was advised to contact the Government. She has been given the run-around and no assistance, just like hundreds of other families in desperate situations.

What do you say to Megan and the hundreds of other Tasmanians like her? When will you stop with the broken promises and actually provide an adequate number of properties for increasingly desperate families and when will your Government stop evicting families into homelessness?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Standen for that question. To be frank, if she really cared, she would have raised that with the minister's office this morning and asked for him to provide a response.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. There is a lot of inflammatory language around here and moods are definitely heightened. I urge you to calm down. We have this question to get through and just one more. Premier, please proceed.

Mr GUTWEIN - Now that I am aware of it and now that the minister is aware of the issue you have raised -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I wish to raise the very concerning mechanism of misleading this House. This minister is quite aware of the issue. It was discussed in a meeting, in a briefing, that the Premier told us to have, in order to fix the matter and it is still not being addressed. The Premier needs to be very careful when he accuses people on this side of not caring. We have done everything he has said to try to resolve this issue.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. Please proceed, Premier.

Mr GUTWEIN - I thank Ms O'Byrne for that speech. Now that I am aware of the matter that you have just raised, following on from the meeting that you had last week, we will follow it up after question time.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. We have Mr Street. It is the final question.

Protecting the Right to Work

Mr STREET question to MINISTER for RESOURCES, Mr BARNETT

[11.13 a.m.]

Can you update the House on what the Government is doing to secure the future by protecting Tasmanian workers' right to work, free from threats and intimidation?

ANSWER

Ms O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please, Ms O'Byrne.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please, this is a safe workplace. We are trying. Please proceed, minister.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, I thank the member, Mr Street, for his question and his special interest in this matter of protecting Tasmanians right to work, during what has been known as the greatest health and economic challenge of our generation. Tasmanians understand that we, as a community, want to respect each other's rights: the right to peacefully protest and the right to work. Every job counts. That is why this Government -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could you all calm down.

Mr BARNETT - That is why this Government, on this side of the House, introduced legislation. We have a strong policy to protect Tasmanians' right to work, to go to work, to earn a living and to support your family free from interference, harassment and intrusion: to allow the right for small businesses of any colour, or size or shape to operate free from intrusion, free from harassment, free from intentional trespass to impede; free from people coming into their workplace to tie themselves to equipment or tractors, or the like.

Why is, that at the federal level, complementary legislation has been passed with bipartisan support of the Labor Party and the coalition -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - Why is it that the mainland states of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, bipartisan support, Liberal and Labor have passed similar legislation to say that you have the right to work, to go to work free from intrusion -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could we please have some respectful debate here?

Mr BARNETT - We know that we have seen a significant escalation in the threatening radical protests that have been occurring not just around mainland Australia but in Tasmania. Extremist groups have been at work and unfortunately, on a regular basis Tasmanians have been threatened and harassed for simply going to work.

Ms O'Connor interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, that's not very nice.

Mr BARNETT - As recently as yesterday, the Bob Brown Foundation forced the radical extremist protest arm of the Greens to invade a workplace - Venture Minerals, a mining company on the west coast - and stopped their work. Stopped the right of those Tasmanian contractors to work. There were two arrests. Guess what? They are back there today. That is why our legislation is so important. That is why our policy to protect Tasmanians' right to work is so important.

What did Britton Timbers managing director, Shawn Britton, recently say when he condemned the actions of these extremist radicals from the Bob Brown Foundation?

I quote:

The protesters are going from business to business across Tasmania, terrorising our employees, issuing death threats to our managers, endangering lives and -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I understand that the minister is apparently quoting from a representative of Britton Timbers, but that is a completely unsubstantiated allegation. In my entire history in politics, I have never heard of anyone who is a peaceful protestor issuing death threats.

Madam SPEAKER - That's not a point of order. Please proceed, minister.

Mr BARNETT - I am quoting Shawn Britton:

... threatening economic activity at a time following COVID when we can least afford it.

Tasmanian Groups. So who are they? Farmers, foresters, fishermen, and miners, businesses large and small, all support our policy and the right to work. That is what we want. We want business to be confident and to enable their members to have that right to work, and the right to operate free from intrusion. Michael Bailey said it. We have seen vegan protesters invade abattoirs. Forest protesters chained inside machinery, dangerous for both the protesters and those workers trying to extricate them. We have seen the TFGA's Peter Skillern who is worried about the family farm. They treat it as their home and they are concerned for the safety of their families. This is the farmers. You have all these productive industries and most of the parliaments across Australia - and then, yesterday, we see Dr Broad come in here feigning support for our productive industries.

I was wondering how much lobbying he has been doing of his Labor colleagues to come on board and to re-think and change their policy to support our legislation going forward. We know how hard it is for the Labor Party on the barbed-wire fence. We know Dr Broad wants to support our bill but he cannot convince the other members of the Labor Party to do so. I call on the Labor Party, who are betwixt and between, to rethink their decision, to reverse their policy and come on board and support the workers rather than the Greens and their radical, extremist protest arm, the Bob Brown Foundation.

Time expired.

TABLED PAPER

Public Works Committee Report - TasTAFE Energy Trades and Water Centre of Excellence

Mrs Petrusma presented the report of the Public Works Committee on TasTAFE Energy Trades and Water Centre of Excellence inquiry, together with evidence received and the transcripts of evidence.

Report received and printed.

GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVES) BILL 2021 (No. 4)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms Archer** and read the first time.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY (RENT CONTROL) AMENDMENT BILL 2021 (No. 7)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms O'Connor** and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Right to Peaceful Protest

[11.22 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: the right to peaceful protest.

I am sure I can speak for all the women in the Chamber today in saying that the March 4 Justice rally held at the beginning of this week was a powerful and historic moment. It demonstrated the tide sweeping across Australia, demanding change on sexual harassment, on abuse and on violence against women. It is demanding that we end a conversation we have had for decades, that has gone around in circles and led nowhere for women. Instead, women every day are continuing to experience in the office, at home, in the streets and even in federal Parliament House, violence against their bodies, violence against their emotions, and a crushing of their abilities and their desire to contribute and to be part of the community, to have the job for which they have an ability, to go where they want when they want to, looking however they choose to look at whatever time of the day they choose to be in a place.

This is the change women in Australia want. Grace Tame so powerfully and so eloquently said that evil thrives in silence. What Monday represented was the power of the voice of people, women and men, coming onto the streets in peaceful community, speaking together and protesting for change.

The right to peaceful protest in Australia is deeply held by Australians. It is a core part of our constitutional rights. It is a core part of the Australian identity. Our spirit as a community of people who understand that change will only come when we listen to people and give everybody in the community a voice. What we had this week was a demonstration of a massive social movement that will not be shut down and will not be silenced.

The reason women, men and children were able to rally across the country in peaceful protest on Monday was because we have laws that affirm the right of people in Australia to assemble peacefully, that affirm the right for us to discuss in any way we choose in a public place in a peaceful way - to stand up for the things that must be protected and to stand up for the people and the animals who have no voice, and for the beautiful places that have no voice in our parliaments.

What we have is not only the March for Justice this week but in the same week we have brave, peaceful protesters, part of the Bob Brown Foundation, who have been in our forests, relentlessly putting their bodies on the line, standing up for the environment and the wild places which are being bulldozed and clear-felled at an alarming rate. They are standing up for the incredible carbon banks that those native forests hold, and standing up for the animals and plants that exist nowhere else on the planet and are in rapid danger of losing the habitat they need to survive.

These peaceful protesters have been putting themselves on the line in a peaceful way, doing what their constitutional right allows them to do, to stand up and give voice to everybody in Tasmania, and outside Tasmania and around Australia. We know people around Australia hold Tasmanian forests so dear, because there is nowhere else like them on the planet. We have amazing functioning ecosystems. People in Tasmania understand we must do everything we can to protect these for the carbon storage they present, and for their intrinsic beauty.

There have been in the last couple of years, the most enormous rallies on parliamentary lawns. School students striking for climate - the rallies which have been happening in Australia, in Tasmania and all around the planet as school students understand they have to get out of the schoolroom and into the streets to speak to politicians and let us know that we must do everything we can to protect the planet and to take action on climate change.

We have had Extinction Rebellion protesters being arrested. The knitting nannas outside the front of the parliament: those amazing women, who in their quiet and gentle way, reminded us that every part of our existence relies on a functioning climate system and on keeping our ecosystems and our wild areas intact. These are the people who are prepared to get out of their chairs and stand up for everybody.

Yet next week this Liberal Government is bringing in draconian laws, unconstitutional laws, anti-democratic laws, into the upper House, having another go, having a fight which is divisive. These are bad laws. They should be thrown out. They have to be abandoned. A tamer version of these unconstitutional laws, the anti-protest laws, went to the High Court of Australia, having been challenged by Bob Brown and Jessica Hoyt on behalf of people in

Tasmania and everyone in Australia who understands we have to protect our protest laws. Those laws were thrown out and these laws will be thrown out too.

Time expired.

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Resources) - Madam Deputy Speaker, there was a pause there. For those listening or reading the *Hansard* there was an enormous pause then because the normal convention is that you hear from the mover of the motion, and I acknowledge the Greens member for Franklin in moving that motion, but what did we hear from the Opposition? Nothing, zippo, zero, no movement. What is their comment, what are their views on workplace protection legislation and the right to work in this state of Tasmania?

This is seriously becoming an embarrassment for the Opposition. They have no policies and no plans. We have had 52 recommendations delivered just a few days ago and they do not know what their views are on any of those 52 recommendations which we are backing to the hilt, all of them, TasTAFE in particular. The Labor Opposition could not move a muscle to stand up and express a view on the merits or otherwise of our workplace protection legislation and the right to work freely, free from intrusion, free from trespass, and free from harassment and intimidation. This is almost beyond the pale. It beggars belief that the Labor Opposition would be sitting there mute.

Yesterday, Dr Broad came in here asking a question, feigning support for our productive industries that all support our policies. We know that. I have shared that in question time already. We have the farmers, the foresters, the miners, the seafood industry, the fishermen, all our businesses large and small supporting the right to work and the right for businesses to operate free from intrusion, free from harassment, and free from these protesters. Yet today we have absolutely nothing from the Opposition. Yesterday Dr Broad was feigning support for our policy and the right of productive industries to operate, and they have gone mute. What are they going to say when they stand up and talk about the right to protest? This is one of the most amazing points of our political debate in recent weeks. We have had the Labor Party wanting to remain mute on such an important matter.

Why is it important? It is because there has been increased escalation by the Bob Brown Foundation, which is the extremist radical protest arm of the Greens. There have been increased threats. It is not just in the forest industry. We have seen that all through the summer. We know about that and they have been out there protesting and threatening and getting into people's workplaces tying themselves to equipment, to diggers, to tractors and the like. Now they are in the mines. Yesterday, the Bob Brown Foundation and the protesters were down at Venture Minerals on the west coast doing their level best. We know there were two arrests - and I will not go into those details but it is on the public record - and they are out there again today.

Dr Woodruff - Hear, hear - good on them.

Mr BARNETT - We get 'hear, hear' and 'good on them' from the Greens so at least the Greens' position is clear. They support the radical protests and the interference in the workplace. They are entitled to that view. That is why the Greens in Braddon at the last state election got less than 4 per cent. The people of Braddon expressed a view at the last state

election. I think we know what the community thinks. They say enough is enough. They want to back in the Government's policy to allow the right to work.

Perhaps the Labor Party will feign support again and talk about our WorkSafe laws. We heard yesterday from the Attorney-General. We know they are an independent regulator so they had better try another trick today to either do a total backflip and support our policy and our bill because next week it will be debated and voted on.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, one person talking at a time, please.

Mr BARNETT - I encourage you to get out and about into the rural and regional areas. Talk to your constituents. Go to the small businesses in the forest industry and the mining industry. Go to the farmers and talk to Peter Skillern and listen to his views about the need for these laws. They have all put on the public record support for our legislation, so what on Earth could you possibly say?

Remaining mute today almost beggars belief. I am astounded. I have not seen that in all my political career in the Senate or in here where the Opposition would not have a view. They have been sitting on that barbed wire fence, so uncomfortable. It is a bit tricky for them at the moment. We only have three members in here so we will hear what they have to say shortly. Of course the Leader for the Opposition has scurried from the Chamber; she does not want to be here and be part of this and be pointed at as being mute on such an important issue to the Tasmanian people. Rural and regional Tasmania want to know the views of the Labor Opposition. They would like you to support where we are going.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the member for Lyons will have her opportunity later on in the debate. Allow the minister to make his contribution.

Mr BARNETT - Shawn Britton of Britton Timbers said:

The protesters are going from business to business across Tasmania, terrorising our employees, issuing death threats to our managers, endangering lives and crippling economic activity at a time following COVID-19 when we can least afford it.

This is pretty serious stuff. This is not just petty politics. I am asking you to come on board, support and pass the legislation to give these hardworking Tasmanians the right to work free from intrusion and interference.

Peter Skillern of the TFGA highlighted the concerns facing family farms when it was introduced. He said that:

farmers, as a rule, acknowledge and support the right of individuals to have their own views and philosophy on the world. However, they do not support

anyone's right to impose that view on others because it is not the Australian way.

Not the Australian way - I totally agree with Peter Skillern.

The Minerals and Energy Council said:

Being able to earn an income and provide for yourself and your family from legal employment is a fundamental right of all Tasmanian workers. ... TMEC implores members of parliament to protect workers who want nothing more than to go about their jobs, earn an income and look after themselves and their family.

Time expired.

Ms O'Connor - Thank goodness. Goosestep your way back to your seat.

Mr BARNETT - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Greens asked me to goosestep my way back to my seat. That is totally offensive and totally out of order. I expect an immediate withdrawal and an apology.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - I ask the member for Clark to withdraw the comment.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am sorry the minister took offence and I withdraw it. Glad it's on the *Hansard* record, though.

[11.37 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, unlike the Liberal Party, I support the right to peaceful protest. In fact I have protested myself on a number of occasions. I have walked down the streets of Smithton with the people of Smithton protesting about the shutdown of the vegetable processing facility by McCain. I stood outside the McCain factory only a matter of months ago to raise the issue of imports of dumped product into Australia, standing up for our farmers. I know that the AMWU has stood outside supermarkets again complaining about dumped imports of potato products into Australia. Recently I took part in the March 4 Justice event on the lawns at Parliament House. These are the sorts of protests that are everybody's right to partake in.

But we have a different attitude on the other side of the House. We have a Prime Minister, for example, whose comments about a peaceful protest like that, instead of addressing the issue, were that the protesters were lucky they were not getting shot. What we had was a Prime Minister in effect saying it is okay for one of their own workforce to be raped, allegedly, in a ministerial office, but you are lucky you are not getting shot. That is the sort of level that the Liberals are playing on.

As to this proposed legislation that the minister spent all his time talking about, it is so poorly drafted that the protest I undertook walking through the main streets of Smithton to protest against the shutdown of vegetable processing in Smithton would be illegal under their laws. The Fair Dinkum Food campaign was another protest I took part in that would have been illegal under the legislation this Government is proposing.

It is all about the politics; that is what this is about. It is not about safety in our forests and so on. If it was, this Government would have done something about it. They would not have been sitting on this legislation for well over a year. It came into this House in November 2019 and they sat on it. It came in as an emergency and the Standing Orders were suspended. It was debated late into the night. What has the Government done? It has sat on it because it is all about the politics. It has been waiting and waiting because the Government wants to use this as a political wedge in the lead-up to the election in the electorate of Derwent.

Now we have on the horizon a war on TAFE - this Government is about to take on the staff of TAFE, and its legislation has the potential to criminalise any staff action to argue against cuts to their pay and conditions. That is what the Government's legislation will do.

I am absolutely no friend of the Bob Brown Foundation. I think people who are honest - unlike 'Fake News Felix' over here - if they were honest, I have never stood in this place and supported the Bob Brown Foundation. Absolutely not. What is this Government doing about the notifications for WorkSafe Tasmania, including by Shawn Britton of Britton Timbers? What is it doing? Nothing.

The Bob Brown Foundation is a protest group; there is no doubt about that. They are definitely not a members-based organisation because if you look at the Bob Brown Foundation's comprehensive income statement, you will see that its membership subscriptions are only \$9555, which was down in the last financial year and down by 40 per cent from the year before. So, only \$9000 is coming into it in subscriptions. The BBF is not a membership-based organisation. If it were, its subscriptions would be much higher.

Instead its major income came from fundraising. Yes, that is right - it is a fundraising organisation. Over \$1 million came in in donations. Now, what does that money get spent on? Consulting and professional fees were \$200 000, \$760 000 was spent on employee costs, and \$116 000 was spent on travel. The vast majority of those donations that came in went into consulting fees, employees' costs and travel.

What we have now is what the Bob Brown Foundation is actually funding. Now when we say 'These protesters are jobless, they should get a job', it is not true because they have a job. The Bob Brown Foundation is employing them to fundraise, to get more money, so that they can protest. I would argue that this is actually a green Ponzi scheme. Basically what they are doing is getting money from donations to do more protests to raise more money to do more protests.

At the same time, the BBF is putting its own people in danger, because time and again we see these dangerous stunts, especially through social media - standing on loose log piles, getting photos, locking on to moving machinery, doing tree-sits in remnant forests and so on. That is what we see.

I believe the industry knows what the situation is, and that is why the minister is so desperate, and why we had the Dorothy Dixier today. The industry understands what the minister is trying to do. It is simply wedge politics. It has written letters to us both, asking us to sit down and work our way through this so we can come up with a solution to the problem. For this to happen, goodwill is required. I am more than willing to sit down with the minister and talk about a way to draft legislation that will actually work. I am not going to support legislation that will ban all protests on footpaths and outside businesses anywhere in the state for anything.

The minister knows that, because this legislation was designed to fail. It has already been thrown out of the High Court, and he has been sitting on it since 2019, simply because this is all about politics. It is not about fixing the problem; if it were, he would have some goodwill -

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - The member for Lyons, Mr Tucker.

Ms O'Connor - With a speech someone else wrote for him! Oh you wrote the speech yourself, did you? Prove it to me.

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Well, Ms O'Connor, how wrong could you be?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I stand shoulder to shoulder with this minister. I stand shoulder to shoulder with every farmer and every forestry worker in this state. I stand shoulder to shoulder with every Tasmanian in this state.

I accept that the Greens have a position. I accept we have a position. Where do Ms White and Dr Broad stand on this issue? Are they going to grow a backbone and actually make a decision? Or are they going to sit on the fence as usual? You know, like the Huntingfield Estate - I think back to that one, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Dr Broad - You are well off track now.

Mr TUCKER - Well, Dr Broad, we have to look at the facts and what you have put forward. You never gave a clear position of where you stand on this position. You had a bob each way. You are not going to support it. Now more than ever before, we know that the Tasmanian way of life is worth protecting.

Dr Broad - You are not listening; that's what I said. It would ban the protest that I undertook in Smithton. I told you about that. You would ban that. Do you want to ban that?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad, I will accept a little bit of interjecting but not the whole speech, so quieten down and allow the member for Lyons to continue, please.

Mr TUCKER - As the member for Lyons, our most rural electorate, and as a farmer myself, our right to work and provide for our families is paramount. Agriculture is one of our most important industries and is most targeted by the unlawful, invasive protesters. It is a cornerstone of our economy, producing \$1.9 billion at the farm gate in 2018-19. The Tasmanian Liberal Government recognises both the right to lawfully protest and the right to work, to farm and to provide for our families and our community.

That is why the Tasmanian Liberal Government introduced this legislation - to ensure we could all go to work, run our local businesses in a safe manner free from threats and disruption, and then come home from work safely.

This workplace protection bill is similar to legislation passed by the Australian Government and the governments of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. It is designed to protect the rights of Tasmanians to work. These laws are

following a significant increase in radical protests involving aggressive, threatening behaviour that is stopping people from working and costing businesses tens of thousands of dollars.

Dr Broad - You haven't even read it.

Mr TUCKER - I have read it - I am sorry Dr Broad, I have read it, and I have also listened to one of your constituents. I bring this to your attention again because, as the minister noted, Britton Brothers' managing director, Shawn Britton, recently condemned the actions of extremist radicals from the Bob Brown Foundation. Listen to what he said -

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, thank you. I ask that the member be allowed to use his last remaining three minutes. A bit quieter, please.

Mr TUCKER - Shawn Britton said:

The protesters are going from business to business across Tasmania, terrorising our employees, issuing death threats to our managers, endangering lives and crippling economic activity at a time following COVID when we can least afford it.

I come back to a comment made by Peter Skillern from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association comment here; he is on the record as saying:

The bill is about protecting farming families and providing security for those farmers and their families. We can no longer tolerate, nor should the community accept the type of invasions of private property and intimidation that we have seen on mainland states and in Tasmania. TFGA supports the rights of individuals to engage in lawful protests, however this does not override the rights of family farms and their employees to undertake lawful business. The TFGA will be engaging all parties to ensure the successful passage of this important bill.

I hope that Dr Broad has spoken to the TFGA and Mr Britton.

We all know that the Greens are against forestry, against mining, against agriculture, against pretty much everything that provides Tasmanians with work. We also know the Greens and their extremist mates have a complete disregard for the right to work - and often for the safety of workers, often for their fellow protesters, often for equipment, and often even for the very thing they purport to want to protect.

This is not an issue we are experiencing alone. The Australian Government has introduced new national legislation with bipartisan support, and the governments of the New South Wales, Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian governments having also moved to tighten these laws. The workplace protection bill does not diminish the right to protest -

Ms O'Connor - Rubbish!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr TUCKER - In fact, the bill removes all references to protesters from the legislation. It protects the right of Tasmanians to work, and that is something we should all want. All political parties should condemn radical extremist actions that threaten Tasmanian workers and businesses. I call on the Labor members of the Legislative Council to think of Tasmanian workers and their families, and support our workplace protection bill.

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, where do I begin?

First of all, I know now that Mr Tucker did not write that speech; it was Orwellian. The bill he refers to was called the Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Bill 2019, or, as we called it, the workplace (protection from democracy) bill 2019. Every member in this House knows debate on that bill was gagged in December 2019. We were told it was an urgent bill. It had the support of every Government member and it had the support of Ms Ogilvie.

Ms Ogilvie - That's right, because I don't think you should go into people's offices. I don't understand why you would want to do that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Put your seasoned lawyer's hat on, Ms Ogilvie, and tell us about the constitutional implications of this amendment bill.

We know who the real radicals are and who the extremists are. They are people who want to trash forests and they are people who are driving the climate emergency. To see the confected schism between the Liberal and Labor parties on this issue is quite something. This is the same Dr Broad and Mr Barnett who set up the Parliamentary Friends of Forestry. They are besties on this issue and on native forest logging, on biodiversity decline and species extinction. They are besties on the depletion of quality water supplies. They come from another century, the twentieth century. We are now in the twenty-first century where we are facing a climate emergency. We are entering a mass species extinction event, where young people, quite rightly, are standing up and saying, 'Enough'.

Because Dr Broad does not really understand anything about the Bob Brown Foundation, I will tell him about some of the young people who have the guts to stand up to defend our forests and to stand up for climate. These are young people who are terrified about the future and they are not prepared to stand by and just let it happen. Dr Woodruff and I are deeply grateful to them, as are many other Tasmanians.

When Mr Tucker gets up here and says he stands shoulder to shoulder with Tasmanians, no, he stands shoulder to shoulder with a small section of Tasmanian industry figures. I would like to hear where Mr Skillern from the TFGA is getting all this confected concern about protests on agricultural lands from. I genuinely cannot remember the last one in Tasmania.

The workplace protection from protesters legislation was written for political reasons. It was written to wedge Labor - let us see if Labor lets itself be wedged - but it is unconstitutional. It is an attack on the right to peaceful protest. All over the world we are seeing this. We have seen it in Hong Kong, in Belarus, in the US capitol and in Myanmar where authoritarian forces try to suppress people's free will. These forces are attacking democracy, and Tasmania is not immune. These protection from protesters laws which Ms Ogilvie supported are an attack on democracy.

The one thing I will agree with Dr Broad about is that they turn every part of Tasmania into a prohibited zone - every footpath, every street. They are odious laws designed to stifle dissent. They are designed to frighten people and they would criminalise those young people who took part in the Strike for Climate if it happened to impede some business that those young people were walking past.

There is a long, proud history on this island of people standing up to defend the place and those decades of action to defend this place by the conservation movement underpins our brand. Where would the west coast and Strahan be now if people had not stood up and protested against the Franklin River dam? Where would the north-west coast and our brand be now if we had a pulp mill at Wesley Vale pumping dioxins into Bass Strait? The same goes for the Tamar Valley pulp mill that would have polluted that airshed and poisoned the people of Launceston. It is the same as Ralphs Bay. We stood up, exercised our right to peaceful protest and saved that internationally significant bird habitat from a 500-home canal estate. The right to peaceful protest is intrinsic to who we are as Tasmanians.

I have heard a fair bit about the PESRAC report in the last couple of days and I hear a bit of selective reading from it. This is a very good report and it is a message to government and to Labor that Tasmanians recognise that environmental protection is essential for our recovery from COVID. You have a Liberal and Labor party in this place that relentlessly attack conservationists, and yet this report tells us that it is a mainstream view in Tasmania that we need to look after nature. They are so out-of-touch, so hostile to the environment, that they are deaf to what Tasmanians love about this place. Tasmanians love their forests and they deeply love their wilderness, which is under attack from the Liberals in government.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

MOTION

Note - Premier's Address

Continued from 17 March 2021 (page 97).

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, yesterday in my contribution on the Premier's Address I was speaking about housing and homelessness statistics and the human impact of homelessness. I am reminded that this week is the three-year anniversary of the Housing Summit, which was held on 15 March 2018. At the time a press release from the then premier said,:

The Liberal Government will convene an urgent summit to address Tasmania's housing shortage.

It was to provide immediate assistance to Tasmanians in need. The then premier said:

It is not acceptable for Tasmanians to live in tents because they cannot find an affordable home.

People will recall the emergency urgent housing summit was convened because there were a number of tents, caravans and the like in the grounds of the Hobart Showground and the visibility of a problem was bringing this urgent matter to the fore with ABC News reporting at the time that families had been camped out at the Hobart Showground with welfare groups admitting they were at a loss to find a solution.

What has happened since those three years? In those three years the housing wait list has increased almost 10 per cent. The median house price across the state has increased dramatically as high as 13.8 per cent in regional Tasmania. Median rent has increased as much as 22 per cent over those three years and 37 per cent in five years. Vacancy rates are continually below 1 per cent.

It is no wonder that young and older people today, everybody across society, is feeling the pinch particularly younger people trying to get into home ownership. They are finding that if they can find a home to start to pay off a mortgage and can afford it, then ironically those mortgage repayments are often times in the urban fringe of places like Hobart and are cheaper than rental repayments which is just a ludicrous situation.

This Government has delivered a woeful record in housing and homelessness. They promised 3400 new homes by 2023 and at the six-year mark of an eight-year period have delivered just one-third of that figure. The wait list for public housing has increased as much as 65 per cent since the Liberal Government took office. The current Housing minister is scrambling to deliver more social housing, which he and the Premier say is the solution to this crisis. It is the truth that there were just 37 new social housing dwellings delivered in the first term of this Government.

The latest media releases from Housing minister, Roger Jaensch, focuses on the pipeline of future construction in the social housing space. He bleats about the fact that COVID-19 has put all this pressure into the housing market but really this is a crisis that has been emerging for at least the seven years that this Liberal Government has been in office. It is beyond frustrating that last year a comprehensive blueprint to address housing and homelessness in this state in the form of a select committee for housing affordability was completely brushed aside. About 50 or so expert witnesses took the time to make written and verbal submissions through that process that ran over six months and there was a comprehensive plan put forward for the Government. It took them six months to respond and even then, as I said, it was just simply brushed aside.

In question time today for the second sitting week in a row we have raised heartbreaking stories to try to appeal to this Premier and to this Government that the failures on housing policy have a real human impact. What did we have? This Premier talking about dwelling approvals and the need to build more houses, like it is a new revelation. He had no insight into the overstretched crisis accommodation and into the crisis that is set to be compounded by more than 1000 people on the National Rental Affordability Scheme set to be exited potentially into homelessness to compound this situation.

I am at my wit's end. I write to the minister. I am told to attend a briefing as if that is going to provide me some revelatory insight into why these things are so complex and I could

not possibly understand. Last week I attended a briefing on the four cases that had been raised in the previous question time. Of those four cases there was zero outcome. It was me and this side of the House providing additional information to the Housing minister's advisers to give them deeper understanding into the insights of those particular cases and, in two cases, suggested that brokerage accommodation might be of assistance, and yet still no outcomes. One of those cases was again raised in question time today.

What is one to do? As an elected representative in this space I am being simply flooded with requests for assistance for housing, because people have nowhere to go. They do not understand the intricacies of where to go and what help is available. They do not understand, for instance, that the Tenants' Union or the Office of the Residential Tenancy Commissioner are there to provide assistance with their private rental increases of up to \$100 a week.

If you are a migrant or a low-income person in particular and you know that there are 40 to 50 or more families lining up applying for private rental properties that come onto the market, what do you think you would do? Would you be looking to just accept an increase of \$50, \$60, \$80, \$100, or would you say, 'no, that is ludicrous, that is outrageous, that is out of step with private market. I know people down the road who are paying much less than that', and simply opt to move out into homelessness at the end of that lease? Of course not. These families are sucking up those rent increases because they simply have nowhere to go and no idea where to turn to for help.

In the time remaining to me, I wanted to try to put a further face on homelessness, and in particular the plight of young people and of women in the face of this housing crisis. Roughly one-third of requests for assistance to specialist homelessness services are from younger people aged 18 to 25, and/or involving family or domestic violence. The plight of women escaping domestic violence is particularly serious. In 2019-20 there were 6400 clients assisted with specialist homelessness services, but there are now, as of this year's data, 36 requests for help go unassisted every single day. In talking with a number of the service providers, I believe that that is a significant underrepresentation. I know of shelters that are turning away 20 or more a day. I think there is a serious problem with the data collection. On the one hand there may be families being captured in that data; on the other, only the person who is phoning is being captured within that data. If I am a mum of three children and I phone three services in the day, that could be as little as three requests going unassisted, yet patently that would be up to 12 people seeking that assistance. We have a problem with data collection.

We know that the shelters are full. We know that two years ago the Government threw \$5 million into emergency homelessness solutions, supposedly, a year after that summit. They have extended two of the southern-based shelters, to say nothing of the homelessness situation that is significant and deepening in regional Tasmania, northern Tasmania and north-west Tasmania, where rental increases have been particularly acute. Turning away on average 36 requests a day, that could be more than 13 000 unassisted requests per annum across around 20 or so services.

Family violence counselling was raised within the context of question time today. Those services too are oversubscribed. I have spoken with one service provider who tells me that because there is as much as a three-month wait list for women to access family violence counselling, they have resorted to using donated funds, fund raised, to provide access to family violence counselling within that service. But where should women go? What is happening as a result of this failure of a service system that is overstretched beyond belief? Families are

being ripped apart for a start, so women are choosing to couch-surf or stay in tents, but children are being farmed out amongst family and friends.

In some cases, very sadly, there is a return to violent partners, putting at risk the women and children who have taken that courageous step to try to move themselves out of that harm. In some cases, there are very sad implications like self-harm, even suicide, and self-medication compounding the trauma of sometimes years of very sad circumstances, to say nothing of the impact on the frontline staff. The saints and whatever the female equivalent of that is within the crisis accommodation services who are day after day talking to these people and having to turn them away, know there is no safety net.

Last week I met with a woman whose case we raised anonymously in question time today. She has four children. Her first child was born when she was only 16, a classic case of coercive control where she had not even been afforded the opportunity to get a driver's licence, let alone financial independence. Several years later, after an incredibly traumatic and violent history, she worked up the courage to leave. When she left she originally went into a caravan park and was paying \$550 per week. Clearly, on her income, that was unsustainable. She was eating into her savings and it meant compromising on things such as food on the table. It was not a sustainable future.

Despite the fact that she knew that it would be uprooting those children, two in primary school and two in high school, she made the difficult decision to go into a shelter and right now is confronting the situation that her 12 weeks is up. She has received her eviction notice and when I spoke with her last week she literally had nowhere to go. She had looked into dozens of private rental options. She suffers a complex medical condition and has been advised by her doctor that she is not able to have internal stairs in the house or to have a shower over a bath but she said to me, with tears in her eyes, 'I'll live anywhere just for a roof over my children's heads'. She cried and I cried and I am crying again.

A total of 6400 people were assisted by specialist homelessness services in Tasmania in 2019-20 and 36 requests for assistance are met each day. We have to do better because right now there are hundreds, if not thousands of women across this state who face the risk of homelessness when leaving abusive relationships. While domestic and family violence affects people of all ages, genders and sexualities, we know that almost a quarter of those who are homeless today are women and their children fleeing violence and abuse.

In contemplating separation from an abusive partner, there are many complex issues to deal with - fears for the safety of children, social and financial impacts to the family and separation. Some want to remain in the family home and do not see any way out of an abusive situation if they are the one to leave. Some want to escape the situation by leaving home but they have concerns about the act of leaving or how they would cope and adjust to some form of alternative accommodation and lifestyle. Consequences of leaving, like ripping kids out of schools or ending the relationship can be a powerful factor and statistically it is the most dangerous time for victims or survivors during attempts to leave the relationship.

Accommodation is a critical factor in the decision whether to leave a violent relationship and right now, with the shelters fuller than they have ever been before and the public housing wait list over a year, this decision is more difficult than it should ever be. Governments need to do everything they can to keep people safe at home, or if the family home is not the safest

option, support and enable women to take themselves and their children out of harm's way. It needs to be making the decision to leave an abusive relationship easier, not harder.

I raise some other heartbreaking stories. I am going to refer to this woman as Rebecca. I wrote to the minister about this woman on 25 February and as yet have received no reply. She has been couch-surfing with her two young daughters now for over four years after fleeing an abusive relationship. Her youngest daughter, at just five years old, has never experienced secure housing. Let that sink in - never experienced secure housing. She has never had the joy of having her friends stay for a sleepover. Instead, the family crowd together in living rooms of family or friends waiting with hope that they will soon get a call from Housing Tasmania offering them a home.

I have written twice to the minister about this case and the minister has confirmed, in his heartless, standard response, that Rebecca was on the priority wait list for public housing. He made some suggestions about expanding the range of suburbs listed on her application or exploring brokerage options or emergency accommodation in a shelter. Four years after leaving an abusive partner, the best this minister could offer was a suggestion to stay in touch with Housing Connect and explore these options. This highlights the urgent need for more safe and permanent housing for families needing a secure base to rebuild their lives.

I want to talk about Fiona, again anonymous. She stayed in contact with Housing Connect and explored the same options offered to Rebecca. This resulted in her being offered a 12-month lease under the Rapid Rehousing program. Once Fiona's lease came to an end there were no homes available for Fiona and her two children to move into permanently. She contacted my office in the weeks before her lease ended desperate for help, fearing the only outcome was becoming homeless. I again wrote to the minister seeking his help to ensure this family did not end up on the streets. By the time the minister responded, Fiona and her children were back in a shelter. The best the minister could do in this situation was recommend that she expand the range of suburbs on her application. I found this particular suggestion strange, even offensive, after I specifically noted in my letter that the only excluded suburbs in the Greater Hobart area were those where the family of her abusive ex-partner lived. The last contact I had with Fiona, she was back in Rapid Rehousing still waiting for a permanent home where they could begin their recovery and work through a healing process, two years after leaving an abusive relationship.

I want to talk about Karen, a single mum with an 11-year-old child. Recently, she has bravely made the break from a violent partner who lives in a Housing Tasmania property in Hobart. Police are working closely with her to keep her family safe from her violent ex-partner. They have a DVO in place and have supported the family on the occasion of more than a dozen breaches of the domestic violence order. Unfortunately, the ex-partner lives only in the next street. She has applied for a housing transfer in great fear for her family's safety. Both mother and child are in contact with multiple support services and are beginning to access psychological support to rebuild their lives. However, the source of their anguish and trauma remains living within an easy walking distance away.

Over 100 women are on the Rapid Rehousing priority wait list due to domestic violence. What will it take to get action to reduce this waiting time and get women and their children like Karen into safe, secure accommodation? It is only with a safe place to call home that families

can recover from trauma. Then they can get on with their lives and again become healthy, happy, productive members of our community.

I want to talk about Susan. She is an older woman, not much older than me, although she has lived a tough life. She had been on the priority applicant wait list with Housing Tasmanian for 93 weeks when she sought assistance through my office in December 2020. She is on a disability support pension and she was recently widowed. She wants to leave the home where she currently resides because there are holes in the floorboards, the stove does not work, and there is no hot water.

She has had no running hot water for more than two years in her home and vandals have smashed several windows which remain boarded up making the house dark and insecure. The house was owned by her husband but now it is the subject of probate as he died without a will.

We will call her Susan. She lives in third-world conditions in Hobart. Her housing arrangements are neither safe, secure nor appropriate to her needs. She waits on a very long list to be considered for housing and she reached out to my office for support.

I wrote to the minister in December 2020 to which he replied a month later in January this year. He simply confirmed what Susan has told us. She has been on a priority wait list since April 2019 and she did not have any specific amenity requirements according to the system. The letter also gave often-stated advice for Susan to consider additional suburbs in her application: 'If you are prepared to leave the support network of the area you have lived in for years, your housing wait time may be reduced'. However, the most notable thing in the letter from the minister dated in January 2021, which our office would normally pass directly onto our constituent who sought our support, was that they put the wrong name on the letter - to add insult to injury.

Is this the best that can be done? Is this an appropriate housing support system for our ageing Tasmanians?

According to an outdated official statistics from the 2016 census, 1600 Tasmanians experience homelessness on any given night. Only 10 per cent of those are sleeping rough. Experts acknowledge that the actual numbers increased significantly over the past four years and the problem is not confined to our cities. The problem is escalating among older women due to an ageing population, high cost of housing and a significant gap in wealth accumulation between men and women. The number of older homeless women in Australia increased by more than 30 per cent between 2011 and 2016.

Many support services currently focus on women with complex issues such as family violence or mental health issues but there are limited services available to older women who are renting, working and have savings yet find themselves at risk of homelessness. They need help to achieve housing security and must not be forgotten by policy makers. Compounding the problem is the hidden nature of homelessness amongst older women with 43 per cent of Tasmania's older homeless women staying temporarily with friends. Half of that population. Official figures are recognised as understating the extent of the problem for older women and particularly those with disability. The number of older people in private rental accommodation has increased with older women more likely to be renters than older men.

Family instability across a lifetime whether through loss of a partner, divorce, family breakdown or domestic and family violence can have significant impact on women's housing security. Mainstream housing support is available to older women but too many fall through the cracks. They may be ineligible or unable to access social community and affordable housing and not in a position to enter the housing market. Housing solutions need to be appropriate and responsive to an individual's current and future needs and to support our ageing in place with a key issue being our ageing social housing stock.

Public housing wait lists are not good enough and we must do something to flatten the curve on the pandemic.

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Before I give the call to the Leader of the Greens. I will just explain the clocks. There are only four pre-set times that we can use to countdown. That is at 7 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes and 40 minutes.

Because the member for Franklin had started yesterday and used 4 minutes 19 seconds we had today to count up. Normally we would count down, but if there is a case where we have had time between the debate we will be counting up.

[12.25 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, what a different world we live in from even this time last year. The world is in the grip of a pandemic and here in Tasmania, of course, there has been suffering. Thirteen people have lost their lives; thousands of people were put out of work; small businesses and big businesses have suffered but there is a sign that at least in little lutruwita Tasmania we are coming through the worst of it.

Of course, there is so much more that we have to do in order to tackle not the dual crises that the Premier talked about yesterday but the three crises of recovering from coronavirus, climate emergency, and raging social inequality. We have to build back greener. We are meeting here in this parliament on the land of the lost nuaneena people of the south-east tribe in the foothills of kunanyi/Mount Wellington. As we know, kunanyi is sacred land to the palawa people of lutruwita, Tasmania and it is threatened by a cable car which they do not support and which they see as a sacrilege on that site.

From kunanyi to kotalina, koodalini to larapuna, wukalina to takayna is Aboriginal land. For 50 000 years or more, the palawa nurtured and shaped this country and, if you are looking, you see the signs everywhere - in the open grasslands, in the woodlands, in the tall regnans forests with the younger rainforests underneath which are a sign, of course, of Aboriginal burning centuries ago. We see in middens and in rock depressions and in shaped stone. I commend this book to members of the house, *The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines made Australia* by Bill Gammage, a wonderful book. In one part of it, it says:

In Tasmania, John Hudspeth praised the beautiful and rich valley of Jericho, more like a gentleman's park in England laid out with taste, the land in its natural state.

George Franklin though the Hampshire Hills afforded 'an instance of the beautiful natural decoration of some of our scenery with that park-like ground is entirely in a state of nature.'

Elsewhere in the book it says:

In southern Australia around most of Tasmania and probably elsewhere was a belt of open country without large timber, running parallel with the coast and varying in width from a quarter to one or one-and-a-half miles.

Everywhere you look you see the signs of a proud people who, for 50 000 years or more, looked after this country. They survived invasion and attempted genocide and their culture, and their connection to country remains strong to this day. We often talk of reconciliation but it has to be much more than a word. We know this island, lutruwita, Tasmania, was never ceded and justice for the palawa people is not yet done and it will not be done until the truth is told by palawa people and we, who are not aboriginal Tasmanians, hear that truth, understand it, accept it and are driven to change through hearing it.

We must have treaty and we should not wait until there is a move nationally for treaty. Aboriginal Tasmanians, the palawa, must have their justice. I was encouraged to hear the Premier in his Address acknowledge the palawa people and their deep connection to this land and make a renewed commitment to work towards justice and land returns. It is, I think, some 16 years since any land was returned to the palawa people. Land returns are integral to justice and this Government needs to get on with returning lands.

The single most important immediate step that the Premier could take to show his respect for the palawa is to walk away from the policy to construct four-wheel drive tracks through takayna. It is, according to archaeologists, one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world. Anyone who has been up there, on that Arthur Coast and has seen those rock depressions, knows that is true. It would be a sacrilege to make four-wheel-drive tracks through that country.

As we know, justice has many layers. Of course, it is all connected to some of the terrible injustices that have been inflicted on the planet. The dispossession and oppression of indigenous people have driven ecosystem decline and habitat loss at an unfathomable scale right across the globe.

So too has the disempowerment of women and girls. There is a direct connection between gender inequality, neoliberalism, predator capitalism, global heating and biodiversity loss. There is a Chinese saying, 'Women hold up half the sky', but as we know and has become so evident in recent weeks, women and girls are being held back.

Grace Tame is right - the mighty Grace Tame, our Australian of the Year, when she said, 'The revolution has begun.' It has, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are seeing women stand up. Being heard. Being believed. We are seeing consequences for sexist, misogynist behaviour, as it should be.

I will just take a moment to reflect on the resignation of a former Liberal staffer, who I named in this place last night. Yes, he was made to resign. I believe he should have been sacked two years ago by the then premier. You cannot hurl that sort of language at a woman

as an employee of the premier of the day and not face consequences. But Mr Hodgson did not at the time. He went on for two more years denigrating women in their workplace in Canberra.

Now he has gone, made to resign, two years too late in our view. It is interesting, is it not? It is so much easier for the Prime Minister to get rid of the staffer who is causing him embarrassment, because he is a sexist pig - not the Prime Minister necessarily, but the staffer - than it is to take on the Attorney-General who stands accused of an historical rape. So, women and girls, we need justice. We need to empower women and girls in order to tackle the enormous crises the world is facing.

We also need to harness the capacity of our migrant communities, of people of all abilities and ages, and, of course, of our young people.

Let us reflect for a moment on the situation the young people of Tasmania are in. They are going through a pandemic. It is hard to find a job. It is nearly impossible to find an affordable rental. We have to do so much better by our young people. With the greatest of respect to the Premier, I do not believe the policies he announced on Tuesday are going to cut it.

We need a job guarantee in Tasmania. We need to say to young people, 'We are going to harness your skills, provide you with the education and the training, and we are going to put you to work, repairing nature, looking after people, working in areas of green skills, in renewable energy and in building and construction. We do not need to corporatise TasTAFE in order to provide the training platform for you to be able to do that.

We know that there is a state election - well, I do not know, now I do not know. I thought the state election was going to be in about a year, but I suspect it is going to be perhaps a little closer than that. We also know we are up against a popular premier, and that there is a lot of gratitude in the Tasmanian community for the way Peter Gutwein - and the people who work with him - have steered us through a pandemic. I am personally very thankful, just as I am sure many Tasmanians are very thankful. I am also deeply grateful to our frontline workers who have helped to keep us safe during this very difficult time.

We can respect Peter Gutwein's leadership in a time of crisis, but we can also be really clear-eyed about the failings of his Government. We can highlight the absolute necessity of having Greens in parliament. Given how often we see the Liberal and Labor parties in this place vote together, we need a real opposition, one that does not bend and weave with the political breeze. That is us.

During COVID-19, Tasmanians learned it is possible to ensure no one is left behind. We are not out of this pandemic by a long shot. But the Premier, we believe, has already abandoned tenants. Some of the stories that we are hearing, of people in extreme rental stress - there is a letter today in the *Mercury* newspaper, 'Rent Rise Crisis', from Ian Jessup of Beaconsfield:

Our landlord jumped our rent by 25 per cent, plus installed a \$20 per fortnight water charge as of January this year. I remarried on 24 February, three years ago. The government believes it is cheaper for two people to live together, so they cut our pension by more than \$400 a fortnight. We have been struggling ever since. Now, we have just bought our prescription medication today for \$88.40. I am dead within three days without them. We live below

the poverty line, have been looking for something cheaper, but can't find anything. Life is very hard. I have been volunteering as a snake wrangler trying to get enough pocket money to pay for a car service, thousands overdue, etc, etc.

And so on. We have had people get in touch with us and tell us things like this, which is so upsetting:

We have been trying to get a rental for two years. We finally found one, not cheap either, would prefer to be making these payments towards our own home, but we have no choice. We were competing with 50-plus people every time we applied for a rental.

People are telling me they are sleeping in cars with children, shared family members on friend's couches and in tents. This is not right. Another one:

I am on a disability pension. My rent is going up \$15 on 1 April, which according to the Tenants' Union, will now be 49 per cent of my income. I recently put my name down with Colony 47, but have no hope of finding something within my budget. I am more worried about ending up back on the streets.

Another one:

As a renter and single mother, the housing crisis directly affects me and a lot of other people who I know who do not have housing at all. I worry about the future and how this housing crisis will affect all of us, not to mention the vulnerable members of our community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another one:

The real estate just gave us notice that the owner wants to raise from \$440 to \$500 a week. We live in a three bedroom, average kind of house in Chigwell.

Another one: 'My rent went from \$600 a fortnight to \$850 a fortnight.' This story is being played out right across Tasmania.

The Premier has said he does not believe rents are too high. The Premier needs to get out more. Rents are soaring. At the end of this month the JobSeeker and JobKeeper supplements end. The level of financial and psychological distress amongst tenants right now is extreme. We are heading for a social calamity if we do not do something to rein in rents. So, the Greens are going to give parliament an opportunity to do just that. This is a policy that was examined during the inquiry into housing affordability first put forward by my colleague, Ms Standen.

Next week this parliament can pass legislation that would give tenants the right to challenge a rent increase over CPI plus 10 per cent. This is not radical policy, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is policy that is in place in the Australian Capital Territory and it gives tenants some rights to take on excessive or unreasonable rent increases. We know that in the community today, they are facing excessive rent increases. Of course, the cost of that in human

terms is not only extreme stress, but it means people will make choices because they have no spare disposable income to, for example, buy the amount of groceries for their family, that they did before. They will make a choice not to pay their power bill this time, and maybe in the next fortnight, pay some of it. They will make hard choices about the recreational opportunities they are able to provide for their children; the clothing they can provide for their children.

This is an urgent social issue and we would argue that right now, it is the most urgent social issue facing Tasmanians. It is not good enough for the Premier and the Housing minister to glibly say, 'We are building more houses, that will put down the pressure on rents'. That means nothing to those families who have had \$100 a week rent increase, who are suffering today. And they are paying the price of the first four years of this Government where there was a massive underinvestment in constructing new social and affordable housing.

So where have we come since 2014? The proportion of child-safety investigations completed within 28 days has decreased from 31.9 per cent to 6.8 per cent. Yes, that is right, 6.8 per cent. The housing wait list has increased from 2465 applicants - we had it at its lowest level in a decade - to nearly 3500 applicants. The average wait-time for those housed has increased from 35.7 weeks to 61.8 weeks. The number of public housing dwellings has decreased from 8413 to 7050. So, we had an announcement from the Premier on Tuesday of the 'headworks holiday' for developers. The Greens are not surprised that developers are getting a hand-out while tenants have been ignored. But it is getting the priorities wrong. We have to help Tasmanians who are struggling. There was nothing in Tuesday's Premier's Address to help tenants. Nothing.

We did learn during COVID-19 it is possible to leave no one behind. What we also learnt during COVID-19 is that the fantasy of small government is over. Government has an integral role to play during an emergency and in recovery. Big government in times like this - when we are tackling climate, COVID-19, and social inequality - is what Tasmania needs: government that takes a direct hands-on role in making sure no one is left behind, but that we are also setting ourselves up to build back greener.

Back to the record since 2014. The elective surgery waiting list has grown by more than 4000 patients, or 56 per cent. The average overdue time waiting for urgent elective surgery patients increased from 15 days to 99 days. Ambulance emergency response times have increased from 11.3 minutes to 13.8 minutes. The daily average prisoner population has increased from 472 in 2014 to 664. It was really interesting that in the Premier's Address, he talked about a new approach to Corrections, a more human rights-based approach.

Ms Archer - I have been trying that for ages. It is not a new approach.

Ms O'CONNOR - I have just listened to the Attorney-General mutter about 'trying' that. Let us get frank here. The Liberal Government came to office in 2014 with a 'tough on crime policy'. The consequence of that suite of measures has been to stuff our prisons full. It is a bit rich, seven years into 'tough on crime', which has our Corrections system bursting at the seam, for the Premier to now be saying, 'We are going to take a more rights-based approach and the Minister for Corrections will take leadership of this.'

With the greatest of respect, it is seven years too late. You threw out 'Breaking the Cycle' and here we are. The imprisonment rate for Aboriginal Tasmanians compared to non-Aboriginal Tasmanians has increased from three times higher in 2014 to four times higher.

The youth offender diversion has decreased from 53 per cent to 46 per cent for the general population, and from 40 per cent to 23 per cent for Aboriginal Tasmanians. Youth recidivism has increased from 29.8 per cent to 58.3 per cent, and adult recidivism has increased from 39.1 per cent to 47.1 per cent.

The Ashley Youth Detention Centre is still open. This is a place that brutalises children, harms children and is a one-way ticket to Risdon Prison Complex. There is no evidence of a therapeutic response to those young people; however, we know that against the advice of independent experts before the 2018 state election, a decision was made to keep the Ashley Youth Detention Centre open for political purposes. This was not done with the interests at heart of young people who find themselves in there. It was not, because if you were genuinely interested in juvenile offenders - in resetting their lives and keeping them out of Risdon Prison - you would close the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

This commission of inquiry is an extremely important initiative. It will hear evidence about the harm perpetrated on children and young people in the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and will reinforce the urgency of closing that Dickensian place. We have urged the minister not to allocate money to the refurbishment of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre until the commission of inquiry is done, but he has refused to do so because it is all about pump-priming the north of the state.

Since 2014, the war on nature in Tasmania has continued apace. They are still water-bombing the fire Sustainable Timber Tasmania lit in the Styx six days after the end of summer, which went from a 25-hectare fire into something more than 200 hectares now. This damages our brand and it releases heavens knows how much carbon into the atmosphere in a time of climate emergency.

I want to take members now to the PESRAC report. This is a very important document and I thank every member of the Premier's Economic Social Recovery Advisory Council for the enormous work, intellect and heart that they put into this report. It is outstanding in so many ways.

We go now to the chapter on Environment and Sustainability. It says:

More than three-quarters of survey participants highlighted Tasmania's natural environment to be important for their own wellbeing, Tasmania's brand, and economic advantage and the global environment.

PESRAC says:

Throughout our consultation we heard that the environment is a major element of Tasmania's brand and creates a significant value for Tasmanian products in local, interstate and global markets.

The message that PESRAC received from across nine workshops is that Tasmania's environment directly and through brand association will be a major contributor to our future opportunities and therefore to economic and social recovery. Doing nothing or modest approaches to sustainability will not cut it in light of global trends. To retain Tasmania's premium brand positioning for tourism, export, investment and liveability, our environmental and sustainability credentials need to be stronger than other places across all the domains of

energy, emissions, air and water quality, land management, waste and biodiversity, and collective action is required by all sectors, government and communities, to ensure our brand is authentic and remains a positive point of difference globally.

We have said it before and we will say it again and again and again. We cannot uphold the integrity of our brand unless we end native forest logging. We simply cannot. The brand will become a sham if we keep felling these beautiful, carbon-rich, biodiverse forests and then burning them. It is a sacrilege. It is a crime against nature, a crime against climate, future generations and it undermines our brand.

Back to PESRAC. We heard that:

... for Tasmania, simply making incremental improvements to sustainability won't be enough to support our brand - we need to be better than elsewhere to maintain an edge.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is so true. We also need to start repairing some of the damage of the past.

A few weeks ago Alice Giblin and I went to a place called Skyline Tier, a former forestry plantation up the back of Scamander. About 16 years ago, Todd Dudley, an east coast local and living treasure and part of the North East Bioregional Network, negotiated with the forestry company there to undertake some rewilding. Rewilding is the future. When we went up to this beautiful little place we saw a baby forest, so what had been this pine plantation on 350 hectares was a sight for sore eyes, quite literally. An evaluation report undertaken for the North East Bioregional Network as the baby forest grew found that there were blue gums, black gums, stringy bark, iron bark, white gum and peppermint, as well as plants like the hairy pennywort and the woolly cross herb, the dolly bush and the musk daisy bush, black casuarinas, native cranberry, native primrose and every type of endemic wattle. These are the habitats and carbon banks and water protectors of the future. Nature is healing itself with a bit of help from its friends at Skyline Tier. It is rewilding in action, where jobs are generated that deliver public good and repair the assaults on nature of the past.

There is also mention in the PESRAC report of an appreciation of the marine environment. The ecology of the marine environment of the east coast of Tasmania is changing rapidly. I think we can do a lot better as a state to build back greener.

Time expired.

Debate adjourned.

JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY) BILL 2021 (No. 6)

Second Reading

[12.56 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice - 2R) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read a second time.

Commissions of inquiry, known in some jurisdictions as royal commissions, are established on an as-needs basis to undertake a forensic examination into a matter of public interest. They provide an important social function by providing the community with the opportunity to contribute to the subject matter of the inquiry which, in turn, assists to inform recommendations and government decisions.

Commissions of inquiry are established to advise the Tasmanian Government on matters relevant to policy development and government processes. They are a powerful tool and what separates them from other inquiries and investigations is their ability to use powers normally only reserved for the courts to examine matters of great importance and public interest.

Commissions of inquiry are usually conducted in public, through open hearings. However, as we have learned through the conduct of the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, not all members of the community wish or are able to share their experiences in a public forum by the very nature of the subject matter.

It is critical that commissions of inquiry are empowered to respect individuals' needs and ensure that all members of the community are supported to participate in the commission's work and share their unique experiences and perspectives.

On 23 November 2020 the Premier announced the intention of the Tasmanian Government to establish a commission of inquiry to examine the responses of the Tasmanian Government to allegations of child sexual abuse in institutional settings. The commission will commence its important work shortly and will be led by the Honourable Marcia Neave AO, assisted by former Family Court Justice the Honourable Robert Benjamin AM, and Professor Leah Bromfield, who is one of Australia's leading child protection researchers with expertise in child protection systems.

The commission of inquiry will build on the investigation to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the responses by the Department of Education to allegations of child sexual abuse in Tasmanian government schools commenced by Professor Timothy McCormack and Professor Stephen Smallbone last year. I wish to take this opportunity to thank them for their work to date on this investigation and sharing their significant expertise.

The commission of inquiry will also continue the investigation into the responses of the Tasmanian Health Service and the Department of Health to allegations of child sexual abuse, particularly in the matter of James Geoffrey Griffin and the Launceston General Hospital and the responses of the Department of Communities Tasmania to allegations of child sexual abuse at Ashley Youth Detention Centre. I would also like to thank Maree Norton and the team at the Department of Communities for the work they have done on their respective investigations to date as well.

The allegations of abuse arising from these institutions have shocked us all. We need to understand how these incidents have occurred and what we need to do to ensure that they do not occur again. There is no greater task of a government than the protection of Tasmania's children and the prevention of child sexual abuse. The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring that children are safe from those who would perpetrate sexual violence and so they can be confident they will be provided every opportunity to achieve justice in whatever form they seek.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Justice Miscellaneous (Commissions of Inquiry) Bill 2021 makes a number of important amendments to the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995, the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997, the Youth Justice Act 1997 and the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2002 to ensure that commissions of inquiry are appropriately empowered to undertake their important work.

The bill amends the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995 to clarify the Governor's power to amend or vary the matters which the commission is directed to examine, including the power to appoint additional commissioners to an established commission of inquiry. Under the bill, a commission of inquiry will be empowered to conduct its inquiry in any manner it considers appropriate, subject to the requirements of procedural fairness, including the use of private sessions.

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

JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY) BILL 2021 (No. 6)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice - 2R) - Madam Speaker, the bill includes a number of amendments that support vulnerable witnesses to give evidence, including to:

permit a witness to give evidence anonymously, including the use of pseudonyms and any other measure that will assist to prevent the direct or indirect identification of the witness; and

provide for the use of special measures for the giving of evidence including, but not limited to, those available under the Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001, such as the use of witness intermediaries.

The Tasmanian Government's Witness Intermediary Scheme Pilot commenced on 1 March 2021 and is already being used in the north-west, north and south of the state in police stations and in Magistrates and Supreme courts. The use of witness intermediaries is essential to ensuring witnesses can effectively participate in otherwise daunting criminal proceedings. These types of improvements to access to justice is one of our Government's key priorities and we will continue to undertake evidence-based reforms that will support people to engage in the Tasmanian criminal justice system.

I believe it is critical that the commission of inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's responses to child sexual abuse in institutional settings is able to utilise witness intermediaries where appropriate and any other special measure available in Tasmanian courts, and we are prepared to make these services available to it.

The bill also implements the work of the Tasmania Law Reform Institute and the Australian Law Reform Commission to enable the appropriate management of circumstances where a witness to the commission or other person may be the subject of a finding constituting 'misconduct' or another finding of the commission which is contrary to the person's interest,

and clarifying the circumstances and procedures for a commission seeking to use listening or surveillance devices.

The bill will also provide the commission with the power to inspect documents where legal privilege is claimed, such as legal professional privilege or public interest immunity, and enables the commission of inquiry itself to determine whether the claim is properly made.

A very important amendment in the bill ensures a commission of inquiry is able to discharge its ethical duty to share information for the purpose of ensuring the safety and protection of children, that is child-safe reporting to appropriate law enforcement and other regulatory authorities.

Public interest disclosure schemes operate across Australia and provide a framework for public officials to raise concerns about the conduct by government agencies or other public officials. In Tasmania, public interest disclosures are received and investigated by the Ombudsman. Public interest disclosure schemes promote integrity and accountability in the public sector by encouraging and facilitating the disclosure of information by public officials about suspected wrongdoing in the public sector. In some circumstances, the Ombudsman may refer matters to other bodies, such as the Integrity Commission, for investigation. The bill amends the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2002 to enable the Ombudsman to refer a matter for investigation by a commission of inquiry.

The Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1997 and the Youth Justice Act 1997 have confidentiality provisions that ensure the privacy of young people who are subject to child welfare and youth justice orders. It is anticipated that the commission of inquiry will examine and hear from many people who have been the subject of these orders at one time in their lives, including being placed by the state in out-of-home care arrangements or while detained at Ashley Youth Detention Centre. We already know from the work of the Commonwealth royal commission that Tasmanian children and young people have suffered abuse in these settings.

To ensure that the commission of inquiry can properly undertake its inquiry and that people who have been affected by abuse in child welfare and youth justice contexts can access their records to enable them to share that information with the commission and participate in private sessions, the bill amends the Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1997 and the Youth Justice Act 1997 to provide exemptions to the confidentiality provisions to permit the disclosure and use of information.

These exemptions to the confidentiality provisions enable the use of otherwise protected information to and by the person to whom the information relates, and ensure that:

a person seeking to bring an action may obtain relevant information to enable them to bring that action, civil or criminal, and can participate in out-of-court settlement discussions;

a person responding to an action, civil or criminal, and can participate in out-of-court settlement discussions;

a person may use the information for any purpose associated with a commission of inquiry established under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995; and

a person may use the information for the purposes of any employment investigation or process to ensure the protection and safety of children.

It is important to note that the amendments ensure that the rules of procedural fairness are to be observed regarding a disclosure made for the purposes of seeking to bring or responding to a criminal or civil action or undertaking employment screening, review and disciplinary processes, and provides equivalent rights of access to information so that there is no power imbalance between the state and the party seeking to bring an action.

The amendment insofar as it relates to civil proceedings will enable the state and a party seeking to bring an action against the state to engage in early out-of-court settlement discussions and reduce the risk of retraumatisation from the usual adversarial nature of civil litigation.

It was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that states work to ensure settlement of civil claims in relation to institutional child sexual abuse and are facilitated at the earliest possible stage. These changes implement this recommendation. This reform ensures that the state can act as model litigant and manage civil litigation in a timely and trauma-informed manner.

I wish to take a moment to acknowledge and thank those victims and survivors who have shown enormous courage and already so bravely and selflessly shared their experiences so that we may identify where we need to improve and act to ensure Tasmania's children and vulnerable are safe.

In closing, I want to highlight that these issues, and media coverage of these issues, can be extremely upsetting and traumatic for some people. I want to stress that if any aspect of these matters raises concerns for anyone, please reach out for help. The Department of Justice has a list of supports available on its website, but please call services such as Lifeline or Beyond Blue if you need to talk to someone.

Madam Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[2.38 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I will begin my contribution where the Attorney-General left off in also recognising the bravery and the strength of victim survivors of child sex abuse who have had that strength to come forward with their stories, particularly to the royal commission.

We have spent a lot of time in this place speaking about the royal commission in the last couple of years. The Attorney-General has brought in multiple legislation designed to implement many of the recommendations of the royal commission, all of which Labor has, of course, supported. I reiterate what the Attorney-General said about debates around this issue. They can be retraumatising for people who have these experiences, or whose loved ones have had experiences of child sex abuse. I also reiterate that there is support out there and that, as we continue to debate these bills in this House, people should feel that they can access those

supports. More importantly, that people should feel empowered and free to bring forward their stories and their experiences in Tasmanian institutions.

I believe thousands of Tasmanians gave evidence to the royal commission. We know that many of recommendations are being implemented around the country. There were over 400 recommendations made by the royal commission and their final report was nearly 20 volumes of chapters recommending changes that need to happen around the country to ensure that the kinds of things that were uncovered during the royal commission's work were never allowed to happen again.

I believe we are at a national turning point at the moment, with the kinds of things that have been brought to light during the royal commission and since.

Importantly, in the last few months we have seen Grace Tame named as Tasmanian of the Year and then Australian of the Year. She is an incredible, formidable force in this national debate. I believe she is a driving factor in how differently that national light is now being cast upon the scourge of these kinds of heinous offences that have been allowed to fester in public and community institutions for decades, in some instances.

It was an incredibly moving experience for everyone who attended the march on Monday. I honestly do not believe that I have seen as many people on the lawns of Parliament House, maybe since I was a teenager. There were some very big rallies concerning national political issues at the time. I have never seen the lawns so filled and pandemic restrictions meant that people were lining the streets outside the lawns, and people were watching online. It has been a long time since I have felt that kind of momentum at a public gathering, rally or a march.

People are waking up to dealing with the issue of child sex abuse and shining a light on it differently to how it had been before the royal commission's findings were added. As Australian of the Year, Grace Tame will now continue to shine in the work that she continues to do in that role.

We have had Brittney Higgins come forward with her experiences of sexual abuse and rape inside Parliament House. We have seen federal and state MPs sharing their stories of abuse at work and in the community. People are really getting to the point where we are realising that enough is enough and we will not stand for it anymore.

So, that is a little bit of the national context, but the commission of inquiry that has been announced by the Government is a very important step and part of the whole fabric of what is going on nationally to shine a light on these things.

Public processes like the royal commission and the commission of inquiry are important public institutions allowing people to share their stories, and more importantly to make sure that the kind of things that are uncovered through these processes are never allowed to happen again.

It is important to reflect on what has led to the commission of inquiry being announced. A series of allegations had started to come to light across multiple agencies and multiple parts of the state about sexual abuse of young people. There were multiple allegations against James Geoffrey Griffin. There were a number of statements made and there has now been a police report released on the various pieces of information that were given to the police as far back as 2009. As those stories started to come to light, others started to come forward with their stories

as well. We started to see public sector workers across the state stood down over allegations of historic cases, and some cases of contemporary allegations of child sex abuse and other inappropriate behaviour.

In August of last year, the Minister for Education and Training announced an independent investigation into child sex abuse in government schools. A couple of months later, on 22 October 2020, the Health minister, Sarah Courtney, announced an independent inquiry into James Griffin. Later there was an announcement of an independent inquiry into treatment of young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

So, three inquiries were established but more allegations of abuse continued to come to light. It became very apparent to the minister, to public sector workers and the public, that this was much bigger and there was much more that needed to be dealt with and uncovered than what could happen in three independent inquiries.

I believe the right decision was made on the first day of Estimates last year, when the Premier made the announcement that a commission of inquiry would be established and that those three existing inquiries that had begun would be collapsed into this new commission of inquiry. It was apparent that these issues that needed to be addressed were whole-of-government issues that needed to be investigated in a way that those three independent inquiries - as much as I am sure the work of those inquiries would have been incredibly valuable - a commission of inquiry can do so much more, and it was the right decision to establish one.

I am encouraged by the high calibre of the appointments of the people who would conduct this work. When the announcement was made during Estimates that a commission of inquiry would be established, Labor made the call that it needed to be somebody external to Tasmania, who would be the chief commissioner. That is not because of a lack of trust, or a lack of belief in the ability of any Tasmanian person to conduct that inquiry. I am sure that that skill set is here, but the reason why it is so important to have that distance, Madam Speaker, is because of our tiny community, the ability for people to come forward as witnesses, but also the ability for the commissioner to not necessarily be somebody who could have possibly had any exposure to any of those people or those cases before.

Marcia Neave is an eminently respected person who conducted the Family Violence Royal Commission in Victoria and is extremely well placed to conduct this inquiry. She is now joined by the honourable Robert Benjamin, a former Family Court judge, and Leah Bromfield, an expert in child protection. It is commendable that people of that high calibre have been appointed to conduct this important work.

Madam Speaker, I turn now to the detail of the bill. First I thank the minister through your office for providing me with the briefing that happened yesterday during the lunch break. I thank Jane from your office - as well as Amber and Oliver from the Department of Justice - for a very thorough briefing that went through the bill in some detail, explaining the changes that are being made to the Commission of Inquiry Act, but also the Public Interest Disclosure Act, the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act, and the Youth Justice Act.

Some of the concerns that I had, I am pleased to say were alleviated in that briefing and resolved. However, I wanted to go through a few of the head issues that I thought warranted me bringing up on the *Hansard* today.

First of all, one of the amendments allows for the commission to conduct private hearings. I know there has been some concern expressed about what that means. Does it mean that information would potentially be concealed or hidden by the commission of inquiry, or that commissioners would not be able to consider evidence that they hear in a private hearing when they come to be making their findings? I mention each of these things hoping that the Attorney-General would reflect on this in her summing-up remarks at the end of the bill.

My understanding is that that is not the case - that the purpose of having the ability for private hearings to be held is to protect witnesses who otherwise would not be able to come forward and share their experiences and their evidence with the commission, and that is modelled on the way the royal commission conducted its hearings nationally.

I believe there were 57 public hearings of the royal commission, but there were over 8000 private hearings. So, it was described to me that of course the commissioners are not going to need to put out of their mind the information they hear from witnesses during private hearings. They will still be able to consider and report on issues they hear in private hearings, but in a de-identified way - that is, not identifying the witness or the institution they are hearing that information about. However, they are still able to consider that information as part of the recommendations they finally make; importantly, they can also choose to investigate it. For example, if the commission ends up hearing dozens of reports about a particular agency or institution, it will be able to instigate its own investigation into that institution or agency and that investigation would be public. I want to confirm that with the minister in the debate.

Among the changes that will be welcomed, particularly by people working in the community sector with children and young people, are those to section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act. We have had a couple of constituent stories from my colleagues about the problem presented by the current wording of section 103. That is, that section 103 prevents people from accessing information about themselves from government under the Personal Information Protection (PIP) Act provisions, if that information relates to a time when they were in the child protection system.

A constituent who contacted one of my colleague's offices is still under 18 but was in the child protection system for a long time when he was young. He was seeking information about a hospital admission he knows he underwent when he was seven but he does not remember why he was in hospital. Importantly, it does not relate to any claim he is trying to make. It has been at the recommendation of his psychologist that he find this information as part of his healing and his psychological journey of dealing with the trauma he has undergone in his life.

Currently he cannot access that information because section 103 allows information to be shared as authorised by law, so it requires a positive obligation to share that information, but the PIP Act does not create that obligation to disclose so it is not required by law to be disclosed. Removing that block will allow people like that young man who spoke to one of my colleagues to seek and receive the information that relates to his hospital admission and his care in the child protection system.

I have some concerns I will place on the record and confirm with the minister that this is not the case. Two people have contacted me in the brief consultation I managed to conduct since receiving the bill on Tuesday who were worried that the changes proposed to section 103 would potentially allow information to be disclosed to an intended defendant or an alleged perpetrator. I want to make sure with the minister that is not the case, that the change being

proposed to section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act is intended to allow individuals to receive information about themselves. Two people raised similar concerns about whether that change would potentially lead to personal information being able to be disclosed to an alleged perpetrator.

There was a similar legislative impediment to settlement conferences being able to proceed quickly, which is something I have commented on in the past. Last year, or possibly in 2019, one recommendation of the royal commission was that settlement conferences should be prioritised by states, be one of the preferred ways of dealing with claims under the redress scheme and also should happen quickly. They are happening quickly in other states but we have seen some public examples in Tasmania already of settlement conferences not taking place quickly or at all, and then people resorting to taking civil actions through the Supreme Court. If that is a course of action a victim survivor chooses to take through the courts, they should be supported to do so, but it can be a pretty traumatising experience to go through a court hearing. If it was not their intention but they ended up having to take it as a last resort because they were not able to achieve a settlement conference date, it could be pretty damaging for that person.

It was explained to me that it was a similar legislative impediment in terms of sharing information with both parties to a claim that meant that those settlement conferences could not happen in a quick way. I am sure if I am not quite right in my interpretation of that, the minister will confirm it for me in her summing-up comments, but I wanted to touch on that and make sure my understanding of it is correct because after these changes have taken place, hopefully we can expect settlement conferences to start happening faster.

I raise an issue related to those last two points about the sharing of information. In November last year some changes to the PIP Act were gazetted to allow public service agencies to share information across agencies relating to civil action. I saw those changes come up in the PIP Act, and my read on them was that they were a new way of dealing with the attempted changes to the Civil Liability Act that nearly came into a bill late last year. I know the minister will know what I mean by that. Instead a decision was made to gazette changes to allow public sector agencies to share information across agencies.

When I first read that, I thought it was a positive thing if it meant sharing information across agencies for the purposes of a commission of inquiry. It is a necessary function that agencies need to be able to share information and often at the moment agencies are prevented from sharing information, or sometimes believe they are prevented from sharing information across agencies or sometimes within agencies because of the provisions of the PIP Act.

I believe that those gazetted changes now achieve the desire that information will be able to be shared more easily across departments, but the concerns raised with me at the time of those gazetted changes were that it could create or exacerbate a perceived power imbalance between claimants and the state. We will stick to the issue of these kinds of civil claims but potentially it could be broader and relate to any civil claim being taken against the Government in any area. Imagine you are a person taking a civil action against the state for a case of child sex abuse. If you want to access your documents, you need to do that through RTI, or through a PIP Act application or through legal discovery, and the Government needs to do the same to gain that information from other agencies. I believe the gazetted changes I went through will now fix that problem for the Government accessing information, but they will not necessarily

fix it for applicants or people who are taking civil action also being provided with that information.

Yesterday in the briefing I was told that it is not the case, and that information that is shared - for example, from Youth Justice or Health or Education - with the Office of the Solicitor-General for the purposes of a case or a commission of inquiry would be shared immediately with the claimant as well. I want to make sure on the record that is the correct understanding.

Finally, one of the changes in Commissions of Inquiry Act is around what happens when a commission of inquiry needs to seek information from an agency and that agency argues that the information is subject to privilege and therefore they will not disclose it or share it with the commission. Understandably some people raised concerns about that and were worried it could mean that information that was vital for the commission of inquiry to consider in its deliberations would potentially be withheld by agencies from the commission.

It was explained to me that the way the amendments are drafted means that will not be the case. In fact, if an agency wants to rely on privilege not to disclose a document, the commission of inquiry will still be able to receive that document and assess for itself whether that privilege argument was warranted or not. In other words, they can assess that claim of privilege and decide if that document is subject to privilege and, I suppose, then return it to the agency, or they can agree with the agency that parts of it are arguably subject to privilege and they could redact those parts; alternatively, they could reject that claim of privilege and consider the whole document.

If that is the case, I think that is a defensible change to make. It would indeed make sure that the commission of inquiry is not prevented from receiving any information because, with something as serious as this and the seriousness of the subject matter that the commission of inquiry will be dealing with, they really need to be able to have unfettered access to information they require regarding allegations of child sex abuse in Tasmanian agencies and across other organisations in Tasmania as their work progresses. If my understanding of how arguments of privilege will be dealt with is correct, I think that is satisfied and the commission should not be prevented from receiving as much information as it needs to do the work it is going to be doing.

I know there was something in a press release but I could not find it, but I want to know what the budget is for the commission of inquiry to conduct its work.

Ms Archer - Whatever it needs, but we estimate up to \$10 million.

Ms O'Connor - Did you say 10?

Ms Archer - Ten, but if it is more than that, it is more than that.

Ms HADDAD - That is encouraging.

Ms Archer - If *Hansard* is happy to do that by interjection.

Ms HADDAD - I am sure they are. That is encouraging because I think what is really important is not only that they have the budget required to do the work they need to do, but also that they have the budget to provide those supports for witnesses and victim survivors who

will be coming forward and telling their stories. It is not just victim survivors, but people who have worked in state agencies or been exposed to or have information that they need to provide to the commission of inquiry. They need to be able to do so in an open, honest and free way without any fear of retribution and also, of course, to access supports in whatever form they might take. It is good to have that confirmation that it is basically an open chequebook but estimated to be around \$10 million.

I feel I have definitely forgotten something. I conclude my comments by inviting the minister - and I know I have given you lots of questions for your summing up - to reflect again on the terms of reference for the commission itself and to ask you once again, as I know that you have done publicly, to explain the breadth of the terms of reference to ensure there is an understanding that the work of the royal commission will not be limited in any way. In other words, if they start to hear evidence around physical abuse, restrictive practices that are unlawful, or other kinds of allegations of abuse as they start to hear evidence -

Ms Archer - It is not just child sexual abuse.

Ms HADDAD - through the commission of other than child sex abuse, such as physical isolation or denigrating conduct. People came forward with stories that do not necessarily involve allegations of child sex abuse. It could be other forms of abuse. I want to put my mind at ease that those allegations, as they come to light, will be able to be the scope of the work the commission does.

Those are the main points I wanted to raise on the bill. I reiterate the importance of this work - do not to lose sight of the terrible allegations that have come forward in Tasmania over the last 12 months or so. They are heartbreaking stories and must be taken with the utmost seriousness, which I believe they will be by this commission of inquiry. That is why we are supporting the changes in this bill. We encourage Tasmanians, no matter what information they have which they believe is relevant to the commission of inquiry, to make a submission, so that no stone is left unturned in the work the commission is to conduct very soon for people not to feel that they cannot come forward with their stories.

Grace Tame said beautifully at the rally on Monday that evil thrives in silence. Now is the time for people to start shining a light and opening up those dark corners where these stories have sat for decades and sometimes generations. It will benefit those who come forward with those stories but it will also benefit future Tasmanians to make sure we can ensure our public and community agencies and our private institutions in the future are never able to operate in a way that allows this kind of abuse to occur.

[3.07 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, the Greens will of course support the Justice Miscellaneous (Commissions of Inquiry) Bill 2021. I want at the outset to thank the officers from the minister's department for the briefing they provided to our office yesterday. A number of questions were asked in that briefing and we were reassured by the readiness of clear answers and the openness about the legislation and its intent. I personally am reassured by the quality of people who have been working on this legislation.

Ms Archer - Hear, hear - so am I.

Ms O'CONNOR - Behind this amendment bill is so much trauma. I think it is reasonable to say that as a state we have been failing children and young people for decades. I remember a previous commissioner for children who talked about Tasmanian's residual culture of child abuse and neglect. I agree with my colleague, Ms Haddad, about the importance of sunlight as a cleanser. It is so important that we shine the light onto agencies' practices and, if necessary, individuals who have been responsible for harming children.

We are having this debate today in part because of the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, established by former prime minister Julia Gillard. We are also here because of a sequence of events and information that came forward over the past year or so that made it clear that we needed to build on the work of the royal commission and make sure we had a process here for having a look at the treatment of children and young people in state settings. It was about three weeks ago that Tasmania Police handed down what was effectively an internal review into their handling of the Griffin matter. Tasmanians discovered that over the course of 10 years, in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and finally in 2019, reports were made to Tasmania Police about the conduct of James Griffin. In one instance, the information was provided by the Australian Federal Police in relation to information about potential use of child pornography by Mr Griffin. We still do not know why that went nowhere and still have yet to understand how it could be that information was brought forward to Tasmania Police over an extended period of time and it did not go anywhere.

I have no doubt at all that Commissioner Hine and many within Tasmanian Police felt that same sense of sadness when they read that review report that we did. I acknowledge that Commissioner Hine sincerely apologised to Griffins' victims for the failures of Tasmania's police. The failures that were detailed went beyond just that of Tasmania Police; there was a clear failure to share information across agencies or, if information was shared, to effectively act on that information. The agencies that were captured by that failure were Communities Tasmania and Child Safety Services. There is also a question mark over how Mr Griffin was able to obtain working with vulnerable people registration and how it was that once the final complainant came forward, it took three months for Mr Griffin to be removed from his place of work at the Launceston General Hospital where he was in regular contact with children and young people, and why it is that he continued to carry his working with vulnerable people registration after such a serious complaint of child sexual abuse had been made against him.

These are the sorts of matters that would be examined by a commission of inquiry. We also know now that there is clear evidence of historical abuse within the Department of Education and a process which had the esteemed Professor, Tim McCormack, leading it, established. We also know that at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, there was a long and tragic history of the mistreatment of young people, and in some instances that goes to the sexual abuse of young people.

Ms Haddad was talking earlier about the terms of reference. I cannot identify any substantive differences between the draft terms of reference and the final terms of reference. It is the Greens deep concern to see the commission of inquiry examine the abuse of children that extends beyond sexual abuse. The Commissions of Inquiry Act Order to establish the Commission of Inquiry states:

WHEREAS all children deserve a safe and happy childhood

AND Tasmania recognises that Australia has undertaken international obligations to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children from sexual abuse and other forms of abuse, including measures for the prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow up of incidents of child abuse.

The information we have received from inside the Ashley Youth Detention Centre points to a place where there is a culture amongst some staff there of harming children or setting children against each other or preventing therapeutic responses to the needs of those young people in Ashley Youth Detention Centre. From the Custodial Inspector's report, searches of people who come into the Ashley Youth Detention Centre have been sporadic at best. We know, for example, the policy at Ashley Youth Detention Centre changed a couple of years ago in relation to strip searches. It was policy that all young people who came into Ashley and were strip searched were provided with the opportunity to have what is called a modesty gown, and that no modesty gowns were available at Ashley Youth Detention Centre. The strip searching continued against government policy at Ashley in clear breach of the rights of those children.

We recognise that the case for the commission to examine how young people are treated at Ashley is compelling and it is unarguable. It is still a matter of great regret to the Greens that the minister for children is ploughing on with a refurbishment of a place that damages children. We have had whistle-blower evidence of young women going in there out of the night court in Launceston, being raped over the weekend by other detainees and let out the front gate on the Monday - different people, a bit broken.

It is a reckless use of government funding, the \$7 million or \$8 million refurbishment budget for Ashley when a commission of inquiry will undoubtedly examine the way young people are treated at Ashley and find it is wanting.

Given the likelihood that a number of government agencies and their policies, practices and where it has happened, failings will be captured by the commission of inquiry, we would like, and notwithstanding amendments in this bill, a clear statement from the Attorney-General about the whistle-blower protections so that when someone inside an agency comes forward with information that is certainly germane to the commission of inquiry's investigations and relevant and important that that person feels the law and the processes of the commission of inquiry will protect them.

If the Attorney-General could go to that briefly, that would be excellent. We have already spoken to at least one potential whistle-blower with very detailed and important knowledge who wants some reassurance from government that they will be protected. That is absolutely vital, just as the need to protect victims and survivors who come before the commission of inquiry or give evidence; whether it is as a result of the provisions of this bill anonymously or under a pseudonym, we need to protect them. This amendment bill does put those protections in place for victims and survivors who come forward.

We acknowledge that not everyone made it. For some victims of past child sexual abuse, life became unbearable. Going to the bill, parts 2 and 3 of the amendment bill amends section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997: these amendments have been separated, despite relating to the same section because Part 3 contains retrospective provisions and Part 2 establishes a criminal offence which cannot be applied retrospectively in

relation to the duty to maintain confidentiality where, should a person breach that duty, they are potentially subject to a fine not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or both.

Section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act sets out requirements for a person administering the act, or a person who attends a family group conference to not divulge personal information relating to a child, guardian, member of the family, or a person alleged to have abused, neglected or threatened a child, except if authorised or required to by law. Part 2 establishes a similar offence for the disclosure of information obtained via the mechanisms in Part 3 of the bill. Part 3 allows for information in relation to the existing provisions of section 103 of the principal act to be disclosed for the person to whom the information relates; a person seeking to bring legal in relation to matters covered by the principal act; in order to respond to said actions for use in the commission of inquiry; or for an employment investigation or process, including a Working with Vulnerable People check.

Some of these matters relate to the same purpose as the proposed - and then subsequently withdrawn late last year - amendments to the Justice and Related Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2020 as well as the 25 November 2020 gazettal of exemptions to the Personal Information Protection Act 2004.

A couple of key distinctions between the earlier legislation and the gazettal is that the amendments before us in this bill provide identical rights of access to claimants and Crown law, and the scope of what is releasable is much more specific and ensures that personal information unrelated to the claim can be redacted or anonymised, which we believe is a more reasonable, balanced and equitable approach.

Parts 6 and 7 apply the same provisions to the Youth Justice Act 1997 that Parts 2 and 3 apply to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997. In the short amount of time that we have available we did consult with key stakeholders and I also seek some clarification from the Attorney-General. I believe the section 7 amendments to section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act are about who the information relates to, not who is able to access it. The concern has been expressed that an alleged perpetrator may be entitled to access the personal information of a victim without these amendments. This information might not be available to a defence team, for example, in a criminal prosecution. There is a concern that this information could be used to attack the claimant's credit. We need an explanation as to why the information could be shared with an alleged perpetrator, particularly in criminal matters.

There is also a question about the proposed section 9 amendments to the Commissions of Inquiry Act in clause 3(b). Why the narrowing of the definition of misconduct? There is a concern this will make it harder for the commission of inquiry to make adverse findings against particular individuals if the adverse findings need to be linked to criminal, civil or disciplinary level proceedings.

There is also a question about the destruction of documents, which was included in the gazetted notice. Could the Attorney-General clarify that the order by gazette relating to the destruction of documents sits alongside this amendment bill? Perhaps we could understand why no reference to the destruction of documents was included in the gazetted exemptions.

Why are there no requirements in the amendments that this information can or should be shared with the claimant and/or their legal representatives? Perhaps the Attorney-General could go to that question.

I would also like to understand, given the terms of reference, how government-funded entities may or may not be captured as part of the commission of inquiry. The terms of reference in the preamble, reading from the top:

WHEREAS all children deserve a safe and happy childhood.

Then four paragraphs down:

AND government institutions, including child-care, educational and other ... institutions, provide important services and support for children and their families that are beneficial to children's development.

Members know that in the past 10 to 15 years, there has been increasing outsourcing of services and, to some extent, responsibility and accountability, to community sector and not-for-profit and for-profit providers.

Given that, look at the case study of Safe Pathways, for example, a for-profit provider given responsibility for children who were on care and protection orders. Therefore the state was their parent, but the state outsourced that parenting, if you like, to a for-profit provider which, it was revealed, was not providing, on the evidence, the best of care to those children. If someone is working for any one of the charitable organisations, for example, that receive government funding to undertake a service, how may they be captured by the commission of inquiry's work?

We would not want to see the scope narrowed only to state settings, because the state purchases services through not-for-profit and for-profit entities. Those entities then, have the responsibility of caring for those children and young people and so they should most certainly be captured by the commission of inquiry's work, given that in all likelihood there are more children and young people within services provided by community sector organisations than there are in state settings outside the education system. If the Attorney-General could go to that, it would be excellent.

As we know, for example, there are 600 or so foster carers in Tasmania and they have one of the most important jobs going around, Madam Speaker. They are looking after children who for one reason or another are not able to be cared and provided for by their family. They are looking after children who invariably will have some form of trauma. Can we have an assurance that the commission of inquiry would be able to examine matters relating to foster carers who sit somewhat outside the state system, even though the services that they work for are funded by the states. We hear some quite confronting testimony about some of the things that happen inside the child safety system and the foster care system. Obviously when that information comes to us in recent times we have been appointing people to making a submission to the commission of inquiry. There is a bit of a concern in the broader community sector, or people I talk to in the community sector, that there does not seem to be enough of a connect between government working to implement the recommendations of the royal

commission as they relate to children and young people and the community sector, which sits outside government. If the minister could address that, that would be very helpful.

They are the main points I wanted to make and questions I wanted to ask. Should those questions be answered to our satisfaction, I can see no reason to go into Committee on this bill. Certainly we will be supporting it, gladly.

[3.31 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Speaker, I thank members for their considered questions about this extremely important bill. I also thank them for being gracious about how little time they have had to have a look at this, but for obvious reasons we are very keen to get this bill through this House so that the upper House is able to deal with it. We would like the commission of inquiry to commence its work by the end of the month or early next month. Although the provisions can apply retrospectively, it is important that we deal with this bill as soon as we possibly can. Again, I thank members for making themselves available at short notice yesterday for full briefings.

I will take this opportunity up front, so that I do not forget at the end or run out of time, to thank the team, particularly Amber and Oliver who I have with me today from the department from CARCRU, our unit that deals with our responses to not only the royal commission but has been doing an enormous amount of work in relation to this commission of inquiry and the legislation, also Jane Cook in my office and all my office for its continued support in this very complex area at times.

I will go straight to the questions. Some of them overlap but I will deal with them where I can in order. The first question Ms Haddad had was about the use of information by the commission of inquiry that has been provided in a private session and, essentially, what the status of evidence heard in a private session will be. As I have said publicly, private sessions were used as a significant source of information in the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission conducted 8013 private sessions, so I can confirm that precise figure for Ms Haddad, and those sessions were with survivors of child sexual abuse during its five-year inquiry. The use of private sessions is a discretionary matter for the commission of inquiry and will be used to inform its work. Obviously it is a matter for the president and the commissioners to determine where it is necessary and appropriate and indeed requested by survivors too.

While people permitted to participate in private sessions are afforded confidentiality, their experiences contribute significantly to the understanding of the commission of inquiry. Essentially this means their evidence can be used, but their identities are protected. The final reports of the royal commission, to give you an example, demonstrate the value of the knowledge gained in private sessions and de-identified narratives, and these narratives are available on the royal commission's website. The final report of the royal commission often refers to what was learnt from private sessions whilst also ensuring that survivors' privacy is respected. Private sessions empower survivors and/or whistleblowers to tell their stories freely and in the manner they choose. This will help to ensure there are no barriers to survivors engaging with the commission.

Ms Haddad and also Ms O'Connor asked a question about whether the changes to section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 would provide a pathway for information to alleged perpetrators or defendants. I can say that the changes to

section 103 provide a right for a person to receive their information. It does not provide a right to the personal information of a claimant to an alleged perpetrator or a defendant. If civil proceedings or disciplinary proceedings eventuate, the normal principles of procedural fairness apply.

There was also a question from Ms Haddad about the Crown's requirement to share information with a claimant and I believe Ms O'Connor referred to this as well. This is dealing with the ministerial exemptions that were provided under the Personal Information Protection Act 2004. They were made in November of last year and are critical for both claimants and the state to locate the records that are relevant to a civil claim. These exemptions do not allow anyone, including the state, to access records that are protected by other acts. Section 4 of the PIP Act provides that it is subordinate to confidentiality protections in other acts.

In relation to fairness issues, once relevant records are located under the exemptions they are received by the Office of the Solicitor-General. It is incumbent on all legal practitioners, including the practitioner of the Crown, to enforce procedural fairness requirements in legal matters. Any suggestion that practitioners of the Crown are not acting fairly with information obtained under these provisions or are concealing evidence are categorically rejected. There has been some commentary around that and I know there is a very strong feeling in the Crown that this just does not happen and will not happen. I say that very strongly on their behalf.

There has also been some commentary around the destruction of records. Information records are predominantly exchanged electronically these days, I think we can all agree, and reference to the destruction of records refers to the deletion of electronic copies, not the source records, so they are actually secondary in most cases. It is unlawful to destroy government records that may be relevant to child abuse and specifically prohibited by the disposal freeze order of the State Archivist.

There was a reference to settlement conferences. These are important conferences and they have been delayed because both claimants in the state cannot access the records relevant to the claim. I know that has been a source of frustration and something we have been looking into for quite some time and dealing with. These amendments will facilitate the appropriate access to relevant records allowing the parties to make an informed decision. I am very keen for these settlement conferences to be able to occur, or at least even before a settlement conference perhaps be able to settle something on the papers. This is critical to ensuring both procedural fairness and more trauma-informed processes can be adopted, so it allows the Crown to be a model litigant, if you like.

There is also the definition of 'reasonable excuse' included in the bill and that issue of legal privilege, so I will just cover this issue in relation to privilege: reasonable excuse is a defence if a witness refuses to comply with a legal requirement to give evidence or produce a document.

Reasonable excuse is already in the act but it has not previously been defined. This definition provides guidance to commissions of inquiry by referring to the existing exemptions for giving evidence in court proceedings. This definition will also ensure that if someone tries to claim a legal privilege as a reason not to give evidence or produce documents, the commission, through the new section 23A can examine the document to check if the claim is valid. Proposed section 23A will empower commissions to examine claims of privilege from both state agencies and individuals alike. If they determine that privilege does attach to those

documents, then they disregard the content of the documents, but at least it allows them to look at it.

In the case of the Victorian inquiry, it was often used potentially as a blocker and the commission could not do anything about it because they were not able to look at the document to determine that fact. That will allow that very strong mechanism.

Ms Haddad asked a general question in relation to the terms of reference and asked me to reflect on that and explain the breadth of the terms of reference and the broad application. From my conversations with the president in particular, I have made it clear and she is of the view too, that the terms of reference should be interpreted very broadly. When hearing evidence, if there is something that may lead the commission down a path that will possibly reveal further abuse, then I am satisfied and comfortable that will be done and that it will be very thorough.

The scope is limited to children, not adults. This is an inquiry specifically into child sexual abuse, but the order provides scope to examine systemic issues that are relevant to physical abuse and that gives that breadth and reach as well.

The bill amends the Commissions of Inquiry Act to enable the commission to request amendment of its terms in any event, and the Governor to vary the matters to be examined. This will enable the commission to seek amendment if a gap is identified. Again, I feel very comfortable with the terms of reference and where we have landed. If for any reason we have missed something, by working with the president who has settled the final terms of reference with us, that can be amended with Her Excellency signing off on it.

I will deal with Ms O'Connor's questions where they do not duplicate. There was a question about protections for whistle-blowers. The commission of inquiry may allow whistle-blowers to participate in such hearings and give evidence that does not reveal their identity, such as the use of pseudonyms. The act itself already contains a number of offence provisions in section 33 that protect the rights of whistle-blowers and other people engaging with a commission of inquiry. To clarify, the act already prohibits any sanctions for whistle-blowers who give evidence to the inquiry and this bill does not touch this section. Rest assured, whistle-blower status is retained absolutely and they can do so through pseudonyms.

Ms O'Connor also asked about whether information provided under section 103 of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act allows information to be provided to the defendant and/or the perpetrator. I have dealt with that previously.

Ms O'Connor - Yes, you have.

Ms ARCHER - Ms O'Connor also had a concern that it will make it harder for a commission of inquiry to make adverse findings in relation to misconduct. I will go through the basis of this to show why we have done it this way.

The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, in its report Review of the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1995, and although that was back in 2003, and was never acted upon, we have used that as a basis as well as the Australian Law Reform Commission for many of the amendments to this

act as well as specifically that we need for this commission of inquiry. It identified many things that we have modernised because that was almost 20 years ago now.

My report identified a number of issues with the operation of section 18, relating the breadth of definition of misconduct, which related to the need for a commission of inquiry to provide procedural fairness to be balanced with the potential for less serious examples of this conduct such as the credibility of a witness's evidence, to significantly impede the conduct of public hearings.

So, the existing provisions of section 18 require a commission of inquiry to provide not less than 48 hours' notice of the allegation or substance of the evidence. The TLRI observed that this is not always practicable for a commission of inquiry, including for the ability for the person's subject of the allegation of misconduct, to waive the notice and exempt the requirement for notice if the allegation arises in the presentation of evidence.

So, to resolve these issues, the bill amends the definition of misconduct, by splitting what is currently misconduct into two categories. The first category is still called misconduct and rightly so, because it covers the most serious examples of wrong doing. These are things that could be reasonably considered likely to result in a criminal charge, civil liability, disciplinary proceedings or other legal proceedings.

To cover the other types of misconduct, the second category, if you like, was created and is called adverse findings. An adverse finding is a finding that is adverse to a person's interest. This new definition and sections included in the bill provide procedural fairness for a person who may be subject to an adverse finding. We gave some examples in the briefing. It is for giving some evidence - and you will see that it does not constitute the serious nature of the misconduct that someone might give in evidence - that they have a certain colour car but it is actually a different colour. You can see that is not a serious type of an adverse finding, so it is of that lesser standard and it should not frustrate proceedings by that 48 hours' notice provision. It still ensures that all conduct that was previously in the scope of misconduct, is addressed by the act, but it just rates it differently and how it is dealt with is different.

The new provision in section 19 will ensure that people who may be at risk from an adverse finding are provided with procedural fairness, but the hearings of the commission are not delayed for conduct less serious than misconduct. This approach reflects the less prescriptive approach to affording procedural fairness used in other Australian jurisdictions.

Ms O'Connor asked about the PIP Act, which I have addressed in relation to the exemptions and the destruction of records issue.

Ms O'Connor also referred to the application of terms of reference to government-funded organisations. Non-government organisations are specifically included in the institutions to be examined by the commission. There is a definition of non-government institutions in the order. Institutional context includes government and non-government institutions as defined in the order as well. They will be covered by the commission of inquiry, to answer your question specifically. It is important that they are for the reasons outlined by you, Ms O'Connor. Did that also relate to your foster carer question as well?

Ms O'Connor - Yes, it did.

Ms ARCHER - I think that was your last question, so I have covered all the questions asked by members, although something has just been handed to me.

Ms O'Connor asked about the disconnect between implementation of recommendations by the community sector and the Government. The Government is currently developing a legislative framework for child safe organisations. A bill was released for consultation, which recently closed at the end of February. I know my department received a number of submissions on that bill and we are considering options for progressing that work.

I also want to have further meetings on that framework to address some of the issues raised. I assure the House that this work is continuing and the legislation will be introduced once we have finalised looking at those consultations and can table the final bill.

With that, I thank all members for their considered contributions, their cooperation in dealing with this very important matter as quickly as possible and for taking a sensible approach throughout this debate so that we can have this matter heard this week.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

MOTION

Note - Premier's Address

Resumed from page 48.

[3.52 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, what a delight to be here back in the House after what was a very tough year last year to make a contribution on the state of our beautiful and wonderful island state of Tasmania. As we know, things are improving. The mood has lifted somewhat and we are all looking forward to a more normal sort of year this year.

I have listened carefully to the contributions of others, particularly to the Premier's Address, which was interesting and included a lot of great announcements. I am in a fortunate position because I am able to speak specifically focused on my electorate of Clark. I intend to focus on the issues affecting people in both local council areas of Clark, but the things that matter for this electorate matter right across Tasmania.

I am proud of the way Tasmania has handled the pandemic and how we have worked together and looked after each other, but it does not mean that all the issues we had unresolved prior to heading into the pandemic year have naturally concluded themselves. There is still quite a deal of work to do.

In the interim we have had some interesting exercises in community engagement. PESRAC was a good one. My team and I made some submissions to that process, and I am pleased to see a fulsome report coming out. It was not just on the economic state of our island

but on the social advancement issues that we would all agree are challenges for us going forward.

I have given quite a deal of thought to what we need to think about when we think about our future in Tasmania. I would like to speak to it as a platform for action, the elements that we could bring together much like a jigsaw puzzle to help cast our island into a new post-COVID-19 era, where we perhaps need to learn to live with this virus and how we do that, particularly around tourism, human movement and travel, and making sure that we maximise our opportunities in that area whilst also keeping people safe and understanding that every single job is as important as every other job. Each job keeps a family in their home, gets the kids to school, sets people up for dignity and, hopefully, an enjoyable life in their local communities.

I think we sometimes forget that. I see in the House here, across the Chamber, the competing aims, issues and debates that we have. Sometimes perhaps it is not as clear to those listening that we are here to govern and advocate for and debate on behalf of all Tasmanians. Tasmania has a huge diversity of people, of opinions, of views, of geography, of demographics, of age groups and of perspectives. We need to be very careful to make sure we are inclusive and we include everybody in those concerns.

I have goals and aspirations for Clark. The electorate, of course, is my home. I was born and bred here and have a long family history of living and working here. Although we have moved round different suburbs, I now have a fairly extensive family network in beautiful Tasmania, where my children are now going to school and growing up themselves.

I want to talk about projects we can look at and positions we ought to be taking on major issues in life that are in the public domain, and philosophies of how we treat each other and look after our beautiful island, recognising that Tasmania and our future are things we need to craft for all of us. I think we need to think about that spirit of inclusion and hopefully that will resonate.

I want to have a chat today about jobs. Jobs in Clark have been a big issue for me. On my first day back when I was re-elected to this place, my first question in the House was about jobs in Clark, specifically about the too high unemployment rate in Glenorchy and how we start addressing that. One of the things I pushed for, and we have been able to deliver - which I am very happy about - is the jobs hub in Glenorchy. We were motivated to create that, to remove some of the barriers I was hearing were happening for younger people in and around the northern suburbs.

Specifically being heavily involved with AFL football at the time, I knew that my clubs were telling me that their young people were literally unable to get to jobs when they were on offer. They did not have a car, or did not have petrol for the car, or the job started very early in the morning, particularly for fruit-picking jobs, those sorts of things. When there was an early start, the bus networks did not go there. I started talking to businesses in the electorate, big employers. I talked to all the schools in the electorate as well, particularly those larger schools in the northern suburbs, about how we could better connect kids and families to local employers, particularly large employers, with the capacity to offer and work closely with schools to make sure those kids who wanted to go into trade and business had the opportunity to do so.

I spent quite a lot of time working in and around Prince of Wales Bay with Taylor Brothers, Incat and various other manufacturing businesses out that way, and I got a really good reception. From that, I took to the Government a proposal that we get a Glenorchy jobs hub started and the rest, as they say, is history. The adviser group was put together with the support of the council and the state Government and it has now officially kicked off.

These sorts of projects are only as good as the petrol you keep putting into the engine with them so it is important that it is not a set-and-forget kind of structure. There needs to be ongoing management and care and love and funding into these things.

I recently had a great chat with the youth network about how we could specifically put some capacity into all the jobs hubs for younger people as well. That is a very healthy goal and something that I have said I will support as well.

Delivering for the electorate of Clark is really important, not because it is something that we get to come and make good speeches about in parliament but because it actually touches everybody's lives, and it is real and important for people's daily lives. It is about our local communities. I have spoken about this at length in my time here. It is about families; it is about real life that is at the heart of how we live here and how we live and work together in our local communities.

It is my view, and I believe this is now a view that is shared so it is very good, that jobs hubs should operate in each local government area. It is a good model and a very inclusive and connected model. I would like to see a big picture level of funding in relation to not just how we do those hubs as bespoke organisations within the context of local communities but how we use their networks to accelerate and elevate, and enlarge and enhance people's opportunities across Tasmania. I am very keen and I will be keeping a close eye on how that grows. I hope we will see some really big successes.

We have had a lot of debate and discussion in this place fairly recently and a lot of fun around the best way forward with major projects particularly the *Spirits of Tasmania* rebuild. My position on this is and always has been very clear: I want to see as much local content delivered in the electorate of Clark as possible. I found myself apologising to one of the lovely journos in the north of the state for being a bit 'Clark-focused' on this but I was being honest. I really do want to see that.

We have such great manufacturing capacity. Not just manufacturing but the advanced manufacturing piece, but also integration systems, engineering, marine, architects - everything from ability to organise design and upholstery and fit out and maintenance works, and those sorts of things. If we pull all of that together we can have a very good piece of the pie when it comes to ship building.

I understand that the decision to manufacture the two large ships as monohulls offshore makes economic sense. It makes sense from a manufacturing perspective but I also want to make sure that the 'up to \$100 million' but let us call it \$100 million worth of local content, Tasmanian content, actually gets landed. I have written already to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the Premier on this matter.

In one of my past lives as a young commercial and IP lawyer I was based on the JOHR project, the Jindalee Over the Horizon Radar project, a major defence infrastructure project.

One of my jobs was to manage the local content delivery against a schedule of what had been committed to, so I am pretty familiar with how we can do this. Usually it is done at an Australian content level but I think we can drop that into a Tasmanian content context. Of course, in order to make sure that is effective and locked in, I will re-use the words in my question previously about this that 'words of comfort are nice but contracts stick'.

We need to see in the prime contract some clauses that set out commitments around that \$100 million around non-delivery against that \$100 million, providing penalties. and what happens if there are disputes and problems.

I have spent quite a lot of time talking with those operating in the industry who provide the jobs and also the workforce. We have about 500 out at Incat who are very keen to make sure that their jobs are secure, resilient and safe. They have been great to work with and very welcoming, as has the leadership of that family-owned business.

There are others in the Tasmanian marine network with whom I have been working on this issue who agree that the local content piece, if you set it up right and look at it as a fund that could be deployed to various elements across Tasmania, the services side, the product side and the engineering side, that it is a good injection that could come our way.

That scenario is 50 per cent of the puzzle because we still have this opportunity to further develop and build more ships in Clark. I look with some jealousy at South Australia and what they have done to build up their shipbuilding industry. They are now doing incredible work with the space sector and the tech side, something I will talk further about later in this speech.

I am somewhat jealous as their government has spoken with one voice on this for so long. They have been able to get the investment and build up that capacity. We know Tasmanian businesses are actually working on projects that are shared projects across both jurisdictions. We can do more here and there is no reason why we should not get a bigger slice of the defence procurement pie and efforts are going into that.

I want to see collaboration between prime contractors and local businesses, particularly where we have bespoke services that we can tap into. Again, I am pushing very hard to land jobs in Clark.

The idea of advanced jobs in the tech sector, not only in our digital and IT side, but science and space, is a live and real one in my electorate. We have the university and the great work that is done there in marine Antarctic science research. The commercialisation of that is elevating and the university has put a lot of effort into bringing that along. I have met with those guys as well.

Commercialisation is really an artform. It is about taking your science and tech and working out applications for that, and then licensing it and creating revenue streams. We need to and we can do more of that. Rufus Black gets that. The university is geared up for that. We have seen big changes there over the pandemic period. It has been difficult for students, particularly first year students who have not been able to be on campus. That has been a very difficult start to their university careers, but hopefully that continues to expand.

One of the areas that is on the radar, on the horizon, to use all my best analogies, is the space sector. It is a multi-billion-dollar sector. Focus is going into that, particularly around

applications for medical technologies and equipment and how we are able to test those in an Antarctic environment. We are in competition with New Zealand to continue to have the leadership as the Antarctic gateway. New Zealand has done a huge amount of work in gearing up and creating a very strong relationship with American researchers. We need to not rest on our laurels. We have some capacity to focus, particularly with Macquarie Point, the investment going in there to create and establish a science, technology and space network and sector, based in and around our waterfront.

It is not only me saying this. There are organisations looking at Tasmania. The reason it is good for space land is because when the polar orbits happen we are well positioned here to track the satellites and objects in space at a time when the northern hemisphere goes dark. We have facilities locally at Oatlands and Mt Pleasant. Our national array, which is owned by the university, is second to none and is a massive asset for Tasmania. So we are very well positioned. The government has signed a MOU with the Australian National Space Agency. It is very exciting times. I would like to see an office opened here to help us attract and retain private sector space investment in Tasmania, to establish those linkages and pathways for students who could imagine or envisage a career in science, research, technology, law in space, and to attract more public service jobs to the Macquarie Point Science Antarctic & Space Research Hub in particular.

We can add additional layers to this, looking at public sector organisations that do not already have a footprint here. How we do that is by lobbying hard and working with federal government agencies to make that happen. I have met and held meetings with David Thodey in relation with this, particularly with CSIRO. I was very fortunate to know him in my old life in Telstra where he was at the time CEO, so I am very grateful that he has taken my call. I am very pleased to see that may be going into Macquarie Point to kickstart that.

I am very keen on being as supportive as anyone can be about the Tasmanian brand. We all think the Tasmanian brand is marvelous and everybody should just magically know that we have the best state in Australia and the best place in the world, but these things take time and effort and growth. The renewal of our brand and our focus in hospitality, in the arts and service sectors is very important.

I will be watching with great interest what happens with TAFE. My personal view is that the nature of the organisational structure of TAFE is a secondary consideration to how best to deliver educational outcomes. That is my real question. I wonder whether the focus on structural change is as important as a renewed focus on how we are going to deliver the best educational outcomes, a top-notch education for our TAFE students.

We know right now that the Tasmanian brand has probably never been stronger. We are - fingers crossed - COVID-19-free and you never want to say that too loudly in case you put the mockers on it. But we are COVID-19-free. We have been the envy of not just Australia, but the world. I have relatives in both London and Stockholm and have seen both of those jurisdictions have a very different journey and trajectory through the pandemic year, and there was a great deal of interest in how we handled things. Of course, big, brave and strong decisions had to be made, but they were backed in by this parliament. All of us, to a person, were able to put Tasmania first in the great crisis that we faced.

I have a lot to do with people who are not just seeking housing, but also seeking maintenance on their houses. It seems like a small point but it is a very important issue. I share

the Liberals' view that building is the way to go. We must build, build, build - apartments in particular. I have met with the board of the Real Estate Institute. We have looked at areas where infill is possible, where apartments can be built. I know one of the great issues for Hobart is that people who are ready to downsize and shift, perhaps as they get older or moving to retirement, are not able to find apartments that are in their local area, close to shops, are level enough, and perhaps have parking. These issues are real and important and will not be solved by just doing regional development. We need to work on how we infill locally as well.

I am interested in the ancillary dwelling issue - that is a very good initiative - but I am not quite sure if it means that you can have a kitchen and a bathroom in that dwelling? You can?

Mr Jaensch - Yes, self-contained.

Ms OGILVIE - Self-contained. It would be very interesting. Great for teenagers. I have a couple of those on my hands as well.

Mr Jaensch - It would be great for students and great for single people.

Ms OGILVIE - Students, exactly. As long as everybody is not feeling like they have just been put out the back. It is how we do these things. I am very interested in that.

I am more excited about supply-side development than demand-side tinkering, but I do feel the absolute pain of the problem with rental increases. I will confess that I am a landlord of one property myself. We have chosen, because we have the most marvellous tenants in the whole world, not to put the rent up for many years because we love them and we want them to stay. That has worked well for both of us. I appreciate that the pressure for landlords of increasing costs, particularly the land tax issue, which I think we are now starting to focus on and trying to address, does increase the cost that does get passed on to tenants. That is a very difficult micro-economic balancing issue.

I have met recently with a couple of groups from our beautiful multicultural community. I have a lot to do with the Filipino community. They have been marvellous. We were able to land some great wins to get their people home when they were stuck overseas during the great crisis. We had some other wins around alleviating restrictions in time for Christmas so we could have those big Christmas events, weddings, dancing, allowing kids to continue to get their L plates, vertical drinking. Who would have thought we would have to come up with the phrase 'vertical drinking'? But there we are. We were able to do that, fantastic.

Ms O'Connor - So often it ends up being horizontal, doesn't it, really?

Ms OGILVIE - Horizontal drinking, I did try it during the pandemic, it was tricky and it was a bit messy. It is quite messy. Maybe a big, bendy straw makes it happen. We are all up for vertical drinking and horizontal drinking, I think we can agree on that.

The overseas traveller issue, though, is not resolved. It has gone a little bit quiet. We do know that there are many thousands of Tasmanians who are still stuck overseas, particularly those who went over to work in places. Their contracts have come to an end or they just need to come home, or have had to travel to look after family members who are still stuck. This is my point about learning to live with the COVID-19 virus. We have to learn to live with it in

the way that we have learnt to live with tuberculosis. It is something that becomes endemic, but we have ways of managing that. That is perhaps the next step out of the immediate crisis that we have faced.

I love to get a road fixed and I am very grateful to the Liberal Government for listening to me about Davey Street. Just today I had some further correspondence on this issue. I very sadly want to report that the transport council that wrote to me said that they had had a terrible story relayed to them of a young woman literally trying to walk across Davey Street with her baby, and tripped over one of the ruts, fell down and ended up in Emergency with the baby. I have stumbled over those ruts trying to get across the road. Kudos to the Government for taking on those roads; thank you very much. Let us get that done. It is such a main arterial and important road for all of us.

Health and education are a core part of what we need to keep the glue of our communities together. I attended the women's protest out the front, which was indeed a marvellous day. I held up my sign, as I have been doing for the past - I think we are up to six or seven years now - in particular about online behaviour and harassment. I speak in this House regularly on this issue, particularly coming at it from different perspectives. But I do think we can do much better. I note - this is the update that I would like to give - that the Commonwealth parliament has now prepared an online safety bill, which will tackle some of the challenges and issues around this, particularly when you have anonymous pages of Twitterers - twits, as I like to call them - and how we can establish, level and land a complaint system for cyber abuse material targeted at Australian adults.

I think to date we have been - quite rightly - giving a lot thought to prioritising children. Now we know that everything in cyberland touches all of us and we all have an obligation to do the best we can to stand up for manners, decency, good behaviour and not saying anything online that you would not say to someone's face. By all means, say it and have the debate. I do not think any of us are shrinking violets in this place, but certainly anonymity online breeds a certain looseness of language that perhaps we need to take more care about.

I am interested in that bill; hopefully, we will be able to look at something similar here. I would like our magistrates to have the capacity to impose immediate take-down orders. I have been chatting with the Tasmania Police union around what we can do to protect their members, particularly around some sensible options such as quick fines, like a parking fine, things like that, to get some community standards and mores in place without being too heavy-handed about how we deal with these things.

I am also very excited that the Attorney-General has today tabled the advance care directives bill. I have been on that journey for six or seven years, from originally proposing that we do this through the parliamentary inquiry on palliative care, a recommendation of which was advance care directives; the review from the Tasmania Law Reform Institute and Guardianship Act; and now the marvellous work delivered today by the Attorney-General, which is a fully formed and framed bill for advance care directives. This matters because it puts into the hands of people some power and choice and the ability to say, 'I have something that is meaningful, that is legal and that is robust around the decisions I would like to make as I progress through older age and towards the end.'. I am very pleased about that.

I argue also, and I have a bill on the agenda myself, that we need to implement a legislative framework and basis for consent to medical treatment. At the moment that is dealt

with under common law and we ought to be also dealing with that in the legislative sense. I hope we get to that soon.

Time expired.

[4.23 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the Premier, Peter Gutwein, on his historic address and his leadership of Tasmania through this pandemic and into recovery.

I start my contribution, as the Premier did, by acknowledging the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the original owners and the continuing custodians of this land, and I pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Our Government is strongly focused on achieving better outcomes for Tasmanian Aboriginal people by prioritising our commitments under the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and finalising our reviews into the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975 and the model for returning land. Last year our Government signed the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, an historic agreement that ensures equal participation and shared decision-making by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on broad and measurable targets across education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' languages.

To support this, the 2020-21 Tasmanian Budget included funding of \$1.2 million across the forward Estimates as part of our commitment to the Closing the Gap Refresh initiative. The funding is our contribution to a national funding pool that will be reinvested in Tasmania to build the capacity of Aboriginal community organisations to deliver services that result in better life outcomes for our Aboriginal people.

We are now working with Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and service providers on Tasmania's implementation plan to be presented at joint council later this year. As part of this process, a series of themed roundtables were held in Hobart and Launceston earlier this year which we co-hosted with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) as the Tasmanian representative on the coalition of peak groups, where participants discussed how the agreement's national targets and four priority reform areas might be realised in Tasmania.

I thank representatives from Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal community organisations from across Tasmania who participated over four days in different locations on subject matter that was very hard for them to hear in particular in many regards. I appreciate the way they shared their views and their sorrow at the life outcomes represented in the statistics. Although they sometimes had differing views on what needed to be done, they stayed in the room together and worked with us through those four days. I look forward to working with them and the TAC on the next steps in the process of turning the feedback from the roundtables into our Closing the Gap implementation plan for Tasmania.

This Government recognises that connection to country and land and sea is a fundamental pillar of Aboriginal identity. That is why we want to see more land returned to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and reviewing the model for returning land is an important part of this process. The review, which aims to identify barriers to returning land and to explore options to improve the land return process, is currently underway and work to finalise the Government's

approach is progressing. It is clear that the current process to return land has not worked well for all Tasmanian Aboriginal people, as highlighted by the feedback from the 2019 public consultation process.

I have had many conversations with Aboriginal people across the state who have an active ongoing interest in owning and managing specific areas of land but feel they cannot access land through the current model. What has also become clear is that the Aboriginal Land Act in its current form does not provide a clear process for proposing or assessing or even returning new parcels of land as Aboriginal land. It is clear that a new approach is necessary if land handbacks are to play a constructive part of our reconciliation with Aboriginal Tasmanians.

As part of the review process we are also considering how best to build economic and job opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal people through joint land management arrangements. The Government intended to hold a second consultation process last year but the pandemic unfortunately has resulted in delays. We now plan to hold a second round of consultations in the first half of this year.

While this is happening, as the Premier indicated, we will continue to progress our conversations with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities on areas of land of particular interest and significance to them. These discussions are helping to inform our review of the model. Development of a framework that is accepted and acceptable to Aboriginal communities and government may take some time to deliver, but it is important that we get it right.

The Tasmanian Government is also committed to protecting Tasmania's remarkable 40 000 years of Aboriginal heritage, which is why we are reviewing the Aboriginal Heritage Act. In 2017 this Government amended the Aboriginal Relics Act 1975 to address some of the most outdated, problematic and offensive parts of that act and establish the independent statutory Aboriginal Heritage Council we have today. We also wanted to ensure that the amendments to the act and the act itself were effective, which is why we included the requirement to review the act. That review is now nearing completion and a report detailing the outcomes will be tabled in both Houses of parliament in coming weeks.

In my Housing portfolio, the Tasmanian Government is investing more in essential services that Tasmanians need as we deliver our plan to secure Tasmania's future. Nearly 12 months on from the day we implemented the toughest border restrictions in the country to keep Tasmanians safe, our economy is rebounding and we are getting on with securing Tasmania's future. This Government is rolling out the most comprehensive affordable housing strategy this state has ever seen but we know we need to do more to meet continuing unprecedented demand across the entire housing market. That is why we have committed to develop a comprehensive whole-of-housing policy framework that addresses the full range of housing market issues across the public and private sectors to drive solutions in line with PESRAC's recommendations. With the Premier's Address we have committed to action across the broader housing market right away.

As we recover from the impacts of the pandemic, it is reassuring to see that our building industry is booming - we are now seeing record numbers of development approvals across our state. It is important we keep this pipeline full and support our building industry as it meets the challenge of building more homes for Tasmanians who need them.

Currently around 5000 hectares of privately owned vacant residential zoned land across Tasmania could deliver around 60 000 lots for residential development right across the state but for various reasons are not being used.

That is why we are taking immediate action to remove barriers and costs to activate this land and put it to work housing Tasmanians with a \$10 million Headworks Holiday for new residential subdivisions. This includes up to \$5000 per residential lot for power and up to \$5000 per residential lot delivered for water and sewerage infrastructure to activate up to 1000 additional home building sites.

We are also providing a no permit-required pathway for landowners to construct ancillary dwellings such as granny flats or self-contained studios on their existing residential properties. Ancillary dwellings are extra self-contained living quarters with a floor area of less than 60 square metres that are additional to the primary home on a block. Ancillary dwellings allow homeowners to meet changing family needs, add value to the family home and add a new class of accommodation to the housing market.

In coming weeks we will release a brochure explaining just how easy it is to build an ancillary dwelling and the benefits it can offer homeowners and people looking for different housing options in the market. To encourage more people to consider building ancillary dwellings and to meet demand in the market, the Government will also provide a \$10 000 incentive for the first 250 landowners to construct a new ancillary dwelling and commit to making it available for long-term rental for at least two years.

Homeshare can turn the dream of home ownership into reality for eligible Tasmanians. The scheme opens the door to home ownership for those who have an income sufficient to make that step but who need help to get into the market in the first place.

Since the commencement of our Affordable Housing Strategy, 450 low income Tasmanian households have realised their dream of owning their own home through the help of Homeshare and the Streets Ahead program.

As part of the Government's construction blitz last year, we announced broader eligibility requirements for HomeShare, with a \$9.3 million commitment to expand the program to a broader market. The applications have flooded in.

The second half of 2020 saw almost three times more applications for Homeshare compared to the same period the year before and more applications than in the whole 2019-20 financial year.

We want to make this opportunity available to more Tasmanians so the funding will be increased by another \$10 million and the program will be advertised widely during the course of this year so that at least another 100 Tasmanian households can realise the dream of home ownership. These new measures will build on our record \$300 million investment in new housing and homelessness initiatives, and they are an important part of our clear plan to secure Tasmania's future.

In the Planning portfolio, the coming year will be one of action and delivery. I am pleased to say that the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is no longer something that is coming but something that is up and running in Tasmania.

Burnie was the first council to formally adopt the Tasmanian Planning Scheme last July. Devonport followed in December and we are about to welcome both Brighton and Meander Valley into the fold with the remaining councils around the state due to come online over the course of the year.

While each council is at a different state of transition to the new statewide scheme, the new planning rules they are adopting have already been consulted and approved by the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission. On 22 February 2021, following a recommendation from the commission, I issued Interim Planning Directive 4 (IDP4), which brings forward key parts of the State Planning Provisions (SPPs), including a range of exemptions, application requirements, general provisions and zone provisions to have immediate effect across all planning schemes in the state.

Consistency in these core elements of the planning system is fundamental to our planning reform agenda and it makes no sense to have different rules in different council areas when the new rules have been approved and are already operational in some areas. The interim planning directive does not, as some have suggested, change or replace the process of adopting the Tasmanian Planning Scheme in each council area. It simply gives immediate effect to a set of standard planning rules that have already been consulted and approved. As our Tasmanian Planning Scheme becomes operational across the state, we are beginning to shift our focus to other elements of our Land Use Planning System.

Consistent with the recommendations of the PESRAC report, we have already commenced the groundwork for a comprehensive review of our regional land use strategies and for the development of the first set of Tasmanian Planning policies. The Government has allocated \$500 000 in the Budget over the next two years to support the review of the regional land use strategies.

We are also working to ensure that the Tasmanian planning system is playing its role in responding to the housing challenge. The no permit-required process for building ancillary dwellings has already been mentioned. We are also finalising a new apartment code which will establish clear pathways for the approval of medium density apartment developments in our inner urban areas to help meet growing demand for inner urban apartment living.

Together with standard planning rules and fewer permit requirements under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, these initiatives will enable a simpler and more flexible approach to residential development in Tasmania, providing greater housing choice and affordability options.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to addressing the impacts of single use and unnecessary plastics in our environment and to increasing resource recovery. As announced during the Premier's Address on Tuesday, this Government has set the goal to phase out the use of single use plastics from government and council facilities and events on public land across the state by 2023. We will be consulting with local government on the rollout of this initiative in coming months, and we will have more to say on this in due course. This is on top of our commitment to meeting the national target of phasing out problematic and unnecessary plastics entirely by 2025.

Also in alignment with PESRAC, many of the initiatives we have underway already will feed directly into a sustainability strategy for the state. The Government is introducing a

container refund scheme and a waste levy to help achieve this goal and to bolster resource recovery across several waste streams. We are proud to be introducing the container refund scheme, which is due to rollout next year to support our commitment to having the lowest litter rate in the country by 2023 and to provide cleaner and more valuable streams of recyclables for reprocessing and value-adding.

Learning from the experiences of other states and territories, we have the opportunity to put together the best possible version of the scheme for Tasmania. We want a scheme that maximises the number of containers returned, provides access to the scheme in all corners of our state and recycles all containers collected on the island wherever possible. That is why earlier this year I was pleased to announce we have chosen a split responsibility governance model for our container refund scheme. This model will help to bring together the beverage industry, the waste and recycling sectors and the community more broadly to ensure the best outcomes from this scheme for Tasmania. My department is currently drafting legislation for this scheme which will be released for public consultation later this year.

We have also committed to the introduction of a statewide waste levy in 2021 to encourage the diversion of waste from landfill and drive investment in the circular economy in Tasmania. The last few years has delivered a perfect storm when it comes to waste and resource recovery. Changes in overseas markets for recyclables, the national policy response to ban exports of various recyclable materials and our own waste action plan have come together to bring sharp focus to this policy area. A waste levy in Tasmania will now mean investment in our recycling and resource recovery sector. It will mean an opportunity for new and innovative ideas, and it will mean that materials that previously would have been buried in the ground will be reused and recycled and turned into valuable products and job opportunities for Tasmanians.

The greater demand for recycling and organics processing will inevitably call for new infrastructure and an expanded labour force, creating new businesses and jobs in the circular economy at a time when we most need them. This year, through a joint funding between the Australian Government and the Tasmanian Government and plastics recycling companies, our Recycling Modernisation Fund (RMF) will provide over \$16 million investment in the Tasmanian circular economy. The first round of projects funded under this program will be announced in coming weeks. The November Budget also flagged a further \$10 million we will be investing in strategic infrastructure to support the circular economy. I look forward to keeping this House informed as we continue to invest in these exciting opportunities for Tasmania and Tasmanians.

Tasmania's natural areas, our parks and reserves, are world renowned. Our Government is committed to ensuring that these special places are protected and presented in ways that allow people of all backgrounds and abilities to enjoy and appreciate them and the natural and cultural values they contain. Our \$80 million investment in contemporary visitor facilities in our national parks and reserves will also help to ensure that we attract locals and tourists back to Tasmania's natural areas as our borders reopen, contributing to the recovery of our visitor economy.

Cradle Mountain is one of Tasmania's iconic visitor destinations and the gateway to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The Government has committed \$26.8 million towards the recently completed and spectacular Cradle Mountain visitor centre and the soon-to-be completed Dove Lake viewing shelter, generating employment and business in the region and a better experience for our visitors. The Government has also committed \$30 million and

secured a further \$30 million from the Australian Government for the cableway project, providing a world-class visitor experience as well as a low-impact transit system to help futureproof this iconic and much-loved destination for the benefit of generations to come. I look forward to further advancements with that project during this year.

Freycinet National Park has been one of the fastest growing and most popular tourism destinations in Tasmania. We are taking the responsible approach of improving infrastructure to meet the existing demands, but also, and more importantly, taking steps to ensure that the benefits of tourism do not compromise the natural cultural and social values of the Freycinet Peninsula. I recently had the pleasure of opening a new second lookout at Wineglass Bay in the Freycinet National Park. This facility will reduce congestion at peak times at the popular destination. The state Government has also provided funding of \$8.4 million alongside a commitment of \$7.2 million from the Australian Government to enable the Parks and Wildlife Service to execute multiple aspects of the Freycinet Peninsula master plan. A critical initiative of this plan is the new visitor gateway which will alleviate traffic congestion in Coles Bay and at the Wineglass Bay trail head car park. Additionally, upgrades to the Freycinet National Park sewage treatment plant and a pipeline from the Wineglass Bay trail head to the treatment plant will address immediate wastewater issues over a one- to five-year time frame.

The Government's \$20 million allocation to the next iconic walk project remains a key commitment and one that will help us rebuild our visitor economy on the back of Tasmania's unique brand and growing recognition as a nature-based ecotourism destination. The Ben Lomond public shelter replacement project will deliver a Parks and Wildlife Service day shelter and toilet facilities prior to the 2022 snow season. We continue to deliver better boating facilities at busy sites on the state's east coast. The Pirates Bay and Coles Bay sites are complete and work is progressing on the remaining two sites at St Helens and Swansea.

Work is continuing on the replacement of tracks in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area damaged by fires in the 2018-19 fire season, investing \$8.3 million into those assets. We have addressed recommendations of the 2019 Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council review into recent bushfires in the state by establishing teams of helicopter winch-capable staff as a means of increasing the capability of attacking bushfires hard and fast in remote areas. Every dollar of these investments translates into employment, building contracts, the purchase of goods and materials and services, and ultimately benefits the economies of regional Tasmania. Our procurement policies actively support local businesses, meaning that work stays in Tasmania and helps to support the growth of local products and services.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in Children and Youth Services, as announced by the Premier, we are strengthening our protections for young people who come into custody by introducing body-scanning technology into the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and reception prisons. The new scanners are able to detect objects on or inside a person's body and clothing without the need to physically remove clothing or make physical contact with the person being searched. The Commissioner for Children and Young People has welcomed the Government's announcement as an important step in upholding children's rights and avoiding potential traumatisation caused by personal searches. This new technology will complement our substantial \$7.3 million infrastructure redesign and upgrade of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. The physical works are well underway, as are changes to the model of care and practice

frameworks and culture of operation of Ashley Youth Detention Centre as part of the statewide therapeutic youth justice system, and that reform process continues.

Our Government is also committed to a long-term redesign of the child safety system. Our Strong Families, Safe Kids child safety redesign project was initiated in 2016 and built on a clear recognition that a whole-of-government service system and a community approach were required to achieve the necessary changes. It also recognised that to secure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, we must do all we can to provide better and earlier support to families. The Government allocated significant resources to the implementation of our redesign, totalling more than \$51 million over the life of the project today.

Between July 2016 and June 2020 Strong Families, Safe Kids successfully delivered a range of actions associated with the project, including the advice and referral line, intensive family engagement services and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework. We also invested significantly in additional staffing resources to help restructure the Child Safety Service in line with our reforms, including clinical practice consultants and educators, Aboriginal liaison officers, staff health and wellbeing officers, child safety officers and many more.

I am pleased to advise that following a positive evaluation by the University of Tasmania and recommendations for ongoing progress, we are now ready to continue the next steps of our redesign. The Strong Families, Safe Kids Next Steps Action Plan 2021-23 has been developed and contains 34 new actions against five priority areas. The UTAS evaluation summary, the progress report and our Next Steps Action Plan will be released shortly. We remain committed to progressing our long-term redesign agenda and supporting improved outcomes for Tasmanian children, young people and their families.

Informal kinship carers play a crucial role in the lives of many Tasmanian children who are unable to live with their parents. As part of our response to the pandemic, the Government initiated the support package to help our most vulnerable children and households, including one-off funding to assist informal kinship carers and commissioning of a comprehensive review of the supports currently in place and needed to identify improvements. This week we released the results of the review and announced \$500 000 to commence implementation of key recommendations immediately, including a support and liaison officer in the north-west who will act as a conduit for informal kinship carers to access supports and services; access training opportunities; an information portal and more concessions for informal kinship carers; increased brokerage funds for set-up and other costs to enable those households to care for children; and access to free community respite for families who need that form of support. Longer term initiatives outlined in the review report will be considered through the 2021-22 state Budget process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Tasmanian Government has a special responsibility for young people in out-of-home care who have exceptional needs. We take this responsibility very seriously. We made a commitment to these young people and to the community that we would scope options for an on-country therapeutic residential placement program for those young people here in Tasmania. We made this commitment in early 2020, following the recommendation of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Out-of-Home Care Monitoring report and we reaffirmed our commitment following the investigative review into the Many Colors, One Direction program in the Northern Territory.

We appointed an expert panel in January to consider the findings of the review and to analyse various programs and services operating in other jurisdictions. The panel will provide advice to government on Tasmania-based options by the end of June this year. In readiness to respond to the panel's recommendations, the Government has now set aside \$500 000 of seed funding to progress the development of a Tasmanian-based program this year. We are dedicated to ensuring that young people with exceptional needs have access to services they need, services that can help short-circuit their current life trajectory, provide an opportunity to heal and to re-engage with their community and the possibility of a positive and productive future.

PESRAC also acknowledged that the aged care and disability sectors are among our fastest growing industries in Tasmania. In just one more decade we are forecast to go from one in five Tasmanians being over the age of 65 to one in four. We are ageing faster than any other state in the nation and we need to ensure we are well equipped to care for our elders.

It is time to value older Tasmanians as productive members of our workforce, economy and our community. We must enable them through increased digital literacy, social connection, interaction and participation. Interaction between the generations must be encouraged. I welcome the Premier's announcement of an increase of 600 training places in aged care and disability services via a certificate III in individual support to build our capacity to care for our elders, not just those in aged care but also those living at home, and in keeping with the aims and objectives of our Elder Abuse Prevention Strategy, respect and protect older Tasmanians.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will guide our response to elder abuse, and while aged care institutions are predominantly a Commonwealth matter, we will give the outcomes of the royal commission our highest priority.

In Tasmania we have much to be grateful for, but the freedoms and the recovery we are currently enjoying come off the back of hard work, sacrifice and cooperation over a very difficult year. I am proud to be part of a government that has earned the trust and respect of its community at this most vulnerable time. I pay tribute to every member of that community who put their lives, livelihoods and freedoms on hold to help confront this threat to the lives and wellbeing of their fellow Tasmanians.

As the Premier and PESRAC have reminded us this week, our social and economic recovery will require similar resolve. I am proud to be part of a government that is ready for that challenge, as we have shown with the plan we have laid out in this Premier's Address.

[4.52 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to respond to the Premier's Address for 2021. Reflecting on the year past, I reiterate my condolences to the families and friends of the 13 Tasmanians who lost their lives to COVID-19. I also extend my sympathy to those Tasmanians who have lost family and friends who live on the mainland or overseas, to those people in our community who have been unable to see their relatives and friends living overseas, and the families who have loved ones living overseas waiting to come home. It certainly has been a long haul and we have been generally blessed, opposed to many other places around the world.

To our frontline workers, thank you for your compassion, care and diligence in putting yourselves in the path of danger to ensure our community is safe. Tasmania Police has

undertaken a massive commitment. Tasmania Police officers stepped up and took on more responsibilities during isolation and they continue to be filling the gaps in government services created by our COVID response. Police officers around the state and those in the State Controller's Office played a pivotal role in Tasmania's response to COVID-19.

At the last election, Labor committed to a fully-funded relief policy to backfill rural and remote country stations. We know these police officers will stay on shift to attend to the needs of their community even after working long shifts. There is currently limited relief for these police officers. Labor has pledged to ensure country police stations and the communities they protect get the resources and support they deserve.

The latest Tasmania Police figures indicate that crime is rising above pre-COVID levels. The 'tough on crime' mantra from this Government is a public relations campaign which Tasmania Police are picking up the pieces from on a daily basis. Our jails are at capacity. Our recidivism is over 50 per cent. That means that when a person has been released from prison there is a 50 per cent likelihood that they will commit another jailable offence. Tackling recidivism and generational recidivism through therapeutic rehabilitation should have been a priority for the Government over the last seven years. How can the Government claim that they are tough on crime?

That said, Tasmania Police clearance rates are exceptional. Customer satisfaction surveys indicate that Tasmania Police is held in very high regard by the general public. Our satisfaction ratings are some of the highest in the country. Our police are under-resourced and overworked and finally, due to a strong advocacy from groups such as the Police Association of Tasmania, mental health support and cultural change is being pursued.

Public order incidents have risen by 18 per cent from the same time last year. Public place assaults are now above the three-year average. There has been an increase of 25 per cent in Glenorchy, 40 per cent in Bridgewater, and 66 per cent in St Helens. Offences against police have risen by 12 per cent, adding to the strain on an already over-utilised workforce.

Family violence is, unfortunately, on the rise with an increase of 3 per cent. Police are most often the first responders in domestic violence cases and we must address these issues at a societal level. Many of our policies to protect women and children in family violence occurrences are reactive, cleaning up the devastation caused to families after the fact. We must be investing into greater preventative measures.

We need to fix the problems at the heart of family violence and provide people with the education, mental health support and tools to overcome it. We need better education, better opportunities, an end to inequality and a system set up to provide real mental health support to the most vulnerable members of society. The Premier's Address reiterated an investment in mental health and I suggest that the reform is well and truly overdue.

Another one of the Premier's announcements I support is the Government's move to make sanitary items free for girls in government schools from term 3 this year, but I consider that all students should be included. I am not sure why the Catholic school students are not included in this announcement. The Premier's announcement was apparently based on affordability and access to education. Up to 60 per cent of students attending Catholic schools are from low

socioeconomic backgrounds. Up to 18 000 Tasmanian students attend Catholic schools across our state and I ask the Premier to extend the policy to be inclusive of all students in need.

There is also little in the Premier's Address that will tackle the real problems we are about to witness with the winding up of the JobKeeper and JobSeeker programs. We really need to start addressing poverty. Before the pandemic, one in four Tasmanians were living in poverty. When people have strong economic security and the dignity of a good job, we can build a strong community and society. It also helps to create a safer community. There is a clear link between unemployment, poverty and crime. When more people are in work and have economic security we see a decrease in crime rates.

The community of the Derwent Valley has been asking for permanent police presence for the last seven years and there is no shift in the Government to listen to this request. On 10 January 2018, former member for Lyons and minister for police, fire and emergency management, Rene Hidding, stated that a re-elected majority Hodgman government would provide a permanent police presence in New Norfolk. This was his promise to the community. He said, 'A new station is needed to provide a high-level permanent police presence. If we are re-elected we will deliver it'. This promise to the people of the Derwent Valley was broken.

On 3 June 2019, after the resignation of Mr Hidding, I asked the new Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Michael Ferguson, if he would honour his Government's undertaking to provide a permanent police presence in New Norfolk? Mr Ferguson answered:

We intend to honour all of our commitments. We do not want a police officer stuck behind a desk in the middle of the night to tick the box 'there is a police presence'. The way to do this is to ensure the resource is appropriately utilised and provide a cover to the community. The police station upgrade should not be seen as wasteful of police time keeping it open, for example, in the midnight hours when nobody wants to visit there.

The Commissioner for Police then reaffirmed the minister's directive and stated:

Minister, you have covered it very well. We have discussed this issue before as to whether it should be a 24-hour station. Bridgewater is the 24-hour station that covers New Norfolk. We discussed varying a time at New Norfolk. There was the rumour going around that police weren't there when the pub closed, but we certainly varied their knock off times for various police officers.

He then continued:

It is covered from a 24-hour station at Bridgewater so we are looking at how to provide the best coverage with the new station but it won't be a 24-hour - as the minister said - police station because that would be a waste of resources. We resource New Norfolk in relation to where police are needed and if they are needed from Bridgewater then we will send them from Bridgewater and as part of our capability review we are looking at what the appropriate number is for that area.

The Liberal Government has completely missed the point of a permanent police presence. It is about community policing. It is having police actively involved in community activities, living in a community, knowing the community, being able to respond to growing crime activities. Keep in mind also that Labor promised a permanent police presence for the people of the Derwent Valley, so too did the Liberal Party and they have not honoured that promise.

I decided to give minister Shelton the benefit of the doubt when he took over the police portfolio from minister Ferguson. On 30 June 2020 I wrote to Mr Shelton asking if a permanent police presence would be provided for the Derwent Valley in keeping with the Liberal Government's election promise. I received a response from minister Shelton that stated that the Liberal Government will not be providing a permanent police presence for the residents of the Derwent Valley.

The people of the Valley overwhelmingly have responded that they do not feel safe and crime in their community is overwhelming. It is hard to differentiate between the increases in crime because the Derwent Valley's incident reporting is lumped in with Bridgewater so it is hard to differentiate which crimes are in which areas, but that is the feedback that is coming back from the people of the Derwent Valley.

The people of Bridgewater are also reporting an increase in crime and this is reflected in the statistics with an increase of 40 per cent in public-place assaults. Like I said, it is hard for us to know whether they come from the Derwent Valley or from Bridgewater but there is a 40 per cent increase in public-place assaults from January last year to January this year.

Homelessness is a major issue and the quality of builds by providers is an issue I will continue monitoring. The Government has an obligation to ensure that the providers they contract to build social housing are monitored to be built to standard, built to last. After receiving a large number of complaints from residents living in newly-built properties in the electorate I serve, I have decided to further investigate the complaints and over four days' door knocking I was invited into 87 of the newly-built homes and witnessed for myself some of the faults that were reported.

To be clear, out of 87 of the properties I sampled, 78 per cent recorded faults. I have never pretended to be a builder or an engineer; I simply reported on the obvious faults that were reported to me. Eleven per cent also report no faults at all and were very happy with their properties. Many of the faults have subsequently been amended and I commend the housing provider for undertaking a process to fix many of the problems raised.

What I would like to reaffirm is that the quality of social housing is the responsibility of the minister and we know there are record high waiting lists for people needing to enter social housing. An estimate 3500 families are waiting to be housed. The Liberals promised to reduce wait lists and we know the wait lists are up 65 per cent since 2014. It is a policy decision of the Government over the last seven years to be inactive. This is the responsibility of the Government. People are living in buses, sheds, in backyards, tents, sleeping on couches and cramming into relatives' or friends' houses, waiting for a roof over their heads. The private rental market is very tight, and out of reach and unaffordable for many people.

I sat with my colleague, Alison Standen and also Ms O'Connor, on the Housing Affordability select committee, and also Mr Tucker. Despite this committee have tri-partite support and an incredible amount of information being provided by experts and stakeholder

groups from across the country, the Government has ignored the 61 recommendations the Housing Affordability select committee came up with. This Government is incapable of rolling out social housing, disability housing and major infrastructure projects. The rolling-out of infrastructure is, it seems, the Achilles heel of this Government.

At this time last year, Labor was continuing to advocate for the people of Westbury and the Meander Valley who were overwhelmingly against the building of a maximum security prison next door to the town of beautiful Westbury. The community was treated with absolute disdain and disrespect by the Government. What this Government did not count on was the brilliant, dedicated and harmonious community of Westbury that stood together to ensure a maximum security prison would not be built next door to their township. We supported the community and continuously advocated for them. Doorknocking suggested to us, from the first day after the announcement, that 80 per cent of residents were against the concept.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were wasted by the Government on the use of consultants on a major project which did not even have a feasibility study explaining any benefit to the community, socially or economically. Labor has always supported the building of major infrastructure in the north, and we call for transparency around the original expressions of interest process, determining the location of the original potential sites. There certainly was not community consultation.

In June 2020, the Government announced that it had abandoned the building of the original maximum security prison on this site. The minister, Ms Archer, conceded that the Government had finally heard the community's concerns some eight months later, and decided to relocate the proposed site to Brushy Rivulet on Birralelee Rd, 5.2 kilometres from the Westbury town centre. The new proposed site is problematic on many levels and Labor has actively sought more information on the Government's plan.

We have written to the Minister for Corrections seeking a briefing on the new site and we would like to know why the proposed new site time line was removed from the Department of Justice website. According to a media release from minister Archer, the Department of Justice intends to submit a joint particular purpose zone development application to the Meander Valley Council later this year. This is a far cry from the last time line on the Department of Justice website which stated:

July 2020. The Tasmanian Government finalises due diligence on crown land site at Brushy Rivulet on Birralelee Rd.

August 2020. The government begins development of the master plan and particular planning zone assessment including required consultation.

December 2020. Planning applications submitted.

March 2021. Design and tendering begins.

Early 2022. Construction work begins on stage 1.

2025. Opening of Tasmania's Northern Regional Prison, Stage 1.

It certainly is not running to schedule. In fact, the due diligence is barely under way. We know that drilling began in November, when the minister for Police, Mark Shelton, stated publicly that the drilling needed to be delayed, due to protesters. This statement backfired spectacularly that day, when the local police officer overseeing the protesters, observed that the people who attended had stood aside when the drilling team entered the site and did not obstruct the exploratory works at all.

It is my understanding that no further on-site exploration has occurred since mid-November, some four months ago. I am also advised that what the drilling found is dolomite: hills of dolomite, hectares of dolomite. The site is not flat. In truth, to turn the federal nature reserve into a flat site to build a maximum security prison, hectares of dolomite will need to be flattened. It is also my understanding that a process such as this will require the use of dynamite explosions at a significant expense to the project. The dynamiting of hills of dolomite may also be problematic to the environmental concerns raised by naturalist ecologist, Sarah Lloyd OAM, who has studied the Brushy Rivulet site for over a decade. Wedge-tailed eagles, masked owls and other endangered species are documented to exist either on the dolomite hills or very close to them. We are interested to understand the veracity of the claims and to understand the state Government's progress circumnavigating federal laws in relation to this. It should be very interesting.

Of note is the hefty expense associated with dynamiting dolomite; then to lay vital infrastructure with this project would require. We have no indication what the actual plan of the second proposed maximum security prison would even look like, there is not even an artistic impression. We do know that the new proposed site has no water and sewerage, no electricity, no gas and no digital infrastructure within kilometres of the site. We know that the Government stated that the site would cost the same as the prison site, \$270 million, that is from the original site. Now, that site was located on flat ground, adjacent to an industrial site with water and sewerage, power, gas and digital capacity next door. There was no community consensus. The proposed site is also located in the middle of a bushfire-prone area. How much money is this second proposed prison going to cost the people of Tasmania?

Labor has a very good track record of delivering infrastructure. Labor has a plan to create 35 000 jobs across the entire economy, working with business, making government spending work for Tasmania, training the workforce of the future, building the infrastructure for Tasmania's future. Labor is focused on getting the basic right to build the foundation for a better, fairer and more prosperous state. Only Labor can be trusted to put people first.

The PESRAC Report findings in the state of the state response did very little to address the current plight of the Tasmanian theatre industry. It has been incredibly underrepresented. Supporting the theatre industry to return to full capacity has been a priority of every other state except Tasmania. Every other state has a plan. Other states funded their theatre industries to build a plan to rebuild to full capacity. In June 2020, the performing arts connections, PAC Australia, the national peak organisation representing performing arts organisations across the country, developed a guide for performing arts venues to assist build a road to recovery during COVID-19 and post recovery. The performing arts venue guidelines aim to provide national consistency and a common framework, recognising that there may be different approaches and timelines across states and territories to easing restrictions and implementing social distancing measures.

The need for a set of national guidelines acknowledges that venues operate and engage with stakeholders at local, state and national levels, but the expectation is that these guidelines will be adapted by local and state authorities to accommodate their specific legislative requirements. All states and territories' theatre industries, except Tasmania, began the work of rebuilding their performing arts venues in conjunction with their governments. The PAC document is now nine months old. The aim is to build each state back up to 100 per cent audience capacity, whilst adhering to COVID-19 safety practices and health advice.

Queensland venues began reopening in July 2020. The venue pilot program invested nearly \$200 000 in funding for six venues to reopen for local Queensland artists and audiences. Queensland theatre stated:

Our approved COVID-19 safe plan aligns with strict Queensland Health guidelines. Our theatre is approved to operate at 100 per cent capacity, with limits in other high traffic areas, like our foyers, reduced to comply with physical distancing measures.

On 5 March 2021, the Sydney Theatre Company announced their return to 100 per cent audience capacity. I quote:

We are delighted to announce that NSW Health has granted Sydney Theatre Company an exemption to the current Public Health Order, allowing us to increase audience capacities to 100% for performances at Roslyn Packer Theatre, Wharf 1 Theatre and Wharf 2 Theatre.

We would like to thank the Minister for Health Brad Hazzard and the NSW Department of Health, who we have worked closely with to get to this point. We are thrilled to be the first live performance venue in the state to be performing to full houses again, almost exactly one year after the industry was shut down due to COVID-19.

This is what can happen when a minister works closely with a theatre industry and we are hoping that the meeting with the Director of Health and Tasmania theatre industry representatives, I believe tomorrow, will begin the process of forming a plan to opening our theatres for full capacity.

We have been asking for a plan to be developed for many months now and the industry has largely been ignored so I really hope we get some traction here.

Digital impacts are also not being addressed properly through the creative industries through losing of the content quotas as well. Organisations such as Blue Rocket have been really affected by that. There could be a lot more that we can be doing to assist the cultural and creative industries in this very difficult time.

The PESRAC Report paid homage to the amazing work undertaken by our fabulous online access centres, Mr Rockliff, which had been almost decimated by the Government over the years. The Government has not supported online access centres over the last seven years; in fact, they have placed obstacles in the way of those centres. It is Labor who has stood up for the 18 online access centres. Online access centres continue to provide services to over 300 000 Tasmanians. It is an absolute credit to the professionalism and community-based

online access and coordinators and volunteers across Tasmania, that these centres have continued to thrive under such difficult conditions.

The future of Tasmania's network of 18 online access centres is due to run out at the end of the 2021-22 financial year. How much funding will be provided to the online access centres to meet the digital inclusion recommendation of the Premier's economic and social recovery program? I would like to have an understanding of what the plan is? Is the Government going to continue running the OAC network on the smell of an oily rag?

I will read out the online access centres, because they provide so much of a contribution to their community: Bagdad Online Access Centre; Beaconsfield Online Access Centre; Bruny Island Online Access Centre; Deloraine Online Access Centre - they have a contribution of 145 volunteer hours per week from their community. They also produce a publication which has a reach of 120 000 people; Derwent Valley Online Access Centre - their publication reaches 5000 people and this data we collected is about 12 to 18 months old so it probably would be more now and they have a contribution of volunteers which is 90 hours per week; Devonport Online Access Centre; Dover Online Access Centre; Exeter Online Access Centre - they have a publication that reaches out to over 600 Tasmanians and 52 volunteer hours provided to that community; Fingal Online Access Centre - their publication reaches 400 people and their community contributes 50 volunteer hours per week; Glenora Online Access Centre; Mole Creek Online Access Centre - their publication reaches 120 000 Tasmanians and they have a voluntary contribution of 30 hours per week; Ouse Online Access Centre - the online access centre produced the *Highland Digest*. It is a well-read publication; Richmond Online Access Centre - their publication reaches 12 000 people; Spring Bay Online Access Centre; St Helens Online Access Centre - their publication reaches about 54 000 people and 26 hours contributed by the community; Swansea Online Access Centre - their publication reaches about 14 000 people; and Wilmot Online Access Centre.

It is wonderful that they are being recognised in the PESRAC Report as being important to the fabric of our communities. I certainly look forward to learning more information about what that is going to look like as we will certainly keep supporting our online access centres.

It is the volunteer contribution of those online access centres that provide the grit of the work because the resourcing from the Government is quite scant. We are also seeing a reduction in volunteering per se statewide and that is having an impact on fire brigades and SES capabilities as well.

For too long volunteer firefighters have been treated poorly by this Government. We understand there has been stealth closure of volunteer brigades across the state, and that this is still underway. From conversations I have had with volunteers, the reason for this comes back to the fact that volunteers still do not have appropriate separate storage for their turnout gear, their equipment is rolled out slowly across the state in a haphazard fashion, and volunteer brigade members at the moment apparently are chipping in to buy their own bottles of water to keep them hydrated during firefighting activities and training. I think that is really lousy. There are no meaningful drives to recruit new volunteers. They might hand out flyers and so forth but there is nothing proactive in that. Tullah said their fire truck has just gone to Rosebery and it was claimed they did not have volunteers, but they do. It is really not the way to treat and encourage volunteers to be firefighters and we must do more to enhance that.

We also know the SES is dealing with the same kind of problems at the moment. It has had difficulties encouraging people to join, but we also know that training is a real issue. SES volunteers are not being trained to a schedule. There is usually a backlog of training; it is not much incentive for people who are giving up their free time to protect our communities and it has wound down significantly.

[5.21 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I acknowledge that this land on which we stand today belongs to the palawa people. It was land that was never ceded. It was stolen, often through violence, and involved murder, rape, kidnapping and other atrocities. As a party, the Greens are committed to truth-telling. Many of those stories have not been properly voiced and listened to. We are committed to justice, including through a treaty and the return of lands to the palawa people. We are committed to listening and learning the wisdom of palawa people who have so much knowledge about this beautiful island, lutruwitta. They have cared for it and lived in harmony here for tens of thousands of years, and we have so much to learn today.

The events of 2020 will not be forgotten in the minds of anybody who lived through them. A highly infectious killer virus romped across the globe. It sparked international and state border closures. It caused lockdowns and social movement restrictions. The north-west outbreak occurred, with the army having to intervene. Thirteen Tasmanians died and many others suffered. Workplaces and schools closed. Businesses collapsed and tens of thousands of Tasmanians lost their jobs. We saw the effective freezing of all cultural and community activity for most of last year. There was, and is, extreme housing insecurity. Australians were stranded overseas, as were international students who could not get to university. There was continuing and widespread anxiety amongst Tasmanians about the rapidity of change, the loss of life as we knew it and the unknown future that this pandemic would usher in.

I want to record the Greens' gratitude for all the doctors, nurses and hospital staff and the testing and contact tracing people across the state who played a huge role in keeping people safe and caring for the sick. The Greens understand that the backbone of our state's successful response has been a publicly funded health system led by the extraordinarily hardworking Dr Veitch. We must never forget that when the chips are down, people and governments everywhere rely on state-funded systems to do the heavy lifting.

Too many Tasmanians right now are suffering real financial hardship that has been made so much worse by the pandemic, but also by the crushing rental and housing crisis we are suffering in Tasmania. The Greens helped make real changes during the COVID pandemic in rental relief and we are absolutely committed to do everything we can in this space, which is why we have tabled a rent relief bill today.

Ms O'Connor - Hear, hear.

Dr WOODRUFF - Throughout the COVID-19 era, the planet has continued to heat, even when carbon emissions dipped briefly from the worldwide COVID shutdowns and planes were grounded. While we have been gripped in a COVID crisis, we are still in a fight for our lives as our planet heats and edges towards unsustainable levels. Throughout the pandemic the Premier took his riding instructions from the Public Health evidence and the experts. So far he

has failed to listen to the evidence of climate scientists and address the climate change emergency and the action that we need.

We know from the hard work of the now crowd-funded Climate Council that was once funded by the federal government until the Liberals cut the money, and from the hard work of those scientists compiling the Bureau of Meteorology data from the last year, that Australia has warmed far more than the global planetary average. We now are above 1.44 degrees Celsius since the records began - that is how much average temperatures have increased. I commend that report to all members; it is called 'Hitting Home: Compounding the Costs of Climate Change Impacts'.

The most shocking and arresting piece of information was that the average maximum temperature across the continent of Australia in 2019 was above 39 degrees for 33 days. That sounds like a large number but the fact is that those 33 days were more than all such days recorded over the previous 60 years. In other words, in just one year we have had a greater number of days above 39 degrees in Australia than we had for 60 years beforehand. That is really shocking in its indication of the rate of change and the heating of the planet.

During the Black Summer fires we crossed a tipping point for Australia's forests. In our typical fire seasons we would have maybe 2 per cent to 3 per cent of forest burnt in Australia but in 2020, 21 per cent of our forests went up in smoke. We have had a grim level of inaction from the federal Liberal government and so far the measured and gradual steps towards change are doing nothing to avoid catastrophe.

The children and adults who have rallied across the state for a safe climate and the XR protesters who put their bodies on the line know that only truly transformative action at this point will make a difference. Much greater dangers lie ahead if we do not act with the urgency that science demands. The science says we have to halve global emissions this decade and Tasmania has to step up. The Premier has to get out of his comfort zone. He has to stop pandering to the logging right of the party. He is happy to spruik Tasmania as a carbon-neutral travel destination but he will not take action to protect our forests.

Our state's carbon-neutral claim is smoke and mirrors. With the signing of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, the clear-felling of native forest plummeted and the regrowth of native forests and plantations since then has driven reductions in the Tasmanian net carbon emissions. The Liberals ripped up the TFA and have gone back to the bad old divisive days of forest destruction. We have protesters back in the forests putting their hearts and bodies on the line to protect these tremendous storehouses of carbon and biodiversity. We have to grow our carbon stores. We have to hold on to centuries of stored carbon in old forests. We have to end native forest logging and end the mad carbon-emitting, health-damaging practice of napalm-fuelled logging burns. We know it, the scientists know it and the 250 doctors who wrote to the Premier last year calling for an end to native forest logging to protect people's lives and health know it too.

The PESRAC report says it clearly. We cannot rest on our laurels - the state of smug contentment that the Liberals project on climate change is not the action our children need. PESRAC makes the point that underlying emissions from other activities, other sectors, continue to grow, particularly from industrial processes, manufacturing, and construction, and this must be dealt with.

A review was required by the Tasmanian Government into the State Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008 every four years. The last review was completed with the report published in October 2016. That report made a number of recommendations that are necessary, but extremely tepid. Nonetheless, there were recommendations that ought to have been acted on, but it was not for another two years until the Liberals put out a belated discussion paper into the community. Despite public consultations for that finishing in November 2018, there has been zero action on any amendments to the state climate act: zero action. So, when the Premier talks about action, his Government has been seven years in government and we have seen no concrete changes to the state climate act. It is woeful and completely out-of-date legislation.

Our gross carbon emissions are high by global standards. If we look at the per person emissions, they are off the tree. Peter Boyer has done the maths for us. If we were a country, only six other countries would beat Tasmania in our carbon emissions - and Australia would be at the top of the list of countries. We cannot wait for the state act review. The Greens have a safe climate bill. It is tabled now and we will bring this bill on for debate this year. That acknowledges that we are in a climate emergency and it is a threat to life on earth. Our bill establishes a framework for Tasmania to respond with near-term and medium-term targets and mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will protect and increase carbon stores. It will establish an action plan for climate adaptation. It is a landmark legislation for climate action and it is the sort of response that PESRAC has pointed out we have to have.

Our state has a government that is either blind to the environment, or it is actively bent on destroying it. It oscillates between those two states. With every responsibility they should have shouldered to care for the environment, you can be confident that the Liberals in government have either defunded it, or starved it of funds until it is just a public relations box that is left to be ticked. They have done the job badly to justify their inaction. They have refused to fund it at all, or they knowingly are going ahead with accelerating the extinction of species.

The war on wildlife is continuing to ramp up under the Liberals. We have regional forest agreements in place that have been denounced by Graeme Samuel in his review of the EPBC Act. They are a failed mechanism. It is entrenching environmentally destructive practices through native logging and through logging native forests, and releasing stored carbon into the atmosphere. Environmental laws that effectively carve out an exemption for native forests are totally incapable of protecting biodiversity. The very nature of native forests logging industry is to flatten and burn forest, to destroy the homes of critically endangered species along the way. There are just 300 swift parrots remaining on the planet, but the Liberals continue to log nesting and feeding trees in the southern and eastern forests.

Under this Government so many of the animals and plants that we love are perilously close to extinction. Some 700 species of animals and plants are listed as under threat in Tasmania. Only 26 per cent of those have recovery plans and most of them are out of date and underfunded. The stalking and killing of native birds, mammals and reptiles from cats at large is horrifying and entirely preventable. The Liberals backed away from cat confinement laws at the last minute, despite the overwhelming coalition of farmers, cat owners, conservationists, councils and cat shelters. Shame.

Raptors are at high risk from electrocution from overhead powerlines, from cruel and ignorant shooters and from badly sited wind farms. The raptor refuge, eagle experts and vets

across the state are run off their feet picking up dead and damaged birds. Watching the number of eagles, harriers, goshawks, sparrow hawks, boobooks and other raptors plummeting is horrifying. Carers on the front line of the wildlife crisis in Tasmania get chickenfeed from the Government and its GBE, Tas Networks. There is no financial support for injured wildlife or for wildlife carers. There is no veterinary, wildlife training, no money for wildlife emergency and remedial medical treatment for animals.

There are meaningful actions that we can take to arrest the catastrophic pressures on raptors and other birds, as well as mitigating the dangers of powerlines. We can, for example, proactively plan where wind farms should go. Robbins Island is the primary migratory bird habitat in Tasmania. It is a critical port of call for birds from the far northern hemisphere. It is a wetland wilderness that fits the Ramsar Criteria for protection and it is no place for one of the largest wind farms that is proposed in Australia.

The Liberals seem to see the native animals as an inconvenience, a pest, a crop destroyer and a nuisance. In the north-west at least 30 Tassie devils have been killed so far this year on the roads adjacent to the Van Dairy Company, but there has been silence from the Government and the EPA. Every year hundreds of thousands of native animals are authorised to be killed through game licences. Crop-protection permits to kill native animals are handed out in DPIPWE like, it seems, lollies at a party.

The duck hunting season started two weeks ago. There were 30 people on Moulting Lagoon protesting the start of the duck hunting season because we have, in this Government, a minister who does not even listen to the experts in his department, refused to take the advice last year of abandoning the duck hunting season because the pressure on wetlands from the mainland drought was so great that we are seeing fewer wetlands and fewer wetland birds overall in eastern Australia. We have to provide a refuge in Tasmania for birds that come here, seeking our wetlands in drought periods. We have to look after the native species we have. Nearly 50 000 were killed the year before last, but the minister ignored the advice. The community will not stop. The community will continue to argue that this is a cruel and pointless activity and it has to be abandoned completely.

The native species population data that is collected by DPIPWE is totally inadequate in reflecting the pace and scale of developments and climate change on impacting native species. We basically have no real idea how habitat and species survival is being impacted at the moment. It is an Orwellian move that the Liberals in Government have stopped the flow of information about the environment. They have stopped producing the state of the environment report completely, despite having a legislative responsibility to do one every four years. The last report card on the Tasmanian environment was in 2009, 12 years ago. It is shameful that this is the case. We should have had one in 2013 and 2017, and another one is due this year. I notice the Premier did not announce he would be doing it in his Address. Where is it?

We funded this sort of work in our alternative budget, just as we funded all the other things I have mentioned so far, all the wildlife carer support, all the work on powerlines, all the removal of crop-protection permits. This is the sort of thing that can be done if a government truly prioritises sustainability, which is exactly what this PESRAC Report recommends the Government take up: sustainability, a vision and a strategy that has to be done immediately.

But it is not enough to have a vision and a strategy if you do not have the laws to back it up. It is very hopeful of PESRAC to think that producing a sustainability vision and strategy

will be enough to force the Liberal and Labor parties to prioritise the environment's interest. Unless we change the laws, unless we change the LUPAA and the EMPCA, unless we have an independent EPA, we will always be almost incapable of holding governments of any persuasion to account without rights to appeal, without enshrined protections for animals and plants, and without enshrined protections for habitat. It is almost impossible to prevent the development interests that are prioritised under Labor and Liberal governments.

Under the Liberal Government at the moment, our reserves and wild places are open for private business. We have Rosny Hill and Kangaroo Bay, Westbury Reserve, Lake Malbena and the south coast in the TWWHA, Cambria Green on the east coast. Even wild and sacred kunanyi is not safe from development.

We have an EPA that is independent in name but not law. The board is directed to work to the policies of the government of the day and its focus is on maintaining industry productivity and not on putting the environment's interest first. It cannot and does not seriously challenge or penalise companies when they damage the environment.

We only have to look at the relentless expansion of fish farming into Storm Bay, up the east coast of the state and the threats to the north-west. We have communities from the Huon, D'Entrecasteaux, Bruny Island, Tinderbox, Long Bay, White Beach and Nubeena on the Tasman Peninsula, South Arm and Clifton Beach, Triabunna, Montagu, Smithton and King Island. All of these communities are already reeling either from the impact of industrial farming in their delicate marine waters, or are girding themselves for the proposed expansion into their beautiful waters.

The laws that should be protecting communities and marine integrity are clearly broken when we have a marine farming planning review panel that can make an approval on the massive expansion into Storm Bay without being quorate, and after the two women expert scientists resigned from the board in disgust at the lack of independence. There was no baseline data collected in advance of that approved expansion and there is nothing to measure salmon farming impacts against. The Greens will continue to work to change our laws to make sure we have appeal rights and to make sure we establish an independent EPA.

In Tasmania we have a Resource Management Planning System created in 1993 that is the basis for all our land, sea and air planning laws. The objective of the RMPS is to promote the sustainable development of natural and physical resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity. The objectives recognise that we should only use as much of our natural resources as will allow future generations to have their needs met and that we have to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of our eco-systems.

It is kind of funny when you look at the objectives that were written in 1993 by the Resource Management Planning System and you read the report from PESRAC. PESRAC has made some fantastic statements about the importance of protecting the environment, some very important statements about strong sustainable development and what it means, and they make it very clear that we have to, as they say, look at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. PESRAC was clear and it is interesting that they are saying essentially what we already have enshrined in our Resource Management Planning System objectives.

The point is that we have a problem. We have a problem when we have had objectives enshrined in legislation from 1993 but we have planning and environmental laws which enable rampant development of fish farms into Storm Bay. We have planning laws that allow a sprawling development and the takeover of publicly owned reserves for private development. Everything about our planning system does not make it possible to do what PESRAC recommends, which is to build energy-efficient houses, small houses, large public open spaces and small dense dwellings. The systems we created, the laws, have been ransacked over the years by the Liberal and Labor parties in government and stripped of the parts that make sure that environmental interests are protected and that communities have a real say in the planning process and are able to challenge decisions.

They are being progressively amended to prioritise developers' interests against the interests of the community and the environment. Until we fix the anti-sustainability of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act and the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act, we cannot hope to do what PESRAC recommends. Strategies, action plans and community talkfests are nice, but they mean diddly squat for environmental and cultural heritage protection.

If you are a small business or home owner right now, the state of our laws is that development approvals are incredibly expensive, time-consuming and an administrative nightmare. However, large developers with deep pockets can pretty much build what they want, where they want, and the red carpet has been rolled out in the planning and environmental laws for them.

A recent example: the major projects legislation passed with the enthusiastic support of Labor whittled away more of the Tasmanian Planning Commission's independence, giving more power to executive decision-making. The recent Interim Planning Directive 4 was foisted on councils by the Planning minister, without any consultation. The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) had no idea what was in it, and what is coming, effectively.

If you believe the minister's spin, IPD4 was meant to help councils in the transition period to the final Tasmanian Planning Scheme. The reality from councils' point of view is that it has created confusion and it overrides the councils' own consultation processes with their communities for the new scheme.

Since the Liberals took office in 2014, we have seen a breathtaking change to the health system. The Liberals, when coming to government, said they were going to fix the broken health system that previously existed. The evidence is that what they have done is smash it up quite a lot more, and what we have is some devastating trends in the wrong direction for people's health and against all national standards.

We have elective surgery waiting lists that have grown by more than 4000 patients, a 56 per cent increase. The average overdue time people have to wait for urgent elective surgery has ballooned from 15 days in 2014, to 99 days now. The average ambulance emergency times have grown even longer, from 11.3 minutes to 13.8 minutes. Every minute counts.

Each year the Liberals have failed to increase the cost of the health system to keep up with the extra patients who are turning up and the real cost of medical care. We recognise that it is preventative health, and the money going into preventative health, that makes all the difference to people's health and wellbeing. That is something the Liberals talked about so

much. When Michael Ferguson was Health minister, he was going to fix Tasmanians' health and make it the best in the country. He persisted with that for a couple of years, until he realised it was too hard, especially when you do not put any money behind it. That has been completely dropped.

Instead, what we are seeing is community health centres and allied health professionals serially underfunded, year-on-year, and that means people living in regional and remote Tasmania have such a hard time accessing the basic health services they need to make sure that they do not end up in an emergency department.

The Greens have some very strong commitments in the area of health and in our alternative budget we have put \$19 million extra into community health centre staffing and \$4 million extra in community preventative health. As well as changing some of the issues which lead to people's health being eroded over time, we especially support strong smoking legislation. We particularly want to change the law that criminalises people for personal use of illicit drugs. There is no argument at all, medical or moral or social, to justify criminalising people and making them part of the criminal justice system for simply personal use of drugs. We are committed to legalising cannabis and having a regulatory framework that makes it clear what the health warnings are, with support for people. At the moment we are in an ideological battle with the war on drugs, which makes it difficult for people to access services when they need it and to get the treatment they need.

I finish by saying that the Liberals' track record in Corrections is appalling. They do not know the meaning of rehabilitative justice and the idea of building a second prison in northern Tasmania, which would cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build and tens of millions of dollars every year in a punitive approach instead of putting it into rehabilitative justice, is madness. It is totally mad to think they will get away with putting it on the beautiful Westbury Reserve. Westbury Reserve is a haven for birds and many other animals. It is remnant forest that is part of the Tasmanian Reserve Estate and must be maintained - and the community will continue to fight for that and we will be right behind them.

Time expired.

[5.52 p.m.]

Ms COURTNEY (Bass - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as the minister for the Health, Strategic Growth, Small Business and Hospitality and Events portfolios and as a very proud member for Bass, I congratulate the Premier and am delighted to be able to provide a response to his address earlier in the week.

We have heard many people in this place talk about the challenges of COVID and what we have done as a government to rebuild. As I reflect on my past year, I have to say I could not have possibly foreseen the events that have taken place in the past 12 months. Standing alongside our Premier as the Minister for Health, and with my other portfolio hats of Small Business and Hospitality as well as Women, seeing the forefront of the impact of the pandemic and having the opportunity to speak regularly firsthand to patients, staff and care providers, as well as businesses, industry and the community, was unique.

To paint a picture, on 17 March last year the Director of Public Health first declared a public health emergency. We had conducted at that time 406 tests, with seven cases identified and 86 people in isolation. We stood up respiratory clinics in our major centres and significant planning was underway at a local, state and national level for what was to come. By the end

of the month, our world as we knew it had completely changed. We restricted indoor gatherings on 18 March and the next day the Premier declared a state of emergency. By 31 March Tasmania had more than 60 active cases. Elective surgeries were cancelled to ensure our hospitals had the capacity they needed, schools and businesses were closed and the north-west outbreak was beginning.

This is all to put into context how far we have come to be here today. Our vaccination program, which commenced last month, is gathering momentum. Thousands of Tasmanians have now been vaccinated, over 160 000 nationwide, and GPs are on the cusp of delivering Phase 1B of the vaccine rollout to the community.

There are currently no active cases in Tasmania and our economy is reaping the benefits of our management, with the latest data showing Tasmanian job vacancies have grown by just over 13 per cent since February, the highest monthly growth in the nation and nearly twice the growth seen nationally. We acknowledge there is still more to do and still more people for us to assist, but our economy is recovering. We are rebuilding, and Tasmanians can be assured that we are absolutely committed to keeping them safe and putting the right economic conditions in place.

With regard to the initiatives outlined by the Premier this week, we know that paramedics are absolutely critical for our healthcare system. In the Premier's Address, he outlined brand new investments for our systems, ensuring that Tasmanians can get the care they need through community care, delivering more dental appointments and looking at what we can do in palliative care as well as paramedics.

We have long acknowledged the impact of demand pressure on our ambulance services and we have been taking action to boost staff in Ambulance Tasmania (AT) since 2014. As the Premier recently noted, there are now over 170 FTE more in AT than when we were elected. These are paramedics, dispatch officers and more services for rural areas. We are investing in two new 24/7 full-time additional crews for our service, one in Greater Launceston and one in Greater Hobart. This is an impressive commitment with 24 more paramedics and the trucks that they need, which will increase coverage and help put downward pressure on fatigue.

This also complements the recent commitments we have been delivering on with regard to boosting services in our regional and rural areas. This comes on top of secondary triage, which is working in the community. We have already diverted over 60 patients to alternative care pathways, saving ambulance time and, importantly, ensuring those patients get the care that is right for them.

Oral health has been significantly impacted by the closure of dental services through COVID and our \$5 million investment is incredibly important for those Tasmanians needing care. Despite the fact that as of last year waiting times for dental care were four times lower than in 2012-13 and waiting times for denture services were nearly nine months lower over the same period, we want to ensure even more Tasmanians can access the care they need.

This package is expected to deliver around 20 000 appointments across a range of emergency general and denture clinics and allow us both to reduce waiting times for new clients as well as improve our overall waiting lists. We will be partnering with the local private sector

to provide additional capacity, which will mean many Tasmanians will receive their care closer to their home.

I have mentioned on several occasions in this House the importance of palliative care, and I know this is shared by many members around the House. Palliative care is delivered in a range of settings, which is why we have already made significant investments into the delivery of specialist palliative care services in our public hospitals as well as support for home- and community-based palliative care services.

This Government introduced Tasmania's first palliative care policy framework, Compassionate Communities, in 2017, which states our commitment to meet the needs and future demands of end-of-life services in this state. I am so pleased we are continuing to deliver on that commitment by providing even more support towards improving people's access to home- and community-based palliative care services across Tasmania. This will ensure that Tasmanians who wish to die in their own homes or in the community supported by family and loved ones will have greater access to care.

As the Premier announced, we will be consulting with our clinical staff and the palliative care sector in the coming months to determine the best ways to support and improve access to services. This consultation will consider a range of areas such as after-hours palliative care support to ensure assistance for palliative care patients, their carers, families and health professionals, because we know it is often after-hours when they are needed.

We are also looking at providing additional home-based services to support and manage people who wish to receive hospice care at their home as domestic assistance and personal care as well as linkages to improved specialist care services.

I take this opportunity to thank our palliative care specialists across the state. Those people who work in palliative care - the nurses, doctors, volunteers and those in the community - I know do it with great compassion and love.

We know how important it is for Tasmanians to be able to access GPs and to be able to access care in their community. The department will also be working closely with the primary health sector to develop an appropriate support model, which will include the development of an incentive scheme to encourage more GPs to provide after-hours services in their local communities. As part of our ongoing consultation for Our Healthcare Future, we know that many in our community consider that greater after-hours primary care support will assist in taking pressure off Tasmanian emergency departments, and provide better care in the right place at the right time for the patient.

Such a scheme would also complement our other initiatives, such as community rapid response, as well as secondary triage. Subject to consultation with the primary care sector, we intend to have this \$3 million incentive program in place by the end of June this year.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Railways Tasmania - 150th Anniversary and Role of Women Waiting Lists for Elective Surgery

[6.01 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have two matters to speak on tonight. The first is the 150th anniversary of Railways Tasmania and the role that women played in the industry. First, let me be clear, it took decades for women to be included in the public and private railways across Tasmania. In fact, it was really only wartime that saw an opportunity for women in this industry. Sadly many of those women who worked for the sector slipped from view.

Jessie Mawby of Victoria arrived in Tasmania around 1900, in time to work on the railway lines being constructed on the wild west coast. Jessie, a single mother of 14, and midwife, worked as a cook for the teams of fitters charged with laying railway lines. She was said to have lived in a flimsy canvas tent with her children, feeding the hungry workers in wet and wild conditions. Jessie became a much-loved member of the Tullah community and her descendants across Tasmania proudly tell her story.

Joy Grist, nee Berriman, of Launceston, was one of the first female workers at the Launceston Railway Workshops during the Second World War. She was hired to clean carriages. There is a photograph of Joy at work in the *Mercury* newspaper in 1943. The accompanying article drily noted that although cleaning was not the nicest job, Joy and her colleagues, and I quote, 'still kept their femininity'. There is no doubt the rigorous training at the railway workshops in Launceston led to Joy becoming a policewoman in Hobart.

Finally, I wanted to highlight the munitions work women like Mavis Carey did at the Launceston Railway Workshops during the Second World War. There is an evocative photograph of Mavis taken in the Shell Annexe at Inveresk, shaving a shell on a lathe for a 25-pounder gun. I remember in 2001, when QVMAG opened the railway workshops, that photograph formed a major part of the exhibition and Mavis was a guest of honour.

Thousands of women like Mavis contributed to the war effort in the workshops. Their labour, as we know, sadly freed up many men to serve on the war front. One hundred and fifty years of railways in Tasmania has been overwhelmingly dominated by men. We have been fortunate enough to have government and private sector investment in our railways. If we dig a little deeper we can uncover the remarkable contributions of women such as Jessie, Joy and Mavis; their stories deserve telling.

My other matter is a lot more serious. I have been asked by my constituent, Justin, and given permission to read his story. I quote his letter:

Following advice from Minister Courtney's staff, my GP sent a second referral to the Orthopaedic Clinic at the Launceston General Hospital on 12 February 2021 seeking a re-appraisal of my elective surgery category based on significant deterioration of my right knee since I was placed on the waiting list as a category three ... An appointment for 3 March was subsequently granted at which I spoke with the orthopaedic surgeon,

outlining my clinical history, most particularly my 29-year struggle with chronic pain in the back and right leg resulting from a spinal cord injury, and Major Depressive Disorder and PTSD. These, I explained, in combination with the extreme and intractable pain resulting from the recent advent of osteo-arthritis in my right knee, had caused me to become house-bound and dependent on a wheelchair, occasionally suicidal, and unable to sleep. This latter condition has endured for more than four months, and in combination with the other factors, has ruined my quality of life. *The surgeon dismissed any possibility of my being re-categorised to level 2 or 1, saying at least 300 other persons were in the same situation as myself, and adding that funding cuts by the state government in recent years had had the consequence of waiting times of 500 to 600 days for joint replacements. This does not square with Minister Courtney's written assurance to me that 'LGH continues to review its wait list'.* The Minister stated also that a further \$45.5 million investment will enable an additional 8500 elective surgeries over the next 18 months. I would like to point to a recent news item which indicated that wait times in all three categories had blown out significantly beyond what is clinically appropriate. It seems this additional investment falls well short of what is required to address the situation. In addition to the waiting time for surgery, I am unable to access publicly funded pain management in Launceston, and would be required to travel to Royal Hobart Hospital - virtually impossible in my current physical state - and wait several months for an appointment.

It seems both farcical and cruel that surgery for my various co-morbidities are unavailable in the state's second city, the North's major population centre, and that hundreds of people such as I are required to exist in crippling, chronic pain with no light at the end of the tunnel.

I have spent time with Justin and there are times when he is absolutely in tears from the pain he is enduring and can barely move. He has been an engaged, committed and smart, fabulous human being who is now in a terrible state.

The Premier, as Treasurer in 2014, cut \$210 million out of the health budget and only the pandemic stopped him from pursuing the other almost \$100 million that he planned to take in his 2019 budget. Our waiting lists are worse than they have ever been. A total of 11 791 people are on the list, up 66 per cent since the last election. Thousands languish on the list, just waiting to get onto that list.

Justin is a clever, engaged man who is now a shadow of himself. This Government speaks of their investment. They should reflect on the human outcome of their cuts.

Barbara Daisy Shelton - Tribute

[6.06 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to pay a tribute and honour my dear old mum who passed away a couple of weeks ago. I say thank you to the many members of this House who sent me condolences and kind words when we were going through that process.

Mum was a special lady as, indeed, all mums are. Danielle Blewett, who many people would know, works at St Giles and writes a weekly article for *The Examiner*. I will read what she wrote when she attended the funeral. I apologise to the House because I am mentioned in it, but it is not about me, it is about Mum:

There's a lot to be said for a crisp autumn Friday morning spent among strangers at the Longford Uniting Church. I knew a handful of those gathered to mourn Barbara Daisy Shelton, but felt every bit the townie in the church hall.

With Jimmy Reeve setting the scene, we saw the beauty of a life lived for family and in enterprise and service to community - a glimpse of the Tasmania that makes this place strong and resilient.

Mrs Shelton was born at Denbury a farm just outside of Bracknell and lived her life in Bracknell. The day before she died at the Toosey -

[which is a nursing home in Longford]

she pumped her fists and said 'I am going home'. The power of home and place is something that many Tasmanians have in spades. I envy their generational connection.

There have been six generations of Sheltons at Bracknell Primary. To most of us, Bracknell is a sweet speck of a place on a map. I've visited the school a number of times during the past 30 years and always come away feeling the unique connection to country of Tasmania's small public schools.

I understand the conversation about quality of education and unsustainable school numbers, but, it might just also be true that a school provides more than book learning.

Barbara Shelton finished her schooling at age 13. The headmaster urged her widower father to continue her education at high school. Barbara was smart, and aware I am sure, that her father and siblings needed her present and made her decision to stay and help on the farm.

Her learnings and music continued, outside of school, and she ran four small businesses in the town.

I've have a long-held affection for the larrikin success of the Bracknell footy club and wasn't shocked to learn that Barbara was a life member with a handy car spot near the entry of the home ground, in waiting for her old Ford Laser.

Some at her funeral wore team colours, poppy red shirts dotted amongst the tweed of that neat and respectful gathering of about 200. Her death came just three weeks after her son, Mark Shelton, walked to Hobart to fundraise for

St Giles. I'd wondered, watching Mark stride out the 200kms to Hobart, what made him tick? What made him stand out as a decent bloke?

I knew his tenacity was farm-hardened, but listening and learning about Barbara Shelton I learned of selfless giving to family. Selfless giving is something that is sadly lacking in society. As an only child, I aspire to be selfless, but know I often fall short.

Women like Barbara Shelton, able to run four small businesses, raise three children, up at dawn each day to light the farmhouse fire and last to bed at night, makes our allegedly busy lives look sparse.

It was perfect to see the tears fall during the eulogy as a grand-daughter described how much she would miss Barbara's presence, in the family caravan, taking the grandchildren on holiday to Tasmania's East Coast. Two precious weeks a year.

Or, how lucky the grandchildren felt that their nan drove the school bus that took them from farm to school. What fun they must have had.

I glimpsed pictures of Barbara playing the piano accordion, of her with arms filled with babies and surrounded by children. I saw Barbara as a young woman, in the late 1940s sitting on a motorbike with four other young women and men, slouching at the rear.

At Longford, last Friday, I glimpsed a life that is still lived in many Tasmanian country towns. The kind of life that us townies can only envy for its community connectedness and compassion.

I thank Danielle for those words.

Members - Hear, hear.

Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women - Inductees for 2021

[6.11 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to acknowledge the inductees to the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women for 2021. They were inducted at a ceremony in Launceston that I had the pleasure of recently attending.

Against the backdrop of the current national spotlight being shone on the systemic structural factors that have led to generations of abuse of women, against a backdrop of countless women coming forward for the first time to shine the light on these things including attending women's marches in our tens of thousands, it was truly uplifting to be in a room full of people, men and women, celebrating the achievements of Tasmanian women.

There were 18 women and three organisations inducted this year and I want to highlight a few today. Before I do, I pay tribute to former Labor Minister Paula Wriedt for establishing

the honour roll in 2005. The role is a special and meaningful gesture and I know it means a lot to recipients and their families and loved ones.

This year's honour roll included the induction of Lily Poulett-Harris who is described as the founder of women's cricket in Tasmania and indeed Australia. In the 1890s Lily Poulett-Harris established the Oyster Bay Ladies Cricket Club believed to have been the first female cricket club in Australia in any of the Australian colonies. She established an early league of teams playing against one another. An early match was played between the Oyster Bay club and Bruny Island. Without her work it is possible that women's cricket in Tasmania and indeed Australia may not have been established for very much longer or at all. She was nominated to be posthumously inducted by Jacqui Triffitt who is currently writing a book about Lily and the history of women's cricket. I am not sure many of the audience would have heard of her before the event and that is what makes the honour roll so special.

Also inducted this year to the honour roll of women was Martine Delaney. Martine as everyone in this place knows is one of the fiercest advocates for LGBTIQ+ people in the country, indeed the world. I first met Martine in 2009 or 2010 when I was a junior adviser in the office of then attorney-general Judy Jackson when the two met to discuss the legal recognition of gender. Martine went on to meet with nine more attorneys-general following Judy to continue to explain the effect of Tasmanian laws on transgender people and to advocate for positive change.

Martine was responsible for national advocacy work to modernise the use of gender on passports which was ultimately achieved in 2009 and was also instrumental in the positive changes made by this parliament a decade later in 2019. Her work on anti-discrimination policy igniting the marriage equality debate and campaign and legal recognition of gender has been nation leading. Martine's hard work, voluntary and often at great personal sacrifice, is to be commended and it was extremely fitting that she was inducted this year.

I also recognise the importance of the Presentation Sisters who were inducted as an organisation to the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women this year. Founded over 150 years ago, the Presentation Sisters have played a vital role in caring for the impoverished and the sick in Tasmania and in educating women. In 2018 they generously donated land at Blackmans Bay for affordable housing and supported accommodation. Their life and work are all around us in buildings and good deeds across Tasmania, including the establishment of St Mary's College, a Catholic school for girls, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2018. The Presentation Sisters are still involved in the work and chaplaincy of the school, and it was fitting indeed that they were recognised as an organisation for their work in Tasmania for more than 150 years.

Finally, I acknowledge the induction of the late Attorney-General Dr Vanessa Goodwin to the honour roll in 2021. Although we come from different sides of politics, there is no doubt about the enormous contribution Dr Goodwin made to law, criminology and politics during her career not only in politics, but also before that in academia. Like so many of her friends and family, I only wish she had been there to receive the honour.

In conclusion, I want to thank the team at Communities Tasmania for again putting on such a wonderful event in Launceston.

Peregrine School, Cygnet

[6.16 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - I want to read in some information I got from a teacher at Peregrine School, near my area in Cygnet in Franklin. Peregrine is at Nicholls Rivulet and Ina Güdelhöfer sent some information about her class and their visit to the Castle Forbes Bay Forest. She took her students there because she wanted to show them the planned clear-felling coupe at Castle Forbes Bay Forest so they could understand exactly what that beautiful forest is. It is a place on their doorstep and she wanted students to understand what was happening around them. She said:

We had interesting and meaningful discussions surrounding the importance of old-growth forest in the area for habitat and carbon storage. The high density of large trees in the Castle Forbes Forest was incredible to see. Students described the forest as a 'protective fire wall', as when entering the forest it is very obvious to see how the rainforest stopped the fires.

She sent me some of the students' works because she wanted to give them their voice - of course, they are the voice for the future. I have copied a couple of things I want to read in, and they were very beautiful pictures by clearly students of different ages. Peregrine School has classes of mixed grades of students in classes.

This one is from Niah and David, and they said:

Forest is beautiful, dear politicians, for Castle Forbes Forest.

There is another one which does not have a name. It says:

Dear legislators,

I want to ask you something:

Why are you chopping down beautiful trees and destroying forests like Castle Forbes Forest and others?

These are habitats for beautiful animals like freshwater crayfish, amazing birds and crazy cool insects.

So why?

Please think about it, think about your children. One day they might want to take their children to those places. So please think about your actions.

Another one says:

Hello, this is a student from Peregrine School. I am writing this because I cannot have the Castle Forbes Forest get logged. Lots of forests across the world have been logged and it is very sad. Many people have visited Castle Forbes Forest. My class and I went there in term three. It was really surprising because when we were walking to the actual forest there were no

green things, but then everything changed. So many old green trees, the whole forest was surrounding me. It was extraordinary.

Henry said, 'Stop the chop, save the forest'. Joy Churnoff said:

Dear politicians, I am writing to you regarding the earth and our future. I am currently 10 years old and have grown up in the Huon Valley Tasmania. There is a number of forests in Tasmania that are currently being logged or about to be demolished. Castle Forbes Forest is magical. It also has swift parrots which are now endangered. I hope you can manage to do something about all of these problems and more. In the end it is our future and we are the ones who will have to deal with this big mess.

I have also been to Castle Forbes Forest and it is extraordinary. According to an apiarist from the apiary association, it has some of the largest leatherwood trees he has ever seen. It has nursery trees. It is an amazingly rich habitat. I agree with the student who said that the difference between the area surrounding the forest and the forest itself is very stark. There is a clear borderline where the fires in 2019-20 went right up to the edge of that Castle Forbes Forest, and there is a line of dried-out land which has been scorched by fires. The rainforest that is Castle Forbes Forest is a damp, moist place, which is habitat for plants and animals that have lived in that environment for countless millennia.

The students of Peregrine School understand and see with their own eyes that this is a very special place and it has to be saved. I am thoroughly supporting them in their quest to make sure that we do not log this beautiful part of our southern native forest and the other native forests which are under threat today.

Tasmania's Wild Catch Fishery Stay Afloat - Mental Health and Wellbeing Program

[6.21 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to share a few remarks tonight about Tasmania's world-class wild catch fishery in our aquaculture seafood sector. As the House knows, COVID-19 impacted our fisheries with market issues and increased freight costs. It was a very difficult time, and very challenging. We have had a clear plan to secure the long-term future of this sector that in recent years has had the beach value of about \$1 billion. It is a very important industry for Tasmania. Thousands of jobs are involved in the fishery sector all around Tasmania, particularly in those rural and regional areas, particularly on our coastlines. It underpins other industries as well, like processing, freight and transport, scientific services, research, manufacturing and the like.

Our plan, first in terms of the salmon industry, is very important. We have a sustainable growth plan for the salmon industry. It is an iconic industry, it is world leading and it aims for best practice. We continue to work with our wild catch fisheries. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, working in partnership with the sector, the Government initiated a range of responses, including \$5.5 million of support through two stimulus packages, rollover of rock lobster quota, enabling 300 000 from the abalone industry development fund to support processors to

can produce, and we delivered other initiatives like grants, loans, and payroll tax relief, providing support across the fisheries.

We know that many wild fishers are still doing it hard. That is why last week I announced, on behalf of the Gutwein Liberal Government, \$663 000 in additional fee relief for rock lobster and other wild fishers.

I thank the member for Lyons for his support and encouragement. He knows how important it is, coming from the east coast, up there at St Helens. It builds on the seafood industry recovery coordination group meetings I commenced last year, during those difficult times of COVID-19. We identified both the challenges and the opportunities. It has been what I have often referred to as team Tasmania, working together to get the job done. That relief package includes waiving biotoxin levies for rock lobster fishers, waiving the translocation levies for the rock lobster fishers, waiving the rock lobster tag fees, and waiving the fishing vessel licence fee for not just rock lobster but other commercial wild fishes, including scale fish and abalone.

We acknowledge that people in these industries still need more support so I am pleased to advise today that I am announcing \$360 000 over the next three years for Stay Afloat, a program dedicated to improving the mental health and wellbeing for the Australian Seafood Industry. It is a really important program. I announced this earlier today with Julian Harrington, the CEO general manager of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council. Stay Afloat is a seafood industry and Rural Alive and Well partnership. Of course, RAW, or Rural Alive and Well do a wonderful job all around Tasmania, particularly in those rural and regional areas.

This partnership supports the health and wellbeing for those in our seafood industry. It is a three-year program, \$120 000 per year providing that support to this very important area. It is a free and confidential service that aims to provide ongoing practical support and, when required, referral to other services. The service is available when and where the help is needed - it can be on a fishing boat, it can be at the wharf, it can be at the marine farm.

I was down with the fishing boats earlier today at Constitution Dock in Hobart. It was great to see and to be with Julian seeing the wonderful potential of our seafood industry - our wild-catch fishery in particular and right near Mures itself. I encourage Tasmanians to get out and enjoy their seafood.

Regarding the Mental Health Services, I want to put on the record a sincere thanks to the Deputy Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, for his support. I know how dedicated and supportive he is of this particular program and this initiative so I want to acknowledge that. Anyone in the fisheries industry who would like support through the service can call 1300HELPMATE or go through to the rawtas.com.au website.

It is important work and the Tasmanian Liberal Government is proud to be behind this work and to support it. This measure is an important part of our plan to secure Tasmania's future, and particularly to secure the future of our highly valued seafood industry and its workers and their families.

Montello Primary School, Burnie

[6.27 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister, Mr Shelton, for his beautiful tribute to his late mother.

I congratulate the staff and students of Montello Primary School in Burnie on their recent success in receiving a Schools Plus grant funded by Google. This grant will be used to further develop their Makerspace and STEM room at their school. Montello Primary School is the first school in Tasmania and only the fourth in Australia to receive a grant funded by Google, and I am sure the House will agree with me that this is an outstanding achievement.

I was so pleased to be invited to celebrate with the school community last week at its official launch with special guests - from local and federal MPs, representatives from Google, and from Schools Plus and, of course, the school community.

Following the launch event grades 4, 5 and 6 students participated in some activities provided by Google, including virtual reality, artificial intelligence and robotics. I look forward to visiting Montello Primary School again soon to experience their Makerspace STEM room.

It was great to see that Google also supported local business and entrepreneur BeaDoughs Donuts, buying 200 doughnuts for staff and students to enjoy after the launch. Sunny Beatson started his business at the height of COVID-19 and has gone from strength to strength, with Sunny recently being named the Burnie City Council young citizen of the year so it was quite fitting he was part of this important community event.

I quote the words of principal Denise Wotherspoon from her speech on the day, which is on the Department of Education website:

We are extremely pleased - and proud - to have been successful in our application for a grant through Schools Plus - funded by Google - to further develop the area in our school known as the Makerspace, where all things STEM take place - science technology engineering and maths. This grant creates a wonderful opportunity for our students to experience real 21st century learning.

STEM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy and enables the next generation of innovators, as proved by the **Matty and Murphy** story. For those of you who do not know, last year we joined an amazing program called Young Leaders of Tasmania where grade six students visited the North-West Support School and were mentors for a group of students there.

Matty and Murphy made a strong connection and on hearing about the difficulties Matty had applying his deodorant Murphy came straight back to school and used a computer assisted design to create a piece of equipment on our laser printer to assist Matty in his dilemma.

This is the first of many projects we will undertake in assistive technology for students at the North-West Support School. STEM learning is very

hands-on and our students love it. Our after-school Coding Club has gone in leaps and bounds this year. We know that this grant will help us progress these activities further in the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, overall it was a wonderful event, and I want to congratulate everyone involved from Montello Primary School, including Matty and Murphy. They should all be very proud of their achievements.

Protecting Tasmanians' Right to Work

[6.30 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I wish to discuss the importance of our responsibility and duty of care we, as members of parliament, have to keep Tasmanians safe, to keep hardworking Tasmanians like Butch in the Karanja sawmill, who recently had his logs spiked - this is quite serious, Ms Butler, and not a joking matter - and Paul from Goulds Country in my own community. They are contributing to their local communities and economies and are working day in, day out to put food on the table for their families.

We have emerged from the greatest health and economic challenge in more than a generation with a strong economy, with opportunity, and I am pleased to say that this Liberal Government has a plan to secure Tasmania's future. We also know now more than ever that every job counts and that no-one deserves to feel intimidated or threatened in our workplaces in our community.

This Government respects the right of every Tasmanian to express their views and we also committed to protecting all Tasmanians' right to work. That is why this Government introduced legislation, our workplace protection bill, which complements legislation already passed in the federal parliament and will deliver Tasmanian business, workers and their families protection against trespass designed to deliberately impede business activity.

As the minister, Mr Barnett, said earlier today, these laws are needed following a significant escalation in threatening radical protest action from militant and extremist groups. Too often Tasmanians have been threatened and harassed simply for going to work. It is happening today and it will happen tomorrow. It is causing hardworking Tasmanians distress and they deserve better.

The radical extremists of the Bob Brown Foundation today invaded the worksite of a mining company on the west coast, directly threatening the right of Tasmanians working at Venture Minerals' Riley Creek operation. We all know the playbook of the Bob Brown Foundation - disrupt, seek media attention, get funding to carry out more disruption, more trespassing, more distress. These funds, by and large, most likely come from latte-sipping inner city benefactors in Melbourne and Sydney, not Tasmanians. These protesters go from business to business, terrorising employees and endangering lives, including their own, with no care, no consideration and no remorse. I have heard firsthand from people in industry that they receive anonymous phone calls from radical green rhetoric-spouting protesters, bullying, intimidating and even threatening their lives.

The distress is real and now is the time to ensure we have the right legislation in place so that people can peacefully protest but not deliberately trespass and prevent people from going

about their jobs. The forestry industry, the mining industry and our hardworking farmers are all rightly concerned about the safety of their employees. We know the Greens are wedded to the trespassers but where does Labor stand? More than likely shoulder to shoulder in lock step with the Greens.

Labor's Shane Broad with the faux rhetoric that he supports industry turns his back on the very legislation that offers some comfort and support. Labor says workers deserve to be safe, yet shuns proposed laws that offer protection. Tasmanians see right through Labor and the anti-everything Greens. Labor's opposition to this bill shows that despite its fake divorce, they remain wedded to their anti-jobs marriage with the Greens.

So what is it going to be for Labor? A genuine demonstration that it respects people's right to go to work and do their job without their lives being endangered, or more hot air? We call on Labor to support our workplace protection bill, to do their bit to support working Tasmanians and to stand with us shoulder to shoulder to protect Tasmanians.

Longford Cricket Club

[6.35 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I congratulate the fabulous Longford Cricket Club, with three of their teams winning their grand finals this season. It has been a brilliant season for Longford cricket. The facilities are top-notch, all games have been well attended and each team has given it their all. Longford held all the finals at the Longford Stadium this year.

A huge shout-out to all the support people who volunteered to run the bar and the canteen over the final series. The club has one of the most inclusive and supportive cultures I have ever come across, and I want to place on record the names of the team members and other people who support the club to make sure the operation runs smoothly. I hope I do not miss anyone's name this evening.

The Longford B grade premiership team successfully took out the grand final this year. It is the third premiership over the last five seasons. Riley Williams is the captain of the team. Riley is 16 years old and took 37 wickets this season. Other team members are Phil Dodd, Kaleb Williams, Jeffery Kitchin, Zac Page, Kyle Davey, Patrick Sytsma, Thomas Langridge, Jacob Page, Anthony Smith, Kyle Blair and Aaron Shearing.

Longford Cricket Club C grade also took the grand final this year. It is the third premiership in a row and the first C grade side in the history of the Tasmanian league to do so. The team members are Johnathon Smits, Simon Humphries, Justin King, Billy Avery, Matthew Harris, Lijo Johny, Joseph Davey, Andrew John Bassett, Simon Thomas, Jack Jarman, Jared Kettle and Stacey Norton Smith.

Unfortunately, despite playing 10 games for the men's C grade, Stacey was banned from playing the grand final by the Tasmanian Cricket League (TCL). You are not able to play in two teams and then play two grand finals, according to the rules. These are the rules for the men's team, but not the rules for the women's team and despite an appeal and an article in *The*

Examiner in relation to Stacey being able to play or not, they persisted with the ban on Stacey playing in the grand final for the men's C grade.

It was disappointing that decision was reached but after the men's C team won their grand final, Stacey was there and during the medal presentations, the twelfth man, Jared Kettle, did not let the TCL put the medal around his neck but called Stacey up to accept the medal. She was in tears and the crowd cheered, but it really was not in the best interests of the game and we are hoping that next year it will not happen again because we would really like to encourage women like Stacey around Tasmania to participate in cricket, especially when you are as good a player as our Stacey is.

The women's team was successful in taking out its third grand final in a row. It is a brilliant group of amazingly supportive and collaborative women. I am proud to sponsor that team and very proud of their accomplishments. The members of the team are Stacey Norton Smith, Karli Humphries, Mary Broadhurst, Kristy Clayon, Emma Humphries, Emily Scott, Kaylee Humphries, Karlee Fulton, Caitlyn Fitch, Nicole Davey and Mia Jarman.

The A grade made it through two stages of the final but unfortunately was knocked out of the competition this year. The Premier league is still in the finals and plays this weekend for a shot at its seventh straight grand final - and no other club has done this.

In the last six seasons, the club has won a total of 26 premierships through all grades, which is absolutely remarkable. Head coach Josh Adams is considered a true leader of the club; he has been at the helm now for six seasons and is loved by all at the club.

Mr Shelton - He is a great Bracknell boy.

Ms BUTLER - Life member Phil Dodd, the driving force behind the Longford Cricket Club, has taken a step back this season, even though he is at every training session and every event and game that I attend. Life member Rob Moore has taken on the president's role and has already established a good record, with three from three grand finals.

Craig Jarman has the role of club treasurer and junior development officer. Craig has been a huge part of the club's success this year and his work with the junior squads has been great in developing the cubs for senior cricket.

Well done, Longford Cricket. I look forward to celebrating with you all on the presentation evening.

The House adjourned at 6.40 p.m.