

Tuesday 26 November 2019

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

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I have answers to questions 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21 and 25. As the answers are lengthy and have tables attached, I seek leave to have them tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

4. TASMANIAN EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS BY GENDER

MS FORREST asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

With regard the latest available data on Tasmania's employment statistics on a trend and original basis -

- (1) What is the current gender pay gap for Tasmanian women?
- (2) What are the current employment figures for Tasmania, broken down by full-time, part-time and casual employees listed by sex?
- (3) (a) How many Tasmanians are unemployed reported by sex?
(b) How many are long-term unemployed reported by sex?
- (4) How many Tasmanians are currently underemployed reported by sex?
- (5) What are the current Tasmanian participation rates reported by sex?
- (6) What is the breakdown of Tasmanians employed in reported income brackets by sex?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) The Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency calculates the national gender pay gap as the difference between female and male average weekly full-time base salary earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings. It does not compare like roles and is influenced by a number of factors, including gender-segregated industries, the level of workplace flexibility to accommodate caring and other responsibilities (especially in senior roles), the distribution of caring and domestic work, promotion and pay decisions, and discrimination and bias in hiring.

In May 2019, in trend terms, full-time adult ordinary time earnings for Tasmanian males was \$1473.10 per week, while the equivalent for Tasmanian females was \$1343.70 per week. This equates to a pay gap of \$129.40, or 8.8 per cent. The national pay gap for May 2019 was \$241.50 per week, or 14 per cent.

In original terms, the pay gap in the year to May 2019 was \$151.90 per week, or 10.4 per cent. Nationally, the pay gap in the year to May 2019 in original terms was \$241.10 or 14.1 per cent.

- (2) Data on casual or permanent status of employees are not available

Table 1: Employment data for Tasmania, trend terms, July 2019

	Male	Female	Total
Full Time	98 500	53 700	152 200
Part Time	31 500	64 300	95 800
Total	130 000	118 000	248 000

Table 2: Employment data for Tasmania, original terms, year to July 2019

	Male	Female	Total
Full Time	100 200	53 800	154 000
Part Time	30 300	64 100	94 400
Total	130 500	118 000	248 500

- (3) (a) In July 2019, in trend terms, 17 900 Tasmanians were unemployed. Of these, 8900 were male and 9000 were female.

In the year to July 2019, in original terms, 16 600 Tasmanians were unemployed. Of these, 8100 were male and 8500 were female.

- (b) Long-term unemployment data are only available in original terms and are not disaggregated by sex.

- (4) In July 2019, in trend terms, 27 600 Tasmanians were underemployed. Of these, 10 400 were male and 17 100 were female. These estimates do not sum to the aggregate estimate due to rounding issues.

In the year to July 2019, in original terms, 26 400 Tasmanians were underemployed. Of these, 10 100 were males and 16 300 were females.

- (5) In July 2019, in trend terms, the Tasmanian participation rate was 60.3 per cent. In the same period, the male participation rate was 64.3 per cent and the female participation rate was 56.4 per cent.

In the year to July 2019, in original terms, the Tasmanian participation rate was 60.5 per cent. In the same period, the male participation rate was 64.5 per cent and the female participation rate was 56.6 per cent.

- (6) The following table outlines 2016 Census data for employed persons aged 15 years and over by weekly personal income.

Table 3: Weekly Personal Income, Employed Persons in Tasmania, 2016 Census

	Male	Male %	Female	Female %	Total	Total %
Negative/Nil income	729	0.7	761	0.7	1492	0.7
\$1-\$149	3044	2.8	4897	4.6	7945	3.7
\$150-\$299	3408	3.1	6307	6.0	9714	4.5
\$300-\$399	3865	3.5	6951	6.6	10 819	5.0
\$400-\$499	4992	4.6	8888	8.4	13 876	6.4
\$500-\$649	8313	7.6	13 624	12.9	21 936	10.2
\$650-\$799	12 037	11.0	14 337	13.6	26 370	12.2
\$800-\$999	15 948	14.6	13 467	12.7	29 413	13.7
\$1000-\$1249	16 586	15.1	12 750	12.1	29 339	13.6
\$1250-\$1499	11 214	10.2	7974	7.5	19 187	8.9
\$1500-\$1749	9579	8.7	6192	5.9	15 772	7.3
\$1750-\$1999	6542	6.0	3746	3.5	10 293	4.8
\$2000-\$2999	7859	7.2	3339	3.2	11 196	5.2
\$3000 or more	3830	3.5	1204	1.1	5034	2.3
Not stated	1621	1.5	1360	1.3	2985	1.4
Total	109 572	100.0	105 795	100.0	215 363	100.00

14. GAMBLING SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-19

Ms WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

With regard to the current Gambling Support Program Strategic Framework 2014-19 -

- (1) What evaluation occurred of the impact and effectiveness of the framework?
- (2) If evaluation was conducted, what did this evaluation indicate in terms of the effectiveness of the framework in -
 - (a) Preventing gambling harm?
 - (b) Reducing gambling harm?
 - (c) Ameliorating gambling harm?
- (3) What measures and indicators (other than general prevalence studies conducted as part of the Social and Economic Impact Studies - SEIS) are used to gauge the impact of gambling support programs?
- (4) Under the framework, what proportion of (a) funding and (b) activity was directed to the prevention of problem gambling?
- (5) Under the framework, what proportion of (a) funding and (b) activity, was directed to support services for people with a gambling problem?

Noting that page 5 of the Gambling Support Program Strategic Framework 2014-19 states that gambling support services reported 71.2 per cent of people seeking support experienced issues related to electronic gaming machines - EGMs - in 2013-14.

- (6) What is the latest data on the proportion of those seeking help from gambling support services in Tasmania affected by a problem with gambling on -
 - (a) EGMs; and
 - (b) other forms of gambling?
- (7) (a) If that data is not currently collected by the gambling support services when between 2013-14 and the present, did gambling support services stop collecting data on the issues experienced by people seeking support?
 - (b) Who made the decision to stop collecting that data through gambling support services?
 - (c) What was the evidence base and rationale for ceasing to collect that data?
- (8) If that statement from page 5 of the framework was drawn from a source other than data collected by gambling support services, what was that data source?
- (9) If those statements are based on a data source other than data collected by gambling support services -
 - (a) what is the latest data from that source on the proportion of those seeking help from gambling support services in Tasmania affected by a problem with gambling on EGMs; and
 - (b) on other forms of gambling?
- (10) Noting that page 5 of the framework states that clients of gambling support services are likely to experience issues stemming from the use of EGMs, particularly within their local hotel/club -
 - (a) what was the data source that informed this statement;
 - (b) does the most recent data available continue to support that statement;
 - (c) if the most recent data does not support that statement, what has replaced an issue with EGMs in their local hotel/club as the form of gambling most likely to be experienced by clients of gambling support services;
 - (d) what is the latest data on the venue-type most likely to be used for gambling on EGMs by those seeking help from gambling support services in Tasmania;
 - (e) if current data is not available, when, between 2013-14 and the present, did this data stop being collected;
 - (f) who made the decision to stop collecting this data; and
 - (g) what was the evidence base and rationale for ceasing to collect this data?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) The gambling support program - GSP - is currently seeking feedback from key stakeholders regarding the effectiveness and currency of the 2014-19 strategic framework.
- (2) As above, feedback is currently being sought.
 - (a) Not applicable.
 - (b) Not applicable.
 - (c) Not applicable.
- (3) Funded gambling support services provide both quantitative and qualitative feedback regarding service effectiveness, including reports against key performance indicators. In addition, community education campaigns are evaluated to ensure the effectiveness of campaigns. Campaigns featuring digital advertising placements allow for metrics including impressions and click-through rates.
- (4) The framework informs the department's public health approach to gambling policy, programs and service delivery; it does not identify budget and activities being undertaken by the GSP
- (5) As with question (4), the framework does not identify budget and activities being undertaken by the GSP.
- (6) For 2018-19, of the people who sought support through gamblers help services and provided their primary form of gambling, 79 per cent reported their primary form of gambling as EGMs.
- (7)
 - (a) Not applicable.
 - (b) Not applicable.
 - (c) Not applicable.
- (8) The statement on page 5 of the framework uses data collected by gambling support services in Tasmania.
- (9)
 - (a) Not applicable.
 - (b) Not applicable.
- (10)
 - (a) The data source used for this statement is the Third SEIS (2014) Volume 1.
 - (b) Yes.
 - (c) Not applicable.
 - (d) The most recent data is available in Table 8.4, Volume 1 of the Fourth SEIS (2017).
 - (e) Not applicable.
 - (f) Not applicable.
 - (g) Not applicable.

15. GAMBLING SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2020-23

MS WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

With regard to the Gambling Support Program Strategic Framework 2020-23 -

- (1) What is the expected date of release of the framework?

- (2) What form of consultation was conducted to inform its development?
- (3) Which stakeholders were involved in the consultation?
- (4) What sources of evidence and/or research informed its development?
- (5) Which data and findings from the latest SEIS specifically informed the planning, funding and provision of service under the framework?
- (6) What proportion of (a) funding and (b) activity will be directed to the prevention of problem gambling?
- (7) What proportion of -
 - (a) funding and
 - (b) activity, will be directed to support services for people with a gambling problem?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) The expected date of release for the framework is December 2019
- (2) Consultation on the framework is currently ongoing. Stakeholders are able to provide feedback through a survey, forum and post-forum consultation opportunities.
- (3) The stakeholders invited to be involved in the consultation include industry, community sector and government representatives. The full list of stakeholders is below -
 - Anglicare Tasmania
 - Department of Treasury - Liquor and Gaming Branch
 - Each
 - Federal Group
 - Gambling Industry Group - GIG
 - Gaming venues across Tasmania
 - Holyoake
 - Housing Connect Front Door organisations
 - Housing Connect support organisations
 - Local Government Association of Tasmania
 - Migrant Resource Centre
 - Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (peak body)
 - Primary Health Network
 - Public Health
 - Relationships Australia
 - SARC - Social Action and Research Centre
 - State and Territory governments
 - TasCOSS
 - Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
 - Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission
 - Turning Point, Eastern Health
 - University of Tasmania
 - YMCA
 - YNot

- (4) In the development of the framework, the GSP will consider a range of reference sources, including the SEIS, activity data from gambling support services in Tasmania, qualitative and anecdotal feedback from gambling support services in Tasmania and relevant contemporary research such as that available through the Australian Gambling Research Centre, the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation research program and the Anglicare Tasmania Social Action and Research Centre. References to specific research will be cited in the framework.
- (5) The framework is currently under development. References to specific sections of the 2017 SEIS will be cited in the framework.
- (6) The framework informs the department's public health approach to gambling policy, programs and service delivery; it does not identify budget and activities being undertaken by the GSP.
- (7) As with question (6), the framework does not identify budget and activities being undertaken by the GSP.

16. GAMBLING SUPPORT PROGRAM MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND ADDICTION

Ms WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council Mrs Hiscutt -

With regard to the material produced in the Gambling Support Program multimedia campaigns of the past five years -

- (1) Noting that gambling addiction is now recognised as a diagnosable mental health condition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM 5), does the Government -
 - (a) Consider it appropriate to clearly label products that contain a risk of addiction?
 - (b) Accept the definition of gambling addiction as a health disorder in the DSM 5?
 - (c) Consider EGMs in their specific design to be a product that can trigger a gambling addiction disorder?
- (2) (a) Does the word 'addiction' appear on any of the material produced in the Gambling Support Program multimedia campaigns?
 - (b) If so, does any of that material explicitly identify gambling as having a risk of addiction?
 - (c) If not, noting that other public education campaigns such as the QUIT campaign explicitly discuss addiction, why not public education campaigns in Tasmania relating to gambling and EGMs?
- (3) What key messaging has been used in the government-funded primary prevention public education campaigns on gambling and EGMs over the past five years? Under the framework, what proportion of -
 - (a) funding and
 - (b) activity was directed to the prevention of problem gambling?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) (a) This is a matter for the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission, which is the independent body established under the Gaming Control Act 1993 responsible for the regulation of gambling in the state.

Tasmania's regulatory framework for gambling provides for robust harm minimisation measures. The commission's Responsible Gambling Mandatory Code of Practice for Tasmania requires that gambling operators make information available to people so that they can understand the nature of gambling and make informed choices about participating in gambling. The commission's suite of information to players closely aligns with the Gambling Support Program material.

The mandatory code, together with the commission's rules for gambling operators require among other things, that -

- Signs with the ODDSR branding and message 'The longer you play, the more you lose', reference to Gamblers Help and the telephone number and a warning for minors must be clearly displayed at every entrance to an area where gaming occurs and/or at other specific locations in a venue.
- In venues with gaming machines, posters with the ODDSR branding and a range of messages must be displayed in public bathrooms closest to gaming areas.
- Information for players (brochures and a contact card for Gamblers Help with the ODDSR branding) must be available in venues and online (if applicable). Brochures are to include information about -
 - the chances of winning;
 - responsible gambling, including how to limit losses;
 - where to get help if gambling becomes a problem
 - exclusion from gambling;
 - the prohibition for minors; and
 - how to make a complaint.
- Individual electronic gaming machines must be labelled with a sticker containing the ODDSR branding and message 'The longer you play, the more you lose', reference to Gamblers Help and the telephone number and a warning for minors.
- Gambling advertising must be conducted in a manner that takes account of the potential adverse impact that it can have on minors, people with gambling problems and people at risk of developing gambling problems. This includes responsible gambling messages in all media advertising incorporating a responsible gambling message and a reference to Gamblers Help and the telephone number.

The commission's mandatory code and the rules for gambling operators are strict and extensive and are available on the Department of Treasury and Finance website www.treasury.tas.gov.au/liquor-and-gaming.

- (b) The Government is aware that the DSM 5 defines gambling addiction as a health disorder. However, the GSP support services do not use the medical definition of addiction. Please see response to question (2)(c) below.
- (c) There is limited research available in relation to the design of EGMs and gambling addiction disorder as defined in the DSM 5. This is a new area that will require further investigation and research before consideration of this can be made.

(2) (a) No.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) The GSP provides campaigns that build community understanding of commercial gambling and allow people to make informed decisions about their participation. Our support services do not use the medical definition of addiction as part of their terminology and instead refer to the Problem Gambling Severity Index - PGSI - which acknowledges that harms can be experienced at any point along the continuum.

Recommendation 7.1 of the Productivity Commission 2010, Gambling, Report No. 50, Canberra, Volume 1 states 'Building on existing initiatives, governments should place greater emphasis on campaigns that -

- (i) dispel common myths about gambling and tell people how to gamble safely;
- (ii) highlight potential future consequences (financial losses, relationship breakdowns) associated with problem gambling; and
- (iii) make the community aware of behaviours indicative of problem gambling, to encourage earlier help-seeking or interventions by family and friends'.

(3) The key messages over the past five years have been -

- Know Your Odds messaging
- The longer you play, the more you lose
- The house edge
- How much can you expect to lose?
- Easy to bet, easy to lose
- It's not just gamblers who need support. It's those around them
- What are you willing to lose?
- Do you know someone affected by gambling?
- Watching more odds than action? Get back to the Real Game.

The framework informs the department's public health approach to gambling policy, programs and service delivery; it does not identify budget and activities being undertaken by the GSP.

17. KNOW YOUR ODDS MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGN

Ms WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

Noting the Know Your Odds multimedia campaign, a key part of the state Government's Gambling Support Program has a website, which appears to have been down for at least the whole of September 2019, and a Facebook page that hasn't had a posting since 11 July 2019 -

- (1) In the 12 months to today's date, for how many days was the Know Your Odds website accessible to the public?
- (2) (a) Is the Know Your Odds Facebook page continuing to be operated?
 (b) If not, why is it no longer operational?
 (c) Who made the decision to cease operation?
- (3) If operational, what frequency of posting is specified in its social media plan?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) The Gambling Support Program - GSP - is not aware of any downtime for the webpage www.knowyourodds.net.au. No-one has informed the GSP that they could not access the website. Google Analytics data shows users accessing the site each day from 1 July 2018 to 7 October 2019.
- (2) (a) Yes.
 (b) NA.
 (c) NA.
- (3) Frequency of posting is not the primary factor in the GSPs social media management. The Know Your Odds Facebook page is used in conjunction with campaigns, initiatives and events undertaken through the GSPs community education strategy. In addition, the GSP periodically posts links to relevant podcasts, television shows or articles that are suitable content for the Facebook page.

People accessing the Know Your Odds Facebook can access links to the Know Your Odds website which provides additional information. People seeking support can access links to support services from both the Facebook page and the Know your Odds website.

21. POKER MACHINE LICENCES

Ms WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

In the Premier's evidence to the Joint Select Committee into Future Gaming Markets and as set out in the Hodgman Liberal Government's Post-2023 Gaming Structural Framework, it states that 'The right to operate poker machines post 2023 will be allocated and priced by a market-based mechanism, such as a tender', and also that 'Hotels and clubs that had machines in place in March 2016 will not require any form of retrospective approvals.'

- (1) How will a market-based mechanism apply to hotels and clubs that currently have poker machines?
- (2) Will all hotels and clubs pay a licence fee for their right to operate poker machines?
- (3) (a) How many individual licenses will potentially be allocated to hotels and clubs under this proposed model?

- (b) Will a licence be required for each individual location or will companies who own multiple venues apply for one licence to operate across those multiple locations?
- (4) What is the estimated market value of each of these individual licences and what is their combined market value?
- (5) What economic modelling has been done or commissioned by the Government on the overall impact on the Tasmanian economy of the proposed new licensing arrangements?

In the joint Tasmanian Hospitality Association/Federal Group submission to the Joint Select Committee into Future Gaming Markets, the industry stated that its modelling estimated that each poker machine venue would be worth, on average, over \$1.5 million more under direct licensing (assuming a total state tax take of 38 per cent).

- (6) Given the tax take stated in the THA/Federal Group submission to the Joint Select Committee into Future Gaming Markets is almost exactly the same as that set out in the Liberal Party's election policy under the direct licensing plan, can the Treasurer confirm whether the industry estimated figure of an increase in value of \$1.5 million for each poker machine venue accords with Treasury modelling?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) to (3)

The Government's Future of Gaming in Tasmania - FGM - policy, released in February 2018, replaced the Post-2023 Gaming Structural Framework and was informed by the outcomes of the Joint Select Committee on Future Gaming Markets.

The FGM policy establishes, amongst other things, the structural framework for electronic gaming machine - EGM - operation in hotels and clubs from 1 July 2023. This includes licensing the right to operate EGMs in hotels and clubs on an individual venue operator model and going to market for the licence to monitor the network of EGMs in hotels and clubs. There are currently 93 licensed hotels and clubs with EGMs.

The Government has established a dedicated Future Gaming Market project team to manage the significant and complex restructure of the gaming industry, which will require legislative amendments to implement. The details of the new regulatory model are under development and will be reflected in legislation to amend the Gaming Control Act 1993.

Due to the complexity of the legislative amendments required to implement the FGM policy, and the need to appropriately consult on these amendments, the Government does not intend to introduce legislation any earlier than March 2020.

- (4) to (6)

The Future Gaming Market project team is continuing to undertake the significant and complex work associated with implementing the Government's FGM policy, including the development of licence fees, tax rates and licence terms. Government has not yet settled on the licence fees, tax rates or licence term that will apply to hotels and clubs under the FGM policy and therefore no modelling is currently available.

25. GAMBLING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Ms WEBB asked the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Mrs Hiscutt -

According to recent Victorian research, gambling harm is estimated to account for 22 per cent of costs to Victoria's mental health sector.

With the Government intending to keep poker machines in Tasmanian local communities for a further 20 years beyond 2023 -

- (1) Has the Government assessed and quantified the extent to which gambling harm has contributed to date to the level of mental ill-health and the cost of mental health services in our state?
- (2) Has the Government modelled the likely contribution of gambling harm to our state's future level of mental ill-health and cost of mental health services under the proposed new licensing model?
- (3) (a) Do Tasmanian mental health services collect data about co-occurrence of gambling harm for people attending state-funded mental health services; and
(b) if not, why not?
- (4) Does the Government have other data sources that quantify or indicate the co-occurrence of mental ill-health and gambling harm in this state?
- (5) Does the Government have data on the co-occurrence of gambling harm with suicides in this state?

The incorporated answer read as follows -

- (1) There has been no assessment of the impact of gambling harm on the level of mental ill-health or the cost of mental health services in Tasmania.
- (2) There has been no modelling of the likely contribution of gambling harm to the state's future level of mental ill-health and cost of mental health services.
- (3) (a) No.
(b) Gambling-related activities are not part of the standard national minimum dataset for mental health services.
- (4) The Department of Health is not aware of any data sources that would quantify or indicate the co-occurrence of mental ill-health and gambling harm in Tasmania.
- (5) The Department of Health in partnership with the Department of Justice and the Tasmanian Coroner's Office is developing the Tasmanian Suicide Register, which will provide the capacity to analyse information captured as part of coronial investigations of suicide. This information will include identified stressors, including any financial stressors.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Member for McIntyre

Motion by **Mrs Hiscutt** agreed to -

That the member for McIntyre, Ms Rattray, be granted leave of absence from the service of the Council for this week's sitting.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jake Wilkinson

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I welcome to our Chamber Jake Wilkinson, which is a pretty famous name in Legislative Council circles. I am not sure if there is any connection but Jake is a year 10 student from Hutchins School who is doing work experience in our Chamber. Jake will observe our proceedings and meet with various staff and officers across the parliament to see how parliament operates, how laws are made and issues debated.

Jake participated in the Youth Parliament this year, and we hope his experiences with us over the next few days offer him some interesting insights into the various workings of this institution and the lives of members of parliament. I am sure the members will join with me in warmly welcoming Jake to our Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

Dr Peter McIntosh

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I also welcome Dr Peter McIntosh, President of the Kingborough Dog Walking Association, who is present with us today to observe our first special interest contribution by the member for Nelson. I am sure all members welcome Dr McIntosh to the Chamber today

Members - Hear, hear.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Kingborough Dog Owner's Handbook

[11.08 a.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I begin by paying my respects to palawa people of lutruwita/Tasmania, in particular the muwinina people, the traditional owners and custodians of the land we are on today. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Mr President this morning I am sharing a story of collaboration, compromise and community. It is a story that proves that when people really listen to each other, engage with each other and work together in good faith, the whole community benefits.

I was privileged to attend the recent launch of the Kingborough Dog Owner's Handbook.

This beautifully presented publication has a wealth of information on enjoying your dog. Sections include things to consider when choosing a dog, ideas for socialising and exercising your dog, a guide to reading your dog's body language, and tips on how to be responsible dog owner within the community. It covers things like being mindful that some people are scared of dogs and how to manage that, and even tips on how to rehome your dog if this option becomes necessary.

It was obvious at the launch that everyone associated with this handbook was very proud to be a part of it - and rightly so - but these collaborators have not always been likeminded or on the same team, and this is what make this handbook so special.

Dr Peter McIntosh, President of the Kingborough Dog Walking Association, and Dean Winter, the Mayor of Kingborough, at the handbook's launch gave brief accounts of its history. I will share some of that with you shortly, but first I thought I would share with you a little research I have been doing about the benefits of dog ownership.

Some of these benefits are pretty obvious - daily walks are good for you and your dog, children who grow up with dogs are less likely to have allergies, many studies have shown that owning a dog decreases blood pressure and stress levels in their owners, and people with dogs report feeling safer and generally more positive about life. Did you know that a dog might improve your social life because more people are likely to stop and talk to you when you are walking your dog? There are a number of reports of dogs detecting early cancers in their owners or of dogs having the ability to alert their owner to imminent epileptic seizure. Owning a dog could literally save your life. Dogs have the ability to transcend cultural, physical, socio-economic and racial differences and, as this story shows, community differences too.

The Kingborough Dog Walking Association was the first dog walking association in Tasmania. It began with fewer than 10 members in 1998, in a response the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service taking over management of what is now the Peter Murrell Reserve in Huntingfield. The Parks and Wildlife Service intended to ban dogs from the new reserve. This did not sit well with several local dog-loving residents who formed an incorporated body to represent the community. The group successfully reached a 'dog on lead' compromise with the Parks and Wildlife Service which still applies today.

The Kingborough Dog Walking Association has now grown to well over 100 members. The objectives of the association are to -

- lobby for the retention and enhancement of suitable dog walking areas in the municipality of Kingborough for the use of members
- encourage members to have their dogs under effective control at all times
- encourage the formation of other dog walking associations in the state
- enhance the image of well-controlled dogs as a benefit to society
- liaise with the appropriate bodies associated with the Peter Murrell Reserve and other areas within the municipality to encourage members to assist with the enhancement of these areas.

In 2017-18 the Kingborough Council commenced its five-yearly review of its dog management plan, in accordance with the requirements of the Dog Control Act 2000; a consultation draft policy was released in 2018. Feedback on the first draft was overwhelmingly negative, particularly from dog owners, who make up about 40 per cent of Kingborough households. Many of the submissions found the language used to be bureaucratic and legalistic. Some suggested the policies should contain information in relation to the benefits of dog ownership and provide details on how to be a responsible owner.

The growing tensions around the review of the dog management plan culminated in June 2018, when over 600 people attended a public rally to protest the draft policy. The council listened and acted. Following the rally, the Kingborough Council initiated a second consultation process that received over 500 comments and suggestions and 105 written submissions. However, council staff were constrained by both the prescriptive requirements of the Dog Control Act 2000 and the standard template required for all council policies. It was clear there needed to be a way around this so the council could meet its legislative obligations while still addressing the needs of the community.

One recommendation of the extended consultation process was the council collaborate with the Kingborough Dog Walking Association to develop a document to support the policy. It could be written in less formal language and focus more on public education and less on enforcement. The original idea came from Councillor Richard Atkinson, who resigned from council earlier this year. The Kingborough Dog Walking Association was enthusiastic in its support of the concept and the notion of a dog owners' handbook was born with enthusiastic support and subsequently formally endorsed by the council. It was agreed to progress the development of the document once the final draft of the policy was approved.

The first joint Kingborough Dog Walking Association and Kingborough Council workshop to produce this handbook resulted in a whiteboard covered with ideas. The writing tasks were allocated to the handbook subcommittee, which comprised Georgia Clark, who is also in the Chamber today, and Venie Phillips, Tony Walch, Dr Katrina Ward and Peter McIntosh. Peter took on the perhaps unenviable task of editing the multi-author document into a single voice. Every edit was reviewed by Dr Katrina Ward, an animal behaviourist, who ensured the information was evidence-based and free from pet theories of a good meaning group of dog lovers.

Everyone associated with this project has mentioned the significant contribution of the Kingborough Council, particularly Amanda Morton. She turned 40 references, one diagram and 12 pages of dense dog management text into the heart-warming, colourful and engaging publication we have before us today. Others who made significant contributions include other members of the Kingborough Dog Walking Association Committee - Maureen Robinson, Maggie Hunter, Carol Baines, Pru Cooper, Ailsa Richards and Belinda Fenney-Walch; and from the Kingborough Council - Daniel Smee, Danielle Azevedo, Kelly Nichols, Scott Basham, Sarah Wilcox and Stephanie Velini. Quite a team effort.

The handbook was launched on Saturday, 9 November, by Dean Winter, the Mayor of Kingborough, and has been well received by the community. In fact, Councillor Winter wrote to me just yesterday to give his own glowing testament. He said, 'I used the book myself when I got home from the launch, read chapter one' - which is about selecting your dog - and with his four-year-old son, 'picked a cavoodle. So a cavoodle named Buzz arrived on Wednesday last week and he has fitted in very well, so the book works.'

The handbook is available on the council's website and in hard copy from the Civic Centre, 15 Channel Highway, Kingston. This is a living document that will evolve in the years to come to meet the needs of dog owners and the dogless alike.

I congratulate the Kingsborough Dog Walking Association and Kingsborough Council on a successful community-responsive and community-building collaboration.

End of Life Choice (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill

[11.16 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, recently I have presented special interest speeches on voluntary assisted dying and palliative care. I have also raised questions in this place concerning palliative care beds, specifically on the north-west coast, and I have also asked questions regarding future funding certainty for Palliative Care Tasmania.

Voluntary assisted dying is an issue that will always create interest, community debate and discussion. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but a very important part of the conversation and journey is ensuring that proposed legislation provides the desired outcomes for the people of Tasmania.

I will take a few moments this morning to update members on the processes I will be undertaking to finalise and progress the legislation, and also to give a detailed envisaged time line for the bill.

Early last year I was approached to take a lead role in carrying the voluntary assisted dying bill in the Legislative Council if it was passed by the majority of members in the House of Assembly. I believe the end of our life is a very important stage of our being. Perhaps it is not one we talk about as a society, but, nevertheless, we all wish for each other a peaceful and dignified exit.

There are challenges that we as a society need to address to provide more options for individuals who are, or may be, experiencing personal difficulty and intolerable suffering.

I was very comfortable to be able to carry the bill in the upper House and accepted that responsibility. To fully appreciate and understand the nuances of the legislation, I felt it integral for the bill's best chance of success to glean as much information as I could. As I have mentioned previously in this place, over a 15-day period I travelled to the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and the United States.

It was a valuable experience to meet with very experienced medical and nurse practitioners, legislators, lawyers, senators, chief executive officers, academics and others, and an experience that greatly assisted in informing me about the many issues and challenges wrapped around this issue.

It also highlighted the many different and varied pieces of legislation worldwide, all with similar goals - the safety, health and wellbeing of all involved with the event.

However, in more recent times, I was asked if I would introduce the bill in my name in the upper House. I said yes. However, understandably, that has meant I now need to take a different approach to this bill and its passage through parliament.

In my eyes, introducing a private member's bill is definitely different from being asked to carry somebody else's bill. The new bill will need to sit comfortably with me and the people I represent. As we know, the discussions surrounding dying with dignity and voluntary assisted dying have been occurring in Tasmania for well over a decade.

In Australia, the Victorian assisted dying laws are already in place, and the Western Australian and Queensland parliaments are moving towards the introduction of legislation in their jurisdictions.

The Tasmanian Dying with Dignity Bill 2009 and the voluntary assisted dying bills 2013 and 2016 were all defeated in the other place and never reached this Chamber.

I firmly believe a need exists - indeed, a fundamental right - for individuals to be able to choose a pathway that allows them to have a less painful, less stressful end of life that minimises intolerable suffering.

Thus, the legislation to be debated next year will be titled End of Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Bill 2020. This is probably more reflective of how I view the legislation: it is a life choice and one that I feel I personally should have the right to decide.

No doubt with any end-of-life event, there needs to be legislative safeguards and processes that allow an individual the right at any stage to withdraw from the process.

I also believe that other options and associated services available at the end of one's life should be financially well supported by the government and be available to every Tasmanian. Our medical and health practitioners need to be supported and legally protected because they play a very important role in the end-of-life experience for all Tasmanians.

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel is very well respected by members in this place. When I accepted the responsibility of introducing this legislation, my first action was to write to the Premier requesting access to OPC. I was very pleased with the Premier's correspondence, which not only offered OPC assistance, but also stated that Liberal Party members would have a conscience vote regarding this legislation. I am aware that both Labor and Greens generally also allow a conscience vote on social issues.

I can now provide the members with the following information regarding the time line. The end of life choices and voluntary assisted dying bill is currently being drafted by OPC. It is envisaged that the draft bill will be available by the end of January 2020. As soon as the draft bill is available, it will be available to all Tasmanians. I will ensure the bill is forwarded to all members of parliament. In February and March 2020, I will be presenting at numerous forums - morning, afternoon and evening - across the state to every local government area. The forums will inform Tasmanians about the bill and the parliamentary processes necessary for its passage.

The feedback received from the forum process will assist me in making alterations to the draft bill, ensuring the legislation reflects the best outcomes for the Tasmanian people and realises their expectations regarding this issue. It is envisaged that the new bill will be introduced to the parliament in this place in 2020. As soon as I have received venue confirmations from local councils, I will forward them to all members of parliament so they are aware of the day, date, time and place of the information sessions in their electorate. As with all constituents, members of parliament are invited to attend the forums.

In closing, I look forward to this journey with every member of parliament. I will endeavour to keep all members informed of the bill's progress and other relevant information to which I have access. Thank you.

Ronald Leslie Marriott OAM

[11.22 a.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Prosser - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I welcome Jake to the House and I hope he enjoys his time here.

Mr President, I rise today to remember a stalwart of local government. Ronald Leslie Marriott OAM passed away at the age of 95 years on Saturday, 3 August 2019, just a month short of his ninety-sixth birthday.

Ronald Leslie Marriott, fondly known as Ron, was born on 1 September 1923 in a quiet and beautiful corner of what would become his much beloved Huon Valley, Cairns Bay. Ron's career can simply be summed up as remarkable. Ron applied for a job as junior clerk with the Esperance Municipal Council at the age of 17 and thus he began a 45-year career in local government. He progressed to become the Esperance Council clerk and he was very proud of the fact that his municipality stretched 600 miles south to include Macquarie Island.

As council clerk in a country town, Ron's role was varied and very interesting, including being clerk of the court when it came to town. In Ron's time at Esperance, he developed a reputation for being an effective and hardworking manager of municipal affairs. He earned the respect of colleagues both around the state and later interstate. Ron's family told me that he was something of a community identity in Esperance, not only because of his work role, but because he was also a justice of the peace, a prominent sportsman - representing the Huon in both football and cricket - a lay preacher, secretary and treasurer of the Geeveston Congregational Church, and a supporter of many causes, as well as office bearer of many associations. It was clear from his extensive involvement with his community that he had a deep love and a great sense of responsibility for it.

Moving on from Esperance, Ron was the inaugural secretary of the newly created Local Government Association of Tasmania, before being appointed council clerk, a position now known as general manager, of the Municipality of Clarence, from 1972 to 1985. He was a leading administrator of local government in Tasmania throughout his 45-year career in the sector. Some of you may not know, but Clarence around that time changed from being a commission to an elected council and Ron very capably oversaw the significant transition. Around that time, the Whitlam government made funds available for local governments to undertake capital works to modernise their communities and Ron was successful in gaining a grant of \$250 000, which was a significant amount of money at that time. That money enabled Clarence to undertake much-needed major upgrades to sewerage, roads, kerbs and guttering, laying the foundations for the steep rise in interest in Clarence as a desirable place to live.

During Ron's working life at the council, he provided strong leadership for the municipality during trying times, particularly in January 1975 when the Tasman Bridge collapsed - naturally, a personal tragedy for those directly involved and a cause of great uncertainty, particularly for residents of the Eastern Shore.

In no way playing down the tragic nature of the disaster, Ron also saw it as an opportunity to gain valuable assets for Clarence and lobbied the state government hard to ensure all was done to alleviate the problems caused by this event. He worked tirelessly in this matter.

New infrastructure in the forms of roads, water reticulation and the opening of various government agencies in Clarence can be put down to Ron's efforts supported by the council.

I am told Ron had a very keen interest in planning issues, which, particularly in a growing municipal area such as Clarence was and remains, is so very important given the varying interest involved. Sensitive infill housing was something Ron pushed for, and he also ensured that in outer areas sufficient provision was given in land subdivisions for the inclusion of right of ways. The very existence of the extensive Tangara Trail system can be sheeted home to Ron and the town planner at the time, Bill Calver.

Ron was, with universal agreement, the leader of local government managers and ultimately held the position of national president of the Municipal Managers Australia, now the Local Government Managers Australia. In this particular role he represented Australian managers in international forums. I am told that he may have been the very first Tasmanian to hold such an exalted position.

Ron was quick to recognise the importance of sporting assets to the Clarence community, in particular Bellerive Oval, now known as Blundstone Arena. He recognised it as a strategic asset not only for Clarence but also for Tasmania as a whole. The development of the oval into a major international cricket venue commenced during his tenure as clerk - a project that Ron was extremely proud of and often spoke about to his family and friends.

Ron was highly respected by all those around him - by staff, elected members and the community alike, so much so that he mentored several staff members who went on to hold very senior positions in local government and politics.

Ron was a leader in so many ways. He led his community in sporting teams, his church, his Lodge, his work colleagues and his peers. He rose to the very top of his game, representing his country on the world stage at international conferences in both New Zealand and South Africa.

Probably one of the most significant recognitions Ron achieved was his Order of Australia medal in 1983 for his service to local government and the community. While Ron was unassuming at being recognised for his many achievements, he was quick to point to former colleagues for their dedication to tasks over many years.

Following his retirement, he was directly involved with the state government's Local Government Board.

As you have heard here today, Ron was extremely passionate about the Eastern Shore, having worked and lived in the municipality for over 50 years.

I had the pleasure of meeting Ron on many occasions and I can truly attest to his integrity, warmth, passion, kindness and love of his family and friends. He and his wife Jeanne celebrated 70 years of marriage in June - what a remarkable innings! Unfortunately, Jeanne passed away in July at the age of 92, with Ron passing some two weeks later. Some might say that is quite a true love story. Together they had six children - two deceased - 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In closing, my sincere condolences to Ron's family, his children, Penny, Greg, Rod, Anthony and their families on the passing of Ron, an instrumental leader and passionate advocate for the local government and this state.

Envorinex

[11.30 a.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, four years ago I stood in this Chamber and gave a speech on a local George Town company, Envorinex, which was doing great things for both Tasmanian industry and the Tasmanian and world environment. During those four years much has happened, and I want to bring this to members' attention.

Envorinex is a Tasmanian-owned and operated company working with recyclable polymer materials. It creates a multitude of recyclable products that are shipped to interstate and export markets, including Japan, Italy, North America, New Zealand, Fiji, European Union and Papua New Guinea.

Envorinex recycles over 16 500 cubic metres per annum of clean hospital waste products, including flexible PVC IV bags, face masks and tubing. It also recycles waste silage wrap from farmers, horticultural film from berry farm tunnels, strawberry grow bags, waste pipe from fish farms and mines, to name a few. A new Tasmanian hospital program will see waste polypropylene film reprocessed and manufactured into new products to re-use and recycle yet again.

From all these recycled products, Envorinex makes items such as mini septic tank chambers, anti-fatigue matting, raised garden beds, building supports, farm fencing, road sign base plates, guideposts, builders film, and a range of contract mouldings and profiles for clients all over Australia.

A new major endeavour, Envorinex is now focused on expanding its business into both Queensland and the Hobart region. It is becoming very well known in the recycling industry as a major player in taking waste and creating useful items. It has also been contacted by eight councils in far north coast New South Wales that have requested its assistance in recycling silage wrap, fertiliser bags, banana bags and palate wrap. It is going worldwide, it is going country-wide.

This is a huge step for the company and one that should be heavily supported by the Tasmanian Government as part of its draft waste action plan. The Government has already invested in facilities to improve the recycling of Tasmania's waste and according to a Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment - DPIPWE - spokesperson -

... capacity should be developed to support the establishment of recycling and reuse businesses ...

That was from a September 2019 waste management review.

Tasmania's recycling has fallen behind the rest of Australia, with a rate of 50 per cent in 2018, which is not good enough. Envorinex is doing its part to help eliminate landfill by using recycled products and annually is saving 6560 tons of waste stream plastics from Tasmanian landfill sites.

Envorinex's intention of building a soft plastics recycling centre in the Hobart region can only further limit the amount of landfill that goes into Tasmanian sites. Envorinex employs Tasmanians and wants to minimise the volume of waste that goes into landfill. I cannot put its case strongly enough for government interest and support. I call on the Government to meet with the two company directors, Mike Turner and Jenny Brown, two Tasmanians who are working their butts off to clean up Tasmania and turn waste into products. They are Tasmanian. They want support for their growth into Hobart and the Government needs to talk and work with them. The company advises it has been trying to talk with the Government through emails and other means, but has had little response. However, some light on the horizon - a visit is planned to the company in late December by the minister, Mr Ferguson.

Ms Forrest - Late December?

Mr DEAN - Late December. Thank you, Mike and Jenny, for what you are doing for the environment and Tasmania. You should be congratulated on the company's achievements and the direction it is taking. You are doing Tasmania proud and cleaning up Tasmania.

In conclusion, I want to wish Mike Turner a speedy recovery from a health issue he recently experienced.

Wynyard Tulip Festival

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, this year's annual Wynyard Tulip Festival was held on 12 October and attracted a crowd of more than 22 000 people, with visitors coming from Tasmania, interstate and overseas. I congratulate the Waratah-Wynyard Council and the fantastic team led by Chantelle French and the large number of volunteers who made this event such a success. The festival is held in Gutteridge Gardens, a beautiful location that provides a picturesque backdrop for what is always a colourful and exciting day. This year's festival was no exception.

There were many local food producers, as well as activities to appeal to all ages. Gemma Giraffe, sand sculpture, fairy tales and pirate sails, snake man, colour run and a gopher race were just some of the many attractions that entertained the crowds. Two helicopters gave patrons a bird's-eye view of Wynyard and Boat Harbour for most of the day, on what was an ideal day for a flight, showing off the vibrant fields of tulips, irises and other crops in and around Table Cape.

More than 119 stalls showcased a variety of local craft, food and beverage, community and corporate entertainment experiences. If music was your thing, there were seven live acts on the main stage who entertained the crowd all day, with thousands of people staying on to enjoy the atmosphere right up till 9.00 p.m., with spectacular closing fireworks over the Inglis River.

The economic benefit to the town was over \$1 million. It was a very welcome and busy weekend for all retailers. Accommodation was booked out over the weekend. The main street businesses all reported greater takings for the day. The Shop and Win and kids' Find and Seek proved very popular. Chantelle French and her team worked hard to attract significant sponsorship and secured one platinum, six gold, three silver and 12 bronze for event and friends of the festival sponsors and 11 prize donations, which contributed almost \$29 000 in cash prizes and in-kind support. Volunteers once again provided invaluable assistance. I sincerely thank them all for their

contribution to our community. The 35 volunteers contributed 205 hours of their time to help make the festival run smoothly. That is just on the day.

Another venue that had a busy day was the Wonders of Wynyard Exhibition and Visitor Information Centre. This amazing visitor experience recently took out the Visitor Information Services Award in the 2019 Tasmanian Tourism Awards. This is the fourth year in a row this centre has been recognised as the best in visitor servicing. This is an outstanding result for a visitor centre in a small regional town. If you have not been there, you do need to visit it. It really is an amazing place. Again, I acknowledge and thank all the volunteers, as well as the paid staff who make this centre the success it is. I know I always recommend it to visitors. They are never disappointed.

The Wonders of Wynyard will now represent Tasmania at the Australian Tourism Awards in Canberra in March 2020, proudly flying the flag for regional tourism in this state. Some of the comments from the judges included, 'Very experienced operator/service provider'; 'Totally customer- and community-focused provider who delivers at the highest standard'. What a recommendation for the people who work and volunteer there. Well done on a well-written and professional submission. When you win four years in a row, you get a bit of practice.

The Australian Tourism Awards program is designed to be a valuable planning and development tool that has enabled Wonders of Wynyard to review the service it provides to its visitors. There was a real sense of pride in the submission, pride in what it does on a daily basis with its team, pride in the town and pride in the north-west region.

I will also briefly mention another north-west organisation that is representing Tasmania at the Australian Tourism Awards in March, this time in the festivals and events category. This is the edgy and fabulous festival held biennially in Queenstown on the west coast - The Unconformity. I declare my interest as a board member. I wish to acknowledge the amazing creative genius of our artistic director Travis Tiddy and the passion and dedication of our Chair, and also local Queenstown lad, Rick Snell, my fellow board members and the broader community who have embraced and supported this festival. The next festival is scheduled for 2020 and I encourage members to book early as accommodation will sell out almost immediately the tickets and program come online.

I wish all the Tasmanian finalists the very best and hope to see the Wonders of Wynyard and The Unconformity bringing home national awards. I note these event experiences would not survive without so many dedicated volunteers and I wish again to acknowledge and thank all our valued volunteers and all those who worked so hard to put our state on the national map and make our local communities wonderful places to live and recreate. To get 22 000 visitors to Wynyard on one day for one festival is a huge achievement. It had a really big impact for the day, and it was fabulous day -

Mr Dean - Huge achievement anywhere, I think.

Ms FORREST - Yes, and it spread all the way through Gutteridge Gardens, right down to the wharf and up onto the main road. which is blocked off. The main streets are blocked off for the Gopher Race, which is always a highlight. I congratulate Chantelle French and her team - an amazing job again.

Mr PRESIDENT - Honorable members, I suppose it is very appropriate that the final special interest contribution for this year goes to one of its biggest fans. He informs me he is now the

longest serving member of the Tasmanian Parliament, which makes him the father of the parliament, which is a fairly frightening thought. I call now on the honorable member for Rosevears.

Riverside Primary School

[11.42 a.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, thank you very much. I recently toured one of the largest and best primary schools in Tasmania - of course, it is in my electorate. It is a credit to its administrators and staff, the community and the Education department, and I am justly proud of it. I speak of the Riverside Primary School, which, with just under 780 pupils, is a great example of public education. It has very strong learning outcomes, innovative teaching practices with a strong professional learning culture and an outstanding external environment for learning. About 96 per cent of the students go on to Riverside High and those who do not probably leave the district before secondary school age. Most parents would much rather their kids go to Riverside High, the best private school the public system provides in Tasmania. It is also a great school.

The primary school's principal, Jane Bovill, says she really wants to be as visible as possible and work with the students. That is not always possible because all principals have high administrative workloads. It is important, though, in a school of that size to build a strong and collaborative team, which she has been able to do, all members of which are working towards the same goals. She says it is important to establish whole school expectations and processes in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The teaching is also focused on learning assets of students as thinkers, collaborators, communicators, self-managers and researchers, which will set them up for any future pathway, whether it be in tertiary education, the workforce or being a positive member of our community. It is not just reading, writing and arithmetic - as we used to say, the three Rs, although that is R,W and A - I quote Jane -

Schools can't be responsible for everything

The content should not control what we teach - it should be skills, understanding and dispositions that set up children for the future. We need to keep our young people curious, creative and resilient thinkers and learners. She is a great thinker, a great educator. Jane Bovill says the Education department has been supportive of innovative practice that improves outcomes for students and encourages parent satisfaction, particularly through its annual survey, which has one of the state's highest participation rates. Jane says that Riverside's strong school association and partnerships with all members of the school community make this school great. These are elements that will make any school great.

The Education department has thrown its financial support behind Riverside Primary School. In turn, the school has received a \$2.8 million capital project, including a school funding contribution. It includes new facilities comprising four new classrooms and the upgrading of existing ones, a discovery centre, an external learning plaza, a student kitchen and an astroturf soccer field.

I will let some of the Riverside students have the last words; I will quote some of the comments from a recent grade 6 student survey -

- 'It's inclusive.'
- 'Lots of amazing opportunities.'

- 'We are friendly.'
- 'Wonderful spaces for learning.'
- 'I am privileged that I can learn in this school and work in the classrooms.'
- 'Thank you for giving us an open space with lots of sun and using student voices in the designs.'
- 'It's a creative space instead of being a boring square box.'
- 'Makes me want to go to school more often.'

They are quotes from the students. If the students are onsite, somebody must be doing something right at Riverside Primary.

MOTION

Youth Unemployment in Tasmania

[11.46 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE - Mr President, I move an amended motion -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes that Tasmania's 12-month average youth unemployment rate is 14.5 per cent, more than double Tasmania's overall unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent;
- (2) Acknowledges there are youth unemployment hotspots across Tasmania's regions with the 12-month average for Greater Hobart at 15.7 per cent and the West/North-West at 15.0 per cent, ranking as the 13th and 16th worst areas for youth unemployment in the nation;
- (3) Acknowledges the recent announcement of 130 job losses at Vodafone in Hobart will disproportionately affect young people;
- (4) Acknowledges that young people who are currently unemployed are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed or leaving the state for opportunities elsewhere;
- (5) Notes with concern that Tasmania has an annual net migration loss of 580 people in the 15-24 demographic;
- (6) Notes that more needs to be done to connect the education system with labour market demands;
- (7) Notes that despite youth unemployment being a major problem for many years, there is no policy framework for solving this problem; and
- (8) Calls on the state Government to acknowledge the importance of immediate action to combat youth unemployment and initiate a youth jobs task force.

Before I start, I have adjusted the job figures as the original Notice of Motion was tabled over a month ago now and they have varied slightly. That is what was circulated this morning to members. I have used the 12-month average for youth unemployment because the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not run trend data as it does for the unemployment rate for the general population.

From the outset. I acknowledge this is a longstanding problem that has plagued governments of all persuasions across Australia. As we do in private members' time, I move this motion to focus the parliament's attention on an important issue. In this instance it is the issue of youth unemployment. Hopefully the ensuing debate will focus on the challenges, discuss what may or may not be happening currently, and any future action the Government could take.

I do not intend to address each of the points in sequential order as many of them are factual in nature. I will speak generally about the issue.

I can acknowledge the Government has a few current job initiatives in various stages of implementation, but not necessarily solely focused on youth. I will talk a little about those later because I am sure the Government will be keen to highlight everything it is doing and say everything is fine.

But is it?

In March this year, according to the Brotherhood of St Laurence youth unemployment report, Hobart had the highest youth unemployment rate of any capital. In Glenorchy, in the heart of my own electorate, youth unemployment in some suburbs is above 20 per cent.

A striking feature of these figures is that the highest rates are not uniform across the country and they are more common in regional areas. This demonstrates that after 28 years of economic growth as a nation, the benefits are deeply uneven. The story of two Tasmanians is stark in these figures and the heart of my electorate, Glenorchy, is bearing one of the biggest burdens of youth unemployment, but so are the west and the north-west of the state. Many young people are simply locked out.

As I said at the outset, this is not a new problem. Back in 1987, after consulting with a wide range of individuals and organisations attempting to assist homeless children, analysing current policy directions and surveying the available literature, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission decided there was a clear need for a national inquiry into homelessness as it affects children and young people. The subsequent report contained chapter 11, a chapter specifically on youth unemployment. Among other issues, the commission found that teenage unemployment rates as high as 21 per cent to 27 per cent for much of the last five years dropped in mid-1988 to 14.8 per cent. In some areas, the pattern of teenage unemployment has remained considerably higher than 20 percent. Sounds familiar.

The high rates at the time were said to be experienced by working class communities in an economy experiencing manufacturing decline, as well as rural communities. Causes of youth unemployment included the substitution of older experienced workers for teenagers, the replacement of full-time teenage jobs by part-time jobs, and the disappearance of teenage career structures.

In 1985, the Bureau of Labour Market Research reported that part-time employment had been responsible for nearly all job growth for youth in Australia. The report noted that technological change had a dramatic impact.

One example given was that of Telecom, which automated its exchange during the 1970s. As a result, 70 percent of junior female operators in New South Wales disappeared from the industry between 1971 and 1976. There was a decline of about 50 per cent for teenage electricians nationally.

Fast forward to 2019 and another telecommunications giant, Vodafone, is offshoring jobs that are currently in Hobart.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission also found that youth unemployment was prolonged with about one in five people out of work at least six months being teenagers. Long-term unemployment can become chronic.

The time that young people remain jobless was an important factor in terms of the psychological impact of unemployment. Young people were likely to spend their period of unemployment in poverty, and those aged 15 would experience considerable difficulty obtaining federal income support payments.

The last point in the report was that many witnesses to the inquiry, including young people, expressed the view that young people were eager to work.

That report was from 1987. It begs the question, what has changed?

Many of those findings could apply, to a certain degree, to the present day. Like a lot of the country, the unemployment rate in Tasmania is much lower than the youth unemployment rate, which like the rest of the country, has been stubbornly high since the global financial crisis.

High levels of youth unemployment and underemployment comparative to the general unemployment figures can mean something else is amiss in the system. There is a mismatch between the skills young people are being equipped with and the demands of the labour market.

The Mitchell Institute's Preparing Young People for the Future of Work report highlights the skills needed to succeed in a changing economy.

While technical or job-specific skills remain important, it is skills in non-routine industries, those requiring innovation, creativity, problem-solving, relationships and responsiveness to changing circumstances, that will see rapid growth.

Foundation for Young Australians' New Work Reality report highlighted that enterprise skills, problem-solving, communication and teamwork can help a young person get to work, on average, 17 months faster.

Other factors that can speed up a young person's transition to full-time work are -

- 5000 hours of relevant paid employment, helping a young person get to work, on average, 12 months faster;

- paid employment in demand areas of work, such as health, professional services, or information technology, helping a young person get to work, on average, five months faster; and
- an optimistic mindset and confidence in their career path, helping a young person get to work two months faster.

This leads us to the education system. While Australia has been developing in some areas of education, there continue to be ongoing challenges, some of which are more acute in Tasmania.

As we have talked about in this place during the NAPLAN debate, Gonski and others are highlighting we are not yet developing the full range of knowledge, skills and capabilities that young people need currently at a systems level. Only narrow measures of education achievement and certain outcomes are captured, valued and prioritised.

The two stated goals in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, agreed on by all Australian governments in 2008, are that Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, active and informed citizens.

Yet as the Mitchell Institute highlights, outcomes against most of these goals are not systemically measured. Narrow proxy measures of academic achievement are made a priority, as demonstrated by the emphasis many schools place on lifting National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy results and the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank.

The national curriculum includes a range of broader learning outcomes; general capabilities such as creative and critical thinking; personal and social capability and ethical understanding. However, as the Mitchell Institute goes on, there is no consistent national approach to measuring and tracking these general capabilities and each jurisdiction is able to determine the extent to which they are assessed and reported on.

It is not yet well understood by all schools how to teach the capabilities, although some schools are moving to include them. Perhaps this is an area where a task force could lead system change in Tasmania. That is not to say it is not happening in Tasmania. I have spoken about Burnie Primary School, which is in your electorate, Leader -

Mrs Hiscutt - No, it is in -

Mr WILLIE - In the member for Murchison's electorate. I visited there this year and they are teaching the general capabilities across all grade levels and it is very impressive. They have a very good understanding of this, but it is not happening in every school.

It is clear more needs to be done to connect the education system with labour market demands. When young people leave without the skills they need, it can be exhausting for them to be trapped in an endless cycle. I have worked with young people most of my professional career - as a primary school teacher, a Whitelion mentor, a football league administrator and now as the member for Elwick and shadow minister for Education.

The unemployed and underemployed young people I have met have described how they feel invisible, which leads them to becoming socially isolated and anxious. There is no doubt the flow-on from this impacts mental health and general wellbeing.

There is a myth that life is good for the younger generation, and all they have to do is eat less smashed avocado to get ahead.

There are so many cost barriers to young people finding work, especially if they are relying on Youth Allowance or Newstart. The low rate of Youth Allowance and Newstart payments traps people in a cruel cycle of poverty.

I am not sure if members have looked up the payments for Youth Allowance or Newstart lately -

Ms Forrest - We know we could not live on it.

Mr WILLIE - They have not changed significantly for a long time. I will read some of the classifications, because they inform the debate on how young people are living if they are not employed.

If you are a single young person, with no children and younger than 18 and live in your parents' home, you are entitled to a maximum fortnightly payment of \$249.20. If you are single, have no children younger than 18 and you need to live away from your parents' home to study, train or look for work, you are entitled to a maximum payment of \$455.20 a fortnight. If you are single with children - and I know from experience children are very costly; a good investment but difficult on household budgets. If you are a single person with children on a Newstart payment, you are entitled to a maximum of \$596.50 a fortnight.

Newstart does not get much better. If you are single with dependant child or children - \$604.70 maximum payment a fortnight. Not everybody receives the maximum payment. It is dependent on your personal circumstances.

Once you take out big household items like rent, which we know is skyrocketing as a household cost, and utilities, which we know are also increasing, and groceries, how are you supposed to afford transport to get to a job or interview and buy clothing appropriate for an interview, access a computer to develop your curriculum vitae or even print it, or if you cannot find work and you want to continue your education, how do you afford to do that? It is notoriously hard to overcome these challenges.

Let us turn to some of the government initiatives designed to address unemployment, not necessarily youth unemployment on its own, but unemployment and business growth, which we hope leads to more employment opportunities. I am sure the Government would talk about its Business Growth Strategy, payroll tax incentives for apprentices and trainees and its Growing Apprenticeships and Traineeships grant program, among others. I am sure we will get a list of those.

Perhaps one of the better stories to tell is the employment partnership. There was a very good story on ABC online this week. I am going to read it out as it is an example of where partnerships, task force alliances can together creatively solve wicked problems like youth unemployment -

Councils, businesses, social services and trainers unite for regional jobs.

Former job seeker, Ethan Cram, felt like 'something in the middle [was] not meeting up'.

'I couldn't find any work in my area. I didn't really want to go up to town for work, and there wasn't really much up there', he said.

He lives in south-east Tasmania, which boasts a high job growth rate, but has highest rate of youth unemployment in the state. Mr Cram, a former chef, is now a building apprentice, and says those three months he spent unemployed and struggling to pay rent were hard.

'I was keen to just do anything', he said. 'I just needed a job, and I found something I liked better, so it worked out really well'.

An alliance of councils, a not-for-profit organisation and a trade training centre in the region was his saviour, and his new employer Trent Young found his new apprentice through the work of the alliance.

'The community is working well together', Mr Young said. 'Why not employ local people and keep those dollars going around in this community rather than elsewhere?'

...

Sorell Mayor Kerry Vincent said he had been determined to tackle unemployment. Through his role as chairman of the South East Regional Development Association (SERDA), which represents the municipalities of Sorell, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Tasman and Clarence, he hired Andrew Hyatt to work with employers to figure out what they needed.

'We needed somebody who could go and talk to employers, and try and get them before they open the doors for business,' he said. 'We needed to say 'what sort of people do you need?', 'how many do you need?', 'can we make sure they're local people?' and 'how would you like them trained to take on the roles in your business'', he said.

...

But they quickly discovered it was about more than just the employers.

'We realised that a large part of the workforce was people who were on government benefits, or underemployed, or living in a situation where they found it difficult to get to work', he said.

At the same time the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) was launching a regional employment program through the Jobs Action Package. This is a partnership with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) and the State Government. TasCOSS contracted Marinda Trembath to

work with the jobless, to remove barriers such as finding a babysitter, or even getting teeth replaced.

'TasCOSS encouraged us to look at young unemployed people, parents returning to work after starting a family and people that are in that 50-65 bracket, that have probably stepped out of their career, but are still looking for something to do', Cr Vincent said.

One more ingredient was felt to be needed. The final player was Rick Birch of the South East Trade Training Centre -

which are excellent -

to ensure the necessary training courses were on offer.

...

'We swap notes, we talk daily.

'We all have a passion for this area, and that's what makes it easy for us.'

...

The funding for Mr Hyatt's position to work with employers came from a program developed with the Tasmanian Community Fund, which aimed to see 50 jobs created over three years. In 11 months, Mr Hyatt has met with more than 500 employers, filled 85 jobs, and identified another 350 for the next 12 months.

Ms Trembath, who was hired to remove barriers to employment, started just three and a half months ago, and has found part-time or full-time employment for 35 people. It is a model TasCOSS chief executive Kym Goodes is keen on expanding. 'This model is working really well because it's being driven at a local level,' she said.

'Local people have come together, working with and through the local mayor to design a model that's going to work for them and their community.'

This program is ongoing. I know they are turning their focus to your electorate, Mr President, the Derwent Valley, and also the north-east.

There are good things happening, and I acknowledge that, but not necessarily solely focused on youth unemployment, and there is no overarching framework for the state. This is a pilot and, as TasCOSS highlighted, it is seeking more investment into initiatives like this to address these sorts of problems. I know in last year's state budget, it was after \$25 million; the Government coughed up \$6 million. Much more investment is still needed to make sure we are all sharing in the prosperity of the state.

An employment partnership in this instance could be a task force or an alliance. I know TasCOSS was seeking, and no doubt will continue to seek, much greater investment from the

current Government to assist communities to support local people into job opportunities. I will read TasCOSS's budget submission for the next budget period with great interest.

Admirably, it emphasises shared responsibility, capacity building and developing innovative solutions to address broader systemic shortfalls and targeted action. As TasCOSS says, it is about doing things differently with, not to, communities. Why cannot this sort of approach be solely adopted for youth? A task force with cross-sector membership, with representation of young people, local leaders from the community, business, not-for-profits, local government, schools, TAFE and the university.

The employment partnership shows it can be done. Why do we not start earlier and connect it to our education institutions in a more efficient way? We could build the skills and attitude of young people; it could be led by local communities and it could build the capacity of local business to support young people. Most importantly, it could improve opportunities for young people to become employed.

In conclusion, Tasmania still has a worrying annual net migration loss of 580 people in the 15 to 24 demographic. With an aging demographic, we cannot afford to lose our best and brightest. Young people are frustrated. We need to find better ways to tailor employment support to young people experiencing disadvantage. We need to address language skills, cultural competencies and find ways to create stronger networks in our community to mentor people. The truth is at the moment many young people I meet are just struggling to get through each day. It is something that for many, especially those without family support, is consuming and exhausting. Many young people should not feel a sense of personal failure. I am keen to hear from Government and independent members in this place on how we can refocus and prioritise opportunities for young people and unlock our state's potential.

[12.08 p.m.]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Huon) - Mr President, the member for Elwick has highlighted youth unemployment and the percentages throughout different regions in Tasmania in his motion. I also mention the change in population and unemployment rates from 2014 to October 2019. In March 2014, our population was 513 681; by March 2019, it had grown to 533 308, an increase of nearly 20 000 people. Our youth unemployment rate in 2014 varied from 19.4 per cent, or 8700, in January to 17.1 per cent, or 7300, in October. For the same period in 2019, the youth unemployment rate in January was 18.6 per cent, or 8400 people and in October 10.3 per cent, or 4700 people. These figures have fluctuated over the years. For example, in June 2014, it was 18.5 per cent, or 8200 people, and in June 2019, it was 13.5 per cent, or 5700 people.

Although we would agree these figures are still too high, it shows there has been a significant improvement in youth employment over the past six years. Undoubtedly there will be hotspots where youth unemployment is higher than the average, for a number of reasons. One of those reasons could be transport.

Although the recent announcement of 130 Vodafone job losses may have an impact on unemployment, I am not convinced that these job losses would reflect in the 15- to 24-year-old age bracket. There will also be areas where youth unemployment will be lower than average.

In 2019, the highest youth unemployment figures were in January. This coincided with the end of the school year. From January to October there was a steady decline in youth employment, from 8400 to 4700.

The member for Elwick stated that we have a net annual migration loss of 580 people in the 15- to 24-year age bracket. While this is concerning, we need to take into account that in that age group there are various reasons for moving interstate, such as enrolment in mainland universities, working holidays, the gap year, relationships, and many other reasons.

In 2014, my local football club was low in numbers, and struggling to fill its three Saturday teams because players had moved interstate looking for work. This are the age bracket we are discussing at the moment. Since then, most of those players have found local employment and returned to the area.

Youth unemployment has been an ongoing issue for as long as I can remember. While I accept the 12-month average youth employment rate was 14.9 percent, we need to look at the latest statistics to October 2019, which is 10.3 percent or 4700.

Mr Willie - That is the monthly figure.

Mr ARMSTRONG - It was coming down from December. It has been gradually coming down all the time. I have the figures here if you want.

The statistics reflect that youth unemployment has declined by 8.3 percent, or 3700, from January this year. That is a significant number.

Although I agree with some of the points in the member for Elwick's motion, I do not believe that now is the time, with youth unemployment significantly dropping, to initiate a youth job task force. I will not be supporting some of the positions in this notice of motion.

[12.13 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, as I flagged earlier some amendments are going around. The member for Elwick updated some of those figures, which was the initiation of our amendments, but we also added a bit, so I will still proceed with the amendments.

Mr Willie - I deliberately kept to the issue and not the politics. You put political markers in the ground.

Mrs HISCUTT - Before I start, I acknowledge the member for Elwick's passion in this area and keeping it in the light. It is a problem that faces our state.

I will lay out for members some of the undisputable facts. Then I will outline the Government's approach to getting more Tasmanians into work and our young people into study, training, or work.

The member spoke about what is currently happening, so I will elaborate a bit more. The fact is that 2109 has been a good year for our economy, our businesses and Tasmanian workers, including our youth. In a record first for Tasmania, the Australian Bureau of Statistics - ABS - just days ago confirmed our economy is now the fastest growing in Australia and growing at its fastest rate in 15 years. It is also the first time that all 19 industries in Tasmania grew throughout the year, meaning our economic success is broad-based, resilient and creating jobs right around the state. Demonstrating nation-leading confidence, our businesses are employing more workers. ABS data shows that a record 250 900 Tasmanians are now in work, and that includes 37 200 young people in year average terms.

Since the Hodgman Government was first elected in 2014, there are 15 800 more jobs, including for 2700 more young people. Overall, the unemployment rate is 1.3 percentage points lower and the youth unemployment rate is 2.8 percentage points lower. The unemployment rate is lower in each region and in every single local government area.

It is important to remember this because the best way for our young people to get a job and for them to stay in Tasmania is if the economy is strong and businesses are investing and hiring. Because there are opportunities, more of our young people are choosing to stay in Tasmania, either pursuing further study here or taking up work.

According to ABS demographic statistics, in 2011-12, 1510 young Tasmanians aged between 15 and 24 left Tasmania. In 2017-18, just 660 did, and that figure has been spoken about a couple of times here. This has been a reduction of nearly a third, which demonstrates that our plan is working.

It is also important to acknowledge that in a small island state, there will always be those who choose to leave Tasmania to take up opportunities elsewhere. I have one son who stayed and one son who left. As a government, the important point is to ensure there remain opportunities here so that leaving is a choice and not a necessity.

Second, it is important that there are opportunities here in Tasmania so that they can choose to return. In 2017-18, 720 people aged 25 to 34 moved to Tasmania, bringing their young children with them as well, thereby demonstrating that Tasmania remains a great place to return to, or move to, to raise a family.

On a personal note, having been a past marriage celebrant, I noticed that some of my son's friends returned home to get married and to have their families here, and that was good to see.

What are we doing? The Government knows that more needs to be done - we acknowledge that - so that all Tasmanians can share in our economic prosperity. There are pockets of Tasmania where youth unemployment can be high. The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to supporting a job-ready generation. The Government is investing in education, skills and training needed to boost apprenticeship and trainee numbers, as well as specific actions for vulnerable youth, so our young people can get the skills needed to get a job. We are investing a record \$7.3 billion over four years into education and \$100 million a year into skills to help Tasmanians get a job.

I will now talk about a number of the Government's actions to improve youth employment outcomes. I think the member for Elwick touched on a few of them. In skills, the budget contains \$2.9 million in additional funding for TasTAFE to address skills needs in our growth industries. This commitment will help enable TasTAFE to employ an additional five teachers across the building, construction and allied trades, a dedicated team of three welding teachers, and a dedicated apprenticeship coordinator and industry liaison officer.

A further \$3.15 million package will fund nine initiatives that will deliver training and qualifications for 600 north-west Tasmanians required in the growth sectors of agriculture, mining, manufacturing, building and construction. Can I say it is all happening on the north-west coast? No, I should not be like that because it is happening all over Tasmania.

Mr Willie - We still have high youth unemployment on the north-west coast.

Mrs HISCUTT - I will come to that. The \$1.3 million Growing Apprenticeships and Traineeships: Industry and Regionally-Led Solutions Program - GATIRS - has recently supported a further seven projects, which include small to medium enterprises operating in the early childhood health care, aged care, disability, aquaculture and construction industries.

The program specifically targets industries and regions that have barriers preventing employers from hiring apprentices and trainees. It takes a demand-driven, industry-led approach and uses a successful model for collaboration between a number of partners. I would like to touch on workforce development efforts. At the same time, the Government's workforce developments efforts have resulted in a strong connection between industry and the skills and training sector in Tasmania, and it is delivering results.

Memorandums of understanding with major employers, industry bodies and community groups have developed workforce plans that are industry-owned and led for skills development required within the industry. The workforce plans list agreed actions developed through consultation with achievable time lines. Workforce plans identify actions that industry and other stakeholders will undertake to support increased workforce development activity to meet current and future workforce needs.

Tasmania's training system is outperforming most other jurisdictions. National reversals - we see increases in Tasmania. Tasmania continues to perform better than the Australian average across most key indicators, with 5140 apprenticeships and traineeship commencements in the past 12 months and we have a target to increase the number of apprentices and trainees by 40 per cent by 2025. Tasmania has the highest completion rates in the country.

The member for Elwick touched on the Payroll Tax Rebates Scheme. The 2019-20 Budget extended our successful Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme and small-business grants schemes to support the employment of 4500 more apprenticeships, trainees and young people. This policy is largely behind the scenes, but the rebates and grants encourage greater employment of apprentices, trainees and young people ages between 15 and 24, which is fundamentally important to youth unemployment overall.

I will touch on education. The Government has a clear plan to keep more young people engaged in education longer and to create job regeneration for our future. In 2020, further changes to the Education Act come into effect, including increasing Tasmania's education and training leaving requirements to have Tasmanian students stay in education and training for longer, helping them to achieve qualifications that significantly improve their life opportunities.

From 2020, young people must participate in education and training until they complete year 12, obtain a Certificate III or until they turn 18 years of age, whichever comes first. Exemptions are granted for full-time employment or other specific individual circumstances. Raising Tasmania's education and training leaving requirements is supported by improvements in year 9 to 12 education and training and the development of data systems to oversee and ensure student participation in required education and training options.

Education and training providers are being actively supported to implement the changes through collaboration across sectors with public, independent and Catholic schools and with TasTAFE, Skills Tasmania and registered training organisations. The Government's policy to extend schools to years 11 and 12 is about ensuring more students can stay in school longer and are able to access life opportunities.

Research by the Mitchell Institute found early school leavers were less likely to participate in the workforce, more likely to have enduring health issues, more likely to participate in crime and to receive welfare. The reality is we need to ensure all student have easy access to quality education as education is the key to securing a good job and being an active participant in society. The Government's extension program drives engagement in learning through flexible and personalised approaches to maximise opportunities for the year 12 or equivalent completion, regardless of geographic location or personal circumstances. Every Tasmanian high school will be extended to year 12 by 2022.

The Government is also taking action to help vulnerable Tasmanians. There is the Job Action Package. That package of \$4.08 million in initiatives is a partnership between the Government, TasCOSS and the TCCI. This is the one the honourable member spoke about. It helps to increase the number of people in employment, especially in regional areas. Focused on communities and industries in the Derwent Valley, Sorell, and the north-east and west coasts, more than \$1.5 million has been made available to community organisations and local projects. To date it has facilitated more than 614 employment- and training-related outcomes. Of that, 553 were training-related, of which 87 are apprenticeships and traineeships and 61 are job-related.

Components of the package have included the successful regional employment transport trial Jobs Bus to transport workers to seasonal jobs. The service has now been awarded funding from the Government's public transport funding pool to maintain the service. It has been extended to the Sorell area. I look forward to that being extended statewide. While talking to people in this sector in Burnie a couple of years ago, one of the things highlighted was transport to employment. Jobs Bus is a good initiative.

Mr Willie - Is it being extended statewide?

Mrs HISCUTT - Not yet. You have to start somewhere. As at the end of July 2019, Jobs Bus has transported 448 passengers from the Derwent Valley and 714 from the south-east region on journeys to work, training or community service. The package has also allowed us to develop an employment hub in Sorell. Negotiations are in the final stages to allocate \$250 000 to meet the training and workforce development needs of the area.

The Break O'Day area's SE@RCH program has commenced working with employers and jobseekers. Since December last year TasCOSS and TCCI have been working with the west coast community and businesses to understand the barriers to employment and to develop initiatives to support the community.

There is additional support for at-risk youth. The Government provided \$75 000 to support Troublesmiths, an innovative social venture to provide real-world job experiences and job coaching for young people. A recent UTAS evaluation found the social impact venture has been very successful. Only last week the Government invested another \$110 000 to support Hobart Hamlet Association Tasmania, helping more Tasmanians in need, including those with disabilities. Hamlet Café is celebrating 20 000 hours of work experience for more than 250 people, with more than 75 per cent of participants completing their training and moving on to employment or further training.

I will now talk about strategic growth. Members will recall the Government's \$6 million investment to develop and implement its strategic growth framework. The strategic growth framework focuses government, businesses and the community attention on ensuring all

Tasmanians participate in and share the benefits of Tasmania's economic growth. It helps provide Tasmanians with access to the education, training and skills for social, health and wellbeing supports. For Tasmanians living in regions, it improves access to the infrastructure supports necessary to allow them to actively participate in and contribute to their communities, including transport and affordable housing.

It supports Tasmanian businesses to innovate, invest and grow and have access to a pool of skilled and qualified Tasmanians to fill the jobs they need where they are needed.

Under this framework, a range of practical and measurable initiatives will be developed in consultation with key government, non-government, community and industry stakeholders, which will make a real difference on the ground.

In conclusion, the Government knows that more needs to be done to ensure that all Tasmanians, including our youth, share in our economic prosperity and it is taking considered action across a number of areas to improve youth employment outcomes.

That was what the member for Elwick concluded with too, so we both agree there is more to be done. I hope I have listed what is being done and the successes there have been so far.

I will go through my amendments. I am advised I should go through all my amendments, speaking to them as I go, and then sit and they will be put.

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, because this is a notice of motion, the process is that the Leader will go through her series of proposed amendments one by one. As each amendment is called separately, members will have one opportunity to speak to the amendment if they feel they need to. If we need a point of clarification, or if any question comes up, members can address that through the Chair to the Leader.

The Leader will put all amendments now, she will resume her chair at the end of that and then we will put them one by one as we move through.

Ms FORREST - Mr President, a point of clarification. If the Leader resumes her seat, does she get to speak on each of the separate amendments again, one at a time?

Mr PRESIDENT - No.

Ms FORREST - If we want to speak on the amendments, do we need to speak on all of them after the Leader has made her contribution now?

Mr PRESIDENT - I will put the question individually and if members feel they have to speak on it, they will have one opportunity to do so. The question will be put through the Chair on each of the amendments. The Leader's role now is to go through and explain each amendment and then she will move -

Ms FORREST - She will speak to each amendment as she goes?

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes. She will move the amendments and then we will put them through one at a time.

Mr WILLIE - A point of clarification, when you are putting them through one at a time, we vote individually on each amendment?

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes. You get a chance to either support or not each amendment individually as we work through them. Because the Leader now has only one chance to speak, like every other member, on the main body of the subject, we will go through and highlight all the amendments and what they do. If members need a point of clarification after that, we can just do it through the Chair while the member is on her feet.

Mrs HISCUTT - I clarify that most of these amendments stemmed from the fact that some of the figures in the member for Elwick's original motion were incorrect, and they have been corrected.

Mr WILLIE - Why do you need to move them then?

Mrs HISCUTT - We feel that there needs to be a little more clarity around what you are saying. We have done a lot of work in this space and I think a bit more clarity in your motion would be very helpful.

Mr President, I move -

That the motion be amended by the following amendments -

First amendment -

Paragraph (1) -

Leave out all words after 'is'

Insert instead

'14.5%, 2.8 percentage points lower since March 2014, more than double Tasmania's overall unemployment rate of 6.1%,

and there are 2700 more young Tasmanians employed since March 2014;'

Speaking to that, as I have mentioned, the unemployment rates the member mentioned have been corrected. Since then, 15 800 jobs have been created. The Government continues to improve the lives of young Tasmanians, whether they are studying, in training or looking for work. Since March 2014, the youth unemployment rate has decreased 2.8 percentage points and there are now 2700 more youth employed. We would like to see that reflected in the motion.

Second amendment -

Paragraph (2) -

Leave out all words after 'Acknowledges'

Insert instead

'that youth unemployment, and regional youth unemployment is a problem seen across all jurisdictions. The 12-month average youth unemployment in Greater Hobart is 15.7% and in the West/North-West is 15%'.
'

As the member for Elwick mentioned, there was a correction to the figures. The rankings are a little different now. We wanted to add that in there. I hope members are happy to put a bit of clarity around these clauses.

The statement in paragraph (3) is very general. Vodafone employs people of all age groups. Its closure, even though very disappointing, may not disproportionately affect one demographic over another because it could employ older people as well as younger people.

Mr Willie - Is there an amendment for this?

Mrs HISCUTT - No, I am just speaking to it; there is no amendment. We think it is not right. It does not really affect younger people. How do you know? It could be younger or older.

The Government is happy to leave paragraph (4) as it is. I reiterate that this is a problem faced by all governments. The Government knows there is more work to do.

Third amendment -

Paragraph (5) -

Leave out all words after 'loss',

Insert instead

'in 2017-18 of 660 people in the 15-24 demographic, with a gain of 720 people in the 25 to 34 demographic and in young children'.

Youth emigration is part of small regional economies, in particular island-based ones, throughout the world. It is important this is a choice for young people and not a necessity. Youth migration is now considerably lower than five years ago. In 2011-12, 1510 young people left Tasmania; in 2017-18 there were just 660, a reduction of nearly one-third. I thought that was worth noting in the motion.

Fourth amendment -

Paragraph (6) -

Leave out all words after 'that'

Insert instead

'the Government has developed strong connections between the education system with labour market demands and that this is delivering results, including a 10 per cent increase in trade apprenticeships and the highest completion rates in the country;'.

The Government's workforce development efforts have resulted in strong connections between industry and the skills and training sector in Tasmania. This is delivering results. The Government has memorandums of understanding with major employees, industry bodies and community groups,

and has developed workforce plans which are industry-owned and industry-led for the skills development required within their industries. The workforce plans list agreed actions developed through consultation with achievable time lines. Workforce plans have identified actions that industry and other stakeholders will undertake to support increased workforce development activity to meet current and future workforce needs. Tasmania's training system is outperforming most other jurisdictions' national reversals. We see increases in Tasmania. Tasmania has the highest completion rates in the country. Commencements in trade apprenticeships and trainees are 10 per cent higher than the previous year.

As noted above, we have seen a decline in youth unemployment rates of 2.8 percentage points and 2700 more youth employed since March 2014. We felt that was such a good result we hoped it would be reflected in the motion. Honourable members, the third page you have been given from the Government sets out what the motion would look like in the end.

Fifth amendment -

Paragraph (7) -

Leave out all the words after 'that'

Insert instead

'despite youth unemployment being a major problem for many years, the Government has put in place several key and ongoing initiatives to improve youth employment outcomes;'.
'

As I have outlined, the Government has clearly put in place several key and ongoing initiatives to reduce youth unemployment, including skills investments, payroll tax rebate schemes and small-business grants to name just some actions, which have had the effect of reducing the youth unemployment rate by 2.8 percentage points since March 2014.

At the same time, the Government is currently implementing a strategic growth initiative aimed at ensuring all Tasmanians can share in the state's economic prosperity. I propose that the paragraph acknowledge this and be changed as identified. That is what I am trying to do here: to reflect a little of the ongoing work of the Government that is fairly significant, as I have outlined.

Sixth amendment -

Paragraph (8) -

Leave out the paragraph

Insert instead

'Notes that 2,700 more youth are employed since March 2014, and the State Government acknowledges that more needs to be done to combat youth unemployment and has a range of strategies in place, including our jobs action package and strategic growth framework to improve youth employment outcomes.'

The Government's economic record is strong; our economy is the fastest growing in the nation and 2700 more youth have been employed since March 2014. The Government acknowledges, as the member for Elwick has stated, that more needs to be done. I propose this paragraph acknowledge this and be changed as I have just stated.

That is the end of my amendments, Mr President. I hope they are not too lengthy and are easy to understand. On the back page you will see them all set out. We would like to get some acknowledgment into the member for Elwick's motion that there is a considerable body of work here. I look forward to any debate on the amendments and how they will proceed.

Once again, I take the opportunity to thank the member for Elwick for bringing this motion on and for his passion for the unemployment area.

[12.42 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I will speak to the first amendment, but to put it in context I might need some leeway to talk about the amendments overall, initially, because that determines where I go with the first amendment. I will take your advice as we go if necessary. I will speak to the overall motion at a later time.

I note the member for Elwick's passion in this area and I support his intent in bringing forward a motion that addresses these matters. He did send out an updated or amended notice of motion to clarify the figures, which the Leader is basically doing in this amendment as well.

When I look through the member for Elwick's amended motion and the Leader's amendments, I think the member for Elwick made a genuine attempt to state fact rather than be political in this. It is easy to be political in this because it is a really serious issue - it has been an issue for a long time, as other people have said. It affects some parts of the state more than others - my area and the member for Windermere's area and some of the southern areas in the lower socio-economic areas. I will speak about those matters later.

To me, these amendments contain information the Leader has rightly made in her speech as a representative of the Government. She could have brought forward a motion herself on behalf of the Government, or the Deputy Leader could have, to put all these things in a motion themselves and debate it and crow about the Government's achievements if they wished to.

We have here an amendment from another member of this place and, from my reading of it, it is a statement of fact. Yes, you can cherrypick certain facts if you want to in broad terms in the amendment to paragraph (5), which we will get to later. It is all about the difference in that you have actually extended the age demographic and included young children.

Mr Willie - But there is no age figure put on that, so what does 'young children' mean?

Ms FORREST - Well, yes, 25- to 34-year olds potentially have brought young children with them to the state.

Mr Willie - Yes, but what age bracket?

Ms FORREST - We do not know; it is a bit of a nonsense with that one, because the demographic we are talking about is the youth unemployment, which is 15 to 24 and is what the member for Elwick's motion put forward. The Leader is unnecessarily politicising this motion. I

cannot speak for her, but she may feel a degree of embarrassment about having to do this because it is politicising it and the Leader on behalf of the Government put forward all these points in her contribution, as any member can.

Fundamentally I do not find any inaccuracies in the amended motion put forward by the member for Elwick. Maybe arguable is the amendment to paragraph (7), which we will come to later. But particularly paragraph (1), which we are dealing with now, is, in my view, unnecessary because - as stated - it is not wrong. The Leader commented about 2700 more Tasmanians being employed since March 2014 in her speech; it is her right to do that, but it does not need to be in the motion - it is in the debate.

On that basis I will be very unlikely to support any of these amendments. We need to keep politics out of this important issue. I believe the member for Elwick made a genuine attempt to do that. These are the overarching comments. We will deal with each amendment as it comes forward, but I do not believe this is necessary. We should try to keep politics out of it where statements of fact are made and the figures have been updated. If that had not happened, of course there is a case then, but the member for Elwick did do that.

I will not be supporting this amendment and probably not any other, but we will see how we go.

[11.48 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I acknowledge efforts the member for Elwick has taken to bring this motion to the House to inform us as much as anything else. It is always good to get information.

The amendment before us deals with paragraph (1) of the motion. The member for Elwick is seeking to make factual statements, and that is important. It is the member's motion. I always find it difficult because as independent members, the way we vote on these sorts of things can see us being seen to support one side or the other in terms of party politics. I always find that uncomfortable. I will vote on these amendments as we go through based on whether I think they do or do not add value. I would not want that to misconstrue my position as to whether I am supporting Labor or Liberal or anything like that. It is important we look at the merits of whatever motion is put before us. I do not have a problem with paragraph (1). It is the member's motion and I am happy to support that. The extra information does not necessarily add value to the motion so I will support the first part of the motion as it currently appears on the Notice Paper.

[12.49 p.m.]

Mr ARMSTRONG (Huon) - Mr President, we are all saying we have to keep politics out of this. What the Government has actually put up is factual, so I do not see any problem with supporting it. If it is factual, if it is the truth, it is actually happening so I am supporting the amendment.

[12.50 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I acknowledge other members' contributions on this amendment to my motion. As some of them have stated, I was very careful in the language, particularly in points (1) to (6), to stick to the facts. They are facts. We could have the debate around (7) and (8) later, but I do not think this adds anything to the motion. It is very political, putting a political stake in the ground around 2014. I could have gone back into history around all sorts of Liberal governments and youth unemployment in those times, but I chose not to because I

wanted to stick to the issue. You will notice that when I was speaking to the motion I did not lay the politics on. I spoke specifically about the issue and the research into the issue and what could be done to address it. I also acknowledged some of the Government's initiatives. I do not think this amendment will add anything to my motion and I will not be supporting it.

[12.51 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, just so I am clear, we are only speaking on the first amendment at this stage, nothing more than that. I have listened to the debate. Looking at the member's paragraph (1) and the Government's amendment, does it really change the intent of the member's paragraph (1)? The member is simply asking that the Legislative Council notes that Tasmania's 12-month average youth unemployment rate is 14.5 per cent, more than double Tasmania overall unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent.

The Government's amendment simply says that 'is 14.5 per cent' should be retained; then '2.8 percentage points lower than since March 2014', which is fact - I did not check the figures myself but I take it as fact - 'more than double Tasmania's overall unemployment rate of 6.1% and there are 2700 more young Tasmanians employed since March 2014.' It really does not change the intent of the member's motion; it is just putting in those extra details.

I agree it has become a little political. I think, by doing that, the Government is trying to put its position on this to show what it has done - and it is doing good work in that area. Be that as it may, I am not certain of my position on it at this moment. I cannot see that it really changes the intent of the first point of the member's motion. I will listen to other comments that might be made.

[12.53 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I am interested in maintaining the fidelity of the motion to the extent that the member for Elwick intended it to be brought to us for discussion. I appreciate that it has been brought to us for discussion. I believe the amendment suggested here for the first point does change the intent because it introduces a new and very selective concept into that point.

Mr Dean - I guess the member has been selective, too.

Ms WEBB - Yes, that is true, but the member for Elwick has brought this motion for our discussion. He has kept the first point relatively straightforward in talking about the average youth unemployment rate and its relationship to the overall unemployment rate. Introducing a concept about a certain number of young Tasmanians becoming employed from a certain period of time is a new and quite different concept to introduce into that point.

Ms Forrest - And no other figures relate to a six-year period.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, it probably does not provide us with enough information about that new element that is being introduced into the point. It does not tell us about the nature of the jobs those young people are being employed in - full-time, part-time, casual, permanent, whatever. It does not talk about how those 2700 across that period relate to the net migration, which the member for Elwick has kept as a separate concept, further down in paragraph (5).

It introduces a new element to that point. There is a political reason for introducing that point that is different to the rest of the figures, and the intent of those figures. I would prefer to keep it as clean as possible, related to the motion that was brought to us by the member for Elwick.

The Leader in her contribution had the opportunity to make all these extra points. The point she would like to add as an amendment has been made on the record in a speech. We do not need to make that amendment.

First amendment negatived.

[12.57 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I ask the member for Elwick, were those rankings as the thirteenth and sixteenth worst areas for youth unemployment in the nation still factually correct?

Mr Willie - Yes. I have updated those from the original motion. I put them in there for national context, so we can see where our regions sit compared to the rest of Australia.

Ms WEBB - That was the element I needed to clarify, so paragraph (2) is factually correct and allows us to discuss the issue around those statements.

[12.57 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I think the member is simply pointing at those two areas for a specific purpose, to say how bad they are - the thirteenth and sixteenth worst areas for youth unemployment in the nation. Adding that broad statement in the amendment does not add value.

The important thing is the member is singling out those two areas because of their national status. There is no need to change that.

[12.58 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I was going to clarify, as the member for Nelson did, the accuracy of those updated figures.

It is important that these things are kept in context within the national perspective, because we are looking at Australian unemployment, or employment, figures when we are looking at these matters.

We have known for a long time there are some really difficult spots in Tasmania. The electorate of Braddon, being the majority of my electorate, and some of member for Montgomery's as well, has been a hotspot. George Town is another area. There are other areas that other members can speak about.

It is an important reminder that we are in one of those really difficult spots in the nation, where specific attention needs to be paid. The Government's amendment watered down that fact and removed the urgency for attention.

I will not be supporting the amendment. This is factual. It is not inaccurate, and it helps us to focus on the areas where we know there are very real challenges for young people seeking employment in our state. I will not be supporting the amendment on that basis.

[12.59 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, when we are talking about the thirteenth and sixteenth worst areas, how many areas are there in the nation? How many areas are worse off than

those two areas? One could put their ranking as the thirteenth and sixteenth best areas for youth employment in the nation. I would like to know more about where they really sit?

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

QUESTIONS

Metro Tasmania

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

[2.31 p.m.]

It has been brought to my attention by a constituent of mine, that while Health Care Card holders are eligible for a discount with Metro Tasmania, this only applies to the principal card holder and not any listed beneficiaries. It appears Metro is the only state Government business that does not provide the discount to all beneficiaries of the card.

Can you please advise if this correct and, if so, why?

ANSWER

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

Metro Tasmania has a longstanding practice of recognising the primary card holder of a Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card as being eligible for concession fares. People listed as a dependant or partner on another person's concession card receive a concession or student fare when they present an eligible card in their own name. Metro students and child fares are lower than its concession fares and therefore provide a greater discount on travel.

I note full-time students, listed as a dependant on a current concession card, may also be eligible to apply for a free travel bus pass by the Department of State Growth. Concession eligibility policy differs across government departments and government businesses.

Metro Tasmania

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

[2.33 p.m.]

This is a supplementary question which I will forward to the Leader's office. My question was in relation to adult passengers - adult beneficiaries of the Health Care Card, not of children.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Rumney for her supplementary question. The first part of the answer related to adults.

Treasury Divestment Process

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

[2.33 p.m.]

In an answer provided by the Treasurer on the 19 September 2019 to a question without notice regarding processes and procedures surrounding the Government's intended divestment of the government properties known as the Treasury Buildings, mention was made of community and stakeholder engagement, including online and hard copy surveys, have your say feedback, proposed seminars and stakeholder briefings.

With regard to surveys, can the Government, please provide -

- (1) (a) The number of surveys completed to date, and -
 - (i) survey designers for each survey;
 - (ii) the dates undertaken, and by whom?
- (b) The number of surveys yet to be undertaken, and -
 - (i) survey designers for each survey;
 - (ii) the intended commencement date of each survey;
 - (iii) those undertaking each survey; and
 - (iv) the target stakeholder group for each?
- (2) With regard to stakeholder meetings, can the Government please provide -
 - (a) The number of stakeholder meetings or briefings conducted?
 - (b) The date of each meeting and the stakeholders involved?
 - (c) The number of stakeholder meetings or briefings yet to be undertaken?
 - (d) The intended date of each?
 - (e) The stakeholders intended to be involved?
- (3) What economic modelling was undertaken by the Government -
 - (a) To inform its decisions to divest Tasmanians of the publicly owned Treasury Buildings?
 - (b) Of the current and future cultural and heritage value of the Treasury Buildings?

ANSWER

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

One hundred and seven members of the community, some of whom represented organisations, participated in the initial consultation process through the www.thetreasuryhobart.info website, which was launched in conjunction with the release of the registration of interest phase of the Treasury divestment process.

Eighty-seven per cent of consultation participants supported the draft project objectives. Community suggestions for future use of the buildings included a mix of museums, galleries,

restaurants, cafes, bars, hotel and conference facilities; use of public spaces for performances, lectures and celebrations, a tourist centre; and a co-working space for young entrepreneurs.

During the weekend of 9 and 10 November 2019, Treasury participated in Open House Hobart and the Treasury Building Complex was open to the public. Treasury's final figures indicate over 750 visitors participated in Open House Hobart's booked tours and estimated over 1000 people visited the Executive Chambers and Court House areas accessible from both the Macquarie Street and Franklin Square entrances. Some visitors would have participated in both the booked tours and visited the open areas.

Visitors were encouraged to meet the Treasury Building Complex Divestment Project team which was available to outline the divestment process and to answer any questions. A short video, interactive website, fact sheets and survey were also provided to visitors interested in learning more about the divestment process.

During the event 64 members of the public completed a survey representing about 8 per cent of participants who undertook a booked tour of the complex. Of the 64 survey respondents, 58 had participated in a 2019 Open House tour; four had participated in a 2018 tour; and four had participated in both years. Two respondents had not participated in a tour. Continued public access to the Treasury Buildings is supported by about 94 per cent of respondents. The Government is committed to ongoing consultation throughout the Treasury divestment process. There will be further opportunities for interested parties to participate as the process moves forward into the expression of interest and request for tender/proposal phases.

In its 2018-19 state Budget, the Government announced its intention to seek proposals through an expression of interest process for the divestment of the Treasury Building Complex. Consideration of the financial impact was considered as part of the budget development process. As previously advised, a new conservation management plan is currently being prepared and will address the cultural and heritage values of the Treasury Buildings.

Tasmania Police - After-Hours Work

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

Will the Leader please advise -

- (1) During the past five years, what extra functions and duties has Tasmania Police become responsible for after five o'clock and when other people are not working?
- (2) What extra activities are police expected to be involved in, or are being requested to provide support for, after normal weekly working hours - work that is not within their core responsibility?
- (3) How many incidents have Tasmania Police responded to on behalf of Ambulance Tasmania since January?
- (4) Has a review been done to ensure these responses are in accordance with the Ambulance Tasmania surge plan?

- (5) How often is Ambulance Tasmania at surge level four as per the AT surge level plan?
- (6) Has there been a review of the Ambulance Tasmania surge plan to ensure workload handed to Tasmania Police is not too onerous or does not adversely affect Tasmania Police's capacity to undertake its core business?
- (7) At budget Estimates on 3 June 2019, as a result of a question by Dr Shane Broad regarding using divisional vans for long-distance prisoner transport - Queenstown to Burnie, Burnie to Launceston and St Helens to Launceston - the Commissioner of Police stated -

For longer distances I understand they are not appropriate because you want the safety mechanisms in the back of those pods for longer distances. My expectation would be early next financial year, as in past July, but we certainly do not want to wait too long. We understand some of the issues and the longer distances these prisoners have to be transported.

- (a) Have these three vehicles been remediated?
- (b) What has been undertaken to resolve the situation, noting the commissioner's comments?

In answering these questions, particularly (2), it is taken there will probably be no definitive answer and that a guesstimate only will be made. That is a comment I made a note on.

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for Windermere for his question. This was an answer that has come in by the hair of the chinny chin chin. Starting from the top -

- (1) Tasmania Police has not identified any additional policing functions.
- (2) (a) The premise of this question is unclear due to Tasmania Police being a 24-hour emergency service and not being subject to normal business hours.
- (b) Tasmania Police is a 24-hour emergency service that will provide support to other government agencies as required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Tasmanian community.
- (3) Systems data shows that from 1 January 2019 to 14 October 2019, Tasmania Police had assisted Ambulance Tasmania with 2861 requests. Tasmania Police officers work to protect the safety of all Tasmanians and when someone in the community is in distress, they will assist. Police are not dispatched instead of ambulances and do not have anywhere near the same level of training as paramedics. Police are sometimes requested by Ambulance Tasmania to attend to a medical emergency if an ambulance is not yet available and there is a police unit available to attend. All police complete first aid training to ensure they are able to assist to protect life.
- (4) This was a question for the Minister for Health. That Tasmania Police respond to assist Ambulance Tasmania is in line with their duty to manage traffic, accident investigations, management of persons behaving in an unacceptable manner, and potential risks identified to

Ambulance Tasmania crews. A letter of understanding has been drafted between the Commissioner of Police and the Chief Executive of Ambulance Tasmania. This outlines an agreed protocol to be implemented between Tasmania Police and Ambulance Tasmania communications centres outlining Tasmania Police's response to, and attendance at, high-risk medical emergency incidents attended by Ambulance Tasmania officers in order to ensure their safety.

- (5) This information is not routinely collated and extraction from the system is not currently available.
- (6) Tasmania Police is notified of Ambulance Tasmania surge levels so it is aware of ambulance workload and possible delays in request of responses. Tasmania Police are only requested to attend cases in situations such as where there is genuine concern for the welfare of the caller and the caller is not answering on call back from the Ambulance Tasmania communications centre. If a request is made to Tasmania Police, resources are sent at the earliest opportunity.
- (7) (a) The answer is air conditioning has been fitted to one of the vehicles as a trial and effectiveness will inform further planning.
(b) The department is working to identify suitable and safe vehicle solutions. Trialling of various options for barriers and pods in multiple vehicle types is currently underway.

Mr Dean - I imagine there will be some supplementary questions.

Bus Transit Lane Report

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

[2.44 p.m.]

The Bus Transit Lane between Kingston and Hobart/Macquarie Street, Concept Options Report has been published on the Department of State Growth website for some time.

- (1) Why is the report missing section 7?
- (2) Is the state Government considering land acquisition?

ANSWER

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

- (1) The Department of State Growth has advised that section 7 of the Jacobs report, consisting of pages 27 to 32, was removed consistent with standard practice as the pages detail cost estimates, including contingency allocations, that have the potential to send price signals to the consultancy and construction markets and thereby influence tender prices.

- (2) State Growth will soon award a tender to examine detailed design options for the Southern Outlet fifth lane and auxiliary work. Only once that work is completed will the Government be in a position to determine what, if any, lands may need to be acquired for projects.

Student Transport - Lilydale School

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

[2.46 p.m.]

Why are an estimated 85 school students being conveyed from in and around Launceston to the Lilydale District School at a cost of approximately \$170 000 annually?

ANSWER

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

The Launceston to Lilydale District School service was reviewed by the Department of State Growth. Following consultation with the Department of Education, it was recommended that the service be recontracted as a legacy service and provided for under the Service Eligibility Guidelines.

While this service would not be introduced today given that it transports students away from their nearest appropriate home area school in Launceston, the decision for its continuation recognises the established patterns of travel in place for a large number of students and the high impact on a large number of families if this service were discontinued on short notice. It is an existing service and the Department of Education supports its continuation.

The Department of State Growth will monitor services to ensure they continue to be appropriate to support student transport needs and remain consistent with the guidelines.

MOTION

Youth Unemployment in Tasmania

Resumed from above.

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, earlier I raised the issue of how many areas or regions there are in the country. It relates to paragraph (2) of the member for Elwick's amended motion that Tasmania has the thirteenth and sixteenth worst areas for youth unemployment in the nation.

I thank the member for Elwick for giving me the figures. There are 111 regions, but if you take away the seven states or territories, that comes back to just above 100. After seeing those figures I urge members not to support the member's second point. I say because now that we know there are more than 100 areas in the nation, I can see it is written that way to paint a very poor picture of youth unemployment in this state.

It could have been better written, ranking as the thirteenth and sixteenth best areas for youth unemployment in the nation -

Mr Willie - No, that is not right.

Mr DEAN - You are saying the worst areas, thirteenth and sixteenth.

Mr Willie - The highest youth unemployment 12-month average figure. They are not the best.

Mr DEAN - But there are about 90 worse off areas.

Mr Willie - No, no, you are looking at it the other way

Mr DEAN - I am going the other way?

Ms Forrest - You are thinking in double-negative terms.

Mr DEAN - Yes, double-negative.

Ms Webb - That would be numbers 84 and 87 out of 100.

Mr DEAN - It is not on the bottom; we have areas above it anyway.

I guess the member is saying that ranking is for the thirteenth and the sixteenth worst areas for youth unemployment in the nation. I have some concerns with the way it is written, I must admit. I will listen to the rest of the debate, but I am inclined to go with the Government. After all is said and done, this is a motion only. It is something the Government would either consider or not. I suspect the Government is considering most of these areas in relation to youth unemployment anyway. It has been stated very clearly that it is concerned about that and wants to do something about it. It is doing something about it - that is very clear and very obvious.

The member's motion simply says acknowledge, acknowledge, acknowledge, notes, notes, notes, but the last one calls on the Government for action. Having said that, I will listen to the rest of the debate in relation to the second amendment.

[2.51 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise on a point of clarification to explain why I put that in there. In my contribution I mentioned the Brotherhood of St Lawrence report into youth unemployment. In that report they ranked the top 20 regions in the country. I thought it was important for a national context, but also from the reading that I had done into this area, it is generally how the figures are presented. That is why they are in there. I have adjusted them in the amendments I sent through this morning. They were the tenth and twelfth, from memory. I have adjusted them back to reflect the current status. They are Australian Bureau of Statistics facts. I will not be supporting the Government's amendment. My original text is factual. There is nothing wrong with providing a national context in this debate.

Ms Webb - Mr President, just to clarify, member for Elwick, when you said top 20, you meant top 20 worst areas.

Mr WILLIE - Top 20 worst areas in the country, yes.

Mr Dean - I think I have referred to your amendments. I think that is the amended one, isn't it? As I have it, I think it is number (2)?

Ms Forrest - That is it, yes. It says 'Amended motion' at the top.

Mr WILLIE - We are debating a motion; that is what private members' time is about. I was up-front about that too - it is an important issue. I wanted to turn the parliament's focus to this debate. I am sure some members have done some research into this and turned their minds to it too. I do not think there is anything wrong with putting forward a topic such as youth unemployment. It is up to the Government what it does with motions. I have been unsuccessful in the past trying to pass a motion on NAPLAN, which was not really treated the way it was intended with the question I asked in follow-up to that. Ultimately, it is a debate in parliament for the Government to take notice of.

Second amendment negatived.

Third amendment (paragraph 5) -

[2.54 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I will not support this amendment because it confuses the issue without any context. The member for Elwick's amended motion states -

Notes with concern that Tasmania has an annual net migration loss of 580 people in the 15-24 demographic.

That is the age in which we are talking about youth leaving the state, often for education, like university, employment and those sorts of matters.

What the Leader's wanting to put in is to read -

Notes with concern that Tasmania has an annual net migration loss in 2017-18 of 660 people in the 15-24 demographic, with a gain of 720 people in the 25 to 34 demographic and in young children.

I do not actually know what that means, 'and in young children'.

Mrs Hiscutt - Families with their children.

Ms FORREST - I was coming to that. We are looking here at a different cohort of people. You can use numbers to say whatever you like, but this is confusing the issue. It adds no value to this issue about unemployment and the net migration of young people from the state. Yes, there are some families coming in. A lot of people do not have children in the 15 to 24 age group. A lot of them wait until after they have finished university or whatever. It adds something that has absolutely no relevance to the rest of it.

The Leader mentioned this in her contribution on the motion, and that is okay to do that, because you can put some context around it when you are actually speaking to it.

This amendment adding this to the motion makes no sense at all, and it actually tries to distract from some of the other. We have rejected the amendment to paragraph (1), which is about '2,700 more young Tasmanians employed since March 2014', which is over a 6-year period.

This talks about a number of people coming to the state within a one-year period. I do not know the purpose of this. It is pure politics; it adds nothing and actually confuses the issue, so I will not be supporting it.

[2.57 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, my wife works at the University of Tasmania in Student Recruitment, so I acutely know this problem from the challenge she has in schools - trying to retain our best and brightest here in Tasmania and the culture around leaving the state as a rite of passage. Some of those people do not come back; they are lost forever to the state and our productive capacity as a community.

That is what I was trying to highlight - that demographic. I have even heard the Vice-Chancellor talk about wanting to retain more of Tasmania's brightest kids at the university, and making it something really attractive to Tasmanians. That is the education context of that.

In the original motion, it says 'Notes with concern'. It is concerning many young people are leaving the state. We would much prefer them to stay and have a good experience here. Maybe become employed here, have a family in Tasmania, and contribute to our economy and the community.

That has been taken out in the Government's amendment. That is what I was trying to highlight in that point. We need to strive to retain as many young people in Tasmania as we can. I talked about that in my contribution. We have an ageing demographic. We have some challenges ahead, and we need to start preparing for them now - challenges and opportunities. We will not be supporting the amendment.

Third amendment negatived.

Fourth amendment (paragraph 6) -

[2.59 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I am beginning to sound like a cracked record. The complete replacement, maybe, that the Government is suggesting with this amendment is something the Government would put in its own motion if it had one before the House.

The Leader in her own speech made this point. It is fine to make it in the context of the motion. She also said the Government recognised more needs to be done. We all accept that. That is what this section of the motion is talking about. I acknowledge there have been increases in trade apprenticeships. Many of us have been banging on about this for a long time, particularly in the north-west where it is so important for our agriculture, manufacturing and advanced manufacturing.

You need university degrees for some of those roles, but some of the best people working in advanced manufacturing have come through the trades and then later gone to university. It is an important pathway, and I commend the Government for taking it seriously. It is a serious matter and had been eroded. You do not need to change the motion to give effect to this. It is a point made by the Government and well made in the Leader's contribution on the motion, but it guts this section of the motion. It detracts from what the member for Elwick is suggesting, that we need to do more to connect the education system with labour market demands. I have heard that ad nauseum from industries in my area and from around the state. The Government would know that. The Leader alluded to that in her contribution.

Ray Mostogl has set up a business to do this in recognition of the need to make that connection between our education facilities, from year 6 through to apprenticeships and university. What the motion says is accurate, it reflects the current situation, and the Leader addressed the Government's views on this matter more fully in her contribution, which I think was fair. I do not support the amendment.

[3.01 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, the Government, by its amendment and by the Leader's speech, made it clear what it has done and what its return has been. The point made by the member for Elwick is clear. The member for Murchison said more needs to be done and the Government accepts that it needs to do more. I really cannot see anything wrong with the point made by the member for Elwick in this case. This is a motion. I should imagine it will not have any impact at all. I want to here support the point put forward by the member for Elwick. Once again, I agree with him.

[3.02 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, this is an accurate statement. More needs to be done. The Government is amending the motion to say that it develops strong connections. That may be the case, but more does need to be done. I am not convinced that the move to try to get years 11 and 12 happening in every school is producing the output we want with regard to VET. I am concerned about how it might degrade the offerings at high schools.

Recently I visited Penguin for a Public Works Committee hearing. There are 10 or 12 kids that are likely to be doing years 11 and 12. Many of them want to go on to college, but there must be some who would be keen to take up VET courses. That would help address the labour issues. I do not see that this amendment adds anything to what the member is trying to achieve. More does need to be done. We do need to get more young people connected with the labour market. I do not support the amendment. I am sorry, Leader.

[3.04 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I do not know why the Government has taken issue with this. The Leader in her contribution acknowledged that more needs to be done. You would find governments all over the country - whether they are Liberal, Labor, who knows - and internationally saying more needs to be done on youth unemployment. We do not want to accept the status quo. Saying everything is fine is accepting the status quo. We know more needs to be done. Industry is telling government and the parliament that more needs to be done across a whole range of industries. They have huge skill shortages in construction, aged care services, disability, manufacturing. There are so many skill shortages, yet we have this high unemployment rate as a state. That says that something is amiss in the system and that we need to work to connect young people to those job opportunities. I do not see any problem with this paragraph as it is written and I do not know why the Government has taken an issue with it.

Fourth amendment negated.

Fifth amendment (paragraph 7) -

[3.06 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, no doubt the Leader would have referred to this when she spoke on it but my question is: is there a policy framework in place for solving this problem? As I understand, the Government is saying either yes or no. If it is not, I see nothing wrong with

the point put forward by the member for Elwick. If there is a policy framework in place, very clearly the point is not right. I just ask that question, but how I vote in relation to this matter will depend on that because it either is or is not.

Ms Forrest - You would think they would have named it up in their own amendment if it was there.

Mr DEAN - I would think they would have done. They have not done that; they have written it in a different way in their amendment, and that is what concerns me - that they have written it in a way that does not identify that.

I do not know whether the Leader can speak on it by way of interjection or whether the other member of the Government might be able to speak on it.

Ms Forrest - The Leader can speak.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am not allowed to speak again.

Mr DEAN - But the other member is.

Mrs Hiscutt - By way of explanation, there is something - the Strategic Growth framework and the Jobs Action Package which encompasses it.

Mr DEAN - Not a policy, though?

Mrs Hiscutt - Not a particular policy as such. It is covered by a couple of clauses.

Mr DEAN - Thank you.

[3.08 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I was not quite quick enough to write those things down. It was the strategic job -

Mrs Hiscutt - The Strategic Growth framework and the Jobs Action Package.

Ms FORREST - The Strategic Growth framework -

Mr Willie - Which is still in train; the Premier is going to lead that work and it has not materialised.

Ms FORREST - The question here is: do we stick with -

Notes that despite youth unemployment being a major problem for many years, there is no policy framework for solving this problem -

when Government wants to completely replace that with -

Notes that despite youth unemployment being a major problem for many years, the Government has put in place several key and ongoing initiatives to improve youth employment outcomes.

I am sure that within the Strategic Growth framework and the Jobs Action Package there are measures that would support young people.

Mrs Hiscutt - I outlined a lot of them in my contribution.

Ms FORREST - Yes, but many of them are not related to youth; they are related to unemployment generally, like getting older people into the workforce, retraining people et cetera.

Mrs Hiscutt - Many of them are targeted at youth - education, apprentices, traineeships.

Ms FORREST - Yes. In some respects, it is six of one and half a dozen of the other because do the Strategic Growth framework and the Jobs Action Package actually constitute a policy framework or is this a couple of different aspects of what the Government are doing? It is a moot point really as to what is policy and what is action. In that regard, it is really playing with words in many respects. Again, if this were the Government putting up its own motion to debate this topic, it would have used similar words acknowledging the work it has done. As you said, Leader, in your contribution when you spoke about some of the things the Government is doing in this area, that is the right place to do it.

Mrs Hiscutt - We were just hoping to have a bit more clarity about the point the member for Elwick put forward. We are doing a lot.

Ms FORREST - We expect the Government to be doing a lot because it is such an important issue and a key challenge. For the last two election campaigns - federally as well as statewide - the mantra has been jobs and growth, jobs and growth until we want to be sick.

So, if they are not focusing on jobs, they are really not even living up to any of the rhetoric that went around the elections. I will listen to other people's comments on this one. I do not think it makes much difference, but I am happy for it to stay as it is because in terms of a youth unemployment framework - which I think is what the member for Elwick is talking about - there is not a specific youth unemployment framework, there is a strategic growth framework. What are we talking about is economic growth, jobs growth, whatever, and yes, they go together a little. The Jobs Action Package is not specifically targeted at youth and I will talk to some other challenges and come back to the motion, when I get back to debating what we end up with.

Youth unemployment is one aspect. There are issues within the youth unemployment figures themselves, but these two programs the Leader spoke about and mentioned are not specific policies related to youth unemployment. If we cannot get young people in jobs, they are not going to stay here or they will likely end up on a long-term unemployed roller-coaster. We need a very targeted approach for youth unemployment. We need other targeted approaches for older people being retrained when the industry they worked in has a downturn or whatever.

We need to take a very targeted approach there. We need a targeted approach for youth and my understanding is what the member for Elwick said in his contribution, and the wording of this section of the motion, would suggest that. I am inclined to stick with it for that reason, acknowledging the work the Government is doing and what the Leader spoke about in her contribution.

[3:31 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I concur with probably most of the things the member for Murchison just talked about. The thing I find problematic about the amendment is that I doubt the Government has put in place several key and ongoing initiatives to improve youth employment

outcomes, despite youth unemployment having been a major problem for many years. I suspect if you really were going to reword this, you would actually say you were doing that in response to it, not despite the fact it has been a problem. You have been a bit too tricky in putting together that amendment; it actually does not really make sense now.

I agree the member for Elwick has put two things in paragraph (7) - it highlighted youth unemployment has been a major problem for many years; that is one thing. It is a major problem highlighted in part to feed through to the second part of the paragraph, which is to highlight that there is no specific policy framework in place to address that particular major problem in the things you have spoken about. You do have some key initiatives you talked about in your speech, Leader, as you would in response to that paragraph, and that is great. It still does not constitute a policy framework response that acknowledges that it is a major problem. Again, unfortunately in a rush to put forward amendments on it, you have actually misworded the amendment anyway so it does not actually convey -

Mrs Hiscutt - On that point, that is a valid point you have. No, we were not trying to be tricky. Had we thought about it, we might have changed it a bit more.

Ms WEBB - I will not be supporting this amendment, Mr President. I think it stands well as a point for discussion as it is in the amended original motion from the member for Elwick.

[3.15 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, 'strategic growth framework' does not immediately speak 'youth' to me. The important thing is that you have to have drivers for these frameworks and the driver is the policy. I think what we are being told in the member's motion is that there is no policy framework. If you do not have a policy framework, if you aim at nothing, you will hit it - that is what I have always been told. It is always important to have that major focus. With respect to this, we are talking about youth unemployment. The major focus is not there in the Strategic Growth framework because it is an all-encompassing framework. That point has already been made, I think by the member for Murchison.

It is the same with the Jobs Action Package. It is about employment per se. I think we have to understand that the youth of today are the adults of tomorrow. They are our future workforce. If we do not address this acutely, we will have a workforce that is simply not there, effectively, to meet the demands required of it. I do not see that the Government's amendment adds anything at all in focusing and sharpening the focus on youth. Once again, I am sorry, but I cannot support that amendment.

[3.17 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I think the Government's contribution confirmed this point. We heard about some initiatives. I acknowledge some of the good ones such as the Jobs Action Package, which is a pilot. We heard about some ad hoc targeted things like payroll tax incentives. I have talked to people in industry. They think some of that is quite tokenistic in that if you are going to put on an apprentice, that is a much larger cost than the incentive anyway. If you are going to make that decision, it is a bonus.

Some of these initiatives are not sustainable either. There is no funding in the budget for them long term. The Strategic Growth strategy the Government has mentioned has been funded in the budget, but it really has not been fleshed out yet. It is in train. The Premier is going to lead that work, from what I understand. It is based on the TasCOSS budget submission that asked for \$25 million. You could say it might be inadequate, given the policy intent from TasCOSS. There

is no strategic framework of this Government to combat youth unemployment. That is essentially the point he is making.

Fifth amendment negatived.

Sixth amendment (paragraph 8) -

[3.18 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, this clause calls on the Government to acknowledge the importance of immediate action. I think the Government has done that in the Leader's contribution. I think we are all aware of the need for action; I do not think there is any issue with that. The Government is completely rewriting this. I am looking at what it is suggesting we remove, as opposed to what it is suggesting we put in - 'immediate action to combat youth unemployment and initiate a youth jobs taskforce'. What the Government wants to replace that with is -

Notes that 2,700 more youth are employed since March 2014, and the State Government acknowledges that more needs to be done to combat youth unemployment and has a range of strategies in place, including our jobs action package and strategic growth framework to improve youth employment outcomes.

I am not going to say the same thing I said when speaking to the previous proposed amendment. Basically my comments remain the same as for that. I am sure there are aspects of youth issues in those, but it is not specifically focused on youth unemployment. I am not entirely sure what the member for Elwick had in mind. He might like to speak to this about a youth jobs task force. We need to listen to young people. We need to hear their ideas. The Government and all of us need to hear what they think. What better way to get the voice of youth on something that really directly impacts them and their future in this state than to have a task force that they can participate in? That is a sensible approach and a good way to engage. I do not see what the threat is in that, if indeed it is seen as a threat.

The suggested amendment by the Government is purely political. It seeks to look at the time the Government has been in office and says, 'Look what we have done'. In spite of that there is still a significant issue. The amendment removes that by just putting in a political statement at the end. I will not be supporting this amendment.

[3.21 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE - Mr President, we will not be supporting this amendment either. It completely takes away from the concept of a task force. Let us have that debate. I am interested in other members' thoughts on that. They have not yet had an opportunity to contribute on that point. If other members want to propose an amendment, I will listen to that too. Let us have a debate around what a task force could do.

Sixth amendment negatived.

Original motion -

[3.22 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, because I said a lot of things I would have said during the discussion of the proposed amendments, I will not repeat myself entirely. I will make a fairly brief contribution.

I first commend the member for Elwick for bringing this matter forward. It is a really important issue. It is important that our young people can get and keep jobs in Tasmania. Some young people are going to leave the state for education that is not offered in the state. It is good for young people to travel for a period, because if you get out of the state, you see what possibilities there are and you appreciate what we have here. Many young people do come back.

Three of my children live out of the state, mostly for work. One or two will not come back and one couple will end up overseas, a lot further away than Melbourne. That is the nature of the lifestyle they have. There are not many jobs for opera singers in Tasmania. That is what my son-in-law does. Mind you, he did perform in Launceston last week.

Mr Willie - Let us hope there is a job in that industry one day.

Ms FORREST - Maybe there will be in the future. He sees his future in Vienna or London. We do not have a Tasmanian opera company. There is a Victorian opera company, for example, so there are reasons some young people do not seek employment in this state at this stage. We should always make the place as welcoming and attractive as possible for young people to come back to for employment and to bring up families in this great place we know and love. The role of government is to ensure that employment opportunities are there for our youth and the education system adequately prepares them for that.

Different aspects of the motion pick up on the need for interaction with education and the jobs market, whether through apprenticeships, university, or workplace training opportunities. It is such an important issue. Because the rates of youth unemployment have been high for a long time in the north-west, it has been a constant challenge. Once a generation or two of young people have been unemployed and their parents have been unemployed, as we all know, it becomes a very difficult cycle to break. When those people have children, they tend to perpetuate that cycle. We need to look at ways of breaking that cycle and that is where we really need the voice of youth. We need the voice of youth front and centre in some of this decision-making. When the member for Elwick sums up, I would be keen to hear his vision for the youth task force and how he thinks it would work.

The way I see it, we could actively engage young people for their ideas in a variety of formats and forums - you could have WhatsApp moderated chat groups; you could have forums in schools or public forums. Young people engage in different ways. We need to make it as easy as possible for them to engage so we hear all those voices. We need to hear the voices of the severely disadvantaged intergenerational unemployed young people living with intergenerational poverty. If we are going to lift them out of this, we have to find a way to do it and we have to work really hard to be able to hear their voices.

If we do, we might come up with things we have not even thought of. We need to listen with an open heart and mind to those voices because they often find it very hard to speak up, even among their peers. There is a lot of work to do there. I wanted to touch on the fact that youth unemployment is, as the motion describes, a significant issue for this state and other states. Every state has challenging geographic areas and we have ours.

In answer to some questions I had on the Notice Paper from August - I appreciate having had one answer; I hope there will be more before the end of this week - I want to talk about the

unemployment figures by gender. One of the questions I asked was regarding unemployment in Tasmania in trend terms and original terms in July 2019, so up-to-date figures.

In trend terms, 17 900 Tasmanians were unemployed; of these 8900 were male and 9000 were female. In the year to July 2019 in original terms, 16 600 Tasmanians were unemployed, of these 8100 were male and 8500 were female. We have more unemployed females. This does not break them down by age, but I am sure it is consistent - I imagine; I did not ask for ages -

Mr Willie - When they are employed, there is gender payback.

Ms FORREST - That is the other thing I am coming to. Unemployment is one aspect, but underemployment is another, because underemployment makes it hard for people to survive.

In the underemployment figures, in July 2019 in trend terms, 27 600 Tasmanians were underemployed. Of these 10 400 were male and 17 100 were female, which is a lot more than just short of 3000 more. These estimates do not sum to the aggregate estimate due to rounding issues. In the year to July 2019, in original terms, 26 400 were underemployed; of these, 10 100 were males and 16 300 were females.

When you look at participation rates in July 2019 in trend terms, the Tasmanian participation rate was 60.3 per cent. It still remains lower than the national average. I do not have the national figures, but we have been tracking lower for a number of years. In the same period, the male participation rate was 64.3 per cent and the female participation rate was 56.4 percent. That is terrible. In the year to July 2019 in original terms, the Tasmanian participation rate was 60.5 per cent. In the same period, the male participation rate was 64.5 per cent and the female participation rate was 56.6 per cent.

We really have an issue here and we need to throw a gender lens across this. In any work we do, we must make sure we hear the voices of young women as well as young men in this.

Slightly off target, I want to make a brief comment about the very real gender pay gap. If the members are interested, look at the answer I received on notice this morning and it will be all there in *Hansard*.

In May 2019, in trend terms, full-time adult ordinary earnings for Tasmanian males were \$1473.10 per week. The equivalent for Tasmanian females was \$1343.70 per week. This equates to a pay gap of \$129.40 or 8.8 per cent - still totally unacceptable.

The national pay gap is worse: it is 14 per cent. Still some work to do.

Other information that was really interesting, and I encourage members to look at this, is the employed persons by income bracket. Even when young people get a job, when a young woman gets a job - and this is broken down by the level of weekly personal income for employed people - for incomes from \$1 per week to \$799 per week, the highest percentage is in the female workforce. I encourage you to look at the chart on this. Once you get to \$800 per week to \$3000 or more per week, the males are the highest percentage consistently across every pay scale. Do not tell me we do not have a problem - we have.

That will affect young and older women alike, and the longer young women are behind the eight ball, the worse off they are with superannuation and with all those other aspects that negatively impact on a woman's capacity to be self-sufficient in her older age.

This is why getting employment for young people is vital, but it is also really important that we throw the gender lens across it and see the particular actions we need to take to be sure young women are being given exactly the same opportunities as young men.

On that point, I just want to briefly mention a young man called Shannon Wells in my electorate; he works for a company called Protech, which does labour hire and training for organisations. He came to see me a few weeks ago to discuss proactively the opportunity of doing specific entry-level training for women in the mining, energy, construction and manufacturing industries. He is looking at designing courses, not particularly delivering them, although the company could, but he sees that as a conflict, which is quite right. He has engaged with some female leaders in Grange Resources and with some key women in Elphinstone to look at developing training programs - how they could be delivered and from where - to ensure women can have access to these areas of work as well.

It is easier for young men to get into these areas because it is traditional men's work in many respects. I commend him for taking that initiative. It is a really important thing he is doing, by focusing particularly on young women in years 10, 11 and 12, trying to engage them in these areas and make it safe to do it, make it okay to do it and helping them get into a field they might find offers a whole heap of other opportunities. These industries are screaming out for people. We have heard that from many of these industries.

We need to engage the young men and young male school leavers in this as well, but there is a whole untapped resource - when you look at the participation rates of women there, as I read out, there is plenty of capacity.

I commend the member for Elwick on his motion. I note the comments I made during the debate of the amendments; I think I covered the majority of those points there. It is an important issue, I know. I do note the work the Government is doing, but I think there needs to be a much more targeted approach on youth unemployment with a policy framework around that, a properly formulated youth engagement strategy and a gender lens put across it.

[3.34 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for bringing the debate on this issue of youth unemployment to the House.

Youth unemployment across Australia remains high, consistently double the normal rate. In this respect Tasmania is no different, but we do have some particular challenges. Two reports released this year that the member for Elwick has discussed on the issue of youth unemployment unfortunately present the bleak reality for many of our young people. One report, from the Brotherhood of St Lawrence, uncovered Australia's top 20 hotspots for youth unemployment. It found that Hobart and the north and north-west regions came in not particularly well in those rankings. We heard thirteenth and sixteenth. This means Hobart is the worst capital city in the country -

Mr Dean - From the bottom, 13th and 16th from the bottom.

Ms WEBB - This is the 20 hotspots for youth unemployment, with the highest rates. The second report is by Anglicare, an organisation I am quite familiar with. I recently came from there and was involved in producing this report in previous years. Its jobs snapshot report revealed that in Tasmania there are a high number of low-skilled jobseekers compared to the number of low-skilled jobs being advertised. The report does a snapshot on a particular weekend or period of time to see in each region how many low-skilled jobs are being advertised as available and how many jobseekers who would fit the skills profile for those jobs are in that region.

The snapshot found that Tasmania has the highest number of potential applicants from jobseekers in the country that would match the skills required for the available low-skilled jobs. There were 14 to one here in Tasmania. That is high. It does not mean there would only be 14 applicants for those jobs. It is not only the people who are minimally qualified for an advertised job who go for it. A range of people with higher levels of qualification will also be going for those jobs because of the competitive nature of the job market.

Young people are particularly at risk in that dynamic. They are particularly vulnerable because their skill level and experience level is unlikely to be as high as other applicants. My family has experience of jobseeking at the moment. A recent application went in for a relatively low-skilled job. More than 400 people applied for that job. If you were a young person applying for that job, you would have been competing against 400 plus, many of whom would have been much more qualified. You would have found yourself, I suspect, with barely a look-in. They probably did not get past reading your name.

Jobs suitable for young people feel like they are becoming scarcer and harder to get. People are competing against a whole range of applicants, not just those with comparable skills and experience. Despite these difficulties, the member for Elwick makes the point that the state Government has no policy framework to tackle this issue. It calls upon them in this motion to establish a task force to undertake this function. I will speak more about that later.

The call for a policy framework rather than broad-based employment frameworks or plans or strategies is warranted. The mix of issues that feed into youth employment warrants the focus and collaborative approach that would be drawn from a specific policy framework. I appreciate the call for that. It is something I would support.

I want to talk more about the mix of issues that feed into this challenge. It would be interesting to think about those the way we think about health outcomes. One of the things we recognise in the health space is that a number of contextual factors determine whether somebody's health outcomes are going to be more positive or more negative, and we typically call those things the social determinants of health. These are people's social, economic and physical individual circumstances. It includes things like their income, their housing situation, their level of education, their employment status, their gender, their social connectedness and their physical environment. If we think about that idea of a determinant approach, it applies really well to the area of youth unemployment also. We can borrow that idea because we can think about the fact that there are certainly some very foundational elements in a person's life that make it possible, particularly for a young person, either to more readily access and maintain employment or to experience barriers to accessing and maintaining employment.

Some of the examples we might be thinking about, if we are thinking about social determinants of employment for young people, would be their access to affordable housing, public transport,

health care and mental health care, child care - even simple things such as their access to getting a driver licence.

In the context of youth unemployment, therefore, I wish to speak briefly about some of those issues because I think they are things that should be thought about and addressed alongside more narrowly targeted jobs policies. They are also the reason that warrants us talking about a policy framework on this issue and thinking about the value of a task force approach to addressing it.

First, I will speak briefly about housing. Many people here know I am a passionate advocate for social and affordable housing in this state. Housing is a bedrock of a successful society. It disturbs me deeply that we continue to find ourselves in such a dire housing situation with so many Tasmanians simply unable to access an affordable home. This is a crisis that has affected many of our friends, family and neighbours. It is not least, really, that the dramatic and quite dire impact of it is felt by young Tasmanians. We know this because of the 3300 or so people on Tasmania's public housing waiting list, around 1000 are under 25 years of age. That is 1000 young Tasmanians who qualify for housing support to live in public or social housing, and we cannot provide them with an affordable home through our public or social housing system at this time. They are left then to face that situation in the private rental market or, in many cases, are facing homelessness because we are not currently able to provide them with access to a safe and affordable home that they are eligible to receive.

We know that young people will be a significant cohort in the private rental market. Tasmania's tenancy laws are now some of the weakest in the country. Specifically, our tenancy laws provide virtually no protection from substantial regular rent increases. That means that we have seen exactly that in recent years: young renters have commonly faced rent hikes of \$100 a week from one rental agreement to the next - that is coming to the end of a lease, renewing a lease into a new lease period and the rent goes up by \$100. There is nothing to stop that happening in our tenancy laws if the landlord can make an argument that this is market rent. Because we know that property prices and the rental market have gone gangbusters here, everyone has just bumped up each other's rents. We would commonly experience hearing from people in our community who are experiencing these enormous jumps in their rent, year after year, as they enter into new rental agreements.

Mr Valentine - You have to bring in new flatmates to help pay for it.

Ms WEBB - Other jurisdictions tackle this in a range of ways. Sometimes there is a maximum amount that can be increased at any given time, or a proportion of the rent that can be increased at any given time. It is a good conversation for us to have for another day about ways we can improve protections in our Residential Tenancy Act, given the private rental market here at the present time.

We also know that the private rental market is becoming incredibly competitive because of a whole range of factors, one of which we are also due to talk about in this Chamber, the short-stay accommodation market, which has made an impact in that area, particularly in the Greater Hobart area. Private rental stock is being depleted by the shifting of properties into the short-stay accommodation market. This affects everybody in Tasmania - families, older people and, particularly, young people who are very vulnerable, and it is simply unacceptable.

The member for Elwick outlined in detail the rates young people receive in their income support payments through our Centrelink system. They are low - they are so low as to be untenable. Another report I was regularly involved in - in my prior role with Anglicare - was the annual Rental Affordability Snapshot. Certainly, for the three years I was involved in doing that report about

Tasmania and I believe it occurred again this year in the most recent report. When we did a snapshot of rental properties available in this state on a weekend in April - which includes units, houses, rooms in share houses, every sort of rental offered - not one single property, including rooms in share houses, could be regarded as affordable for a young person on Youth Allowance. It has been the case for years now. In that snapshot report, not a single property could be deemed affordable.

That is a dire situation that means even the sorts of living arrangements typically available to young people or student share house living is now stretched beyond what could be deemed affordable and reasonable for them. I have spoken about housing at length here and know it is not about housing, but it is very hard to get a job if you do not have a safe and secure home you can afford to live in and afford to use as your home base for going about the rest of your life, including education, training and employment.

The other thing I wanted to talk about is the context of the determinants of employment. Social determinacy is a more direct one, and we would assume a link with education. The link between education and employment in many ways is quite obvious but also warrants mentioning in a few particular ways. Through a robust education system, we provide all Tasmanian children and young people with the ability to go on and into good employment situations and deliver good outcomes for themselves personally, but also for our state.

Tasmania has historically had some of the lowest student retention rates. I am disheartened to see we still seem to be hovering in the vicinity of around the lowest and at the moment we have the second lowest rate in the country. Understandably, this has prompted action by government, which is excellent to see. Steps are being taken to tackle this exact issue and I welcome the work being done. Actually, by successive governments, but particularly by this Government, there has been a lot of focus around the years 9 to 12 and the extension of high schools has been mentioned to some extent today. It may serve well some young people to assist them complete their education and move through to employment. That is a critical time to keep young people involved in education and employment and efforts to do that are really welcome.

One thing I am familiar with - again from previous roles - in a way bookends that year 9 to 12 focus is that we have also made efforts, across a few successive governments over the last 10 years, to build up and really invest in early years education. We have done quite well at bookending school with good efforts in investment in and results from focusing on early years education, and in recent times good progress, efforts and investment around years 9 to 12. Over the last few years one thing is that we seem to have dropped the ball still in the middle. In terms of ultimate outcomes for the most vulnerable children in our community, we have to plug that gap in a much more focused way with much greater investment. We saw that through the policy and research work done in the community sector. In the spaces in which I worked, children in particularly vulnerable families begin their disengagement from school in the mid-to-late primary school years. The member for Elwick, with his background and experience, will probably concur with this. Children from vulnerable families experiencing a range of challenges would begin to not participate in their educational pathway from about the age of 10 onwards.

That would be coupled with a whole range of other factors in their lives, such as disengagement at home, experiences of trauma and abuse at home and homelessness. The problem is we do not meet those challenges well. Our efforts in years 9 and 12 are not going to touch them because they definitely will not be at school by the time they get to that age group. We have lost them already.

Mr Willie - Given the trajectory of some of those kids - and I know them well, particularly in the northern suburbs - it almost requires an emergency response. If we do not rush there to wrap around that child and re-engage them and get them through, they continue on that trajectory.

Ms WEBB - That is exactly right. We are miserably failing highly vulnerable children in those middle years. We have absolutely no response to unaccompanied homeless children under the age of 13. If children aged 10 to 13 are homeless and unaccompanied in this state, we have nothing to offer them in the way of care and support. If a 12-year-old presents to a shelter in this state as an unaccompanied homeless child, the shelter has to turn them away. That is the situation we are in.

Mr Willie - There is a government task force on unaccompanied youth at the moment.

Ms WEBB - Indeed we have one.

Ms Forrest - Maybe they could include them in the other discussions.

Ms WEBB - They would be a stakeholder. I am getting a bit distracted, but that is partly because this issue has many different factors. It is not as simple as focusing narrowly on creating jobs or particular types of employment and training. There many other things associated with a young person's ability to access and maintain work.

I was going to speak briefly about our VET system. Our TAFE system is crucial to getting young people into the workforce and some additional funding has been committed. I believe that follows from an erosion of that space by state and federal governments over recent years. I hope the reinvestment by the state Government is not just a bandaid for what has happened in recent times but will be enough to take us into a more positive situation.

At the federal level Senator Jacqui Lambie is a champion and strong voice for more investment in vocational education and training and TAFE facilities.

Housing and education undoubtedly play strong roles in a young person's ability to find work. I would also like to look at three specific issues that could be addressed in the short term. They would come within the remit of a task force if they were to give a holistic, focused approach to this issue.

The three things I would like to talk about very briefly are improving driver licence access, improving access to child care and improving the way we deliver employment services to young people. Getting a driver licence is often one of the most liberating moments we experience in our lives. I was pretty late coming to it. Parents generally appreciate the moment when their children get their licence because you no longer need to wear the taxi hat. That feeling of liberation is even more strongly felt here in Tasmania because having a licence and a car is particularly important given our geographical spread and limited public transport options. Having a licence is beneficial socially as well for employment or education and training.

It is disappointing that in Tasmania young people are facing lengthy waiting times to simply sit their test to get their licence. I believe just a few months ago *The Mercury* profiled a young man who was shut out of a job because he simply was stuck waiting to get his licence and the job that he was potentially able to get required him to have one.

Mr Willie - I can report that he has now found an apprenticeship. I think he has to resit for his driver's licence again, but he is my constituent and I know him well.

Ms WEBB - A lot of people take more than one go at it.

Mr Willie - Yes, but it is good news that he has found an apprenticeship, and I think they are prepared to wait the month it is going to take. It is good news. He is very capable.

Ms WEBB - Again, this is another reason you do not want long waits. That is fantastic news. That is a very good news story, thank you, member for Elwick.

That young man is clearly not alone. I believe that has prompted the Government to take action to fix waiting times, to some extent. One thing that concerns me about that, and I was a bit dismayed to read that potentially the policy response involved in trying to fix waiting times was to open up driver assessments to the private sector. That is a type of approach we have seen before: underfund good public services to the point where they break and they are not meeting the needs of the community and then move to a privatisation model as a solution. I hope that does not happen in this space.

Mr Willie - It has.

Ms WEBB - That is very disappointing then. I think it would be a shame -

Mr Valentine - It is then an issue of quality control.

Ms WEBB - There are all kinds of issues that come into play once you have privatised a service which could have readily been delivered by the Government if they had funded it adequately in the first place. However, I am going to move on from that.

You have that direct link there between driver licences, cars and access, and getting a job for some people. There is another issue I think does not get the same level of attention in terms of it being a direct enabler of accessing employment, and that is young mothers and their access to child care and their ability to get a job if they have access to adequate and affordable child care.

I thank the member for Murchison for the attention she provided in her speech to gender considerations relating to this issue and some of those matters she highlighted. This is quite a particular one that fits in the same vein. Child care does not have to be an issue that relates just to women and girls. It is an issue that ultimately, I hope, relates equally to men and boys. At the moment, we still face a situation, particularly for young women who may also be mothers, that child care tends to fall on them as a responsibility and therefore on them as an issue to solve in terms of their employment prospects.

I note a report done by PriceWaterhouseCoopers on the importance of tackling the high number of NEETs in Australia. NEET is a term used to describe someone who is Not in Education, Employment or Training. In the PriceWaterhouseCoopers report, it was interesting to see - for a number of reasons but it would be very interesting to consider for a task force - the range of matters discussed in that report. One of the things I did note here is that it is estimated that one in 10 young people in Australia have NEET status and that within that number, young women are over-represented. This report argued that one of the most effective ways of tackling the issue of NEET young people is to target young women by improving their access to child care.

We need to think about a holistic response to these issues that sit around a young person's ability in terms of different sorts of situations around gender.

We know that Australia has relatively high childcare costs. Many young women in the community would like to work but find that the lack of affordable child care is a significant barrier.

I am going to talk very briefly about employment services. I wish to talk about them because we can really improve the way we deliver employment services to young people. Some of the reports and evidence mentioned today highlight this issue as well. I note the member for Elwick spoke in his initial contribution about the effective partnership in the Sorell municipality that tackles this with a new collaborative approach, providing employment support to people in a very local and focused way.

I also highlight a local program run by Colony 47 in Hobart that is doing a really fantastic job of getting young people into work. Young people, through that program, are provided with one-to-one mentoring to help them access, or train towards, work. It is supported by the federal government's Transition to Work initiative. It is a program making real and positive change in helping over 100 young people in Hobart find work or get into training. That should be really celebrated. This program through Colony 47 and the partnership collaboration mentioned by the member for Elwick and highlighted in the media recently are ways of thinking creatively and holistically about how we can best support people. There are ways we could do this with particular focus around young people and bring that holistic response.

I restate my support for the member for Elwick's motion. I support the idea of a youth jobs task force. There are a range of challenges and barriers relating to the issue. We need to tackle them holistically. A task force idea really gives a sense of urgency and momentum, but also positive action. The member for Elwick mentioned a range of stakeholders who may be involved in such a task force. I very much appreciated the member for Murchison's focus on the need to involve young people themselves in such a task force. This is an essential ingredient and would assist to make sure the work of a task force did not drift into irrelevance and away from some of the core issues that sit around the idea of work for young people.

I thank the member for Elwick for providing the opportunity to discuss this issue. It is a really important one for our state. I recognise the efforts the Government has and is undertaking in the space, but I absolutely emphasise the opportunity to do more. I appreciate the suggestion put forward of a policy framework and a task force to do this.

[4.02 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I thank the member for Nelson for a very interesting offering on this particular matter. It is great when we have members who have past experience they can bring to the table. It really helps us to synthesise our own thinking and ideas. I thank her for that.

When I read through these things, and after listening to some of the comments today, I do not see young adults leaving as a negative. When people leave, they go out and gain a wider experience and then bring that back to the community.

Ms Forrest - It is attracting them back we need to focus on.

Mr VALENTINE - That is right and is where the issue is. Of course, we are finding a renewed interest in Tasmania that will make it easier as we go along.

Mrs Hiscutt - Following from what the member was saying, , the young lad whose marriage I was celebrant for now owns his own business, has had two children and employs about 12 people in our state.

Mr VALENTINE - I do not think it is all negative when people leave the state. But we have to be cognisant of looking after those staying. They are our certain future. If they are not either properly trained or job-ready in some way, they are not going to find an easy path. This is the really important thing the member is seeking to bring out here, with the idea of initiating a youth jobs task force. It would be great if the task force was an independent task force. We do not need to have political argy-bargy in this area, but proper consideration of the issues. We need to listen to the young people. I would be fascinated to hear what young people think about all high schools going to years 11 and 12. It would be interesting to hear from those who have gone through that and maybe ended up in a trade. How hard was it for them? Would they have found it easier through a VET course?

Encouraging students to stay in the system is important, but we have to be careful how that is approached. It might degrade the years 11 and 12 experience because there are not enough students to provide the subjects they need to do. Even in collaboration with colleges, it might be difficult, including getting kids to classes and back. Whatever this task force is supposed to achieve, it needs to be independent.

I heard what the member for Nelson said about students putting in job applications. Can you imagine how demoralising it must be to put in a job application with 400 other people? It might be character-building and might make them a more resilient person, but you must keep them focused on getting that job. Many kids would simply think they might as well be on Newstart. We do not want kids to get to that point.

We need holistic policies. It is not just about youth finding work. It is about the whole employment area and the pathways for people to follow. We need to build a workforce that is capable of delivering the demands we are going to place on it. We need long-term strategic frameworks that are not election-cycle driven. Parties need to agree to the end point across the parliament and agree on that important point. There may be a series of strategies in that framework.

Whoever gets into government chooses which strategies they are going to work on. They do not move outside the framework. That is the way we need to tackle many things, not just education, employment and health. We do not want to be discombobulating everybody by seeing new strategies and new frameworks put in place every four years. Our state cannot afford to deal with life like that.

I support the motion. That holistic framework, that end-to-end stuff, is a good thing for us to look at. An independent youth task force, please.

[4.09 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I too appreciate this motion. I was disappointed in the amendments from the Government. In the 18 years I have been here I have never seen this sort of tactic. I have seen other tactics. I have seen where advice has come from the other place and

from advisers who do not understand how this place works. They think it is all about the bearpit; it is pointscoring -

We are not about that. We are above that. This is about your language, strength of the debate, strength of the points you can make, the research you do, what you want to bring to the table to try to influence the way people think by the way we think collectively, the ideas we might put forward to the Government. They might have a little brain cell that goes, 'Oh, yes, bang! That's not a bad idea. We might make that our own.'

From the get-go, we could see it was a misreading of the situation - as has been proven, by what members think here, in the way we dealt with the amendments. I thought it was embarrassing for the Government to advance this material and for it to be dealt with as it should have been dealt with.

Then just to be a bit more positive, I appreciated very much listening to the contribution by all members to the debate and the way we conducted ourselves, except for one unedifying incident at lunchtime when the member was treated, I thought, with aggression and assertiveness. That sort of behaviour is uncalled for in this Chamber.

I have not witnessed it before, here, and I trust I will not witness it again. However, I think it was a measure of the astuteness of the member for Elwick that he conducted himself properly.

What a terrific debate, what a terrific discussion to have. What an issue we have on our hands that we need to be aware of and concerned about, and this was the opportunity for that discussion. For the Leader, there is nothing in the amendments put forward that you could not have delivered in your response to the members' presentation, to give us the Government's view - present it, tell us, inform us. Let us know what is going on without this pointscoring opportunity, which I think backfired.

I support the motion.

[4.12 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I thank members for their thoughtful contributions. I think it has been a really good debate, and this is what private members' day is all about - when a member puts forward an issue for debate, members turn their minds to that; they might do some research to see what is happening and come back to contribute. It has been a really productive debate, and I hope the Government takes notice of that.

I will make a few brief comments on each member's contribution, and then maybe talk a little bit about the task force at the end.

The member for Huon said he was not convinced that the loss of Vodafone jobs in Hobart would affect young people. The thinking around that is that they are entry-level jobs. I know a number of people who have worked at Vodafone in the call centre, funnily enough. Many young people work in that call centre.

Many young people find themselves starting off in these entry-level service industry jobs, and that is great.

When I started work, it was at Domino's Pizza. Young people start in those sorts of jobs. If they are full-time, entry-level jobs, they are good jobs. We need those so young people get a foothold in the employment sector and get some experience. That is a good thing.

Ms Webb - I interpreted that point in the motion also to be the fact that 130 jobseekers injected into the current job market in Tasmania means that young people will be competing against even more, and potentially more experienced, people for the other jobs that are available.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, there are more people in the jobs market looking for employment, potentially.

The member for Huon also referred to monthly figures. I did not go to the monthly figures because they fluctuate quite wildly at times. It would only take one industry to lay off a number of jobs. They can fluctuate - even in the general employment trend data, you can have fluctuations from month to month. It is actually more reasonable to use a 12-month average figure there because it gives you an indication of the year - the 12 months - and the average across months rather than the wild fluctuations from month to month.

I certainly acknowledge the Government's Jobs Action Package and some of the other programs. We want to see investment from governments of all persuasions, but as this debate has confirmed, there is no overarching framework or strategy to combat youth unemployment. If this motion is fortunate enough to pass and the Government thinks that is a good idea and would like to flesh that out further, I would be willing to participate in that in a bipartisan way.

The member for Hobart talked about an independent task force. I think there is a role for that too. Some of the stakeholders who are real experts in this field and young people would be best placed to formulate the idea of what that would look like and what the action would involve. I have had some initial conversations with Youth Network of Tasmania - YNOT - about this motion. They were supportive of the intent and would like to flesh out some of those things too. Maybe the Government would like to get in contact with YNOT about this idea.

The member for Murchison raised some very important points about the disadvantage between genders in unemployment, and also the employment and the gender pay gap. I think there is a notice of motion in there.

Ms Forrest - Don't worry. That is what I was asking the questions for.

Mr WILLIE - If you bring that forward for debate, I will commit now to participating in it, because it is a good topic in itself. I certainly appreciate that aspect and that thought. It certainly needs to be addressed too; there are some key actions that could be taken in that space.

The member for Nelson has a lot of experience in the community sector and I respect that. She talked about the complexities, whether it be housing, health care, transport, child care, disengagement from education. They were all worthy contributions. A lot of that is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We have talked about that a lot in this place. If you do not have your basic need met, it is pretty hard to self-actualise, be employed and contribute something elsewhere in a workplace when a whole lot of other things are happening.

Just on child care, that is an interesting one. I know the Government has some initiatives at the moment with Working Together. That whole sector is really ripe for a huge national reform like a

Gonski or an NDIS. There are so many working families in Australia that are really struggling with access to child care. There are a lot of unemployed families whose kids would benefit from access to child care because we know play-based learning is so good for childhood development. I would not be surprised if the federal government ends up turning its mind to that sector at some stage and really having a comprehensive policy reform agenda.

Member for Hobart, I appreciate your thoughts that it is not a negative for young people to leave. That was a good point made. My motion was trying to acknowledge the demographic challenges and opportunities we have.

Mr Valentine - I appreciate that.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, with an ageing population, we need to make sure we attract young people and young families here.

Mr Valentine - You are talking about the ones who are here who have stayed.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. That makes it a better place for everyone to live - all ages. That was the point of my motion. I certainly acknowledge that going away and getting some experience elsewhere can be a good thing, and hopefully they come back. They do not all come back. That is the hard thing. I have friends who have gone away and have not come back.

Mr Valentine - I have one who is coming home.

Ms Webb - One of mine has gone away and is not coming back just yet.

Mr WILLIE - It is incredibly difficult for families when they do that. Some of my friends' parents are still here and find it hard being away from grandkids and things like that.

Mr Finch - That is life; it is the same everywhere.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, that is right.

An independent task force has some merit too. I talked about some of the organisations and people who could be involved. I acknowledge the member for Murchison's point that it is great to hear from young people, particularly disadvantaged young people, local leaders in the community, the not-for-profit sector, business, local government, schools. I am really interested, if a task force were established, in the general capabilities being taught in schools. We talked about Burnie Primary School, but there are some schools doing that really well, and other schools that probably have not turned their mind to this yet. Given some of those skills and the need to develop these for a changing economy, it should be a matter of priority. The department would be working very hard on this, but it is hard to provide that accountability over 196 schools. Some schools are starting to turn their mind to that, but it could be a way of connecting the education system more to the labour market.

That is about it in summing up. We would love to see a comprehensive framework or strategy to combat youth unemployment in the state. We would be happy to participate in that, if this is fortunate enough to pass. I will certainly be continuing to have those conversations with stakeholders. I thank members for their contributions and look forward, hopefully, to this passing.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Civics and Citizenship - Understanding Politics

[4.21 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council -

- (1) Notes that civics and citizenship is a part of the national curriculum that measures students' understanding of Australia's historic and current governance systems and practices, as well as Australian identity and culture.
- (2) Recognises that results from the 2016 National Assessment Program for Civics and Citizenship showed that only 30 per cent of Tasmanian year 10 students achieved a proficient standard.
- (3) Recognises that civics and citizenship is a vital part of increasing understanding of politics and helps to equip young adults with necessary skills to have their say.
- (4) Acknowledges that over 50 per cent of year 6 and year 10 students in the National Assessment Program sample believe that discussing politics is an important citizenship activity.
- (5) Commends the important work of Tasmanian schools, the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, the House of Assembly Education Office and the broader community in delivering civics and citizenship education.
- (6) Encourages all Tasmanians, including young people, to take an interest in civics and citizenship and engage with the Parliament.

During this elongated debate, I have made quite a lot of changes to what I was going to present. I hope I get it in perspective and correct for, particularly, our spectator, Hugh Magnus, who is in the Chamber today and the prompter of us, and subsequently me, to go down the line of a notice of motion to talk about civics and citizenship as part of the national curriculum. It is in all our interests to encourage better understanding of the political process and the great enthusiasm in our communities for participation and debate. To achieve that, it is necessary to start in schools, in making sure that civics and citizenship is part of the national curriculum.

The curriculum measures students' understanding of Australia's historic and current governance systems and practices, as well as Australian identity and culture. However, as this motion points out, results from the 2016 National Assessment Program showed only 30 per cent of Tasmanian year 10 students achieved a proficient standard.

Much needs to be done and that is why I have put forward this motion. In respect of paragraph (1), I would like to go to civics and citizenship in Australian schools. There is a long history of government investment in measures to improve understanding of civics and citizenship in Australia. The importance of civics and citizenship education in schools is recognised by all

Australian governments, as demonstrated by the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians in 2008.

The declaration includes that one of the primary goals of education is for all young Australians to become active and informed citizens who, among other things -

- have an understanding of Australia's system of government
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and participate in Australia's civic life

The Melbourne declaration drove the inclusion of civics and citizenship as part of the Australian Curriculum. Initially, it was to be a learning area in its own right. However, following a review of the Australian curriculum in 2014, it was incorporated into humanities and social sciences.

Paragraph (2) - the 2016 results I mentioned were concerning, particularly for year 10 students. The then minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, stated the results were woeful and should be of serious concern. He pledged to take the issue to the COAG Education Council to develop a joint strategy for improving student performance. It is not evident if that has occurred. Year 6 students in Tasmania performed slightly below the national average. Year 10 students in Tasmania were among the lowest performers.

Paragraph (3) - there has been a large volume of academic research into civics and citizenship over the past few decades as successive governments have attempted to make improvements in this area. Recent research shows that the delivery of civic and citizenship education in Australian schools is failing to adequately prepare young people to participate in democracy. For example, in late 2017 researchers from Monash University spoke to recent school leavers aged 18 and 19 about their preparedness to participate in the Australian political process. The findings indicated that while young Australians are interested in politics, many do not have a good understanding of how the political system works and believe they did not learn enough in school to prepare them to vote. The students who participated in the study suggested that civics and citizenship education should be extended to year 12 so it is being provided closer to the voting age. It should be seen more as a life skill rather than an academic subject.

Other researchers argue that the Australian Curriculum is repeating the mistakes of the past when it comes to civic and citizenship education. The authors of a 2018 article called 'Civics and citizenship education: What have we learned and what does it mean for the future of Australian democracy?' contest that previous government initiatives have failed to develop active citizens. They cite the results from an annual Lowy Institute poll to demonstrate why levels of civic engagement in Australia are concerning. The latest poll, conducted in 2019, found that 65 per cent of respondents and 55 per cent of those in the 18 to 29 age group agreed that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. The gap between older and younger Australians on importance of democracy is narrowing compared to previous polls. However, it is still concerning that 30 per cent of 18- to 29-year-olds polled said that in some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferable.

Australia is also facing decreasing voter turnout and an increase in informal voting. While the authors of the article support the introduction of a national civic and citizenship curriculum as a means of improving civic engagement among young people, they argue that the Australian

Curriculum overlooks diverse citizenship cultures and fails to recognise student agency in the becoming an active citizen process. One of the primary suggestions for improving civics and citizenship education is to enable students to learn more through active participation in their own communities. This sentiment is shared by other critics of the Australian Curriculum civics and citizenship.

Commentators have also noted that teachers may not have the necessary knowledge and training to teach civics and citizenship due to a lack of experience from their own schooling. They emphasise the importance of ongoing professional development and support to deliver the curriculum appropriately.

Mr Valentine - Are you putting your hand up after May?

Mr FINCH - To do what?

Mr Valentine - To do civics and citizenship.

Mr FINCH - You think I might change my mind. I think I have a job to do, yes, you might be right. We will see what happens.

Paragraph (4) -

Acknowledges that over 50 per cent of the year 6 and year 10 students in the National Assessment Program sample believe that discussing politics is an important citizenship activity.

Since 2013, significant decreases in performances were observed for year 10 students in both metropolitan and provincial areas. At the national level in 2016, 38 per cent of year 10 students achieved at or above the proficient standard compared to 44 per cent in 2013 and 49 per cent in 2010.

The 2016 result for year 10 students was, in fact, the lowest on record. There was an increase in positive attitudes among students towards participation as active citizens, but approximately half of all students viewed discussing politics as an important citizenship behaviour - 55 per cent in year 6 and 51 per cent in year 10. These findings show a significant improvement for year 10 students when compared with the 2010 and 2013 results. However, discussing politics was ranked as the least important citizenship behaviour overall behind several others, such as taking part in activities to protect the environment and learning about Australia's history.

Voting in elections was viewed as very or quite important by 85 per cent of year 6 students and 84 per cent of year 10 students. Around half of all year 6 students and 41 per cent of year 10 students reported they had participated in excursions to parliaments, local governments or law courts. The percentage of year 10 students in Tasmania achieving at or above the proficient standard was statistically lower than in 2010, with 30 per cent of students achieving at or above the proficient standard in 2016 compared to 39 per cent in 2010. Female year 10 students in Tasmania have statistically significantly higher mean scores than male students.

Paragraph (5) - Tasmania follows the curriculum for civics and citizenship - that is, humanities and social sciences in prep to year 6 and civics and citizenship in years 7 and 8. Civics and citizenship as a standalone subject is optional after year 8. The Minister for Education and Training,

the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff, indicated in the House of Assembly on the 4 June 2019, that there are no plans to make civics and citizenship compulsory for years 9 and 10 in Tasmanian schools. Some elements of civics and citizenship education may be covered in the compulsory history subject in year 10, for example, through the required study of human rights and the environment movement, which is an elective.

I might go on to point out the Tasmanian Electoral Commission provides education resources on civics and citizenship through the TEC Education Gateway as part of its legislated role to provide electoral awareness and education. The gateway contains collated information relevant to Tasmania and the goals of that project are to develop Tasmania-specific resources for teachers that will provide students with broad grounding in the principles of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen. Also, to facilitate opportunities for hands-on experience of democracy and instil long-term understanding and connection to the democratic process.

The House of Assembly Education Office coordinates school tours of Parliament House and outreach visits. In May 2019, I made a speech about respect of civics and citizenship education in Tasmania - I will refer to the notes I made during that speech because they were quite magnificent. What I meant to say was that the figures I was provided by the education officers were magnificent. I asked how many students had toured Parliament House over the past 12 months.

We had 1191 students visit on a sitting day to watch the debate and 3478 students visiting on a non-sitting day, either to tour or do the House of Assembly role-play. In total, almost 4700 students visited.

The figure does not include the Tasmanian Youth Parliament or students reached during the schools outreach program. That is a wealth of connection to younger people. Our education officers are to be congratulated.

Ms Forrest - The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - CWP - gets young women into the parliament. That is another thing that is done.

Mr FINCH - Yes. There are opportunities. One hopes there are increasing opportunities for people to have that connection to parliament.

Ms Forrest - This year we had young women from Rosebery and Smithton. They came a long way to get here.

Mr FINCH - Yes. As I point out whenever I have guests here or invite people here, 'This is your Parliament. This is your House.' People should understand who we are, what we do, what this place represents and what it is all about. They should take some ownership of this glorious Parliament House in which we are privileged to work. They should see it as part of being a Tasmanian. This is their Parliament House.

I had a lot of material about what is going on in other states in civics and citizenship. I have already touched on what the minister for Education has said about that. I have covered most of the points I wanted to make except (6) -

Encourages all Tasmanians, including young people, to take an interest in civics and citizenship and engage with the Parliament.

That is what we should be doing and what we try to do. I am a promoter of conducting ourselves properly in this new world of being live-streamed. I hope young people want to get a taste of this parliament and see what is going on. When we are presenting, we should be presenting in a good, fulsome way that encourages young people to say, 'Crikey, what a good thing'.

Ms Forrest - They probably think, 'I can do a better job than him'.

Mr FINCH - You pointed at me when you said that.

Ms Forrest - No, that was in general.

Mr FINCH - 'I would like to have a go at that. I think I could do that'. We would like to encourage the feeling within young people that there may be an opportunity in their future to embrace what we do here in parliament in trying to influence the quality of our life and what is good about Tasmania -

Entering adulthood without an understanding of our political system is seldom corrected. People lose interest in how politics works and are unlikely to take the time to learn.

That is what I said in my special interest speech - we need to engage young people in our community, to get them at that very young age, to inspire them. They are unlikely to take the time to learn if they move through the system and they have scant understanding of what democracy and the system is all about. The important work is being done. I point out again: only 30 per cent of Tasmanian year 10 students achieved a proficient standard in previous tests. We need to do all we can to encourage our young Tasmanians to be interested in what we do. I would like members to support the motion. I believe as Tasmanians, we need to go further and need to take every opportunity to foster that interest in the political process. I am trusting members will support the motion.

[4.40 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this motion on. It is an important issue and something we do not always give a lot of thought to. It has helped to focus the attention, also to acknowledge Hugh Magnus is in the Chamber - he encouraged the member for Rosevears to put this up for debate. It is such an important matter.

It is disturbing, as the member for Rosevears mentioned, that students in Tasmania do not do very well in terms of their studies in civics and citizenship, even though it is part of the national curriculum. We assume everyone hears and understands it, but it appears that is not the case. We all have an obligation, when we are out and about in our electorates, to take the opportunities that present themselves - as I am sure all of us do - to talk to young people and groups of students.

From my perspective, the first time I ever set foot in this place was as an elected member. I had never been to Parliament House. I had been to Canberra on a school trip, the old Parliament House back then. It was still the Parliament House. To me, this was a really completely foreign place. I had never even been here. To step into the place, coming through the front door as an elected member for the very first time, was a very rare occurrence.

Mr Willie - And daunting, probably.

Ms FORREST - Yes, it was a little bit and I hope it is a rare occurrence. The problem is for people from the north-west and west coast, it is a long, long way away. There are some people who have not been to Hobart. I will add, there are some people from Hobart who have not been to the west coast. For some of the young people up there, it is beyond the capacity of their families to bring them down here with travel costs, the transport, the time away and perhaps the greater desire to even visit Hobart. People from up my way are fearful of the traffic. If they had driven last evening, they would have been fearful of the traffic. It was dreadful going up the Brooker Highway. I do not know what was going on, but I heard it was pretty bad everywhere.

I can understand why people become a bit stressed about this, when you are not really sure where you are going and you have three or four lanes of traffic, it is pretty scary. They are little things that prevent direct access to this place for young people.

Speaking in broad terms, the member for Rosevears covered the detail of the motion. There are many things we can do to engage young people. Again, it is at times a small and usually a highly motivated group - those who engage with Youth Parliament, the young women who are selected to the Stepping Up program run through the CWP.

It is a big ask for some of the schools a long way from here. We do see them coming in. It is really great to see them, right from the little tots in grades 1 and 2 - which we have had - through to obviously the young people in years 11 and 12, and even university. Particularly in our more remote areas, which many of us represent, we need to be the people who go to them, to visit the schools and talk to the school children.

Whenever I go to Zeehan Primary School, I know I have to go through the minister's office and the minister always says yes. He is very good and I really appreciate it. Usually a text message is all I need to do, to let him know where I am going. At Zeehan Primary one day, a grade 4, 5 and 6 class was really interested in talking to me and asking what I did. I talked to them about that. These are the points of engagement we can have if we make the most of those opportunities. When I had coffee recently with a friend of mine with a little four-year-old, who is not at school yet - she might be at kindergarten, but she was on a day off - she is the most hilarious little girl, she is beautiful, and she was asking me about what I did. I was telling her and I said, 'Would you like a business card?' She did. She wanted a business card. I gave her the business card and she thought it was just so beautiful, she took it home and put it in her jewellery box, her mother told me. She wants to do what I do when she grows up. I said, 'That is excellent. I am looking for a succession plan.'

Even those little touch points like that make us, as politicians, real people and make parliament and parliamentarians accessible. We all have a very important obligation in promoting civics and citizenship in that way and engagement with the parliament.

I do take on board the member for Rosevears' comments about how we behave in this place. I am sure you have all heard around the electorates that 'All we see is that carry-on in question time' - and that is the carry-on in the other place in question time, not here - and the same with the federal parliament. Unfortunately, it is the theatre of the parliament, and that is what the media report. If people just watch the news to get that, rather than tuning into a debate, that is what they will see. But I am personally staggered by the number of people who actually watch parliament now that we have the live feed. You get emails from people who have said, 'I didn't like what you said then' or 'I did like what you said there' or whatever. An amazing number of people tune in.

That helps take parliament to the people. If I am talking about a particular matter, about a school or something like that, I can let the school know and they can tune in at that time on a five-minute speech or a special interest matter speech and that sort of thing. There are ways we can take the parliament to the people as well as bringing the people into the parliament. I encourage all of us to think about the ways we can do that and then to take each of those opportunities.

I highly commend our parliamentary educators. I know they are sitting in the back of the Chamber and that they put an enormous amount of effort into the conference held last week here for parliamentary educators right around the country. I know that was fabulous because I heard feedback from a number of the participants. Some of them I had met at the ASPG conference in Canberra and the CWP conference in South Australia just recently. They play such an important role. We are very lucky in this parliament to have the ones we have, in the enthusiasm and vigour with which the program is presented and the work they do behind the scenes to set these things up - like the Youth Parliament, like the Stepping Up event for young women and other events that occur. I commend them and thank them for their efforts in that. It is appreciated and it does not go unnoticed.

Mr President, I am encouraged by the response I get in talking to young people about civics and citizenship, and about parliament and engagement with the parliament. In my mind, this feeds a lot into the previous motion we just debated from the member for Elwick about youth unemployment and the need for a youth task force. It is very important to hear the voices of youth. I am actively seeking to engage with the already established youth organisations run by the councils in my electorate because that is another way of tapping into those young people, hearing their views, bringing their views to the parliament and perhaps facilitating an opportunity for them to participate in parliament in whatever way they can.

Many years ago, when the former member for Rumney, Lin Thorp, was the minister for Education, we tried for a long time to get funding allocated for a new gymnasium and an upgrade at Smithton High School. It had been built in 1962 and it had not changed since then. I would not have got undressed in the change rooms, I can tell you. They were freezing and horrible. Anyway, I met with the school executive council, the students. They put a very good case forward and I suggested they come down to parliament and meet the minister, so they did. I hosted them here. One of their teachers and the SEC coordinator came with them. They came down; I attended the meeting with the minister with them and we had a meal together in the Parliament Dining Room, and they stayed overnight. I think they went back the next day after having some tours around the parliament and watching some of the parliamentary proceedings. One or two years later, funding was put into the budget. I am not saying that always happens, but for them it showed this is how it can work - you can participate and engage. A wonderful young man. Connor Bramich who was one of the co-presidents in grade 10 at that time made the point to the minister and me earlier, that this would not benefit him, it would benefit the students following him and the broader community and that was why he was doing it. What a fantastic young man - and the other students all made similar comments along those lines.

If we can facilitate these ways of engaging with young people ourselves as parliamentarians, teaching them about civics and citizenship and parliamentary process and what we do, we will hopefully have a great line of people to take over our seats. That is what we need; we need people with new ideas, fresh ideas, to follow behind us and be ready to come up into those ranks at a later time.

I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing the motion forward and giving us this opportunity to speak about this really important matter.

[4.51 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I start by stating my support and also thanking the member for Rosevears and his team for bringing forward a positive motion for us to discuss today.

The motion raises several significant points, but perhaps most importantly, it recognises the role the study of civics and citizenship plays in our society - a very positive role. Our curriculum should encompass a breadth of subjects that provide a really rich educational opportunity and accommodate a range of talents, interests and capabilities among children and young people in our schools.

While it is, of course, quite essentially important to focus on the three Rs, the curriculum should also include other areas that provide enrichment like arts, technology or indeed civics and citizenship. Placing civics and citizenship within the national curriculum is a real recognition of the benefits a full and rich education can provide, and it is capable of producing citizens who can participate fully in their community. As the motion states, providing civics education 'helps to equip young people with necessary skills to have their say'.

Civics has much more of a role to play than merely educating students on the parliamentary system or the mechanics on how to vote. On a broader scale, it helps us maintain a strong democracy. On an individual level, civics can also be a real spark for students to become engaged and passionate about politics and advocacy. I support the comments made by the member for Murchison on the need or value of having people develop a real interest and passion in pursuing politics, having a whole range of people from our community coming to public service and politics and the contribution that would make to the outcomes for our state if this were to happen.

Also, people engage in the political area not necessarily directly as politicians or would-be politicians, but as advocates, whether on issues areas or from the perspective of certain cohorts of the community, particular industries or all sorts of things. Advocacy and engagement in the political area are also important contributions to progressing public policy and progressing political discussion. Civics and citizenship competency and knowledge are things that can also equip people to be very effective in the area of advocacy. I see this as a real plus.

A programme like Youth Parliament is a real testament to what civics education and engagement can mean for our young people. My eldest daughter participated in Youth Parliament when she went through high school and found it to be a very valuable and enjoyable experience.

Ms Forrest - One of my sons did the same year as the Leader's son.

Ms WEBB - She was deputy premier, which I thought was quite impressive. I doubt she will go into politics but she did enjoy Youth Parliament. I was very happy, having already some exposure to Youth Parliament, to be involved this year as a newly minted member of this Chamber and to participate in Youth Parliament and observe the depth of engagement among the young people participating. There was real passion and verve when debating issues of importance, not issues of frivolity or issues relevant only to children. They participated in thoughtful debate about meaningful issues.

One aspect of Youth Parliament that impressed me was the range of students from a variety of schools. Many regions of the state were represented. Students came from a whole range of backgrounds. We should always be improving our schools and the educational opportunities of our children. We have touched on this today. I am a passionate advocate for a strong public school system and I am grateful for the clause in this motion that recognises the role schools play in civics education. It was informative to read in the motion about the National Assessment Program and some of the results from that. They tell us that the majority of year 6 and year 10 students in Tasmania believe in the importance of discussing politics. With two students in my own household in year 5 and year 6, it is a compulsory subject in my household. They do not get to escape it so they will be contributing to that statistic.

Mr Willie - From memory at school they would be learning about Federation.

Ms WEBB - All kinds of things. One of my proudest moments was when my second daughter was in year 5 last year. We were heading off to vote in an election that occurred early last year. As we were heading towards the voting station she said to me, 'Now we are going to see a Robson Rotation on these ballot papers'. I just about fainted with pride. It is brilliant that students at that age are engaged and learning about the mechanics of politics, learning about the history of Federation and our system of government. I have experienced discussions with friends and associates who were never given the opportunity to learn about our system of government or the basis of our voting system. I have had to give a voting 101 lesson to many adults in my life. I do not tell them how to vote; I just talk them through the structure of our parliamentary system and the mechanics of how our voting system works. You are behind the eight ball if you get to adulthood and you have not had a chance to learn that. I support the idea that we make sure all children coming through our schooling system have the chance to learn that.

I noted in the National Assessment Program that concerning statistic from the 2016 assessment. I think the member for Rosevears referenced in the motion that only 30 per cent of Tasmanian year 10 students appear to have proficient standards in civics. That is a shame. There is a lot of opportunity for us to be doing better in that area. I wonder whether there has been some improvements or investment since 2016 at a federal or state level that would help to shift that figure. I think the same survey is conducted at intervals. Perhaps a more updated statistic will give us better news.

In closing, I wish to express my support for the motion and thank the member for Rosevears for providing us with an opportunity to discuss it today.

[4:59 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, first I acknowledge Hugh Magnus from Woodbridge School in the President's Reserve. I have received emails from Hugh before about civics and citizenship education, so it is good to see him here. I also thank the member for Rosevears for taking the opportunity for bringing this on and for Hugh to be able to be here to hear this -

Civics and citizenship education promotes students' participation in Australia's democracy by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of active and informed citizenship. It entails knowledge and understanding of Australia's democratic heritage and traditions, its political and legal institutions and the shared values of freedom, tolerance, respect, responsibility and inclusion.

That is from Education Services Australia.

Civics and citizenship education is underpinned by Australian history and the history of other societies that have influenced that historical tradition. Civics and citizenship education also supports the development of skills, values and attitudes necessary for effective, informed and reflective participation in Australia's democracy.

Civics and citizenship is a subject within the Australian Curriculum learning area of Humanities and Social Sciences - HASS - for all students in years 3 to 8, and is an optional offering in years 9 and 10, as it is in other states and territories.

It is an expectation that all schools implement the civics and citizenship curriculum as a component of the Australian Curriculum version 8, Humanities and Social Sciences, as outlined by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Schools may adopt flexible approaches to curriculum implementation to suit their context and needs. This includes how civics and citizenship is offered in each school context.

Civics and citizenship was endorsed by ministers as a subject in September 2015. Schools may choose to teach civics and citizenship as a standalone subject in years 7 and 8, or equally they may choose to embed it within an integrated approach to learning. There is no requirement for it to be taught as a discrete subject. Schools use the Australian Curriculum learning areas and subjects to inform elective options offered in years 9 and 10. Schools may report on students' achievements in civics and citizenships as a discrete subject or as part of an overall report of HASS.

It is important to note that the introduction of the Australian Curriculum has been phased in and schools are continuing to work through the implementation of learning areas and adjust aspects such as timetabling to be able to accommodate all aspects of an expanded curriculum and the needs of their school communities. It requires time for the provision of professional learning for teachers and the development of teaching resources to ensure the provision of high-quality programs across all aspects of the Australian Curriculum.

The National Assessment Program for Civics and Citizenship - NAP-CC - assesses a representative sample of Australian year 6 and year 10 students in civics and citizenship every three years. In 2016, Tasmania's year 6 results were comparable with other Australian states. Year 6 results have remained stable for Tasmania and Australia, with results in 2016 comparable with results in all assessments since 2004.

A survey measured students' perceptions of citizenship and their attitudes towards civic-related issues and civic engagement. Survey results were reported nationally, but not by jurisdiction. The survey found an increase in already high levels of positive attitudes towards participation as active citizens, with students in 2016 tending to have higher levels of interest in civic issues, greater belief in the value of civic action and stronger expectations to engage in civic attitudes in the future, particularly when compared to 2010.

How is the department supporting the teaching of civics and citizenship? The department, through Curriculum Services, is currently working on additional teaching and learning materials to support the teaching of civics and citizenship, including blended learning resources designed to support equitable coverage of the Australian Curriculum across different school contexts.

There are also many existing resources to support teaching key concepts within civics and citizenships produced by the Australian Government for all schools. Professional learning is to be offered to all Department of Education schools in terms 3 and 4 in 2019, to support the teaching and assessment of all area of the humanities.

I notice our parliamentary educators here in the room. I would like to touch on Youth Parliament; I have been part of a mock parliament set up and I must admit I did enjoy that. The children involved enjoyed it also.

I congratulate the organisers of Youth Parliament. It is an important program organised by young Tasmanians for young Tasmanians in conjunction with the Young Men's Christian Association, the Tasmanian Government and parliamentary staff. We thank you all for your efforts in this important work you do.

The organisers of Youth Parliament are a not-for-profit group of volunteers under the age of 25, called the Tasmanian Youth Government Association Taskforce. Their primary aim is to educate young people about our system of government in an enjoyable, challenging and interactive way. Many of them have personal insights, having been youth parliamentarians themselves.

This initiative program has a proven track record of educating, engaging and empowering young Tasmanians. Our Government is pleased to support this initiative and continues to provide funding to support Youth Parliament in 2020. One of the most exciting elements of the program is seeing students evolve and grow over the week.

The Government certainly supports the motion.

While I have the Floor, I flag to members that we might have a dinner break between 6.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. for our scheduled function and resume at 7 o'clock to facilitate the remainder of private members' business.

[5.07 p.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Elwick) - Mr President, I could not let a debate on education go past me, even though I was a bit preoccupied with preparing another notice of motion. I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this motion on and also his interest. He has brought this to the parliament through several formats, including a special interest speech, and it is great that Hugh is also here. He is obviously engaged on the matter and it is great he has a voice here on the Floor. Collaboratively, it is a good thing.

I will offer a reasonably brief contribution unless I get sidetracked.

Point (1) -

Notes that civics and citizenship is a part of the national curriculum that measures students' understanding of Australia's historic and current governance systems and practices, as well as Australian identity and culture.

The important point here is that to measure something, you need to teach it. I am not so sure that is happening to the extent it could in all classrooms. You mentioned some teachers might not feel confident to teach civics and citizenship. I do not know whether more work can be done around professional learning. I have been invited back to schools since I was elected. I really enjoyed

talking to them about civics and citizenship. If we are measuring it, and we have talked about it in this place during the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy debate, but formative assessment as an assessment for teaching is a really effective tool to then measure progress. You see where the students are and then some of the summative things can happen towards the end of a learning program.

Mr Finch - The Leader suggested there was a thrust by the Department of Education to provide resources and professional development for the teaching staff.

Mr WILLIE - Yes. The Professional Learning Institute does a good job, but with 195 schools it is hard to get across every classroom. A quality civics and citizenship program is recognised as being an effective source in understanding and engaging effectively in politics. Civics and citizenship provide opportunities for young Australians to consider: Where did I come from? What does it mean to be Australian? How can I as an Australian use my voice and make a difference to my community?

The curriculum is designed to act as an enabling tool for young people to gain knowledge and confidence to understand and value Australian democracy and to encourage community engagement and contribution. Unlike the member for Murchison, I was fortunate to visit parliament many times as a schoolteacher, before I was elected. I used to thoroughly enjoy organising excursions to parliament for education. The parliamentary staff were always excellent, working with schools, building understanding, building capacity in our young people.

I also used to take them to Town Hall and the Council Chambers as part of that excursion, which was always a good way to talk about the different levels of government. In the broader population, many people do not understand the three tiers of government and their different roles and responsibilities. Young people can participate in a whole lot of other civic engagements in schools. I used to teach the Student Representative Council and loved doing that with a whole range of grades. Kids would give up their lunchtimes and we would discuss different projects we could get involved in within the community or building cultural things within the school or events. It was a really good process to go through with the kids. We did all sorts of wonderful things. We raised money for Guide Dogs Tasmania and had Dexter the guide dog visit. We engaged with a whole range of different community initiatives. This was a really good outlet for young people.

Paragraph (2) recognises the results from the 2016 National Assessment Program for Civics and Citizenship that showed only 30 per cent of Tasmanian year 10 students achieved a proficient standard. That is worrying. All Australians should feel empowered and understand the government systems and practices that exist to serve their best interests. Yet as point (2) highlights, the 2016 National Assessment Program for Civics and Citizenship showed less than 50 per cent of year 10 students across the country were proficient - it is worrying, but I am also not surprised.

We have all sorts of engagements with adults who would not be proficient and all sorts of conversations that reveal those -

Mr Finch - Shortcomings.

Mr WILLIE - Yes, shortcomings; thank you. If we want to gain the best for our students, and indeed the best future for our state, we need to reflect seriously on these results. Tasmania is home to almost 113 000 children and young people, about one-fifth of our population. As the future of

our state, young people should understand the systems of government and democracy, and the education system should be better at preparing young people to engage.

Some other members have talked about engagement. It can take many forms - reflecting on the digital world in which we live, my discussions with young people have highlighted to me that the traditional methods of civic engagement are changing and young people are at the forefront of this change.

In place of writing a letter, or phoning through to Mornings on ABC, it is more common to see status updates and online awareness campaigns. As other members who have a social media presence would know, and will probably agree with me, much of the contact through my online page comes from students and young people, whether posting publicly or direct messaging about different issues and their thoughts. I welcome and try to respond in a timely manner and engage with young people in our important role, not only as parliamentarians, but in educating the populace and being ambassadors for the Westminster system we are fortunate enough to be custodians of.

In particular, the Tasmanian Parliament website has been identified as an obvious outlet for civic engagement, but in its current format, it is irrelevant to young people. In today's digital world it makes sense that we develop the Parliament of Tasmania website to allow for an informative and inspiring resource to activate the young people of our state and help them build an understanding of government systems. On this, Mr President, as you know, because I have included you in the correspondence, I was fortunate enough to attend a Commissioner for Children and Young People forum a couple of years ago, I think now, with Mr Jaensch. We engaged with the ambassadors at the time - I think there were nearly 50 of them - and had a broad discussion about all sorts of issues. One of the things they raised with Mr Jaensch and me was access to parliamentarians, wanting to learn more, and also the parliamentary website.

I took that away and wanted to provide the young people with a tangible outcome. I wrote to the Speaker in the other place, saying that this had happened and this was something I was interested in, and whether she could help me lobby for an allocation of funds to develop the website. Unfortunately, we were not successful in the last budget period, but it is not something I am letting go. I have already written to the Speaker and the Treasurer this year, hoping they will consider that. I think it could be a wonderful resource that could be accessed by young people. It could be a great teaching resource in schools.

It is not only unfriendly to young people at the moment, it is not very friendly for users who are of adult age or parliamentarians. It is quite antiquated in the way it operates and how we access information on it. It is well overdue to do that. If we could have a focus for young people, that would be a great outcome. I thank the young people for raising that with me at that forum.

There are plenty of examples of great state parliament websites or just parliamentary websites. The Victorian Parliament, for example, has a user-friendly education zone with activities that progress through the ages of learning. Then, as the most recent commissioner for children pointed out to me, the New Zealand parliamentary website is outstanding. It is called 'Our House is your house'. You can visit that and learn through sections targeted towards students and teachers. That is the sort of resource we should be fighting for here, to develop understanding in the community. Young people will engage through those digital platforms if we make them available. Currently it is not available.

On point (3), we know that young people - I will not read it out, it will get boring - hold strong and passionate views about our country, as reflected in such issues as marriage equality and the climate school strikes. Youth enrolment is at an all-time high, with an estimated 88.8 per cent of eligible 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled to vote at this year's federal election. Other members might correct me if I am wrong, but I think the plebiscite on marriage equality meant that many young people enrolled to vote so that they could have a say in that plebiscite. That resulted in more voters being enrolled at the subsequent federal election.

As we all know, you cannot vote with certainty for a particular person or party without understanding the workings of the government system. During the most recent federal election I stood at my old primary school from about 6.00 a.m. - that is Glenorchy Primary School - until the close of the booth, shadowing our federal member, the member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie. We had some great banter all day about who people should vote for.

Mr Dean - You obviously did not do too well.

Mr WILLIE - No, actually, at the end of the day I heard him on the phone saying 'Last time I was on this booth I had a free hit. Josh Willie has been shadowing me all day and I think my vote is going to go down'. It went down 10 per cent, so I take that as a win.

Through the course of that day I had many conversations with people who demonstrated apathy but might have wanted to understand more. However, they did not understand the system or which party stood for what. They were making their choice as they were walking into the booth, which is their right to do. I think that level of engagement is concerning. As parliamentarians we should be trying to address that. I know we do not help ourselves sometimes with the games that go on, not so much in this place but maybe the other place and outside this building. It was a deeply concerning day for me, not because Labor lost the federal election but the conversations I had about how many people were not sure of who they were going to vote for or why and were making a split-second decision. The difficulty today is connecting the line between the importance of citizenship activity and the politics relating to that issue, teaching young people about the current political environment and the implication of policies. In previous generations the actions and outcomes of government were probably easier to define. An example of that is decisions to join wars.

In Victoria the government is working to improve understanding. On advice from the government's own student representative council, Education minister James Merlino has instructed an overhaul of the civics and citizenship curriculum, so there is a tangible outcome for young people. I met James recently and he was very generous with his time. He is quite a charismatic person and a well-respected education minister in Victoria. I have spent time in schools and people spoke very highly of him and his level of engagement and knowledge of upskilling, although not coming from an education background. Students there have identified particular needs and will help to create new course materials, including proposed digital and video resources. These would be great on our website. Unfortunately that is lacking. Reflecting the digital age the student council referenced online sources in determining what exactly should be taught as part of the civics and citizenship curriculum.

I will move to point (4). While the National Assessment Program reflected a general lack of understanding of Australia's democratic process, this does not reflect the interest on the importance of politics. The member for Nelson was buoyed by this. I am too. The report also showed that young people believed discussing politics is an important activity. A young person's view matters. We should be putting their ideas at the centre of decision-making processes on issues that affect

them, whether it be in the parliament, their local community or their school. Since coming into parliament, I have made it a priority to stay connected with young people, to actively seek out opportunities to engage, to listen and offer advice when asked. It sounds simple, but helping a young person engage in a discussion can start with just one question on an issue relatable to that person. What are the things that impact their everyday lives? It has been a privilege in this role to engage with young people at the beginning of their engagement. A former student came to me the other day with concerns about the rodeo at the Showground. We wrote to the minister together. It is a privilege to facilitate conversations, support young people in voicing their views and seeking information. The letter we wrote was not political, it was about seeking information from the minister and entering into a discussion. It is great that a young person wanted to do that.

I will move to the next point, which is commencing the important work of Tasmanian schools, the Tasmanian Electoral Commission and the House of Assembly Education Office in the broader community in delivering civics and citizenship education. Today, there are certainly many outlets for young people of Tasmania to participate and engage actively in civics-related activities. In schools, there are more opportunities today for student involvement and some schools can make a priority of this. For example, in my electorate New Town High School has a strong focus on civics and citizenship and in preparing students to be active community leaders with opportunities to actively participate in civics action.

As members may recall, I hosted representatives of New Town High School Student Council to parliament earlier this year.

Mr Dean - It is a brilliant school.

Mr WILLIE - You would be on the honour board, member for Windermere.

Mr Valentine - Scratched on the back of it.

Mr WILLIE - Those students were responsible for identifying community courses for students' civic engagement as well as key student topics of focus for the year. I was really pleased they chose a topic that involved learning more about civics and the workings of government systems, hence their visit here. Outside schools, the traditional civics and citizenship opportunities still remain, and many members would have local Rotarian groups, and Lions Clubs indeed, reflecting on interesting aspects of community engagement.

My local Lions Club, the Glenorchy City Lions, has once again established the Leo Club, made up of members between the ages of 12 and 30 years old. If you going to get involved in an organisation at that young age, this is a really good thing for your own personal growth, to get into the communities see what is happening and contribute. I am always very impressed with young people who have that mindset because it is quite worldly and well-rounded at such a young age.

Local government is also providing civics and citizenship education, such as in the Glenorchy Youth Task Force, whose members have also visited this House. There is a bit of a theme here - being a former teacher, I enjoy hosting younger generations here and teaching them about the parliament, and leading community engagement for the northern suburbs of Hobart. Members are enthusiastic about giving back to the community and have a real confidence in discussing their political views and ideas for the future of our state. When you talk to young people, they have a lot of really important views. I can understand their frustration sometimes that parliament is not discussing the important issues they want to discuss.

Other members have thanked our education officers here and commended them on their work; they are very enthusiastic and passionate and do a marvellous job presenting the history of Tasmanians' parliament and how democracy functions in Tasmania. Through their resources, they are highly informative, entertaining and create real interest for young Tasmanians and citizens of all ages.

I take this opportunity to pass on my thanks to Kimbra McCormack and her staff for organising parliament visits - 100 per cent of the time my office receives positive feedback and a genuine desire for people to come back again and learn more. That in itself is great feedback for Kimbra and the staff at parliament that what they are doing is making a difference.

Youth Parliament is one of my favourite parts of the year, where members are invited to participate in the debates. I always take that opportunity up; it is a great experience for young people - and how brave of them at that age. When I was a young teenager, I probably would never have seen myself standing in this place or being able to participate in lively public debates like those kids do. Great leadership is shown in those debates. I think some of them will probably end up here at some stage.

I will move on to point (6) to try to wrap this up.

Societies as a whole are generally more interested and active in expressing their values with young people, particularly giving them the right to be heard. As we have seen at recent elections, young people are becoming more issues-based rather than aligning with political parties, and that is a real challenge to the major parties. At the same time, I think it is also a lack of understanding of the party system and collective decision-making, and the roles of opposition and government.

I often get people asking why Labor Party policies have not been implemented. They do not understand that you need a majority in the lower House to be able to implement a lot of policies. They do not understand the principles of collective decision-making and that you do have a voice in that Party Room. Those discussions can be very robust at times, as we know.

It is a real challenge for the major parties that young people are becoming more issues-based and becoming engaged around those issues, but not necessarily engaging with broader political movements. It is something I encourage. Any engagement is good. It is good that young people are passionate and aspiring to a better and fairer future. We need to make sure we are encouraging that in an inclusive way for young people to engage with the Tasmanian Parliament.

That is my contribution. I feel a bit rushed, member for Rosevears. I have been a bit preoccupied within another motion, but I am happy to contribute those offerings. Thank you for bringing this motion on. No doubt you will continue to engage with the parliament on this issue for half of next year.

[5.32 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I will be quite brief on this. I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this forward as well. It is very topical out there and a lot of people talk about civics, citizenship and politics. It is good to bring it in to have the matter debated.

I suppose politics is not a subject that appeals to all, but then not too many school subjects appeal to all students in any event, of all the other subjects. There should be an opportunity for this to be a part of the curriculum, and I understand it is, from what the Leader was saying, and from

what I know as well. It would be interesting to know the number of schools that take it up and provide this course and how long it is provided for as well. Maybe I will put that question on notice if I cannot get the answer to it, to see how much it is being considered.

I have been involved in politics for quite some time - in local government and in a state position. It is interesting. We talk about young people. A lot of young people know very little about it. A lot of older people know very little or even less about politics, civics and citizenship.

I went to a function here recently run by an official body. I will not mention the body because I do not want to embarrass anybody. On my nameplate - and the nameplates were done very well, I might add - they had 'MLC', and underneath that, it had 'Member of local council'. I have been out of council for about 10 years, or something like that. I took it; I souvenired it. I have it at home. I said to my wife, who was with me at the time, 'I am going to souvenir that'. It is great.

People remember me - I can go down the street now, not as a politician, not as being involved in local government, but they remember me as a copper. That is what I get all the time. If I am walking around, even down here, it is, 'You used to be a copper'. I do not get anything about being in state parliament or politics or anything else at all. I do not even get from many that I was a previous mayor - none of that. It is, 'You were a copper'. If you want to get a bit of a profile and be known you need to be a police officer. That is the story.

I have three sons. Two of them were able to find their professions here in Tasmania following their schooling and university. The third one was not able to find a job in his profession in this state and he had to go to the mainland, where he has been ever since. His job has taken him around the world and goodness knows what else. As he keeps saying, he has always wanted to come back to Tasmania, but sadly and unfortunately, he will never be able to come back to Tasmania in the job he has. There is not a job here in that line, unless he moves out of the Royal Australian Air Force and into private enterprise, which they are always targeted to do in the area of aircraft. He is currently a chief engineer and responsible for the Joint Strike Fighter pilots - keeping the F35s in the air. He loves his profession. I can talk to him about politics because he also has the gift of the gab. I thought he might come back into politics here, and his comment was - 'Dad, they would need to double the salary - number one - and I need a life.' '

His current job was in Afghanistan, but back in Australia, unless there is an emergency or something happening, he knows when and where he is working. He can play his golf and do all those other things he wants to do. As a politician, you cannot do that or it makes it hard for you to do those things. It is interesting how some people see these things.

If you talk to young people today about the subject, they are so interested in technology. Technology has taken a lot of students, young people, away from other areas and subjects. Almost everyone you encounter on the street has a mobile phone to their ear or has their ears plugged up with other stuff, listening to something on some device they are carrying. It is unbelievable. You can imagine the air traffic there is with all of this technology, and those who do not have an interest in technology, have an interest in sport, unfortunately not in civics and citizenship and politics. That is the way of young people and the way they see things.

I was involved in Youth Parliament this year for the very first time and thoroughly enjoyed it - it was great, and it was good to have some input into it. The member for Mersey was also involved and has been for a number of years. It was great to be there with these young people. I am not sure how they are selected or whether they volunteer to join. I imagine plenty of students want to be a

part of that process. They are absolutely enthusiastic and every time a point came up every hand would go up and somebody wanted to ask a question.

Mr Valentine - Depending on the answer they would say, 'Shame, shame!'

Mr DEAN - Yes. There was no doubt they did a very good job and it was really great to be part of and give something back to them. At the end, most of us had an opportunity to talk to them about politics and they listened intently.

Mr Gaffney - It is interesting where they call out 'Shame' and it must be from year to year when new students come along, and they have heard it the year before. I have never heard that in this parliament, maybe they have heard it in the House of Lords, but every year you hear, 'Shame, shame!'

Mr DEAN - They have to pick it up from somewhere. I am not sure whether it is in the federal arena. I have not heard it much in the federal area either so I am not sure where it comes from.

Mr Gaffney - Unless it is from Westminster. It is interesting.

Mr DEAN - Yes. For a while I had to pick out what they were saying. It was not 'Order, order'; it was 'Shame, shame!'

Mr Willie - It might come from the political party conferences.

Mr DEAN - Since that day, I have had a number of the students contact me to talk about different issues and things maybe they should be doing to get themselves established in the area we are talking about. We have some great young people out there. Tasmania is in good hands in the future provided we can keep them. Many of them return to Tasmania and pass on what they have learned on the mainland or overseas. Part of them moving forward is getting experience outside Tasmania. That is critical. I will be supporting the motion.

[5.40 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing the motion forward. I have said before in this place that in my first year of high school, I hated French. I got 65 per cent; I passed. I pleaded with my parents not to make me do French because I thought I could do other things that might be more valuable. The only thing that was on offer was citizenship. Look where my path in life led.

I can remember visiting the Clarence City Council, but I cannot remember visiting this place. I am not sure they did that job that well. I think that is where they put all the people who really did not care. Clearly it is an important role we play. The lower House is a House of representatives, we sit here in judgment on legislation that affects the whole state. It is a real privilege to be able to do that. A lot of people do not understand what the role of the Houses are.

I do not know whether you get the queries I get. You have to explain to people it is the House of review. It is there to make sure that legislation is good and does not have unintended consequences. If it comes to us with a framework, you cannot move outside that framework. You might attempt to change or amend it within the framework of the bill, but you cannot decide that something is worth putting in place and put up an amendment that is totally left field. It is not like that.

Unfortunately people do not understand the way the Houses are set up and how they operate. When I was campaigning for this position, I had to pick something up from someone. The person was their mid-60s, maybe 70. They said, 'What are you doing these days?' I said, 'I am standing for the Legislative Council'. They said, 'The Legislative Council, that would be mayor such and such'. I said, 'No, no, it is not local government, it is state government'. 'State government', this person says, 'So that is with Kevin Rudd and company'. I said, 'No, this is the state government, that is the federal government'. This person had absolutely no idea.

Maybe they had never ever had the opportunity to sit down with somebody and have them explain it to them. There are people out there who do not understand, not just this system, but also local and federal government. They do not see how it all fits together. It is essential we try to improve that in our community. When our parliamentary education officers come through with a band of young people behind them, you hear them sitting patiently explaining what happens. I come upstairs, I see them all in the Chamber. Someone is sitting in your chair, Mr President. They are getting a feel for how the Chamber works - the education officers do a fantastic job. We do not want to embarrass them too much; they are already embarrassed enough. The parliamentary education officers are of amazing value. So many children are getting that opportunity, whether they be primary or secondary schoolkids who are coming through or whether they be adults from TasTAFE - all sorts of people come through this place and they get the opportunity to see how the Chamber works.

Mr Dean - That is interesting. As I understand it - and we spent a couple of weeks in the federal parliament recently - each school over there, and I am not sure how wide it is, is funded by the federal government to bring the schoolkids to Parliament House.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay.

Mr Dean - It is something I need to follow up to see how much is involved in that. They get special funding to take their students to Parliament House.

Mr VALENTINE - I have been to federal parliament a few times in different roles and you do see many schools going through - probably no different to this, maybe the volume is a lot more. Taking kids into that federal parliament is just amazing. It is quite amazing here, too, because they look in awe of it, but I think there is a distance between the general citizen and these Chambers and that is what needs to be broken down. As other members have alluded to, we need people to feel comfortable about this place and what its purpose is in the community. They need to feel a sense of ownership because that is what it is: the people's place, as you have pointed out, member for Rosevears.

Whatever we can do to encourage students to consider how they could be involved, I think is worthwhile. Youth Parliament has been mentioned and I have been involved in that a few times. I have to say it is fascinating listening to young people come forward with their ideas and debate - and they do it with such passion. I love it sitting in as the presiding officer, Mr President, just listening to young people espousing their ideas and thoughts on things, even if it is through that interjection of 'Shame, shame!', although I really do not know where that comes from. They get passionately involved and it is a real introduction for them to the political system.

Someone mentioned that we have cameras now and parliamentary proceedings are online; they are there for people to listen to in the comfort of their own lounge rooms or at their office desks - I hope the televised proceedings do not put them off their work.

It is important it starts with young people. There is also that issue with teaching - through conversation, teachers have such a lot to fit into their day when it comes to delivering curriculum. You get all sorts of aspects. How it happens is the important thing and how you get quality information in a short period of time, given the workload that teachers have. Our education officers give a thorough rundown as to how this space works. Is there a necessity for much of that information to be imparted before they come here? We might have to balance that up a bit because they are getting such good information here and they are captured in the moment.

Mr Dean - As somebody else mentioned, having the teachers within the schools able to deliver the subjects is an issue. I am not quite sure how much a teacher would learn about civics, citizenship and politics going through university. I do not think there is too much on it.

Mr VALENTINE - There might not be, but they can do it in subtle ways, such as they have to elect house captains, they have to elect sports leaders and these sorts of things. Maybe elements of the political system can be brought into this and explained as they are going through that process - 'This is what happens in state parliament' and - 'This is how we are going to deal with this today'. Do you know what I am trying to say?

I know time is short. I fully support the motion and think whatever we can do to reduce the distance people feel from this place - young people must think, 'I will never make that' and 'I would never get there'. We need them to understand they can. That is the important thing.

[5.50 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I, too, thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this motion forward. We all know how little is known of the Legislative Council. I think many times the word 'council' throws people out. When I have been out in the streets - and I try to go out when it is not election time and just talk to people - they say, 'Yes, you are on Launceston Council'. Obviously, the word 'Launceston' and word 'council' - the legislative part is missed out. It is confusing for people. Particularly if the parents do not know, obviously, it makes it hard for the students. Sometimes, the students can teach the parents.

I have taken to going to schools kitted up with a couple of little books. The Clerk might remember the little books we had - those little glossy Legislative Council books. They are quite old, so I have done my own version and updated it a little bit, and gone to grade 5 and 6 classes and spoken to them about the Legislative Council. The questions they ask are really quite interesting. They are interested.

Only two weeks ago, when I was doing McHappy Day at McDonalds at South Launceston, one of the young girls from McDonalds said, 'Yes, I remember you - you came to my class and talked about the Legislative Council' when she was at Summerdale Primary School. It was really interesting they had paid some attention, because it was a couple of years since I had been to Summerdale, but she had remembered I was on the Legislative Council and had spoken to the class. It is important whether it be primary school or senior school - they certainly learn.

Often, as you say, we see young people come through this place. They come from a variety of different schools. They are always interested. You have a chat with them outside and they are excited. I do not know whether it might be possible, Mr President, to actually put something together for them again, because when we had several classes here from Youngtown Primary recently, I put together an updated version of my leaflets for them so when they went back to their classrooms, they actually had something to discuss and go through in their lessons.

I did do an updated list of who all the members were, where they were from, what the upper House was about, how it started, the bicameral system - pretty much along the lines of the outdated booklet we had. It is really useful to give to the students. It was only probably four pages double-sided but we printed it for them. At least when they go back to school after having been here - I know they get bookmarks and some things - it is something they can actually take back to their lessons and continue with.

It might be something worth considering - and it does not have to be expensive. The ones we did were simply a little bit of colour and a few sheets to give them information to continue with. I certainly appreciate the member for Rosevears raising it, because it is really important they understand what we do. Many people think there is only a House of parliament and when something goes through the lower House - and how often have you seen it in the local newspaper, when it says 'a bill has passed'. We think, 'No, it has not; it has not been to us yet', but it has been through the lower House and people assumed it has become law. So many people forget the relevance and importance of the upper House. They should be learning about politics totally, and I take note of the member for Windermere about the fact the federal parliament provided funding to -

Mr Dean - I understand they do, to schools, for them to visit.

Ms ARMITAGE - There is a fair cost to it when you consider families having to find the funding for students to come down. Often they do not just come down for one day. They might come down for a couple of days and try to incorporate other areas. There is accommodation, bus fares - it is quite a cost. Some people might not think it is very much. For a family with two or three children and all the other costs associated with families, it certainly is. It is worth considering. The Leader might like to discuss with her party whether there is some way to make it easier for schools to bring their classes down. Year 5 and year 6 classes, not just the senior schools.

I have only gone to year 5 and year 6 classes when I have spoken to primary schools. The children at that age are really interested. I am not sure whether you would gain the same interest going to the high schools, but the year 5 and 6 classes are really delighted.

Mrs Hiscutt - Through you, Mr President, parliamentary educators do take parliament to the schools and set up mock parliaments in their schools. That is a way of getting to places that are not so close to Hobart.

Ms ARMITAGE - It is, but it is more exciting for them to come down to the -

Mrs Hiscutt - Yes, but they do the education programs. But yes, I can see that it is very exciting.

Ms ARMITAGE - I understand that, but it is just like being at school. Everyone likes to get an excursion, to get out and come to somewhere like this. We take it for granted. For many other people coming down here it is a real experience, particularly children. Some of the teachers and aides who come with them are just as excited as the children. I support the motion. I think it is a very good motion. I certainly hope it goes somewhere. Would you like me to adjourn?

Mrs Hiscutt - No.

[5.56]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I will only speak for a couple of minutes on this motion because it has been very well covered by everybody. Well done to the member for Rosevears for bringing it forward.

As far as I am aware, if students from this state go to Canberra to visit federal parliament, they get an allocation of about \$150 if they visit three or four different sites. Students from Latrobe Primary School went last year. Every two years they take year 5 and 6 students across. They get some funding. That does not happen at the state level.

Every year, when students come here for the voluntary Youth Parliament, I always give \$50 to every student to help them out financially. They travel. That is probably a good thing to do. They are really receptive. Sometimes it all depends on school staff to get the students organised. If a staff member is really involved, they will ask students to be involved. If you do not have a staff member who is into it, the students do not get that information.

Student readiness is a real issue in civics and citizenship. Some students are ready to have that conversation in years 5 and 6. Some are not ready to have a conversation about it until they get to years 9 or 10. The overcrowded curriculum is important. I send a letter out at the beginning of every year to every principal saying I am happy to speak about local government, local councils and state government. Of the 19 or 20 schools I will probably get two responses a year. They are always pleased when we do it but it is a matter of fitting it in the curriculum. I had a year in the United States as an exchange student. The school's leadership, civics and citizenship was a course all students in year 11 had to do.

In year 9, you had to do US geography; in year 10, you had to do US history; and in year 11, you had to do civics and citizenship. It was part of their graduation exercise. I found that a good way of working. Here we tend to start targeting students to get into career paths early on in our system. I am not quite sure that is a wise thing to do, but that is how it works.

We have some really good modules associated with parliament. When I go into the primary schools and high schools, there are several modules available for schools to access which talk about the design of parliament and how it works. I chuckled and you would appreciate the humour behind this I am sure, when they said, 'A student would sit in your chair and feel comfortable in it'. I actually had four primary school students sitting there one day and they all felt comfortable all at once. They thought that was quite good so they did have a bit of a chuckle. I said, 'Be careful, do not make too much noise or the President will walk in and you will be in trouble.'

As far as the shame, shame thing, I think it came from when I was downstairs one day and I said - 'Unfortunately, the member for Rosevears, Mr Finch, will not be able to be in the Chamber today to help out', and they all went 'Shame, shame!'

Civic and citizenship - the main pressure is on staff and with all the other tests or activities they are required to do and all the other KPIs, it becomes a little bit hard at times and that is not taking away that we should not have it. It should be done in a way they can do it properly and spend time on it. It is like any subject - some students really enjoy it but some students could not care two hoots about it, so how do you weigh that up?

It is managing that but no desire through ignorance about not having the opportunity is different to no desire because they do not know what it is about. We need to be able to provide them with an opportunity to understand that. Once again, I congratulate Kimbra and her team for what they do here. It is wonderful. I wish we all had that exposure and access to it when we were younger. It is a step in the right direction and with the idea it is now on television, they can go online, and they can have a look at parliament and it connects people a lot quicker.

Congratulations, once again, after 18 years you have done something really worthwhile.

[6.02 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I thank you and Council members. To be honest with you, I did not expect such a fulsome response from members. I appreciate very much you have taken the trouble to give it some consideration. I want to thank Dr Bryan Stait in the Parliamentary Research Service and the person he handballed the assignment to, Kate Roberts, who is new to our Library and Research Services; she did a terrific job and had plenty of information.

I was going to suggest some advice be sent out to schools - a suggestion from maybe the minister's office, they might consider coming here. The wonderful Kimbra McCormack tells me at the beginning of every year, she sends out a notice to every school inviting them to come here so that is covered. With all the accolades Kimbra has received here today, Mr Baily might need to open the second door to allow her head to squeeze through, but it is certainly justified praise, Kimbra. Well done.

It was good to hear Neil Robson - the Robson Rotation. It was a fantastic thing somebody would have the interest - being part of Mensa, he had the sort of mind that would turn his attention to developing a simple process that is now so effective in our voting system. The diminishing percentage - 2016 was the only figure we had, but, of course, the point I made was the 2016 result for year 10 students was in fact the lowest on record since 2010-13 and 2013-16. It would be interesting to see what a 2019 assessment might reveal.

I did not mention one of the groups that provides this understanding of civics and citizenship. The Rotary Club of Hobart has an essay competition about civics and citizenship. The rotary club states the competition 'seeks to promote interest in and participation in the civic culture of Tasmania through a debate on the foundation principles of citizen engagement with our democracy'. Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Hobart. That is something that might be cemented or discussed in other rotary clubs in the state.

I was going to mention funding. The member for Mersey mentioned that you get support if you go to Canberra, which is understandable, but also the member for Launceston touched on the cost of actually bringing the students here. I am not sure of what the cost is - I have not checked that - but I imagine the schools trying to allocate the buses, the teachers, those sorts of things, from their budgets to allow students to come to Hobart. I am not sure what limitations or support the schools actually get, but let us hope that there is some sort of consideration that would help us achieve the situation where our young people are more exposed to our parliament.

I thank all members for their contributions and for supporting the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 p.m. to 7.05 p.m.

MOTION

Consideration and Noting - Report of the Auditor-General No. 3 of 2019-20 on Tasmania Prison Service

[7.06 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I move -

That the report of the Auditor-General No. 3 of 2019-20: Tasmania Prison Service - Use of Resources, be considered and noted.

Mr President, I just brought to the front of my mind Tasmania's health service and the prison service. They are both broken and both need radical revision. The report by the Auditor-General into the use of resources in the Tasmania Prison Service is damning. The objective of that 2019-20 audit was to form an opinion on the efficiency and effectiveness of Tasmania Prison Service's financial management of its custodial facilities. Much of the report focuses on management efficiency and the use of funds. Such subjects as community re-entry preparation, including rehabilitation and inmate quality of life, are within its scope.

Over the years, we have had scrutiny of the Tasmania Prison Service through our budget Estimates. The member for Windermere and I are long-time warriors in respect of what is going on at the TPS. Each time we have a sense that 'Hello, they have to be getting the message that we have an eye on them and we are talking about overtime.' Every year we have banged on about it while overtime has increased. It was interesting to watch that process, that something as dramatic as we were presenting and showing the increase, showing the numbers, was completely ignored, or their systems were out of place to such an extent that they increased again the following year. It might be best if I start by quoting the Auditor-General's conclusion -

It is my conclusion TPS's financial management of the prison service did not perform, in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, with respect to the audit criteria or the objective of the performance audit, as a whole. This is because TPS has not had a strong approach to modelling of future inmate numbers and associated staffing to ensure it has sufficient resources to run its prisons safely and securely. Reporting of key areas of both financial and operational performance has not been as developed as they could be. Workforce planning has not been fully developed, while improvements in the rostering of COs are needed to ensure the right staffing levels are achieved across the prison service. TPS has acted to fill resourcing gaps by predominantly using staff overtime, which has had adverse consequences in the cost efficiency of the prison service and increased unplanned staff absences.

If it were an annual school report, it could be summarised as 'Could do better - much better'. It is hard to plan the future management of a prison service unless there is a reasonably accurate way of predicting future numbers. This could be hard when a government changes its policy on sentencing, which significantly increases the number of inmates. That is the problem at the moment. One of the report's recommendations is especially pertinent -

Improve resource and financial modelling that is more predictive and forward looking to more accurately reflect demand and therefore resourcing requirements, which should lead to more informed decision-making.

Staffing levels have not kept up with inmate numbers and as a result the overtime budget has blown out. Inmate numbers rose from 472 in 2013-14 to 613 in 2017-18, an increase of 30 per cent. The running cost per inmate is estimated at \$306 a day. If prison numbers are going to continue to increase by 30 per cent every four years, our prison service is heading for unsustainability. Prison numbers at 30 June this year were 692. If you multiply 692 by 306, you come up with \$212 772.

I find that mind-boggling. We must keep more people out of prison. There are plenty of alternatives to expensive imprisonment for many crimes - big fines, home detention, tight probation conditions and compulsory re-education. I have spoken about this during the mandatory sentencing attempts by the Government. If these alternative deterrents were widespread, we would only need to lock up those who are a danger to society, those who are likely to repeat violent acts. Most importantly, we need to prevent crimes happening.

I made a number of points in my special interest speech last month. One of them was intervention. If I could quote a few paragraphs - is it okay? I am on safe ground, am I? I went before with one of my references and I had a big chuckle from the -

Ms Forrest - I only just said how brilliant the words were.

Mr FINCH - This is pretty good too, let me tell you. Sorry, I digress, Mr President -

Prevention, of course, starts in the home and in the education system, where young males in particular should be more closely observed and mentored. Good teachers can swiftly recognise problematic behaviour. We need a system where problematic behaviour can be addressed - both in the school and at home. Specially trained social workers are needed here to initiate early intervention.

Peer pressure is a big factor in schools and often leads young males astray. However, it can also work for the better, persuading young people that crime is a futile pursuit. One problem, as I pointed out in a speech last year, is that young people have a poor understanding of the law and their rights. This can be incorporated in curriculums ...

That reference shows I have not only spoken once, twice and probably more often, when we have covered mandatory sentencing. More interaction between youth justice officials, police officers and the community is vital. One more quote from last month's speech -

The usual political argument these days is that stiff sentencing and being tough on crime are effective deterrents. It could be argued that the most effective deterrent is the certainty of being caught. Looking at our deficient justice system more closely, we need to have a serious debate about the effectiveness of the present policies of recruiting more police, building more prisons, using mandatory sentencing and toughening parole systems.

The message in this Auditor-General's report is that our prison population is growing too fast and too unpredictably for efficient management. The report offers a number of remedies.

It is an important Auditor-General's report and the reason I wanted to make note of the report was so that we perhaps can take a closer look at what was actually contained therein, to highlight what is going on at the TPS and maybe shine a spotlight on what is occurring.

I urge members to support the motion.

[7.15 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this motion on. Had he not done it, I am confident I would have done so, or others might have.

Listening to the Auditor-General took me back in time. I go back to the 2013 report, which the member for Rosevears was involved in as well, in relation to prison overtime. The Auditor-General's findings and many of his recommendations were almost identical to what we had in that report. It was crazy. I did not think I was hearing properly, to be quite frank. When we did our inquiry in 2013, we provided two reports - an interim report and the final report - in relation to this matter. A similar parliamentary inquiry was done in the early 1980s - 1982 or 1983 it might have been.

We made the comment when we did our report in 2013 that we could have removed the names of those members of parliament from that report and put our names into it and it would have been the report that we came up with. That is what we said. I honestly do not know what is going on. The member for Rosevears is absolutely right - it is failing, in my view, in many areas. I accept that there have been a number of inmates coming in and I think it has moved from about 400-plus up to about 600 in a relatively short period. I accept all that, but still, at the end of the day, a lot of work needs to be done on our prison.

Reading from the Auditor-General's overall report gives a fairly good understanding and assessment of what is going on. I have taken a couple of comments from it here where Mr Whitehead said that TPS had not had a strong approach to modelling of future inmate numbers and associated staffing to ensure it had sufficient resources to run its prison safely and securely. He said the modelling used for predicting inmate numbers had relied on a backward view and had not been predictive enough and that this had led to TPS struggling to cope with changes in Tasmanian government policy and sentencing, which significantly increased the numbers of inmates during the five-year period to 30 June 2018 -

In short, TPS did not have enough Correctional officers to effectively and efficiently run the prison service.

This was the position in the 1980s, it was the position in 2013, and it is still the position.

I will now get back to the speech I wrote on this. I get quite upset and annoyed with this, to be very honest. Again, the member for Rosevears and I harassed the ministers for corrective services year in, year out prior to 2013. For about five or six years, we continually harassed them about the overtime and the way the prison was being managed.

Mr Gaffney - You cannot do that anymore, can you? You are not allowed to harass people anymore, are you?

Mr Finch - No. We have pulled back a bit from that.

Ms Forrest - Hold them to account.

Mr DEAN - We hold them to account. We harassed them and I certainly do not mind admitting that because I could see very clearly what was going on. I am going back from memory here, but when we started to take up the matter of overtime, it was about \$3 million. Over the years, despite what we were saying and the promises being made to us, the statement was made that 'We are now aware and will get on top of this and fix it'. However, it continued to blow out and it went up to \$5 million-plus over a very short period of time. That is when we determined we needed an inquiry to find out what the hell was going on and that was the cause of the 2013 inquiry. Sadly, nothing much has changed.

Mr Finch - During our investigations into that report we did some travelling, gaining some understanding of what was happening. The member went to New South Wales to do a study of the prison service and brought back their process of controlling overtime, and it made sense to everybody, including the prison service - and what has happened? Nothing occurred.

Mr DEAN - You are right - despite promises we were made that these things would happen, our findings and recommendations would be accepted and all the rest. Yes, I went to New South Wales off my own back, paid for it myself and went to the New South Wales prison service where I spoke to a number of very senior people in the organisation about how they were running their prison system. That was the information I brought back here that helped us construct our final report. Simple things like centralised rostering had more or less gone a long way towards fixing the issues they had in New South Wales. They had similar problems with overtime and all the rest, but a centralised rostering system, a fairly basic sort of thing, helped fix that.

At the time the prison service here used a rostering system that was all over the place, each little area was responsible for its own rostering and so on, and that changed. Whether they still have the centralised rostering system, I do not know, but I would like to think they did - it is beyond me.

Mr Finch - It seems from the report though it has not been paying dividends.

Mr DEAN - No, it has not. I mentioned we tabled two reports. Refer back to a similar inquiry, I have also referred to that. We are talking about a report in 1980, a report almost 40 years ago, almost half a lifetime.

Mr Finch - A third of a lifetime.

Mr DEAN - I would like to think it was, it would be good if it was. The member has me right off track now, and I am trying to go back to pick up where I should be. I made the comment here and when we did our previous inquiries that when you looked at what was happening with overtime, some members were earning almost as much on overtime as they were on their basic salaries. Very clearly back then if you read the reports, there was a lot of evidence to show the system was being rorted. I use that word and think that word was used previously - it is probably even in the report. I have not read through the reports word perfectly this time, but it was clear a number of employees were putting positions in place where they were able to manufacture overtime for their mates and so on, going on sick leave, taking sick leave when they should not have been and correlating that with long weekends and public holidays and so on.

If you looked at that evidence it was clear, it was stark. I do not know whether that evidence is there now or whether that is now still happening. It has reached a stage where one of our recommendations in our report was that following our report in 2013 being tabled, in two years time there should be a further follow-up inquiry. That was one of our recommendations. However, we did not do it. The time is here for a further inquiry. We should wait to see what the outcome of the Auditor-General's report will do within the prison service. If it does not do a lot, there needs to be another inquiry into the prison service to find the root cause of all these issues.

Mr Finch - Member for Windermere, here is a quote that you may have missed. This is from the Auditor-General -

TPS has acted to fill resourcing gaps by predominantly using staff overtime, which has had adverse consequences in the cost efficiency of the prison service and increased unplanned staff absences.

Mr DEAN - Amazing stuff. Is that not what came out of our findings and reports? It is just crazy what is happening there. We were told these things would change. There would be a concentrated effort in relation to prison management and overtime, sick leave in particular. The graph on page 4 of the Auditor-General's report shows sick leave has continued to go up quickly by large amounts. My interpretation is that sick leave is impacting on almost 45 per cent of the correctional officers in the prison service.

If you look at the management or operational area, the sick leave is down to what I believe is an acceptable level.

The Auditor-General's report also explains why there so much overtime in the prison system -

The long-standing challenge of overtime was noted by the 2013 LCGAC inquiry and by Legislative Council review and by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts in its 1983 inquiry

The Legislative Council review identified short-notice sick leave as one of the major contributors.

That was high. Officers ringing in saying they were sick then one of their mates would come in and work,

Workers compensation absences - these have gone up again. Workers compensation has gone up, if you look at the graphs from the Auditor-General.

Staff vacancies - that was there when we did the inquiry and it was there in 1983.

Critical incidents - I can understand why that would have an impact on overtime. If a critical incident occurs within the prison, obviously they have to get some control over it and have to get control over it quickly. I can accept that, but some of the other areas amaze me. When the police had an issue with overtime, when an inordinate amount of overtime was being worked by police, I was a manager in the police. What happened was that the salary system changed and there were negotiations within the enterprise agreement. They bundled public holidays into one, so a police officer now gets no more money for working on a Sunday or Christmas Day. That cut overtime. The basic salary was increased to cover that.

Mr Willie - Is it difficult to roster Christmas Day and others because you do not get that incentive?

Mr DEAN - No, it has not created any problems. The police have no say in the rosters. If a member has young children, Tasmania Police will do its utmost to ensure they have that day off or at least a big part of it to be with their family. Hence there is no real problem with it. My son, for instance, has worked on Christmas Day for many years.

Ms Forrest - It is the same with nurses. The problem is that people who are older and do not have young children or people who choose not to have children or are unable to have children find

themselves completely disadvantaged as they are always expected to work Christmas Day. It is a pain in the neck.

Mr DEAN - You are right, and that was the same with the police. They were able to work around that.

Mr Finch - When I joined the ABC over 40 years ago, nearly everybody in the ABC in Australia was getting 50 per cent of their salary in overtime. The ABC decreed that nobody was to be paid overtime. The sky did not fall in. People had to make adjustments because imagine losing 50 per cent of your salary, but people went on. The point was that it was being claimed unnecessarily.

Mr DEAN - That is what happened in the police service. Members were living well above their salaries and had to work overtime to get the money to live on. That is what happens if overtime is not being managed properly. Members become annoyed if they are only going to be paid their basic salary. That has to be controlled in the right way.

I have talked about visiting New South Wales and coming back with a lot of good information. Change has to happen. The TPS cannot continue to perform in this way. Hard decisions are necessary and must be made. The staffing levels must be right. They must have the required numbers of people. The same has been said about the hospital systems where nurses are working double and triple shifts. When you look at the money they are earning, you could employ a lot more staff. I have difficulty working why they think they are saving money by paying all this overtime. I know you have all the other things that go with it - superannuation, holidays and everything else that goes with that - I understand and accept that.

I conclude by saying that other than the fact that I am very annoyed and we could not believe the Auditor-General when he was making these statements, this whole thing really came back to me.

The member for Rosevears raises a very important issue about trying to keep crooks out of jail and that has to be worked on. I raised here not long ago the electronic monitoring. It will be interesting to see how far that goes and how many people we can keep out of the jail through electronic monitoring. I understand it is working quite well and we are getting good results from it. Even though I was a police officer and spent a big part of my life putting them in there, I am a great believer that they are better off being kept outside if we can because it is simply another place where crooks and criminals learn to be better criminals. We need to keep them out of jail. There is electronic monitoring and there are other opportunities that the courts now have. The courts pleaded with us over a long period to get all of these additional sentencing options. I think that electronic monitoring will play a big role in where we go into the future.

On police and prevention, the member for Rosevears is right - the thought of being caught is a great deterrent. If you look at the statistics and I have not looked at them this year, police are only catching about half the crooks who are committing crimes right across the board. If you look at the very serious crimes, they are doing very well and catching up with the biggest part of them - not all but very close to it - and they are doing an exceptional job. That is where police concentrate, in that area. That is where they should concentrate, but they do not have the opportunity now for the preventive policing. The association talks about that - the police's options now of going out and doing all of those preventive things that they used to do and should be doing are now almost gone; they are almost totally reactive because of what is going on. I got some answers back today. Police

are attending jobs now that they ought not to be attending. They have core responsibilities and that is what police should stick to. Preventive policing is one of their core responsibilities, but unfortunately they do not have the option or the position of being able to do that.

If you were to take drugs out of the scene, we would probably only have 50 per cent of the prisoners over there that we have now. If you look at drugs and the impact they are having on crime in the state, it is absolutely enormous. When I was back there, at one stage 75 to 80 per cent of crime was drug-related. It is probably higher now. It was drug-related in some way. They were either impacted by drugs, wanting to get drugs - it just went on and on because the return provided by drugs is enormous and amazing.

I support the motion. I plead with the Government to really get onto this and do something about it because it is no good now simply saying, 'We are doing things, we are looking at it'. Well, you have been looking at it for 40 years and there comes a time when you have to make changes. We have had this change in our governors and directors at the jail as well. I had a great deal of faith in Barry Greenberry.

Mr Finch - And the change manager.

Mr DEAN - Yes, and the change manager at the time. I thought they were doing a good job, but of course we know what happened there. Things went wrong for whatever reasons and as we know, Mr Greenberry suicided when he returned to England. It was a sad situation.

Mr Finch - I did not realise that.

Mr DEAN - Yes, he did. It was a very sad situation.

[7.39 p.m.]

Mrs HISCUTT (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the Liberal Government is committed to keeping Tasmanians safe. We have demonstrated this by employing 119 additional corrections officers since May 2016, with recruitment already underway for a further 90 corrections officers by the end of 2020. The Auditor-General's office has undertaken a performance audit of the Tasmania Prison Service's use of resources. The audit examined whether the TPS is carrying out its activities effectively, and whether it is doing so economically and efficiently.

The Department of Justice and the Tasmania Prison Service is already working on a number of other strategies on top of this recruitment activity to address the recommendations of the Tasmanian Audit Office report. In fact that is acknowledged by the report, which states that 'it, the TPS, has taken steps to address them'. Ongoing measures to address the recommendations include implementing the recommendations of a full review of the TPS roster, boosting resources available to the workers compensation management team to improve the management of workers compensation claims and support staff to recover and return to duty as quickly as possible, and developing an agency-wide people strategy with a focus on recruitment, leadership and management capability, developing our people, performance management, and managing significant change.

On top of all this, we are also getting on with the job of delivering our \$350 million prison infrastructure investment program. The Government is committed to being tough on serious crime. However we also want offenders to be rehabilitated and get their lives back on track, becoming

productive, law-abiding members of society, who no longer pose a threat to community and safety. The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the TPS' financial management of its custodial facilities and its human resources. These improvements are likely to enhance the wellbeing of uniform and non-uniform staff throughout the organisation.

The department and the TPS are already working on a number of strategies which will address the recommendations of the audit. The scope of the audit dated back as far as 2013. A significant amount of work has been undertaken since that time to address many of the issues identified in the report. The audit recommends strengthening governance arrangements to oversee the ongoing implementation of the improvement program. The department is currently reviewing governance structures and will add to them where needed. The TPS undertakes a rigorous monthly reporting process in the interests of transparency and accountability.

The audit recommends reviewing the resourcing of the TPS improvement program. The department is committed to implementing improvements, while it must prioritise the operational safety and security of staff and prisoners on a day-to-day basis. The audit recommends improved modelling of prison numbers to give more accurate predictions of demand, therefore resource requirement planning. The planning has been underway. A new model has been developed over recent months and is scheduled to commence in December 2019, in time to inform the budget processes for the 2020-21 financial year.

The audit recommends improved workforce planning processes to inform recruitment, retention, succession planning and training requirements and to deliver improvements in rostering that will reduce overtime and absenteeism.

Mr Dean - We were told that last time.

Mrs HISCUTT - These are areas in which the TPS has already invested significant time and effort. Finally, the audit recommends improvements to the performance management framework to inform and enhance decision-making. The TPS has already developed a new suite of benchmarked key performance indicators for internal and external reporting for the 2019-20 financial year. The annual business plan addresses operational and government priorities, risks and funding, and reports against a range of outcomes. The plan is reviewed by senior management on a quarterly basis. The department and the TPS will continue to work together to improve reporting, and benchmarking.

I also note the significant budget allocation the Government has committed to the Southern Remand Centre and the Northern Regional Prison. This very strategic and planned investment will ease the pressure currently being experienced by our prison system and into the future, which has seen year on year population increases for the last five years. The Government is confident that measures are in place to effectively address the matters raised in the report. The Government notes the report.

[7.49 p.m.]

Mr FINCH (Rosevears) - Mr President, I have said about all I need to say, except that listening to the Government's response and having heard what the member for Windermere said, and noting the report we received from the Auditor-General, that was gibby-gobby, as a former member from here would say. We have heard it all before.

Mr Dean - Many times, not once.

Mr FINCH - It would make you bilious. Here is the report from 2013, the interim report, and it laid out the issues at the prison, and of course, all the promises about what might happen and the recognition of what is going on there. We were not on the wrong tram; we were not manufacturing the issues of the prison - they were agreed to. They were agreed. It was here; it was the culture of the place.

But no, we are going to fix the culture. People live outside the bell curve and some of those people are people who are doing the wrong thing. In order to save the most money, we need to push the average down. We can only do that by what you have suggested - supporting people to come to work, changing that culture. What I was trying to say, perhaps too coyly, was management has to accept a significant responsibility for opening itself up to new ways of doing things and generating the trust environment for it to change. At the moment, in the past few years we have been in different corners and it has not been possible.

So, we are moving there. I am sorry, Leader, we have heard it all before. Look, agreed, it must be a difficult process of management to get a handle on this. Get the right management in there. Get the right processes. Work out what is going on in there. Change the culture. The messages have been loud and clear. Here is another series of messages we are giving you. Gibby-gobby, that is the way I would translate what you have said, gibby-gobby. The Government has taken steps. Historically they have taken steps.

Ms Forrest - He is taking a leaf out of the former member for McIntyre's - Mr Hall's - copybook. He used to use that term, gibby-gobby.

Mr FINCH - The people here, in the Leader's reserve get a sense of the frustration we are feeling. We are trying to do the appropriate thing here at budget Estimates. We are trying to do the appropriate thing and alert the Government. That is what the budget Estimates are all about. We go in to scrutinise and we alert the Government to the problems we are observing. I do not want to be here banging on about a process that is not working over years and years. I would like to think we suggest things that change the way things are done and serve the Tasmanian community and the taxpayer better.

We are not seeing that. That was why I wanted to note the Auditor-General's report. I think this is another damning situation in a long process. You would think, member for Windermere, after all we have said at budget Estimates and the things we have been through, that we would not have an Auditor-General's report of the type we have seen.

Mr Dean - I just could not believe it was happening.

Mr FINCH - Unbelievable.

Mr Dean - I think they believe after a period of time, a few years, we forget things, they move on and nothing changes.

Mr FINCH - Yes, away it will go. Well, it has not gone away and now when we get to this stage of frustration, it is embarrassing for the Government. The Government has been in control of the situation. You cannot say, 'Oh, no, Labor did this, Labor did that, it is Labor's fault'. Well, it is not. I know you did not say that. You cannot blame anybody else. The Government cannot hivy the blame off to somebody else because we have made this Government aware of the issues we have scrutinised. How you go about it, I do not know, but there is going to need to be more than

gibby-gobby to sort the problem out so we do not have this sort of frustration going on year in, year out.

Mr Dean - Maybe, we need a briefing from the Attorney-General to tell us what is going to happen and how they are going to get in control of this.

Ms Forrest - Maybe Administration Committee B need to have their own inquiry into it?

Mr Dean - Again, you are right.

Mr Finch - That is what it may come to.

I have noted the report because I am very disappointed in the way things have evolved with respect to the TPS. I urge members to support the noting of the report.

Motion agreed to.

Report noted.

MOTION

Consideration and Noting - Select Committee on Short Stay Accommodation in Tasmania - Report

[7.52 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, I move -

That the report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Short Stay Accommodation in Tasmania be considered and noted.

I am pleased to note this report.

Due to the myriad of widely publicised concerns about the effect short stay accommodation schemes have caused in Tasmania's housing and rental markets, the inquiry was charged with investigating a number of issues.

The terms of reference involved reviewing the growth and character of the short stay accommodation market; the impacts the market had on residential housing and tourism; and what possible regulations regarding safety, planning, amenity and licencing should be recommended. The inquiry, therefore, has been responsible for examining wide-ranging economic, social and sustainability concerns - issues which affect all Tasmanians.

We received 192 submissions, with 34 groups or people giving evidence at hearings held across the state. This enabled us to gain a detailed understanding of the varying effects the short stay industry has had on different geographic regions of the state.

Obviously, we found there were varying and differing issues across the state. Some of the east coast for example - places like Freycinet and St Helens - had problems finding long-term accommodation for people at holiday periods. We were told that in some areas, like Freycinet, it

was very hard for entities such as Federal Hotels, Saffire, and others to find accommodation for their workers, and many had to provide accommodation themselves. On many occasions when people sold a long-term property, they were picked up very quickly by someone wanting the short-term market so it was very easy to find accommodation in winter, but in summer it was much harder, which certainly makes it difficult for those wanting to live in these areas. It changes the dynamics, too, of people living in coastal areas.

Through the process, the report endeavoured to reflect the diverse range of views concerning the short stay accommodation industry and the sharing economy as it relates to the Tasmanian context.

We had five terms of reference. Briefly our first term of reference was the growth of the short stay accommodation in Tasmania and the changing character of the market, including the recent trends in online letting of short stay accommodation.

We found reliable data was not currently available on the stock of private rental properties in Tasmania. For example, the Launceston City Council had tried on one occasion to determine how many properties there were in the short stay sector. Obviously, at that time in order to determine where the property was, you had to rent it. You could go online, but it became almost an impossibility to try to determine where the properties were.

When we had briefings from Break O'Day Council, it was much easier for them. They had their own building surveyors; they looked at properties, and they could recognise properties, which certainly helped with a smaller local government area. They recognised a property and said they went and knocked on doors just to determine whether it was for short-stay or what they were doing. Some councils were very proactive. I am sure members will remember that some really went above and beyond and also had the building surveyors. Building surveyors are limited; there are not that many. Break O'Day Council was very fortunate to have its own building surveyors, but I think some of the other councils had to bring people in to do that work, which certainly made it a lot harder.

Our second term of reference was the impact of the short stay accommodation on the residential housing sector. In different areas it was affected differently. In Hobart, it was certainly more severely affected than in Launceston or some of the other areas. The east coast and some of the holiday areas were heavily affected in the summer period. In winter it was not such an issue, but it certainly gave them some problems when it came to summer accommodation. It was very difficult for people wanting to live in these areas because not only were they not available, but when they were available, they were very expensive. That was one thing we discovered in some of the more popular holiday areas.

People were simply buying them. Members will probably remember there was a very expensive holiday accommodation place, I think it was in the Break O'Day area, in St Helens or in that general area, Binalong Bay - I think it was Bay of Fires. The owners had purchased it. They were never going to live in it, or maybe a long time ago after as they had young children, but they had purchased it purely for short stay accommodation because it was a popular area and it was something they could get a return from.

That was one of the things we found: different councils had different charges. From memory, in the Break O'Day Council the commercial rates were not any more expensive than the residential rates, whereas in many of the areas commercial rates were more expensive. Things changed

between councils. No two councils were the same and that was one of the things I found quite interesting. Councils determine what works for them and change matters accordingly, which was quite interesting.

Term of reference (3), the impact of short stay accommodation on the tourism sector, also had some quite interesting findings. I think it was the west coast - and members will correct me - where a couple of people we spoke to said it was really hard because it was not a level playing field. In the commercial sector, one lady had purchased a property for commercial use. Many people in the same area had purchased homes and they were renting them out in the same market but without the overheads she had, which made it really difficult for those in the commercial sector.

Basically, it was apples and apples, but they were not apples and apples when it came to costs. Someone in the commercial sector had a property they were paying for, and down there the rates probably were more expensive for the commercial properties. I know sewerage and water, for example, is much more expensive when you are looking at commercial aspects. They would be paying those costs, yet someone who had purchased a property and were renting it out in the short-stay sector did not have the same commitments. It made it really difficult for some people who were paying a lot more when they were doing same thing - they were both hiring out to the tourism sector.

Mr Valentine - When you say 'commercial', you are talking about commercial bed and breakfast operations?

Ms ARMITAGE - Yes, sorry.

Mr Valentine - Not motels or hotels?

Ms ARMITAGE - No, commercial bed and breakfasts. I was thinking of the lady on the west coast who had purchased - I think it was a home with three or four bedrooms - for a commercial Airbnb and was paying the commercial rates. Whereas someone along the road who purchased a home with still two or three bedrooms was renting it out as short stay accommodation and not paying anything commercial, still going along on the residential rates.

There were a lot of issues that it really was not a fair playing field for a lot of those people.

Our fourth term of reference was on the regulatory issues, including the customer safety, the land use planning, neighbourhood amenity and licensing conditions compared to other jurisdictions in Australia and worldwide. That is where it was really interesting too, getting the building surveyors and also the Tasmania Fire Service to come in and finding out simple things such as the building surveyors saying that in a lot of the old homes the balustrades were lower and the glass was float glass - simple things that really needed attention before people could live there safely. Of course, they are not things that you think of. You do not think that in an old heritage house the balustrades are lower than they should be or that the glass will break very easily.

Mr Valentine - Unless you live in one.

Ms ARMITAGE - Unless you live in one, exactly. One of the issues raised by both the fire service and the building surveyors was that when people come to short stay accommodation, it is not like a motel or hotel where people are onsite. They get the key, they go in and they are on their own in most situations. If there is a fire, they do not know how they are going to get out.

Many places did not have emergency lighting. Some had a sheet showing people how to get out. Very few had emergency lighting so that if the power went off in a fire, they would not know how to get out. It is really important that fire service issues are taken into account, as are other things like the float glass and balustrades.

Simple things can be done. The building surveyors said that something as simple as a screen or a film could be placed over the glass so that if it breaks, it does not fall and cut people to shreds. However, they need to be done. There need to be regulations in place to make sure that they occur.

The recommendations were fairly basic. We tried to keep things very simplistic. Our first recommendation was that an urgent review of safety standards for short term accommodation be undertaken to mitigate the risks and address inconsistencies between provider types.

As I mentioned, the fire service came up with some very simple things: they need wired-in smoke alarms; and they need battery lights so that if the power goes off, people can see the way out. These are simple things to make things safer. While we have not had any tragedies yet, it is not if, but when. If we do not look at these safety issues, it will happen.

Our second recommendation for the state Government goes further than the requirements of the Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019 and develops comprehensive data collection and analysis programs covering both short stay accommodation and the private housing market to underpin policy and resourcing responses in relation to housing supply and demand.

The third recommendation says that for properties other than a principal place of residence local government authorities be provided with discretionary powers to issue permits regarding short stay accommodation.

This is one of the matters discussed by the committee, that the principal place of residence, the true home sharing economy, where someone has a home and they rent a room or two out, should not be affected. Now, a house goes up for sale, particularly in a coastal or holiday area, someone buys it and all of a sudden instead of there being a long-term resident in there, it becomes a short stay. That was where it was decided that the principal place of residence should not be affected as much as someone who buys it specifically for a short-stay.

The local government authorities should have a discretionary power to issue the permits regarding short stay accommodation. Each local council area is the one that knows best what suits its area.

It is all very well for us to say what happens at Break O'Day or what happens at Glamorgan Spring Bay or Launceston or Hobart, but those councils are best placed to know what happens and what should actually happen in their area.

I often look at council advertisements in the paper. I notice regularly, particularly in *The Examiner* in Launceston, it will say, 'change of use to visitor accommodation'.

At least twice a month, three or four will be changing to visitor accommodation. It is becoming more of a norm.

When we were talking about the platforms, we heard evidence from people about areas such as Barcelona. These were lovely areas where people used to like to stay. Suddenly, the only people

staying in those nice little areas, such as Barcelona, were short-stay. They have huge fines now if you are actually renting out without having a licence.

I think the member for Hobart might remember some of the recommendations given to us about the fines we should put on people that have a short stay without a licence were quite exorbitant.

Mr Valentine - They certainly were.

Ms ARMITAGE - I think only one person would need to be fined and no-one would ever do it again. I believe that in Barcelona, they have quite exorbitant fines. They knock on the doors to see who is living there and if it is someone from short-stay or a rental who does not have a permit, they get a massive fine. They are very unlikely to do it again because they will probably lose their property because of the cost of the fine they actually get.

Our fourth recommendation was that the local government authorities determine the frequency and the rate of permit fees for short stay accommodation. It was felt the local government authorities are the ones best suited, they know what is happening in their area. They are best suited and obviously with any regulations, they are the ones who are going to have the cost and have to put staff on to determine, to regulate and to do permits. There is a cost to administration and it should be up to local governments to determine the frequency and rate of permit fees.

Our fifth recommendation was that the short-term rental of a person's principal place of residence be exempt from obtaining a short-term accommodation permit, but be required to be registered with a local government authority for data collection purposes. Behind this recommendation was that if you are a traditional short-stay renter - for example, you have a bed in your home and want to rent out - it is a traditional type of short stay. It needs to be registered with the local council so they are aware of who is renting out their home or renting out a room or that you are not, and there are safeguards in place, but there should not have to be a permit. It is not the same as someone having a whole house and renting that out totally separately, which comes into a different category.

The feeling of the committee was if the principal place of residence - and I will be corrected if I am wrong - had a granny flat in the backyard, that is still really on the principal place of residence. Anything confined within your area really should be registered with the local government and obviously there is probably a cost. I imagine there would be a slight fee, but it should not be exorbitant. Those people who own a separate property they are not living in really should have to have a permit.

Our sixth recommendation is short stay accommodation providers be required to have appropriate levels of public liability insurance. Another interesting case, because on the Airbnb platform, they provide \$1 million dollars public liability insurance many people may feel is adequate but obviously in these times, it is not. Many people felt their home insurance actually covered their public liability. It did not really come up in the committee that people said that, but in the community, people have said, 'I have public liability insurance', but obviously, public liability insurance when you are renting out something is a totally different area and you have to have an attachment to your policy. Not all insurance companies will do that, and you may have to get a separate policy. It is very important short stay accommodation providers have a separate public liability policy to cover people when they break a leg or whatever might happen, bearing in mind even when they are living in your home with you, they are still renting from you.

Even the traditional home share should have an attachment to the public liability because someone is living in your home and paying you to live there. Once someone is paying you to live there, if they break a leg, fall down or something happens, they are not covered unless you actually take out an attachment on your policy.

It was really all about getting the balance right and capturing the benefits but mitigating against the downside and the consequences. We found the rapid growth in short stay sector has clearly had an impact on the supply of private housing in some areas. There is not any doubt, and the report endeavours to provide a series of constructive findings and recommendations for consideration by the Tasmanian Government. The committee carefully considered all the evidence and took a range of information into consideration when coming up with its findings and recommendations.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to Jenny Mannering, who started off with us, and Stuart Wright and Julie Thompson and the other Legislative Council and parliamentary staff for their excellent and tireless work. While we had many submissions and many groups coming along, I need to make particular thanks to Professor Richard Eccleston and Dr Julia Verdouw from the Institute for the Study of Social Change, who provided us with a lot of information. They came back a couple of times and were very willing to help to the committee; they provided much information. We were very fortunate to have many groups willing to give freely of their time and assist us.

It is a very important matter and at the end of the day, it is all about safety and trying to ensure we are not overpopulated with short stay. We all know in many areas tourism is extremely important. It is also extremely important that we have housing for people, for those who cannot find housing. On one hand there were many anomalies - how do you tell someone that they cannot purchase a house and rent it out? On the other hand people are looking for rental accommodation and they cannot find it. People in holiday places cannot find somewhere to stay long term if they want to live there, if they are working there.

Was it King Island or Flinders Island, one of the islands, was having some building work done. It is really hard now that King Island -

Mr Willie - Through the Chair, it was King Island where they have had the boom in tourism because of the golf courses and they could not find places for builders to stay.

Ms ARMITAGE - That is the thing. You are a casualty of your own success. You have something wonderful happening and everyone wants to stay there. Then the properties are purchased by people renting them out, but then there is nowhere for the permanent people to stay. It is a really difficult situation.

As mentioned, it was felt that realistically, rather than the government being in control of the permits and the charges, it really should come down to the local councils. They are the ones who have to administer this. They are the ones who know best, whether it be Break O'Day, whether it be Hobart, whether it be Glamorgan Spring Bay, or on the north-west coast or Launceston - they know what is happening in their area. Realistically they should be in charge of their own areas, deciding that there is only a certain number they can allow in a certain area and what the charges might be.

It is not an easy area and I do not think it is an easy fix. I am interested to hear the Government's response. I thank the members particularly for the work that they have done. As I said, it is not an

easy determination to come up with a finding. I hope that along the way we continue our tourism, that we continue to find homes for people to live without preventing people from going forward and purchasing homes. It is a no-win in some ways. As I said, we are a casualty of our own success.

It is hard to know what is going to happen. I hope we do not go the way of some of the areas such as Barcelona, that realistically have lost their heart and soul. That is one thing that we do not want to do in Tasmania - we do not want to lose our heart and soul. We want to keep our tourism, but also have places for our own people to live. I note the report.

[8.12 p.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, this was a very interesting inquiry. It came out of significant concern for the sort of impact that it might be having on the community, on the accommodation industry, all sorts of aspects to it. I thank the member for Launceston for chairing the committee and taking it on. I was asked and I said, 'I have to stand for election so I do not think it is the sort of thing I ought to be taking on'. We would not get it finished if I did not happen to get back in. The member for Launceston stepped up as well. It was good to have all members, the member for Huon and the member for McIntyre, who would dearly like to be talking on this, I am sure, but she is otherwise engaged in the mother country, the United Kingdom. The member for Elwick, Mr Willie, also participated.

It was a good experience, overall, to be exposed to all the different schools of thought on this particular issue - six recommendations, 47 findings, 192 submissions. That is no small number of submissions when you have to sit down and read them all and absorb it. The last thing you want is to be doing the scrutiny as people come in and present to you. You say yes, what about such and such. They said it is on page 6 of our submission. It does not look good. Every member around this Chamber understands the need to properly look at submissions. We certainly had our task cut out.

There was a variety of submissions received. We had individual share house owners, those living on their premises. We had those shining a light on access for people with varying abilities. Concerned individuals, loss of community feel out there. Council has already been mentioned by the member for Launceston.

Break O'Day, Hobart City Council, local government associations were very interested in this area. Platform providers like HomeAway and Airbnb, concerned advocates for the disadvantaged, youth service and housing providers with Youth Network of Tasmania, TasCOSS, Shelter Tas. Community associations like the Battery Point Community Association, Tenants' Union, tourism groups and there are a few of those. Restaurant and catering industry, exhibition and events associations, building surveyors and Tasmania Fire Service. Academics - you have already heard about the Institute for the Study of Social Change - and Tasmanian Homeless Protocols Research, Accommodation Association of Australia, Tasmanian Government itself.

I am fairly sure that no one can say their sector did not have a say. We did not miss anybody. There was a lot of interest.

There were various aspects of the industry - retirees, time on their hands, opportunity to engage with visitors. That has health spin-offs. That has the wellbeing spin-offs and loneliness can be overcome by being able to host others from other places. It provides for a more relaxed lifestyle. Travel to other countries maybe, where their guests have come from. There are all sorts of reasons

why retirees enter this industry - living at home and having a couple of spare bedrooms, they can get involved. They are positives.

Whole homes being made available. There is a gap in the market - catering for those who prefer a home to themselves when visiting rather than going to a hotel.

The economy benefits because there are businesses that have arisen as a result of short stay accommodation coming up. Management of multiple homes - we heard from one lady and gentleman who had 24 homes they managed, something of that order. There are cleaning businesses that they would employ, to go around and clean the accommodation. It all boosts the economy, but with the benefits come some of the detriments. We heard about some of those with whole homes off the rental market. Some would say, 'Why wouldn't I put my whole home up because I have fewer problems with renters. I do not have as many problems with short stay people'. There is that feeling that if I can rent my house for a third of the year I will get the same return and not have the same damage bill. It is that sort of feedback we seemed to be getting.

That can cause a detriment because there are fewer homes available for long-term rental. The outcome of that is an acute housing shortage in the long-term rental market, not the only factor as we were told, but significant. No doubt further data will assist in clarifying the situation but I will deal with that a little further down.

Other council areas will have their problems. While not as acute as, say, Hobart with as low as 0.2 vacancy rate we heard the other day - that is getting critical, and for the individual families involved it is acute. If you are at St Helens, you might not have the same number of people who are after long-term housing but for the families who are after that housing, it is acute. Sometimes they are forced to move out of the area and possibly closer to a school somewhere more remote so that their children can attend school if there is no effective transport capacity and the pricing is too high in the town. You have that awkward situation that people find themselves in, so that is a detrimental aspect.

They are less populated there and have fewer options. As I said before, a family without a roof means they may be forced to relocate for monetary reasons.

As has already been pointed out, builders finding work and accommodation for projects. It is all very well for us to have a booming economy but when it comes to actually building infrastructure if you do not have anywhere for your workers to stay that can be a real difficulty. When they are out there trying to improve the circumstance by building dwellings and hotels and all these other sorts of things, if they do not have anywhere for their workers to be that presents a real problem. It is something that possibly councils can be involved in, bringing temporary accommodation through the placement of containers that have been turned into accommodation. I am not sure what the whole answer is there, but it is something that needs to be addressed.

The growth in tourism has been significant and that causes a greater squeeze in the housing. If we look at page 13 of the report we find the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania making a comment there. Their quote is -

While much has been said and written about the tourism boom in Tasmania, the numbers indicate that rather than a short-term 'boom' the State is really experiencing a relatively long and consistent period of steady visitor growth interrupted only by the market disruption caused by the Global Financial Crisis.

It goes on to talk about 520 000 overnight visitors in 2002 to about 1.3 million this year. That is a very significant growth. They say -

We know nearly all visitor growth over the past five years has been generated by the holiday leisure market ...

Clearly, they see growth and the need to be able to provide for that growth.

On page 15 we have some comments by Dr Julia Verdouw from the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of Tasmania. She says -

We know there has been, to June 2018, which is when our latest data snapshot happened, a steady growth in most listing types in most areas of Tasmania. In most areas and most listing types, Airbnb is currently at its peak listings since July 2016. For example, entire properties have grown by 205 per cent statewide, in Greater Hobart, 228 per cent and in Hobart LGA, by 268 per cent. They are large numbers.

They do their homework and it is important. If you want some bedtime reading read this report. I can assure you it will give you some interesting facts.

Housing affordability is affected. That is another downside. The Tenants' Union is pretty keen to point that out on page 23 of the report. According to data provided by the Hobart City Council, 209 investment properties are being used exclusively for Airbnb within Hobart. The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that at least 6976 properties in Hobart are rented; 35.1 per cent of total dwellings. Those 209 properties potentially represent 3 per cent of the total rental supply.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission has accepted that conversion of housing stock to short-term visitor accommodation is impacting the availability and affordability of long-term rentals. The Tenants' Union is pointing that out.

International data indicates Australia is not alone. If you go to page 24, you will see the areas that the Auckland Council did some work on. Across the United States a 10 per cent increase in Airbnb listings led to a 0.42 per cent increase in rents and a 0.76 per cent increase in house prices. It goes to Meranti and Horn and Los Angeles. It goes through a whole heap of places. We are not on our own basically. This is happening across the world. It is clearly a segment of the accommodation market that is in demand. It seems that that may be for whole houses so that they have the place to themselves. That presents an issue.

But for us to really know what that level of impact is, we need more data as the member for Launceston has already pointed out. There is that need. The Local Government Association of Tasmania addresses that on page 25. It also references Anglicare's figures. The member for Nelson would have had some part in that on page 26 of the report. I will read that into *Hansard* -

In addition, the LGAT submission referred to the most recent Anglicare Tasmania's Social Action and Research Centre Rental Affordability Snapshot 2018 which stated -

South - Low Income Families and individuals have been increasingly locked out of Tasmania's southern rental market, with the region entirely unaffordable for

eight of the 14 low-income household types examined in the snapshot. In total there were 563 properties advertised to rent in the South on the 2018 snapshot weekend, a 40% drop since 2014. An average of 9% of properties were affordable to those earning a minimum wage in 2018, compared to 13% in 2017 respectively.

You might have quoted that earlier today. It is in our report too, so you have been listened to.

Ms Webb - Good evidence right there. It is a damning picture though.

Mr VALENTINE - It is a very worrying picture. We do need more data.

Of course we have the Hobart City Council's submission on the following page. I am not going to go completely through that but they noted the growing body of evidence from a number of cities that the supply of self-contained visitor accommodation has seen an extensive conversion of properties from long-term rental to visitor accommodation properties. I have to say, when I was standing for the election last year and I was on my rounds doorknocking, the number of places I came across that were being renovated. People were not living in them. They were being renovated. You think to yourself they are not renovating this to sell it, because it was so clear. You looked around and you could see how they moved all the furniture into one particular room and they were renovating three or four others. You can see it all.

Ms Webb - You see the little key boxes near the front door. Doorknocking is out, another Airbnb.

Mr VALENTINE - That is it. There were lots of them. There was not just one or two here and there. There was quite a lot and I did a lot of doorknocking, probably much to the displeasure of a lot of the people but that is beside the point.

We had an offering from Dr Angela Ballard commenting on the availability of property in Hobart. Dr Ballard is a University of Queensland PhD in urban and regional planning, community planning and housing markets. She has significant expertise. She was commenting on the availability of property in Hobart and expressed concern that planning directive number 3 overrides council's ability to make their own planning decisions to regulate short-term accommodation. 'There it is', she says -

A Planning Minister's Directive at variance with and in opposition to not only Councils' attempts to rein in what is becoming a scourge across tourism based cities and towns worldwide, especially small ones, but also the Tasmanian Government's own housing policy and programs. The cascading effect has ostensibly derailed the Private Rental Access Program and housing prices across all housing market segments in Hobart and Launceston have bolted. That a Minister of Housing and Director of Housing in 2017 appear to have either not been consulted by Planning, nor warned Planning about the potential impacts of an overarching Directive relative to housing, remains problematic.

It is an interesting outside view, if you like.

TasCOSS, page 32, has some input in our report. 'As Availability declines', they say, 'competition for properties intensifies, with some renters pushed into unaffordable price ranges,

while others are forced farther and farther away from employment, education and training opportunities and health and other services'.

We do not want to end up seeing people having to live so far out to be able to get to an affordable property that they have the problems of transport back in to where they work. I remember years ago, again when I was on the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, listening to the lord mayor of Sydney talking about the fact that cafes and restaurants were having great difficulty because their workers could not afford to live close enough to come and work for them. We do not want to end up in that sort of circumstance. We need to get that balance right. We need the data to make sure that we can get that balance right. To address the need for that balance we need that reliable data.

The Government has legislated, as we know, the Short Stay Accommodation Bill, which we all dealt with in this House. It goes some way to collecting more respectable data, if I could put it that way. There is no question that those platform providers are going to have to provide relevant information, as the act points out, the relevant permit, or if no permit if required, the fact that this is the case, that the use of the short stay accommodation premises is a use to which section 12 of LUPAA applies. The address, the number of bedrooms used for short stay accommodation. Where a permit exists, the number of that permit, and whether the short stay accommodation premises comprises all or part of the primary residence of the provider. Booking platforms are to display the relevant information, as I just read out. Those short stay accommodation providers must provide that detail to the booking platforms that they use.

All the relevant information is to be provided to the Director of Building Control at the end of each financial quarter within 30 days. The listing period is also to be provided to the Director of Building Control. Any publishing of data must be de-identified data. That is what that new act mandates that needs to be collected.

Airbnb states that they will provide cities with the information they need to make informed decisions about home sharing policies. Their community compact goes further than the data that is requested in this. One wonders whether we need to look at reviewing that act to capture all the data that Airbnb says they are happy to provide. There is a whole heap of things: the total economic activity generated by the Airbnb community; the amount of income earned by a typical Airbnb host; the geographic distribution of Airbnb listings; the number of hosts who avoided eviction or foreclosure by sharing their home on Airbnb; the percentage of Airbnb hosts who are sharing their permanent home; the number of days a typical listing is rented on Airbnb, when they can be accessed; the total number of Airbnb guests who visited the city; the average number of guests per listing by city; the average number of days the average guests stayed in the city; and the safety record of the Airbnb listings.

You can see that in their own community compact they provide, or commit to providing, a lot more data than is being requested here. There is a reason to look at that. You can see there are a number of upsides to the industry; there are certainly a number of downsides to the industry in the way that deregulation occurred. It is hard to claw back control once that door has been opened. It is very difficult. When the government says you can go out and do this, someone buys a property and puts it on the Airbnb market, it is very difficult to come back in and say 'Sorry, you can't do that now'. Then they would be trying to claim compensation and all sorts of things.

Ms Forrest - They did that in Sausalito in California.

Mr VALENTINE - They did, and they reversed it.

Ms Forrest - One day they just said 'No, no more, bang' - and all those bookings had to be cancelled and there was no more, bang.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, so the people who invested in housing just had wear it?

Ms Forrest - Yes, that is right. They made that decision.

Ms Webb - They still have an asset.

Mr VALENTINE - They are still going to get their asset back.

Ms Forrest - They had to refund all the pre-bookings. It can be done.

Mr VALENTINE - There you go - that is an interesting observation. I remember back in 2017 during budget Estimates, I asked whether the Treasurer would be prepared to confine short stay accommodation only to homes with the owner in residence, but he did not have an appetite for that. That was before deregulation. I talked about the fact that it could have an impact, and he said, 'I would suggest you test that policy yourself'. I do not think he was too keen. It is a bit late now either way, but with the benefit of hindsight, it would have certainly resulted in a housing market that was not so squeezey; as you said before, it is 0.2 per cent vacancy.

Ms Webb - It is a failure of the rental market.

Mr VALENTINE - It is terrible.

Mr Willie - It is a failure of public policy.

Mr VALENTINE - What percentage relief it would have achieved had that policy move been made is a bit hard to know because we do not have the full data. We did hear a number of reasons for the low vacancy rates, but without that better data, we will not truly know the level of impact each of those components has on the overall situation. On pages 22 and 23 of the report, you will see that it is laid out in the Government's submission, saying -

Short stay accommodation is seen as a possible contributing factor to the shortage of dwellings available for residential use, particularly dwellings available for rental and affordable housing. However, the impact of the short stay accommodation market cannot be considered without also looking at the other impacts on housing.

These are employment growth, population growth, increasing house prices, increased tourist growth, growth in international students, access to skilled labour in the construction industry, and changes to the way we live.

We can all see that some of those things will obviously impact and cause a relative shortage at certain times, but I have this gut feeling that short stay accommodation is a significant component of that overall picture.

On page 39 you have HomeAway making some statements as well. According to the HomeAway submission -

On the supply side, individuals can earn additional income by renting out the beds, rooms or properties they own that would otherwise be sitting idle. On the demand side, visitors benefit from a wider choice of accommodation options across a wider price range. As a result, more people can travel, and they may be able to purchase more of other goods and services in the region they are visiting.

An even playing field is called for; not everybody is a winner, especially if you listen to, as the member for Launceston has already pointed out, Ms Sandra Roberts and Ms Joy Chappell from Queenstown and Steve Old in the hospitality industry, all make comments; page 43 and 44 deal with a lot of that but, given the time I am not going to go through it all.

Regulatory issues are a bit of a sore point for some, as the member for Launceston pointed out. However, safety is important and when it comes to permits, there is a fair bit of difference between somebody who is living on the property with one or two guests and if there is an issue, they are going to be there to help them out. If visitors are occupying a whole house, very easily people can become discombobulated, confused about where the exits are and all of those things.

Some bed and breakfast operations already have to have lights in the hallway, but is that a requirement on those who have a permit for short stay?

Ms Armitage - And exit signs.

Mr VALENTINE - And exit signs and all sorts of things to be considered and the access aspect for people with varying abilities. They came and spoke to us about a number of those things. Bushfire protection, building standards, accessibility - that is on page 58. I will read it because it is something that needs to be highlighted. Mr Michael Small and Mr David Cawthorn submission expressed concern about the lack of availability of short stay accommodation for people with mobility issues. They say -

There are very few Class 1b buildings that can be used by people with significant mobility disability, as this type of accommodation tends to be smaller in size. As a result, this significant accommodation choice is not available to people with mobility disability.

They suggest short stay accommodation be regulated to the same degree as class 1b buildings. Airbnb and Stayz can offer five bedrooms for rent before they require a permit and even then, the permit does not require any accessibility. Clearly, that is an issue and with the recommendations in this report, an urgent review of safety standards for short term accommodation should be undertaken to mitigate risks and address inconsistencies between provider types. That is a clear example of one of those things that fits under the first recommendation. We need to make sure the review happens, if not simply to make places more accessible for those with varying abilities.

Neighbourhood amenity was focused on. We all know the Battery Point Community Association put in a submission, which is dealt with on pages 60, 61 and 62. Those three pages deal with the concerns they have. It is so close to the city and is why it came up as one of the problem areas from the word go. People might say they are a privileged community. They may be a privileged community because they live close to the city, but one of their concerns is the fact that

their community feeling goes when they wake up and find a neighbour who was there yesterday is no longer there and you have somebody different coming in every second night. It does have an impact on community feeling. I am sure it is not just Hobart or Battery Point that experiences this.

We talked about the Hobart City Council's submission on page 69. It deals with international examples - say, from Berlin, Barcelona, San Francisco, Santa Monica, New York and New Orleans, which all have similar problems. The Restaurant and Catering Industry Association, on page 70, says -

Any regulatory approach ... should not result in any additional burden being placed on the short stay accommodation industry.

They do not want to see the short stay accommodation industry impacted. So we have a problem. They do not want to see it impacted because they do not want to see their custom go away. At the same time we must have concern for the people who are staying to make sure they are safe, or to make sure they are accessible.

Clearly, this issue needs to be addressed. The Government needs to see that happen. The view of the Restaurant and Catering Industry Association was backed up by the Exhibition and Event Association on page 71.

However, the Accommodation Association of Australia advocates, as the member Launceston was saying, a \$1 million fine for any property providing short stay accommodation that is not registered. A \$1 million fine. It is a bit like pouring a bucket of iced water over someone getting out of a hot bath. It would wake you up.

I enjoyed being part of the inquiry. We heard a lot of information. It gave us a good picture of what is happening around Tasmania. We need better data to see a focused policy in this area. There is no doubt a lot of people are suffering from housing affordability and housing availability. It is clear we cannot wait too long before paying attention to some of the things brought up in this report.

I note the report.

[8.47 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Prosser - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for Launceston for presenting this report to the Council for consideration and noting, and I also thank the select committee for all the hard work that went into the report's preparation.

The Government takes Tasmania's current housing shortage very seriously and has implemented a range of initiatives to increase the supply of social and affordable housing and support services across a wide spectrum of need.

Tasmanians have embraced the home sharing economy and we have heard concerns regarding long-term rental properties being repurposed for the provision of short stay accommodation. What is clearly and consistently raised, and this is one of the key messages of this report, is that more data is needed so that we can properly understand the actual role of short stay accommodation in the broader private and rental housing market. Until we have an accurate picture of how many

properties of different types are being used for short stay accommodation across Tasmania, we are not in a position to develop evidence-based policy and planning responses at state or local scale.

The Government recently introduced the Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019 which will drive increased compliance with existing regulations and paint a clearer picture of the short stay sector based on comprehensive data covering all properties listed in Tasmania.

A key requirement of this act - the first of its kind in Australia - is that all online short stay booking platforms will be required to provide actual data on their listings in the residential zones to the Government at quarterly intervals. It is expected that the first set of data covering the quarter ending in December 2019 will be received in February 2020. This data will be more comprehensive than the gross listing totals released recently by Airbnb and other figures quoted in recent public debate, which are estimates at best, and will lead to a much better understanding of the role of short stay accommodation in the broader housing markets.

In particular, the information will allow a breakdown of the entire place listing that the select committee rightly acknowledges includes both self-contained parts of people's primary residence as well as entire investment properties.

We look forward to sharing the insights emerging from this process and using it to drive evidence-based policy and planning in the future.

What is evident from the many inquiries the Government has received in response to the platforms requiring permit information is that most hosts now seeking permits have been operating short stay accommodation for many years without the permits we require by local councils before the Government reforms in 2016.

This demonstrates the Government's reforms are already having the desired effect on the compliance and this should also be reflected in the data once it begins to be collected.

I conclude by acknowledging the recommendations of the report and assuring members they will receive due consideration from the Government.

I am advised preparation of the whole-of-government response to the recommendations has already commenced and, as is established practice, I will present that response to the Council once it has been completed.

I note the report.

Motion agreed to.

Report noted.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION (MANDATORY SENTENCING) BILL 2019 (No. 57)

DUTIES AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 56)

First Reading

Bills received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders - Duties Amendment Bill 2019 (No. 56)

[8.52 p.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended in respect of this bill in order that the bill may pass through its remaining stages at such time as the Council may appoint.

Members, as you know, this bill was originally expected to be debated in the House of Assembly on 14 November, which would have enabled it to be here, if passed, and to be tabled in the Legislative Council; however that did not happen. This bill will implement a number of retrospective taxpayer-favourable amendments to the definition of 'foreign person' as it relates to the Foreign Investor Duty Surcharge in the Duties Act 2001. In particular, if enacted, the bill will exempt a number of taxpayers from the Foreign Investor Duty Surcharge or allow taxpayers to seek a refund on the surcharges already paid, if they meet the criteria specified in the bill.

For this reason, the Government is seeking to have the bill considered this calendar year, to allow eligible taxpayers that have already paid FIDS to apply for a refund as soon as possible and provide certainty to taxpayers that may be affected by the amendments when purchasing a property. Otherwise such taxpayers may be required to pay FIDS when buying a property and will have to wait until parliament resumes in 2020 and the bill is dealt with at that time to apply for a refund of the FIDS.

Honourable members, it means that people purchasing property will be liable for the tax until the bill is enacted. The SRO has indicated that it will be compelled to seek that duty if it is paid until such time as this bill has received royal assent. I am advised that the earliest that this could possibly happen would be around 18 December when our President goes to Government House.

I seriously apologise for the urgency of this bill. The Treasurer has outlined the unintended consequences in a letter he has sent to all members of what has happened. I hope the motion will be supported.

[8.56 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I will not be supporting this motion. I will to explain why.

In 2018, we dealt with a bill that introduced the foreign investment duty we are now seeking to amend as part of the legislation to deal with that.

I will read some of my own speech from an adjournment speech I made on 12 July 2018. I said at that time -

I have often stood in this place and raised concerns about taking bills under suspension. I raise my concerns regarding the taxation bill we dealt with recently.

Which is the bill I have referred to -

I made the point at the time, that while I appreciated the individual briefing I was provided the day of the Budget, an hour before the Budget was delivered, I was not able to access a copy of the bill before that time and neither was anybody else.

I said during the briefing that other members might comment on that during the debate. The section relating to the foreign investment duty surcharge was a very complex section of the bill - 40 pages long - and I said to them at the time, 'I guess we will have to take you on trust this is going to work'.

Subsequently, I had some communication from the Law Society. I asked during budget Estimates who was consulted during the process of the development of the bill. No-one was consulted, it was all done in-house.

On 22 June I received a letter forwarded to me from the Law Society of Tasmania. It was written by Will Justo, the President of the Law Society.

I read the letter from Mr Justo; I will not read all of it again, but one of the points raised in the letter from Mr Justo was -

One other major objection is the retrospectivity of the legislation. FIDs applies to acquisitions. Importantly, an acquisition is not the signing of the contract. It is the date of settlement. Therefore there are many foreign persons (and importantly also family trusts and companies which may fall foul of the legislation for the reasons outlined above) that have signed contracts to purchase property prior to having any knowledge of this legislation.

The letter continued, but I will not read all of the rest of it.

I raised at the time the concern that there was no consultation with this outside the State Revenue Office and Treasury. This time, I understand - and I appreciate the briefing I had yesterday; I will refer to some information I was provided with at that time - there has been consultation with the Law Society and others that have worked through this as best they can.

I said in closing my adjournment speech on 12 July 2018 -

I urge members to listen and consider when I get up and bang on again about taking things under suspension, I will do it every time it happens. The only time I may make an exception following this, is if it is an urgent situation we are addressing - not some convenience because it has happened at a time that suits.

I said that then and I stand by my words.

At the briefing yesterday the member for Nelson joined me. I happened to run into her in the car park and she came along. She can verify this if there is any question about what I was told. That has happened in the past, so there was at least one other witness to witness what we were told.

I asked the Treasury officials who were briefing us: what would happen if there was a delay? This legislation is all retrospective. There are potentially around 51 people who may be in a position where they could make representation to the SRO to have their FIDS refunded on the basis they have a discretionary trust and when the legislation is passed, they will be able to have the trust

amended to remove the capacity for a foreign person to be a beneficiary of that discretionary trust. The Treasury official said that is the most likely category of people who will come forward.

The other one was that when a foreign person becomes no longer foreign - that is, they get a permanent residency visa or a citizenship in that period - they can apply for a refund. Their view was - in fact I will read some information sent to me from Treasury -

Treasury expects that the majority of refunds will relate to discretionary trusts. Over the period from 1 July 2018 to 19 November 2019, FIDS was charged on a total of 51 transactions relating to discretionary trusts. The 51 discretionary trusts are broken up as follows:

- 31 residential;
- 18 primary production; and
- 2 both residential and primary production.

Some of those taxpayers may wish to retain the ability to distribute to foreign persons while others may be eligible for a refund if they meet the specified eligibility criteria.

There may be some people who, for example, do not want to get rid of uncle Spiros off their discretionary family trust. You will remember we mentioned him in Estimates last year, or the year before, 2018.

The point about the urgency to get this through is, yes, it would mean by 1 January this year those who may feel they have fallen foul of this have a discretionary family trust or discretionary trust that has a beneficiary who notionally could get more than 50 per cent of the benefit, which is the way discretionary trusts work, and is a foreign person, and if they get rid of that person off the discretionary trust, they can get a refund. There may be some who could do that.

Having to wait until March next year, when we come back and deal with this and make sure we have it right this time, is complicated. I do not know how much time members have had to actually study it. When I went through it after we received the copy of it - I read it online when it was available - it was complicated. We should always be very cautious about retrospective legislation, always very cautious.

I do not see there is a major problem waiting for three months. These people will be made aware, or become aware through the process, they may be able to make a claim. They will have to undertake certain steps, like going to their lawyers and getting the discretionary trust redrawn. They can get on and do that; there is nothing to stop them. If they intend to do that, they can get on and do it. When the legislation is dealt with, assuming it was passed at that time, it could be done. They can apply to the SRO. There would not be a hold-up while that discretionary trust was amended or redrawn.

I will oppose suspending Standing Orders. I know Treasury wrote to us. I know it wanted to get it done in the week before, when the lower House last sat. Not our problem up here. That is the Government managing its business. As I said, we rushed the last one through that brought this FIDS in; let us not rush this one - let us make sure we get it right.

[9.04 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President. following on from the member for Murchison, the Leader said the lower House was supposed to get it completed on 14 November, but that did not happen. What time did the lower House sit to that night? Was there a reason it did not happen? That then puts the pressure on us this week. I would like to understand why it did not occur, which would have allowed us more time to at least examine and have briefings on the legislation before we make this decision.

Mrs Hiscutt - I am not fully cognisant with the workings of the other place, but I was aware there was a finish time that had to be adhered to. When that time came, because the other bill took so long, they were out of time. I can find a fuller answer for you from the Leader in the other place, but I am not fully cognisant of that.

Mr GAFFNEY - That would be appreciated.

[9.05 p.m.]

Mr DEAN (Windermere) - Mr President, I take the member up on what he has said too. I would like to know a little more about this. There is no urgency for this to be determined now. I would have thought it could be -

Mrs Hiscutt - The Treasurer is very keen to get it through.

Mr DEAN - Yes, but you are not going to get it through tonight, are you? You do not intend to -

Mrs Hiscutt - We are only talking about suspension -

Mr DEAN - That is all you are doing at this stage. If your motion gets up, then you will be dealing with this matter tomorrow or Thursday.

Mrs Hiscutt - I will have briefings.

Mr DEAN - That is what I am saying.

Mrs Hiscutt - Mr President, we could probably cover some of those questions through the briefing, I should imagine. I will make sure I have an answer.

Ms Forrest - The motion is before the Chair now.

Mr DEAN - I was going to suggest there is no reason why the motion cannot be deferred. I would not have thought at this stage that we complete -

Mr Valentine - Until after the briefing?

Mr DEAN - Until after the briefing or at least tomorrow morning when the Leader can come back with the further information that she said she may be able to get for the member for Mersey. I believe that is a proper situation. I am inclined to support the motion because it benefits other people here. It is not the normal retrospective legislation that we would see that is benefiting our government, or to fix a problem that gets the government out of trouble. That is normally what we see with retrospective legislation.

Ms Forrest - This is getting the Government out of trouble for not doing it right in the first place. That is what is happening.

Mr DEAN - That might be so.

Mrs Hiscutt - It was an unintended consequence that came to light. We are just trying to fix it.

Mr DEAN - I would like to understand the exact reason as to why you are saying they had to meet a commitment and that is why the matter could not be dealt with. I do not know, but that commitment may well have been supported by all the members in the other place. I do not know what it was. I would have thought that would have been helpful. I ask at this stage that this matter be deferred until tomorrow morning.

Mrs Hiscutt - I would rather not defer it, but I might see if I can manage to get the Treasurer to our briefing because it will be early in the morning.

Ms Forrest - We have already agreed to take another suspension at that point if the motion is agreed.

Mrs Hiscutt - Yes, that is correct.

Mr DEAN - Do we have to do that? You can proceed with it if you wish, but one member has asked for that further information. You said you can provide it.

Mrs Hiscutt - I said I will find that information, but I cannot do it tonight.

Mr DEAN - It really is not helpful because the member for Mersey did not go so far as to say what exactly his vision might be.

Mrs Hiscutt - Mr President, would members be happy if we were to suspend and I can ring the Treasurer and see what he is doing and get that answer for you now?

Mr PRESIDENT - There is a motion before the Chair and we will deal with that.

Mr DEAN - I am not sure how you would do it. You can take the risk.

[9.08 a.m.]

Mr VALENTINE (Hobart) - Mr President, is it possible for this motion to lie on the Table until we finish our briefing tomorrow and we are more informed as to exactly what the concerns are and see if we can work out some of those concerns?

Mr PRESIDENT - No, there is a motion before the Chamber that has to be supported or not supported.

Mr VALENTINE - If it is not supported, is it able to be moved again after the briefing? Is that possible?

Mr PRESIDENT - I will seek some advice on that.

Mr VALENTINE - My reason for the question is that I would like to know a little bit more about this as well. We have had a bit of a discussion over there and we want to know if there is a cost involved if it is deferred until March.

Mrs Hiscutt - I thought you wanted to know why it did not proceed.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, that is one part. I am also wondering if we do not deal with this tomorrow what costs are associated with deferring it.

Ms Forrest - Costs to whom?

Mr VALENTINE - To the Government. Is there a cost to anyone involved in deferring it? That can probably not be answered tonight. We need to have the briefing tomorrow and consider things then. I have questions in my own mind. I am interested in knowing those answers.

Ms Forrest - There has already been one ex gratia payment made to somebody who paid the duty and then made an application to the Treasurer. There is a provision in the bill which shows that if someone has received an ex gratia payment they cannot try again. They cannot double dip. Other people have been dealt with already.

Mr Gaffney - While you are on your feet, according to *Hansard* it finished at 6.26 p.m. on 14 November. That is quite early. It was not as though they sat late.

Ms Forrest - They have sat enough late nights before, though.

Mr VALENTINE - There are a few questions to be answered before I would support that bill.

Mr PRESIDENT - Members, the motion is that Standing Orders be suspended. That is what we need to deal with now. The Leader can withdraw it but that leaves a bill with no second reading order. That would mean then it would have to go through the normal process. It needs to either be read Tuesday next or -

Mrs Hiscutt - Mr President, in light of what I hear you saying I would like to proceed with the motion. I urge members to pass this so that we can deal with it tomorrow.

Mr PRESIDENT - The motion we are putting now is to suspend Standing Orders.

The Council divided -

AYES 5

Ms Armitage (Teller)
Mr Armstrong
Mr Dean
Ms Hiscutt
Ms Howlett

NOES 8

Mr Finch (Teller)
Ms Forrest
Mr Gaffney
Ms Lovell
Ms Siejka
Mr Valentine
Ms Webb
Mr Willie

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Council at its rising adjourns until 11 a.m. Wednesday, 27 November 2019.

Mr President, I remind members the briefing will now be different tomorrow. We will have a briefing at 9 a.m. on something.

Remembering Black Deaths since the Royal Commission

[9.21 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I appreciate it has been a long day and I rise to speak on something I feel is important. It will not take too much time so I beg the indulgence of the members.

I rise to speak on an action that took place this evening out the front of this building where a group of citizens gathered to bear witness. This action was called Remembering Black Deaths since the Royal Commission. They gathered because it has been more than 25 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still dying in custody in unacceptably high numbers. Just a matter of weeks ago we saw the fatal shooting of a 19-year-old Warlpiri man in the central Australian Aboriginal community of Yuendumu. There have been 420 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody since the royal commission. Five of those deaths are reported in Tasmania.

Since the royal commission, every report into the implementation of its recommendations has criticised state and federal governments, including Tasmania. In fact, in Deloitte's 2018 review of implementation of the recommendations of the royal commission, Tasmania was ranked lowest of all states in implementation of the royal commission's recommendations.

Today, those gathering outside our parliament were remembering all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody since the royal commission. They took turns reading out the circumstances of some of those deaths in custody that have occurred since 1991. Those involved in this action are a group of concerned citizens, Aboriginal Tasmanians and their allies, citizens who are concerned about the ongoing deaths in custody of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They are concerned our state has not implemented all of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. They are concerned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still incarcerated at a disproportionately high rate in this country and in this state. Nineteen per cent of those in Tasmanian prisons are Tasmanian Aboriginal people, significantly disproportionate to the general community. I acknowledge and thank those involved in the Remembering Black Deaths since the Royal Commission action that took place this evening out the front of parliament.

We have not done well enough on this issue and our failure is shameful. On this we continue to let down the community, both Tasmanian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. Progress is much too slow in coming. When this is the case, we rightly see concerned citizens engage in actions that highlight and give voice to community calls for justice. On such issues

positive progress is made only through such actions, demonstrations and at times, through protests. I believe such actions make our community safer, more enriched, more inclusive and cohesive.

On this issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody and the high rate of incarceration, I note the genuinely held concerns of the citizens that gathered outside our parliament today and I ask, is the Tasmanian Government satisfied it has sufficiently implemented the recommendations of the royal commission? Noting Aboriginal Tasmanians are still over-represented in prisons in this state, I ask: What further action will the Government take to rectify this? What further commitments will they make to positive progress?

The Council adjourned at 9.25 p.m.