



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Wednesday 9 August 2023

REVISED EDITION

Contents

LEAVE OF ABSENCE	1
Ms ARCHER AND MR STREET	1
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	1
MOTION	1
REFERRAL OF PREMIER TO PRIVILEGES AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE.....	1
STATEMENT BY SPEAKER	3
REFERRAL OF PREMIER TO PRIVILEGES AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE.....	3
QUESTIONS	3
ACCESS TO POWER FOR BUSINESSES	3
POWER SUPPLY - CONSTRAINTS ON BOYER PAPER MILL	5
AMBULANCE RAMPING - RELOCATION OF AMBULANCES AT RHH FOR MEDIA EVENT	6
METRO TASMANIA - BUS SERVICE CANCELLATIONS.....	7
OFFICE OF RACING INTEGRITY	10
ACCESS TO POWER FOR BUSINESSES	10
BELL BAY - OPEN-CYCLE GAS-FIRED POWER STATION.....	12
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS	12
1080 POISON - PERMIT TO USE ON PROPERTY WITH THREATENED SPECIES	14
FIRE LEVY ALLOCATION	14
POWER SUPPLY - EXPANDING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT INDUSTRIAL GROWTH.....	15
LAND 400 PHASE 3 PROGRAM BID.....	16
FIRE SERVICE - REFORM.....	17
DEBT - COST OF MAJOR PROJECTS	19
MEN'S SHEDS - GOVERNMENT SUPPORT.....	21
TABLED PAPER	22
QUESTION ON NOTICE - ANSWER	22
RESPONSES TO PETITIONS	22
CALL FOR PROHIBITION OF LGBTIQA+ CONVERSION PRACTICES	22
TASMANIAN LAW REFORM INSTITUTE REPORT ON CONVERSION PRACTICES	23
HOUSING LAND SUPPLY AMENDMENT BILL 2023 (NO. 17)	23
FIRST READING	23
MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE	23
ENERGY.....	23
MOTION	32
REFORM OF THE FIRE SERVICE ACT 1979.....	32
MOTION	50
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AMBULANCE RAMPING	50
MOTION	66
AFL DEAL AND PROPOSED STADIUM - ADVICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY AND FINANCE - MOTION NEGATIVED	66
MOTION	89

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY SECTOR	89
ADJOURNMENT	104
WOMEN IN BUSINESS.....	104
JUNIOR SPORTS - TRIBUTE TO VOLUNTEERS.....	106
CLIMATE CHANGE - REQUIREMENT FOR RESPONSIBLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES	107
CASSY O'CONNOR - TRIBUTE	107
FOREST PROTESTERS - TRIBUTE	108
AFL AND AFLW PLAYER PATHWAYS.....	110
FRED 'CHOCKA' BLOCH OAM - TRIBUTE.....	112
FOREST PRIMARY SCHOOL	114
POWER SUPPLY - BELL BAY GAS TURBINE	116
FAMILY VIOLENCE	118
APPENDIX 1	120
APPENDIX 2	122
APPENDIX 3	124

Wednesday 9 August 2023

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Ms Archer and Mr Street

[10.02 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, I inform the House that both the Attorney-General and minister Street will be absent from Question Time today due to illness.

As such, I will be taking the Attorney-General's questions for the ministerial portfolios of Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs and the Arts, and minister Street's questions for the portfolios of Housing and Construction, Local Government, Sport and Recreation and Stadia and Events.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome the grade 5 and 6 students from The Cottage School. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

MOTION

Referral of Premier to Privileges and Conduct Committee

[10.02 a.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That in accordance with Standing Order 81, the Premier, the honourable Jeremy Rockliff MP, having been ordered by the House to table -

- (1) All signed agreements and documents relating to the AFL agreement by Thursday 1 June 2023;
- (2) All departmental and departmental commissioned assessments advice and reports relating to the Macquarie Point stadium by Thursday 1 June 2023;
- (3) Failed to do that and therefore this House refers the Premier to the Privileges and Conduct Committee.

Mr Speaker, this is a very serious matter. As you would fully understand, the parliament is supreme and the executive is subservient to the parliament. When an order of this House is

made that requires the executive, and in this case the Premier, to table certain documents and that Premier fails to do so, then there has to be accountability.

The first opportunity I have had to raise this matter is today. In the last session of parliament, the Budget took precedence. Yesterday, we were expecting the Premier to table further information and this House had granted him the goodwill to do that.

I remind members that, in a letter written by the Premier on 21 June to members of this House, it included a statement that said that the Premier would bring forward a motion on Tuesday 8 August, yesterday, to the parliament which reflects the advice contained within the report that would set out a way to ensure that information shared with this place is more transparent. That did not happen.

We gave the Premier until the end of business yesterday. Therefore, this is the earliest opportunity that we have for us to be able to prosecute this motion. This House has provided leniency to the Premier to have until yesterday to demonstrate goodwill to the motion that was first moved in this place, for him to provide information by 1 June.

He has failed to table documents in accordance with that order. That has been proven by the fact that on 20 June, three more pieces of information were tabled in this place. Further to that, more information has become available.

Mr Speaker, the Premier did not take seriously the order that was put before you as the Chair of this place or the order of this parliament. May I remind all members of the parliament that every single member voted for this order: not a single Government member voted against it. The parliament has a responsibility to hold the executive accountable.

The Premier has clearly not instructed his department to take this order seriously enough. That is demonstrated in the letter written by the acting secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet when he said that he will take a further look at what other information might be held by departments to provide back to this House. That would not happen until yesterday, despite the fact the deadline was 1 June.

The parliament has arguably been treated with contempt by this Government. The only way for us to properly deal with this is for the Premier to be referred to the Privileges and Conduct Committee for this to be properly considered.

Mr Speaker, I understand according to the standing orders that you have the opportunity to rule on whether we now debate this motion. I hope that the explanation I have provided is clear. For us it is very straight forward: there was an order of this House made for the Premier to table information by 1 June. He did not do that. There has to be accountability, otherwise the standing orders have not been upheld and arguably the Westminster system of parliament has been undermined by the contempt shown to it by the executive arm of government.

Mr SPEAKER - I have heard the Leader's position. As mentioned, Standing Order 81 requires the Speaker to determine whether to give the matter precedence. I will leave the chair until the ringing of the bells to consider the issue.

The House suspended from 10.06 a.m. to 10.17 a.m.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Referral of Premier to Privileges and Conduct Committee

[10.17 a.m.]

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, the member has raised a matter of privilege pursuant to Standing Order 81. Where a matter is raised under this standing order, the Speaker is required to determine whether to give the matter precedence over other Orders of the Day.

In order to grant precedence to a privilege motion over other business, I must be satisfied that the matter raised is not frivolous, and that the matter has been raised at the earliest opportunity. In doing so, the Speaker does not make a judgment on the merits of the matter, or even express a view as to whether there is a prima facie case as such matters are properly a matter for the judgment of the House.

However, this matter has been ongoing for some time and while new developments occurred yesterday, the matter could have been raised yesterday after the Premier tabled subsequent information.

I also have to be mindful of the order of business for today which provides a number of members with an opportunity to bring a motion on for debate and if I was to allow debate on this matter it would disadvantage those members.

I therefore decline to give the matter precedence over Standing Order 81.

I note this does not prevent a member from using other forms of the House to bring the matter on for debate, including suspending standing order to enable the Opposition to debate this matter during its private members' time.

QUESTIONS

Access to Power for Businesses

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.19 a.m.]

Yesterday you finally admitted what businesses around Tasmania have been telling us for years: they cannot access new energy to grow their businesses and create jobs. You said:

Tasmania has a power supply challenge ... capacity is limited. The truth is we are facing a real challenge ...

After 10 years of Liberal government, has Tasmania effectively run out of power?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. This is a classic Labor Party scaring tactic, scaring the Tasmanian community, like they have been doing with their propaganda put in people's letterboxes, scaring vulnerable Tasmanians, who have contacted our office

distressed about the propaganda that Labor has been putting into people's letterboxes but not owning up to, which is a disgrace.

The member's tactics this morning are clearly not about the matter at hand but on page 6 of *The Australian* today, it was all very clear. This is about Ms White's leadership, Mr O'Byrne and, somewhere in the mix, Mr Winter.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - The matter, which is no secret, is that our economy has grown. Remember that time between 2010 and 2014 where we had the economic development plan released and three months later the state went into recession? The difference between you and us is the fact that we have grown the economy -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - around 4 per cent over the course of the last couple of years and we still have that growth, with 1.5 per cent on top of that growth in the budget forecast, if my memory serves me correctly. We are growing and, therefore, we need greater energy capacity. It is no secret that when you have a growing economy and you want the economy to continue to grow and for jobs to be created, which is why we support Marinus Link and -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Members on my left should stop interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - we are working very positively and constructively with the federal government to ensure that we make that investment happen. That renewable energy growth opportunity, bringing in investment in renewables, solar and wind to Tasmania, enables us to continue to grow our economy where businesses can come to Tasmania and invest with confidence.

I am not sure what those opposite believe about Marinus but the Leader of the Opposition wants us to walk away from it. Mr Winter is too weak to make a call. I have not asked Mr O'Byrne what his view is. All three leaders of the Labor Party need to declare their hand, particularly the member who is currently the leader, who I know is desperate for Mr Albanese to save her job and reject Mr O'Byrne coming back into the fold.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not off to a good start. He backed the stadium today on Twitter. He backs the AFL team -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and yesterday, I believe it was on radio and I will paraphrase this, the member said: every step of the way I will try and kill the stadium, or stop the stadium. Every step of the way. Well, the first step was yesterday.

Ms White - You are not being honest again.

Ms O'BYRNE - Mr Speaker, point of order. In reference to the Standing Orders earlier this morning, could we have greater adherence to the Standing Orders now and require the Premier to be relevant or sit down.

Ms White - Well, he has run away, so there is no worry about that.

Mr SPEAKER - The Premier's time for his answer has concluded so we will move on to the next question.

Power Supply - Constraints on Boyer Paper Mill

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.24 a.m.]

The Boyer paper mill has been the economic engine room of the Derwent Valley for nearly a century. The plant employs hundreds of people in my electorate of Lyons and is a major contributor to Tasmania's manufacturing base. The mill has a new project critical to securing its future which requires 50 megawatts of new power supply. They have been told they cannot access any more power, which means their new project cannot proceed.

Abundant, reliable and affordable power has been central to Tasmania's economic growth for 100 years. Is it not the case that the power constraints you have created over the past 10 years are now putting a handbrake on our economy and impacting growth planned for the Boyer mill?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. There is a lot of light between when you were last in power and our Government, which has grown the economy, which has a plan for renewable energy and investment, and is supporting our major industrials. The Tasmanian Government recognises the significant contribution that Norske Skog, as well as other major industrials, makes to the state as a manufacturer, employer and general driver of economic activity. We are looking forward to continuing our working relationship to support operations at the Boyer mill site.

In 2022 the Government committed \$2 million to Norske Skog to support various projects aimed at reducing operating costs and supporting long-term sustainability at the site. This support is aimed at ensuring the Boyer mill site remains an important employment and infrastructure hub for the region. Our member for Lyons, who is minister for Energy, and I fully understand the importance of Norske Skog to the Derwent Valley and Tasmania more broadly.

Once again, this is about talking Tasmania down and scaring Tasmanians. Not only do you directly scare vulnerable Tasmanians direct to their households with your Labor propaganda, which you are too scared to own up to - you have to go to the website to realise that it is your mob scaring Tasmanians - but more broadly, in a macro sense, putting fear and uncertainty into the Tasmanian community.

We are about securing our renewable energy future. Marinus Link is an important part of that. So is pumped hydro. We are working through those matters constructively with the federal government. I reckon I have a better relationship with the Prime Minister than you lot have. Given the shenanigans of the civil war in the Labor Party, I get on pretty -

Ms WHITE - Mr Speaker, point of order. It goes to Standing Order 45. This is a very serious question relating to the Boyer mill in my electorate and the handbrake on its economic growth because it has not been able to access power. I ask you to draw the Premier's answer to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - We are on limited time so I will be very cautious of people moving motions as far as Standing Order 45 goes; but, Premier, if you could conclude your answer with relevance in mind, please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Absolutely, Mr Speaker. We will always be in the corner of major industrials, large businesses, small and medium businesses as well, unlike the Labor Party, which is intent on scaring Tasmanians.

I reckon I am able to deal with the challenges that Tasmania is facing through a cooperative and good working relationship with the Prime Minister of Australia. I am in a far better position than the Leader of the Opposition, who is desperate for the Prime Minister to intervene to save her leadership. This question is not about saving major industrials - this is about trying to save Ms White's leadership.

Ambulance Ramping - Relocation of Ambulances at RHH for Media Event

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr BARNETT

[10.29 a.m.]

Ambulance ramping is spiralling out of control in Tasmania. It is an issue of deep concern for the community and for healthcare workers, but the Rockliff Government has so far refused to take the issue seriously.

On your first day in the Health job you held a media event at the Royal Hobart Hospital. Ramping was really bad at the hospital that day, as it regularly is now. It seems someone realised that lots of ambulances ramped outside the hospital and paramedics caring for multiple patients while they waited for hospital care might be a pretty bad look for the TV news. Interestingly, hospital staff report that before the cameras arrived, they were told to relocate emergency department patients to another part of the hospital in a highly irregular way to create space in the ED to clear the ramping. Did you or anyone in your office or anyone in the Government's media office ask for the hospital to be made more presentable, and when did you become aware this occurred?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I acknowledge and thank the hardworking staff and health workers at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I have been there three times now in the last 15 days as Minister for Health and I cannot express enough admiration for their work and their support, their level of professionalism and their care for their fellow Tasmanians. On behalf of the Government, I say thank you.

It disturbs me greatly to hear the member make those allegations because I raised that matter specifically with the chief executive of the Royal Hobart Hospital yesterday because they have been raised with him. He was very concerned and upset by that and does not concur with the remarks of the member.

Having said that, I want to make it very clear that we are 100 per cent in support and grateful to the workers at the Royal Hobart Hospital and the staff who provide that work, particularly in the emergency department. Why is it that within five hours of being sworn in, I visited the Royal Hobart Hospital's emergency department? It is a priority for this Government, and that is why we have that record funding and commitment to the Tasmanian people.

Dr Woodruff - Why haven't you picked up the phone to HACSU? Why haven't you been talking to the staff union?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know Tasmanians expect to receive the very best of care, especially when they are at the emergency department. I expect that, the Government expects that; I do not accept the allegations that have been made and that is why it was raised with the Royal Hobart Hospital chief executive.

Metro Tasmania - Bus Service Cancellations

Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.33 a.m.]

Minister, yet again, Hobart's public transport network is collapsing under the weight of your Government's incompetence. On average, well over 100 Metro services are being cancelled every single day. A total of 580 Metro services were cancelled in the first five days of schools returning from school holidays alone, causing chaos with the travelling public. Schoolkids, commuters and the elderly are regularly being stranded on the side of the road in the freezing cold winter, waiting for a bus that does not show up. Minister, instead of hiding behind Metro, when are you actually going to take responsibility for this chaos?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member, and the next leader of the Labor Party, for his question.

Ms White - Mr Speaker, you know that is out of order; you could actually deal with that.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - I am very consistent in my concern for the reliability of public transport. The reason Metro is having trouble staffing its roster is that it is having trouble getting drivers. When you were the minister for economic development and we had a recession and an unemployment rate of 7.4 per cent, it was very easy to get bus drivers when the economy was being run down by the Labor-Greens government.

This is a great concern for me. I want to see 100 per cent reliability of public transport. My advice is that Metro is currently at about 95 per cent of daily trips running reliably. That is not good enough; I want 100 per cent, like you do, Mr O'Byrne, which is why we are looking for further transport solutions.

Mr O'Byrne - It has been going on for years.

Mr FERGUSON - You need to listen, Mr O'Byrne, because we are taking action. I have tasked my department to provide special support to Metro so that the combined resources of the department work together with the team at Metro in an environment of record low unemployment of 3.8 per cent, where every business, including transport in this state, has issues that revolve around workforce availability. It is very hard to get workers right now in effectively full employment.

I do not want the travelling public to be disadvantaged by the negative side, if I can put it that way, of a strong economy and low unemployment. We are looking for long-term reliability measures.

I was pleased this morning to announce that we are expanding our Derwent ferry service, which has now carried 250 000 passengers across the Derwent River. Every day during working days, that is 500 fewer people requiring the land-based infrastructure and the Tasman Bridge. That has taken pressure off congestion and is also a public transport initiative. I believe an expansion of the Derwent ferry service is part of the long-term solution in these circumstances and we will continue to work very closely with Metro through what are very challenging times for them.

Mr O'Byrne, in your unveiling of your stalking attack on your former leader who took your place and you want revenge, I noted your conversation with Mr Leon Compton where you talked about public transport and your desire to score punches. This is about politics for you, not about solutions. I am interested in solutions, not helping you with your stalking war on the Leader of the Opposition.

I know the Tasmanian public wants to see solutions and greater reliability of public transport. That is also my position and the position of this Government as we continue to work for solutions on network reliability, including, if necessary, working with Metro and my department to find solutions that are not going to lead to people daily having to check what routes might be cancelled because of worker shortages, but finding long-term solutions so that we can establish a network and a timetable that does not change day by day. That is the challenge that I accept.

Antarctic and Southern Ocean Programs - Opportunities

Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for STATE DEVELOPMENT, TRADE and the ANTARCTIC, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.37 a.m.]

Can the Premier please outline to the House the opportunities for Tasmania as the gateway to the Antarctic and Southern Ocean?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question on this important matter. Tasmania is in the fortunate position of Hobart being home to the wonderful strategic asset in the Australian Antarctic gateway. I believe it is a unique opportunity to focus our efforts on growing our international engagement with other Antarctic nations to grow trade investment for Tasmania across key sectors.

We must be in it to win it, however. There is an opportunity to participate in bids to host and supply international Antarctic programs in Hobart, such as the current tender for the \$2.3 billion US Antarctic on Ice program and other international Antarctic programs that visit and resupply in Hobart. We need to focus on growing our Antarctic aviation and maritime activities through our air and seaport infrastructure. Our plan for the Macquarie Point urban regeneration precinct highlights the upgrade of the wharf as a key element of the project and in support of our Antarctic aspirations.

As Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic, I am committed to ensuring we create the conditions that allow Tasmanian businesses to take advantage of this Antarctic focus and these expanded opportunities. As Premier, I will leverage Tasmania's reputation as a globally significant leader in Antarctic and Southern Ocean research, teaching and policy that build on the unique Tasmanian brand. We will continue to attract and deliver world-class Antarctic events which ideally are timed each year in our visitor off-season. After all, we in Tasmania know there is no better place to visit, live, work and raise a family. That is why it is important that the Australian Government continues to invest in the Australian Antarctic Division and the sector and considers growing its influence.

We have recently seen that the Australian Antarctic Division is facing a \$25 million shortfall in funds. The Australian Government will need to address this funding uncertainty and the impact it will have on jobs and businesses in Tasmania. I have written to the federal minister, Tanya Plibersek, on these matters and to discuss how the Tasmanian Government can work in collaboration with the Australian Government to continue the focus on investing and strengthening Australia's national interests in Antarctica, play an active role in increasing international investment into Antarctic science in Tasmania and to reinforce Tasmania's position as the most important gateway to the Southern Ocean.

For Tasmania and Tasmanians, the Antarctic sector matters. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to progress our activities because this sector supports keeping our economy strong, creates new jobs and new investment and shows the world that Tasmania is the perfect choice when it comes to supporting Antarctic missions.

Office of Racing Integrity

Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for RACING, Mr ELLIS

[10.40 a.m.]

Yesterday you rejected my call for an independent inquiry into the racing industry, instead saying, 'The Office of Racing Integrity is investigating allegations against Anthony Bullock'.

The words 'ORI is investigating' fills no one in the industry with fear. This is the same ORI that repeatedly turned a blind eye to the fact that Bullock did not have a kennel licence for many years: the same ORI that already knew that Bullock kept his dogs in below minimum standards and did nothing; the same ORI that claims to have regularly inspected Bullock's property and has only acted now because the public has seen the appalling conditions of the dogs and evidence of live baiting through the release of Animal Liberation video footage.

You must accept that ORI has lost the confidence of the community. What will you do to inject integrity and trust back into the Office of Racing Integrity?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we canvassed this matter yesterday. I do not have too much more to add to the specific matter. We have had two significant independent reviews in recent times that examined integrity matters, the Monteith review and the upcoming Murrirhy review, which will report to the Government by the end of the month. There is some significant work under way. We are keen to see reform in this space so that we can make sure that the integrity framework under which racing operates is fit for purpose and strong for the future. There is also a Legislative Council short inquiry into the Office of Racing Integrity under way, so we are focused on that work for now.

We have a very strong commitment. I have a very strong commitment, as my predecessor did, around making sure that animal welfare and integrity are focuses for the industry because we want it to have bright future.

I know Ms Johnston's plan is to shut down the industry. We do not accept that but we do want to work with all people who want to see a bright future for the racing industry. That is what we will deliver.

Access to Power for Businesses

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.42 a.m.]

You have admitted that after 10 years of Liberal Government there is not enough power for businesses like Boyer. Can you confirm that at least one other major industrial customer has recently requested additional power for an expansion project and has been told there is no power available? Will you treat this matter with the seriousness it deserves, given how many jobs are at stake?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Let me tell you who has run out of power: the state Labor Party. They have run out of power -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. We now have time limits of four minutes. This is a very serious economic issue. The Premier refuses to answer the question. I am asking you to ask him to be relevant to the question, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - I take your point of order and I remind the Premier of relevance. He was 10 seconds into his answer so I am not going to make a call on relevance.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, the Tasmanian Labor Party has run out of power. It ran out of power when the federal division took over the Tasmanian Labor Party and put it into administration.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, Standing Order 45. I ask you to draw the attention of the Premier to the relevance of his answer to the question. There are major industrial customers watching you giving the answer to this right now.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, I am going to allow the Premier to continue. We need to stop the clock if other interjections or points of orders are taken.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is what happens when you are in civil war. They do not like it at all. A leadership crisis in their ranks and they are powerless when it comes to the federal division controlling them. They are in no position to deal with the challenges of government.

We have highlighted many of those challenges. Part of the solution when it comes to energy security and supply of energy and our renewable energy future is investing in renewables and bringing that investment to Tasmania, which Marinus Link allows. That is why we are working with the federal government.

Ms White - So, you are going to import power?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are constructively working with the federal government, working with our major industrials and continuing our support for vulnerable Tasmanians as a result of the volatility in energy prices, working with the federal government with that \$90 million investment we are making to support vulnerable Tasmanians with the energy price volatility. We will always support continued investment and support the growth of the Tasmanian economy -

Ms White - They cannot get power, they cannot continue to grow.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - and along with that, major industrials.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. I am not going to put up with continued interjections.

Mr ROCKLIFF - This is why it is crucial that we work with the federal government on securing Marinus Link, bringing all that renewable investment, that solar and wind investment to Tasmania to complement our many generations of investment and hard work by thousands of Tasmanians in building our hydroelectric capacity.

With our hydro capacity and our water resource and wind resource coming online and solar, I believe we have a very strong future with Marinus and energy supply and security in Tasmania. What Tasmanians, major industrials and large businesses do not want is the talking down of Tasmania and the uncertainty that is put in people's minds, in investors' minds by the Tasmanian Labor Party. They are not only scaring the broader business community but also targeting vulnerable Tasmanians with their pathetic propaganda.

Bell Bay - Open-Cycle Gas-Fired Power Station

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.47 a.m.]

Can you confirm that you are now having to run the open-cycle gas-fired power station at Bell Bay? How can you claim that we are not running out of power if you have been forced to fire up the gas plants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. As the minister for Energy has said, the answer to your question is no. From the horse's mouth.

Ms White - No, you are not running the gas plants?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Once again, honourable member, scaring Tasmanians. What we are about is ensuring that we support vulnerable Tasmanians when it comes to energy price increases and the volatility of the energy market, but also working with our major industrials and the Australian Government when it comes to securing Marinus Link and our energy future, as part of our Tasmania-first energy guaranteed.

Infrastructure Projects

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON

[10.48 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Government's delivery of infrastructure projects and the role this has played in stimulating the Tasmanian economy? How does this contrast to any alternative approach?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for his question. We are builders not blockers. As we build our state, deal with generational underinvestment and then deal with infrastructure to accommodate future growth, we are stimulating jobs and creating the buzz in the economy that is helping our economy to weather the economic headwinds that continue around the country. Our record is one that is delivering. I am very pleased to be part of a Government that is delivering. Unlike the Labor Opposition with a member for Bass who infamously said, 'This is not the right time for significant investment in new infrastructure in Tasmania'. I do not agree with those sentiments.

What we have to do is continue to drive jobs across Tasmania. I invite the Labor Party to start getting excited about the women and men who are joining the construction sector, not just in civil, not just in residential housing but also commercial building. These are jobs that are creating opportunities for Tasmanian families. We are all for it and it would be good if the Labor Party would get on board because it has been part of our economic success. As a tiny state in the federation we are punching above our weight.

As we recover from the pandemic, the Government's clear mission has been to continue to grow our economy, support jobs and, of course, the training that comes when you have a strong jobs market. That is a great pathway for young people to get opportunity for traineeships and apprenticeships. It is when those employers need to get not just more workers but to grow their skilled labour pipeline for the future.

The Treasurer's annual financial report in 2021-22 showed a significant improvement in our year, not just for the budget position but also for infrastructure delivery. That report noted that the estimated \$819 million invested in community infrastructure was the strongest level of delivery since the Government was elected and 99 per cent of the original budget estimate.

Dr Broad laughing.

Mr FERGUSON - I think Dr Broad is laughing because he knows I am about to talk about Mr O'Byrne's record. As I mentioned yesterday, our investment of \$568 million was more than four times that of the final year of the Labor-Greens disaster with Mr O'Byrne, who was then minister and putative leader of the Opposition.

Across government, \$5.6 billion is budgeted to be invested across the next four years. It is, therefore, no surprise as to how we have seen those 56 000 more Tasmanian men and women in work in our state, to see our unemployment rate go from 7.4 per cent to a record 3.8 per cent. Our state's economy is clearly benefiting. Those opposite do not like it when we talk about what CommSec has to say. They like to rubbish it, moan and groan every time I talk about CommSec. Our goal is not always to be number one. We know it is great to be number one as the best-performing economy in the nation, but our goal is really to make sure that Tasmanians have opportunities. That is what we are so pleased to be seeing.

The great risk to the economy is a Labor-Greens government. When they were in power it was a disaster for our economy. Tasmanians fled our state and the major industrials did not thank you either. The energy industry did not thank you. Nor did the forestry industry when you shut them down, Ms White, when you cast your vote with the Greens. The economy did not thank you either.

1080 Poison - Permit to use on Property with Threatened Species

Mr BAYLEY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Ms PALMER

[10.53 a.m.]

Are you aware that a permit has been issued by your department to use 1080 poison on a property in the Southern Midlands owned by a syndicate of investors, and that baiting will commence next week? The use of 1080 poison is a cruel, crude and antiquated method of killing native wildlife which was banned on public land in Tasmania. Even Gunns Ltd, that bastion of animal ethics and social licence, moved to stop it altogether.

We have reports of healthy populations of species on the property, including disease-free Tasmanian devils, spotted-tailed and eastern quolls and multiple pairs of wedge-tailed eagles. 1080 is non-target-specific and the impacts of secondary poisoning on carnivores is of serious concern.

Will you urgently review and cancel the permit for this property in order to protect the multitude of threatened species there? Will you also commit to reviewing how this permit was issued in the first place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the new member for his question. It is not my House but I welcome you personally to this place. Hold on, it is quite a ride.

I am not across the details of that particular property but I can look into that for you.

There has been quite a decline in the use of 1080 over the past 20 years. The total use of 1080 poison across Tasmania for the 2021-22 financial year was 0.73 kg. This is a marked reduction compared to the 12.7 kg used in 1999 and 2000.

We are aware that there are issues around 1080 and the different opinions that people have. At the moment we are looking at different options. However, we have seen a significant reduction. I will look into your comments around that particular property.

Fire Levy Allocation

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

[10.55 a.m.]

Households across Tasmania have recently received their rates for the new financial year. Included in the rates is the fire levy, which is not a small amount in some instances. Can you assure the Tasmania Fire Service that the fire levy is going to be purely for the benefit of the fire services and that it is not left to the discretion of the police commissioner to allocate these funds to other areas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yes, I can confirm that it will be for fire and emergency services in Tasmania.

Power Supply - Expanding Capacity to Support Industrial Growth

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.56 a.m.]

The Tasmanian Economic Regulator's latest electricity market analysis shows there is no power available for any new energy projects, and there will not be until at least the middle of next year. To be clear, the independent economic regulator is saying that Tasmania, on your watch, has no ability to supply power to new projects. What are you going to do to ensure that there is new generation available for existing customers to expand their production and create new jobs, or to attract new customers to Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, first, I wish to clarify in relation to whether the gas power station is used to fill in gaps: it is not. It has not been used for energy security and is only run at commercial opportunities for Hydro.

Ms White - So it is operating?

Mr Winter - Is it running today?

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The Premier has been asked a question. Allow him to answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker, if I could answer. The Labor Party throws rocks, scares Tasmanians, and they are not providing any alternative. They are silent on what a huge opportunity the Marinus Link investment is, unlocking some \$7 billion of investment coming to Tasmania in renewable energy investment, solar, wind. We are working positively with the federal government, unlike the Tasmanian Labor Opposition, it would seem, in more recent times.

We recognise that, with a growing economy, we need a greater investment in our energy resources and security when it comes to wind, solar and supporting upgrades to our hydro-electric system as well. That is crucial. That is why we have a strong plan, a plan for Tasmanians to be supported for their investment in our Hydro. That is why part of our Tasmania-First Energy Guarantee is that when Hydro makes money, Tasmanians save money.

We are creating the bigger picture, the growing economy, supporting investment in renewables - wind and solar, upgrading existing hydro-electric facilities and infrastructure, but also supporting Tasmanians on the impacts of energy volatility - not scaring Tasmanians as the Labor Party quite clearly have been demonstrating that they are doing, particularly with the propaganda people are receiving in their letterboxes. They are too scared to own up to that, but they are scaring Tasmanians nonetheless and it is the Labor Party who should be ashamed of themselves.

LAND 400 Phase 3 Program Bid

Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for ADVANCED MANUFACTURING and DEFENCE INDUSTRIES, Ms OGILVIE

[11.00 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the successful LAND 400 Phase 3 program bid?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I know he has a great interest in business.

Tasmania's advanced manufacturers are leading the world with their solutions and that is something we are enormously proud of. One very fine example of this is Elphinstone Pty Ltd. Elphinstone was successful in its joint bid with Hanwha Defense Australia to be part of the LAND 400 Phase 3 program. This is a \$5 billion to \$7 billion project to supply 129 infantry fighting vehicles to the Australian Army. Hanwha's partnership with Elphinstone and several other Tasmanian companies on this project is Tasmania's biggest ever defence supply contract. Hanwha's decision to involve Tasmanian industry in these types of contracts is a clear demonstration that our advanced manufacturing capabilities and commitment to quality are being noticed and taken seriously.

I was very pleased to congratulate Kelly Elphinstone in person on the day of the announcement at the recent Tasmanian Minerals Manufacturing and Energy Council conference. What a woman, showing strategic leadership in business.

This announcement will create substantial long-term employment opportunities for the north-west region and this is a win not only for Elphinstone and the north-west but also for numerous other local businesses through the supply chain. Elphinstone and the other Tasmanian companies, Delta Hydraulics, CGB Systems and Penguin Composites, have been involved in Hanwha's bid for the multi-billion-dollar project and I am thrilled to see this outcome for Tasmania. It truly demonstrates the success that advanced manufacturers in our state can achieve and the success of this Government's support for this very important industry.

Our investment of \$5 million in partnership with Elphinstone to deliver a new \$23 million world-class facility will provide even more opportunities for global defence contracts. The more Tasmanian companies get involved in the defence supply sector the more it increases the visibility of our capabilities and products and the more contracts it promises to attract. There is enormous potential for this sector to grow and expand further to the benefit of Tasmanian jobs and our economy. Defence, advanced manufacturing, the tech sector, science and small business will all benefit. The Rockliff Liberal Government has confidence in the Tasmanian industry and we will always stand shoulder to shoulder with them to build our economy.

Fire Service - Reform

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

[11.03 a.m.]

Considering the objections and issues that have arisen since you announced the new fire service reform, such as concern for safety, funding and autonomy, what steps have you taken to confer with members of the Tasmanian fire and emergency services in fixing these issues?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker for his question. We are very committed to making sure that we act because fire and emergency services is a matter where lives are at stake. We are one of the most bushfire-prone places on Earth, we have had three one-in-100-year floods in the last 10 years and since Dunalley, work has been underway to see how we can make this service fit for the future. I continue to meet with fire brigades and SES units right across the state. I was in Fingal and St Marys the other day speaking with the outstanding teams at the SES and fire services in your electorate, Mr Tucker, and they too are very keen to make sure that we deliver on these reforms as a parliament.

We need to deliver three key things. First, a common operating platform that will unite the Fire Service and SES together under the new Tasmanian Fire and Emergency Services because our first responders are stronger together. Second, we need to fix the failed governance model so that we have a stronger, clearer chain of command. People need to know who is in charge when it comes to preparation and response and that will be a critical part of these reforms. Finally, we need a fair, simple and sustainable funding model. I know Mr Tucker and many others have heard from fire and emergency services: people who are crying out for that fair, simple and sustainable funding model.

Reform is hard but we are really keen on delivering that. We will be bringing legislation to this place and the parliament will have the opportunity to act. I am very happy to offer to you, Mr Tucker, as I did before, and Mrs Alexander, a briefing on these matters because it is significant reform and we will be consulting widely with our community, just as we have over the last two independent reviews and the parliamentary inquiry into the failures of Fire and Emergency Service frameworks in Tasmania.

Energy Developments - Costs

Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.06 a.m.]

The CEO of the TCCI, Michael Bailey, has said that Tasmania could be 'sleepwalking' into an energy crisis. While you were on leave, your Treasurer wrote to the Prime Minister outlining your Government's concerns about the current cost estimates for Marinus Link, your signature energy policy. In your Treasurer's letter, he admitted that both the North West Transmission Developments and the Battery of the Nation project have also experienced significant cost escalation. How much were these two projects blown out by? Will you commit

to providing the House with a full explanation of the cost of Marinus, the North West Transmission Developments and the Battery of the Nation projects, and if not, why not?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question. I found it ironic that the member who asked the question mentioned sleepwalking given the snooze he had yesterday. Nonetheless, I take this very seriously. The TCCI is very supportive of Marinus, as are we - absolutely.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. I am not going to put up with constant interjections. Someone will leave the Chamber in a moment if you do not listen to the Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Speaker, quite clearly we are very supportive of Marinus. We are looking very proactively and working constructively with the federal government. As I have said, it is important to secure energy future through Marinus bringing in record investment and investment into wind and solar in Tasmania and complementing our hydro industrialisation energy assets as well. We will continue those positive discussions in the best interests of Tasmania.

However, we are a population of 570 000 people and there has to be a line drawn in the sand in terms of Tasmania's capacity when it comes to levels of debt. Our support for Marinus is well known, as is the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's support. What is not clear is whether the Labor Party believes in Marinus. You want us to walk away, you have no idea and David O'Byrne is holding his fire at this stage, I think.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, under Standing Order 45, relevance.

Mr SPEAKER - I remind the Premier of the point of relevance. Please continue. We are on time-limited answers.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We will not be playing any scaring games. The member needs to wake up, declare a position on this matter and not scare Tasmanians like you have been doing with this scam leaflet you have put in people's letterboxes. I am sure I could have found a worse photo than that. Anyway, it is an absolute scam. We have received correspondence from vulnerable Tasmanians. One of them said, 'Premier, I am contacting you in reference to some disturbing mail I received today'. It comes from Liberal Energy via the Labor Party. I'm a pensioner with health issues and when I received this I thought I owed this. On closer inspection, after an upsetting reaction, I realised it was political propaganda from the ALP:

I am concerned that my reaction would have been the same for most elderly pensioners who are stringent on paying their bills and would go ahead to try and pay this.

Scaring people does a lot of harm.

Another one, Mr Speaker -

Who do you think may be putting an unsigned -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. How much does Marinus cost?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You are sensitive to this.

Who do you think may be putting an unsigned printed sheet of rubbish in my letterbox? Someone gutless and afraid to sign their piece of garbage. It won't encourage me to support them.

Time expired.

Debt - Cost of Major Projects

Dr BROAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.11 a.m.]

In your Treasurer's letter, he said that Marinus Link was 'not able to be effectively managed within the fiscal capacity of the Tasmanian Budget'.

The reason for that is that you have plunged the state into record debt. Your Budget has the state headed to \$5.6 billion of debt, rising to more than \$30 billion of debt by 2035. Because of all of this debt, by your Treasurer's own admission, you can no longer afford major projects you have previously committed to, like Marinus. What other major projects face the axe because of your record debt?

ANSWER

Here we go again. Half the ALP - the left wing of the ALP - wants us to spend more money, and the so-called right wing conservatives want us to not spend a single dollar. I remind you, in March 2020 we had the COVID-19 pandemic. Do you remember that? We spent up to \$2 billion on keeping people alive, well and in work.

That was our focus for those two years. It remains so in our recovery, so do not come in here talking about Tasmanian debt but refusing to acknowledge that we had to, as a government, spend and invest considerable sums in the Tasmanian community to keep people alive, well and in work. That is important.

Dr Broad - Is that all you have to say? What about the rest?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Braddon.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You talk about debt. What about household debt and this gutless propaganda that you put about? You need to take a good hard at yourselves, scaring vulnerable Tasmanians. I have read out some examples. I am sure there are others about which people have contacted us and Aurora as well - vulnerable Tasmanians who thought they owed large power bills.

What do you think they felt when it comes to their household debt? What do you think about that? You did not think about that much at all, did you? This is another example of this propaganda rubbish.

As Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, this is close to my heart and you are not thinking things through. We, as elected members of parliament -

Mr Winter - Oversaw the closure of the mental health hospital.

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Franklin, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - can reach many members of the Tasmanian community. You have circulated a fake bill -

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Speaker, relevance. This is not relevant to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - Stop the clock.

Dr Broad - What other projects are facing the axe because of the record debt this Government is racking up?

Mr SPEAKER - I will ask all interjections to cease. Questions have been put to the Premier. There is always some leniency given to questions and answers. The Premier has the opportunity to answer the question the way he sees fit. Other members may not like that, but that is the way this parliament has always worked.

I will accept the point of order on relevance and remind the Premier of relevance but that is, as you well know, as far as the Speaker can go.

Premier, you will continue now and we will start the clock again.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would be very interested if the ministers for Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Health actually approved this brochure. Not only does this fake bill needlessly scare people with their bills, but perpetuates stigmatising language. There is terminology in this fake bill that adds to the misunderstanding and trivialises mental ill health. Have you lot opposite read the Mindframe's language guide? I urge you to do so. Not only are you scaring people, but you are trivialising mental health and using stigmatising language. We have worked hard as a Government, as a community over the last 20 years, to de-stigmatise mental health.

Ms White - You are the one that is breaking promises and hurting households.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Not well thought through: scaring vulnerable Tasmanians who have contacted us. I have read out those quotes. The Leader of the Opposition needs to apologise for scaring Tasmanians.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. You will have to quieten down before I ask for the next question.

Men's Sheds - Government Support

Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for COMMUNITY SERVICES and DEVELOPMENT, Ms PALMER

[11.16 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Rockliff Liberal Government is supporting Tasmania's men's sheds and the vital roles that these sheds play in Tasmanian men's health and wellbeing?

Dr Woodruff - Just issue a media release. We have really important stuff to talk about. This is not a matter for question time. This is a media release.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. There cannot be anything more important than the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians. It is an honour to stand here today as the Minister for Community Services and Development.

Our community sector is the heart and soul of our community - vitally important, in my humble opinion. These are the services and the people we turn to for help. We turn to them for comfort, for acceptance and assistance, and certainly for friendship. When it comes to friendship, what a wonderful example we have in our Tasmanian men's sheds. These are not just buildings with cement floors and machinery. Our sheds are assets that provide a safe and supportive environment for men to meet, to find friendship and to sometimes just simply be connected.

I do not think you ever underestimate the power that can come with being connected and with true friendship when it comes to mental health and the wellbeing of our men.

Men's sheds provide an opportunity to come together, to talk, and to share their lives over a cuppa. Even more important, it is an opportunity for men to come together when they do not actually feel like sharing or talking, but they do not want to be alone. It is an opportunity for them to stand side by side and just work on a project.

In 2023, the Rockliff Liberal Government committed to extending peak body funding to over \$120 000 annually until 2025-26. Additionally, we committed to continuing the Tasmanian Men's Shed Association Grants Program with \$175 000 per annum until 2025-26. Over the past four years alone, this grants program has provided over \$590 000 to 117 initiatives: initiatives being from buying new power tools, right through to capital works projects.

We currently have 71 Tasmanian Men's Shed Association member sheds covering all parts of Tasmania. In particular, we find them in our rural areas and in some of the more

isolated areas of our state. It was a great pleasure and a delight for me to visit one of my local men's sheds in Riverside last week to officially open the 2023-24 grants program and to witness the exceptional camaraderie and mateship that is generated.

This current grant round provides funding under two categories, with a maximum of \$25 000 available. Applicants can apply for a grant of up to \$7000 in category one. That is for tools and equipment. It is also for mental health and wellbeing initiatives, for member training and for community initiatives. Applicants can also apply for a grant of up to \$20 000 in category two, for capital works.

We know many of Tasmania's men's sheds are actively involved in their local communities and are always ready to lend a helping hand, from creating benches in public spaces to repairing or repurposing furniture and household items and creating handmade trophies and souvenirs out of Tasmanian timbers.

Each shed is different, but one thing is the same - men's sheds are the heart and vital hub for men throughout Tasmania, and our Government is proud to be a strong supporter of this treasured community service.

Time expired.

TABLED PAPER

Question on Notice - Answer

The following answer to a Question on Notice was tabled by Mr Ferguson on behalf of the Attorney-General -

No. 15 of 2023 - SURVEILLANCE DEVICE WARRANT - RISDON PRISON

Ms Haddad to Attorney-General, Ms Archer

See Appendix 1 on page 120.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

Call for Prohibition of LGBTIQ+ Conversion Practices

Mr Ferguson, on behalf of Ms Archer, tabled the response to a petition tabled by Ms Johnston on 24 November 2022.

- Petition No. 20 of 2022 - See Appendix 2 on page 122.

Tasmanian Law Reform Institute Report on Conversion Practices

Mr Ferguson, on behalf of Ms Archer, tabled the response to a petition tabled by Mrs Alexander on 28 February 2023.

- Petition No. 1 of 2023 - See Appendix 3 on page 124.

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY AMENDMENT BILL 2023 (No. 17)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Ferguson and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Energy

[11.22 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, energy is the critical economic issue that we face today. We are in the incomprehensible situation where this Tasmanian Liberal Government, after 10 years, has left Tasmania effectively in an energy drought where we do not have enough electricity to power the major industrials and the expansion they want to do. There are also businesses that want to grow and expand that are going to their retailer attempting to get more power and they simply cannot get it.

In the meantime, the repeated deflection from the Premier today was to worry about people's reaction to a fake bill. What he should be worried about is their reaction to their real bill. If he was really concerned about Tasmanians, he would be worried about their real power bills, which have been overseen by his Government and his broken promises and this Energy minister across the Chamber from me.

This is a government that has broken two key election promises. It broke its promise to delink from the National Electricity Market. It wants to talk about propaganda - the biggest piece of propaganda is his policy. The lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation was the promise in 2018. We are not. We pay more than Victorians. The promise to delink from the National Electricity Market so that we would pay 10 per cent less in our power bills - the price of power has gone up by 22.5 per cent since June last year and it is all down to their broken promise. They ditched their promise to delink from the National Electricity Market just as prices in the NEM were starting to go up, up, up under this Energy minister. That is the promise he made and that is the promise he broke, and he has never apologised. The Premier wants to talk about apologies. He should apologise to Tasmanians for their real power bills, the power bills that have been overseen by his governance, and governance before, because of this Energy minister and because of this Premier. What is happening in Tasmania is a disgrace.

We believe that Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power. We also believe that our major industrials should be able to get access to that power when they need it because they are the ones that are maintaining and creating jobs in this state. This is

the economic engine room of places like Bell Bay, the northern suburbs of Hobart, the Derwent Valley, which have been serviced for 100 years, in some cases, by these major industrials. These companies rely on having access to reliable, cheap power that has given them a competitive and economic advantage against other states and territories.

This is the first government in Tasmanian history that is walking away from major industrials, from businesses and from Tasmanian households that desperately rely on our promise. That is a promise this place has made to Tasmanians for 100 years; the promise that this is a state where there will be access to clean power at an affordable price.

This morning, the Premier made an unfortunate error in saying that the open-cycle gas turbine is not operating. I understand it was operating as he said it was not operating. That was based on the advice from the Energy minister, Mr Barnett, who does not know what he is doing. Mr Barnett gave the advice to Premier that it was not operating. Guess what? It was, and it has been because we do not have enough power in the state.

The gas turbine operating means that Tasmania is not 100 per cent renewable, as this Energy minister likes to tell Tasmanians. We are having to operate the gas-fired turbine because there is not enough power. This is an Energy minister who has been talking about building wind-farm projects for the entire time he has been minister but we are watching as wind farms cannot get approved, are not being built, all because of this minister.

Now we are watching the deep uncertainty that his latest policy backflip is causing this state, particularly the letter he co-signed. I wonder how this letter was signed by Guy Barnett. Did someone hold his hand and force the signature on it? This must have been deeply embarrassing for him to say. These are the words in the letter from the number one spruiker for the Marinus project:

We are concerned that the project may not remain in the long-term interests of Tasmanian consumers or the state and, as such, the Tasmanian Government is not in a position to continue to take this project forward and is seeking your further engagement regarding alternative pathways to deliver the project.

They have walked away from Tasmania delivering this project. The Premier wants to say he supports it but it looks like he is saying to the federal government, 'Can you bail us out again? Please bail us out, Australian Government, because my budget is cooked, I cannot afford it. And, by the way, it has taken me so long to get this project anywhere near construction that the costs have blown out by, we think, about \$2 billion', but they will not say. The Premier wants to say, 'Do you support it?', but he will not say how much it is going to cost Tasmanians in relation to the actual capital build.

More importantly, a question I have been asking for a long time, and this Energy minister has refused to give the answer to is, what is it going to cost consumers? We had TasNetworks walking around telling major industrials that their transmission costs could go up by as much as 40 per cent, but he has never admitted it. When I ask these questions in Estimates and other places, he will not tell Tasmanians the truth. They want to know what the project is going to cost them. He talked about having a rule change that he would submit. No rule change, no financial investment decision, no idea how much the project is going to cost and no idea what impact it is going to have on our economy. He wants me to say whether I support it. How

could I possibly support a project when you do not know those simple answers or you will not give the answer? All I want to know is how much it is going to cost, what is it going to cost Tasmanian consumers, and what is the impact going to be on our economy?

These are serious questions that need a serious government to answer them. We do not have a serious government; we have a joke. The Premier's performance on energy this morning was farcical. He does not know that the open-cycle gas turbine was being fired up as he said it was not operating. He does not know that we have an energy drought and that our major industrials are screaming. They need access to power because they want to grow. The reason we have places like Access Economics forecasting that we are going to have a decline in economic activity in this state for this financial year is because we have a government that cannot provide the power that our major industrials and major employers need.

[11.29 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this topic of energy. There is nothing more important in addressing the cost of living for Tasmanians and the cost of doing business. That is why we have a focus, and have had since 2014, of putting downward pressure on electricity prices, and the record will show exactly that.

What it will also show is that when the Labor-Greens government was in power, electricity prices went up by 65 per cent. They talk about access to energy and asked questions about that today. The Labor-Greens approach is to have a recession because that is exactly what happened when they were in government. They had a recession and 10 000 jobs were lost. They cannot deny that; that is on the record and electricity prices went up 65 per cent, so they cannot be trusted to manage our economy.

What we have just heard is an amazing confession from the spokesperson for state Labor when it comes to Marinus, which is that he did not have a position. State Labor does not have a position. He says, 'I don't know, how can you ask me that question? I don't know a position on Marinus'. Marinus has been around for many years and has been part of our approach as a government to grow our economy, create more jobs and improve energy security.

The Greens' position is very clear: they oppose it but state Labor does not know. The TCCI strongly support it. They put out a statement a few days ago to back in their previous position of strong support, and the business community support it as well across the board more generally but Labor does not know. Mr Winter said, 'I don't know, how would I know?'. The other thing Mr Winter said yesterday was that this Government has driven Hydro into the ground. That is an outrageous statement.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - There is much dismay in the community about that statement and I hope you correct the record very quickly. The Premier noted yesterday that when Hydro does well and makes a profit, Tasmanians can save \$100 on their power bill, but you called it 'lousy'. One hundred dollars is a lot of money to Tasmanian people and households. That is why our Tasmania First energy guarantee locks in Marinus and there will be a line that we will not cross to protect the Tasmanian interest. Second, the Renewable Energy Dividend will be made

available to Tasmanians as Hydro improves its profits and Tasmanians will save money. That is what we are on about.

There is a clear contrast between the Labor-Greens Opposition and the Liberal Government that is providing stability, because we acknowledge, as I have said many times, that we have a power supply challenge and it is in balance. Hydro is a wonderful resource based on our world-class water resource and I should note that you are making assertions today in terms of storage. It is 45.4 per cent, so I am very pleased as Energy minister; that is a very good level for this time of year. I love it when it rains and fills up those dams - 45.4 per cent as of Monday this week.

Hydro is not cheap to run. It costs more than \$100 million a year to upgrade our power stations and keep them maintained and repaired. We have plans to grow our renewable energy resource in Tasmania through Tarraleah, Lake Cethana pumped hydro and the west coast upgrades - \$250 million plus over the coming years and there is more as well. We are about growing the economy, creating more investment in wind and solar and our hydro power stations and facilities, and make the most of that. We want to keep investing in Tasmania. We will continue to do that because we want to deliver amongst the lowest power prices in Australia and we will do it.

Labor wants to kill Marinus, it seems, because they do not even have a position. They are undermining the economy. Their power price cap will kill competition and undermine our opportunity to grow the economy and create more jobs. Let us be very clear. We want to keep investing, keep building, keep making sure Tasmania always has amongst the lowest power prices in Australia. That is what we are on about and that is what our policies have done since 2014 and right through into the years ahead. Of course, a lot of this is a smokescreen for the Leader of the Opposition with the leadership push by David O'Byrne, and now the Prime Minister is getting involved. It is a smokescreen and a distraction from their own internal division in state Labor.

In conclusion, in terms of the gas operation, the Premier was asked if the state and the Hydro was running the open-cycle units to fill energy gaps. The answer is no and the Premier answered that very clearly. The storages are very good. This is all set out in the Energy Security Risk Response Framework for August and you have the prudent storage level, the high reliability level, the highest level for this time of year since 2019, so there is no doubt about energy security. This is all a distraction to the main game by Labor.

Time expired.

[11.36 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, people in Tasmania, particularly anyone who has been watching politics over the last couple of decades, could see this disaster coming years back. The Greens were on the record back in 2016-17 when this Government started talking about another couple of cables that they wanted to string across to the mainland as the sole focus of our renewable energy response in a climate emergency.

We were very concerned then that there had been no information made available to the public about the extent of the scale of the project they were looking at and that there was no advance planning with communities of interest about the project. Since then we have seen the rush to roll out unplanned - and certainly unconsulted with communities of interest -

transmission lines across the whole of the north-west through what we know are endangered and threatened forest communities, through landowners' properties, where we have heard many times about local communities and landowners being specifically isolated in the consultation process, kept separate and pressured to sign up to agreements for infrastructure on their land.

The issues are so important and that is why we are so concerned that the minister has failed to have an open process for planning large-scale renewables in Tasmania. We also have the debt bomb in front of us and that is what is exercising people so greatly at the moment. We simply do not have many dollars to spend in this space. Every dollar needs to be spent with perfect focus and utter transparency to Tasmanians about what we are doing with their money.

We have already seen an example of major large-scale renewable energy infrastructure that was pushed through. Tasmania is replete with them in our history, but the most obvious one is Basslink in its recent history. The whole development of Basslink involved wild claims about profit-making for Tasmanians and the minimal facility fees we would pay. It was going to be a boom for jobs and a boom for Tasmania, but what we have seen since is that Basslink has gone broke. It has been put into administration and has cost the state millions of dollars in legal time and fees. It was bought for \$773 million and is now pending an assessment of whether it will be a regulated asset. The investigation that will be done in that process will be very interesting because it might be an opportunity for Tasmanians to understand the long-term costs of these projects and for us to consider them in light of Marinus. We will be paying for Basslink for decades to come and no-one is being held to account for the spin and outright lies that accompanied the decision-making on that project.

Now we have Marinus. It is the same old dishonest story being told to Tasmanians again, and media opportunities for this minister and previous Energy ministers. Even federal Liberal election campaigning has been part of the road show to try to gaslight Tasmanians into thinking that this is going to be the one big thing that is going to save us and provide jobs forever into the future.

What we heard was that the outside cost of Marinus would be \$3.8 billion. The lower estimate, the one that Mr Voss in Estimates gave to the Greens when we questioned the minister repeatedly about it, was that Marinus would cost \$3.1 billion. That was two months ago. Now we hear the speculation, which is yet to be disproved by the minister, is that it is in the order of \$5 billion or \$5.5 billion. No wonder the Premier is finally pausing this project.

Peter Gutwein, when he was minister, promised Tasmanians that we would only pay 10 per cent of costs because we will only get, he said, 10 per cent of the benefit of Marinus Link. Forget that. What we know from the Premier and the minister is that they are prepared to borrow 80 per cent of the cost through a loan. The state would be making further injections of 6.5 per cent in equity.

We still have no handle on the real costs and the risks because of the secrecy the minister is sticking to. Because of cable supply pressures and the commitment that would be required by a federal investment decision, there is real pressure to make an advance commitment to cable supply. That is so dangerous for Tasmania. It would lock us into paying a minimum of \$1 billion towards the pre-purchase of a cable before an investment decision has been made.

The Greens are so concerned that this Liberal Government is driving up the debt in Tasmania. It is fiscally irresponsible in a climate emergency. We have to be looking at the

debt that is sustainable for the state and delivers us outcomes that are going to be good for investment on island. Let us not forget that when we are exporting electrons, we are also exporting jobs. Who is working with the major industrials, who is talking to Norske Skog about how they can be sustainable in the future? They have not heard any good ideas from this minister. He is only out there for press conferences. He is clearly not grappling with the hard issues in Tasmania about security for major industrials - that is sustainable energy, working to create jobs and protect our environment.

[11.43 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, this matter of public importance is very important. What we heard from the minister was nothing. What we should have heard from the minister was a series of apologies.

First, he should have apologised to the Premier for telling him that the gas-fired power station is not running, when obviously it is. Second, he should have apologised for the power bills of Tasmanians that are going up because of his broken promise. They have gone up 22.5 per cent because of his broken promise to delink from the NEM if there is price volatility. We have price volatility and he has not delinked from the NEM even though that policy still remains on the website.

He should also apologise for this power shortage that he has created. Ten years of government and the state does not have enough power to grow. He should be apologising for that. Last of all, he should apologise for deliberately misleading. As he scrambled to make an excuse for misleading the Premier, he misquoted what was asked. The question that was asked of the Premier was, 'Can you confirm that you are now having to run the open-cycle gas-fired power station at Bell Bay?' Nothing to do with filling gaps. The minister has deliberately misquoted. The *Hansard* will show that. The minister needs to update the House at the earliest convenience because he has deliberately misled. He should apologise. The matter of public importance is about power, it is about energy. This is what we should be focusing on instead of trying to talk everything except for the job he has at hand.

The Premier belled the cat yesterday when he said Tasmania has a power supply challenge and capacity is limited. He said, 'The truth is we are facing a real challenge'. After 10 years of Government why has Tasmania run out of power? We have businesses like the Boyer paper mill wanting to reinvest in its site to futureproof it, to reduce its carbon emissions, but it needs 50 megawatts of new power to make that project happen. What do we get from this Government? Crickets.

The state cannot grow because we do not have power. Norske Skog cannot get 50 megawatts. That is not a huge amount of power, but Norske Skog cannot get it because this minister has failed. He should be apologising for this failure. He has capped Tasmania's economy. We cannot grow if we do not have power. That is what this minister's legacy is.

We also have confirmation from the Tasmanian Economic Regulator in his latest electricity market analysis, which shows there is no power available for any new energy projects. There will not be until at least the middle of next year. What is the minister doing about this? Making cat calls across the Chamber about our position on Marinus does not cut the mustard. What is he doing about this now?

How has Tasmania got into this position where there is a power shortage, where major industrials cannot grow because this Government has capped Tasmania's power supply? We have a power policy brownout. Not enough power. Projects cannot go ahead. The minister is ridiculously spruiking projects like hydrogen and then we hear from the minister that there is no power.

How can he spruik that everybody should move to Tasmania and set up these projects, yet there is no power? That is embarrassing not only for him but for the entire state. He is telling people to come to this state, telling businesses to invest. They spend money doing due diligence and they are faced with an incompetent Government that cannot supply them even 50 megawatts.

The Treasurer's letter, which also has the minister's signature on it, says that the Marinus Link was:

Not able to be effectively managed within the fiscal capacity of the Tasmanian Budget.

Not only is there a power supply cap on the state, the state is broke and cannot do anything about it. How is this Government going to fund Marinus? No wonder they have backflipped on the whole idea because:

The project is not able to be affectively managed within the fiscal capacity of the Tasmanian Budget.

They have stuffed the Budget so much that they cannot do anything about the power crisis we are facing. The minister says the dams are at 45.4 per cent storage. That is good but what are we facing? We are facing a lot of risk. There is a 70 per cent chance of an El Niño this year, which means less rainfall for Tasmania. How long will this dam storage last if we do not get rainfall? What risk is the state at because we are power-supply constrained? We will need to import massive amounts of power across Bass Strait.

What does that mean? Supply and demand is economics 101. When there is a lack of supply prices go up. We are going to be forced once again, because of this minister's incompetence, to import power at high cost. What is he doing about it? He is doing nothing. He is trying to blame Labor. He is talking about what happened 10 years ago instead of doing his job. What does this power price supply cap mean for Tasmania's economy? It means the economy cannot grow. We already have organisations like Deloitte Access Economics predicting that the state's economy went backwards in the financial year 2022-23 and it predicts a further decline in this financial year and no wonder, because big industrials who want to grow the economy and want to grow jobs cannot because there is no power available.

Tasmania's economic prosperity was built on hydro-industrialisation. In 10 years, what we have seen this Government do is run it into the ground, so much so that there is no more power available. These big businesses cannot grow, jobs are constrained and the minister should hang his head in shame.

Time expired.

[11.51 a.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, there is strong and broad interest in investing in Tasmania, including by businesses new to the state, expansion plans by those already here and by Tasmanians wanting to further electrify their homes and vehicles. A growing population and a growing economy need more energy and that is why the Government's renewable energy target is so important.

One hundred years of hydroelectric development have served Tasmanians well. The hydro system, coupled with more recent developments by the private sector of some of the state's outstanding wind resources, work together to provide the energy we need to meet the existing demands of commercial, small business and residential customers. Importantly, meeting new and significant energy load in the state will need to be matched with additional capacity to generate electricity. This will be in the form of a mix of new wind and solar, upgrades to existing hydro generation assets and increased interconnection with Victoria.

Marinus Link is a significant project that on commissioning would support the electricity sector and enable the development of more generation in Tasmania. Until this time, the sequencing of significant increases in electricity load with new generation projects will need to be carefully considered and aligned. The work on this pathway is underway, including investigating viable ways to accelerate proposed generation projects.

The Government highly values Tasmania's existing industries and the jobs they support. Accordingly, it is the Government's priority to ensure that these industries are supported with their energy needs ahead of potential new industrial-scale loads in Tasmania. Those new large-scale loads will need to be underpinned by the arrival of renewable generation sources.

The Rockliff Liberal Government is focused on delivering a strong future for Tasmania and a safe, caring community. Fundamental to this is a strong economy. We know employment underpins people's wellbeing and participation across our community. We want to give our young people the best possible and brightest future. That is why we are creating jobs, building homes, investing in infrastructure and growing our economy.

However, while Tasmania's economy is strong, the increasing cost of living is a real issue, not just for Tasmanians but across the country and around the world. Continued interest rate rises by the Reserve Bank seeking to curb inflation is impacting many Tasmanian households and businesses. We understand these cost-of-living pressures are hurting Tasmanians, especially our vulnerable, which is why the Government is providing a range of support. Over the next four years we will provide nearly \$400 million in government supports, which is an increase of more than 28 per cent compared to the 2022-23 budget. This includes \$261.5 million over the next four years to assist eligible Tasmanians to manage their electricity bills, including the \$45 million national energy relief rebate which will provide rebates to over 140 000 households and 35 000 small businesses. We know that electricity bills are a large expense for many Tasmanian households. This is why we have a targeted approach to support those Tasmanians in need.

We know electricity prices will always be less under a Tasmanian Liberal government. We have a strong record of assisting vulnerable Tasmanians with the impact of increases in the cost of living. Our policy has always been to ensure Tasmanians have amongst the lowest regulated energy prices, which we are delivering on. According to the Economic Regulator, the bill relief rebates of \$250 for residential customers should offset the impact of the 2023-24

price increase. Based on this, approximately six out of 10 Tasmanian households will be shielded from the price rise and we are increasing the electricity concessions by 9.5 per cent. Combined with the energy bill relief payment, this means total bill relief for concession customers will increase from \$575 to \$880 in this financial year, up from \$305 in 2022-23.

On top of this, as part of our Tasmanian First energy guarantee, our Government will deliver millions of dollars in energy bill relief to Tasmanians with our new Renewable Energy Dividend. This means when Hydro makes money, Tasmanians save money. Tasmanians will now directly share in Hydro's profits when its dividends exceed \$100 million. For example, Tasmanians could expect to save \$100 on their power bill for the year if Hydro delivered a dividend of around \$160 million. This will help every single Tasmanian household with their energy bills. That is around 254 000 households, including those who receive concessions.

Since we came to government in 2014, electricity prices for Tasmanian residential customers have only increased by 5.8 per cent in nominal terms and have actually decreased by 15.4 per cent in real terms. For small business customers, electricity prices have decreased by 5.8 per cent in nominal terms and decreased by 25 per cent in real terms since we came to government in 2014. We are delivering for Tasmanians. We are providing targeted relief for those who need it while investing in the new generation and interconnection that will put downward pressure on prices long term.

[11.56 a.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Just for the record, Mr Speaker, the question asked by Labor on the running and operating of the Tamar Valley Power Station was in the context of energy security. The answer the Premier gave was accurate. The Tamar Valley Power Station is not being run for energy security.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - Hydro currently runs the Tamar Valley Power Station for testing or commercial opportunities from time to time.

Dr Broad - He has already spoken.

Mr SPEAKER - The minister can make a clarifying statement.

Ms White - Actually, no. The minister at the conclusion of this debate may seek to make a statement but he cannot speak twice in the middle of a debate.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. The House will come to order. The time for the MPI has now concluded.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

MOTION

Reform of the Fire Service Act 1979

[11.58 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes there is widespread support for reform of the Fire Service Act 1979 to improve operational efficiencies.
- (2) Further notes -
 - (a) reforms proposed by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Hon. Felix Ellis MP, have been rejected by professional firefighters, the Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association and three highly respected former Chief Officers of the Tasmania Fire Service;
 - (b) experienced fire Chief Officers have noted that the proposed changes are overly bureaucratic and would risk slowing decision making during periods of high or extreme fire danger;
 - (c) the most recent Chief Officer resigned because of his concern that the minister's reforms would threaten fire safety during the upcoming fire season; and
 - (d) the minister's failure to respond to the concerns of professional and volunteer firefighters and the former fire Chief Officers has adversely affected morale throughout the fire service.
- (3) Calls on the minister to urgently consult with the fire experts, including professional and volunteer firefighters to -
 - (a) develop reforms which will address their concerns and improve the safety of fire services for the next bushfire season and into the future;
 - (b) provide for the formation of an independent statutory fire authority to oversee fire and emergency services under the management of the Chief Fire Officer who will report directly to the minister and not be required to report through the Police Commissioner;
 - (c) remove bureaucratic overkill from the proposed reforms; and

- (d) allocate all fire levies to the new independent statutory authority for the exclusive usage of the fire services.

Mr Speaker, the Independent member for Bass, Lara Alexander, and I have been warning the Government since long before we left the Liberal Party that it was widely seen as arrogant, out-of-touch and failing to listen or respond to the concerns of the community.

Mr SPEAKER - Sorry, there is too much noise in the Chamber. Is a vote required?

Mr TUCKER - Yes, I will be needing a vote today, thank you.

We have seen it time and time again, most notably with the authoritarian approach to the proposed AFL stadium in Hobart. That was the issue which galvanised our decision to leave the Liberal Party and the Government to free us up to provide better representation to our constituents. You might expect that the loss of majority government would, at the very least, prompt some reconsideration by the Government of its approach. Instead, it would appear they need to be dragged, kicking and screaming, every step of the way.

The first issue we named up was transparency. This House is well aware of the battle it took to lift even the corners of the blackout on information on the massively expensive AFL stadium proposal. Along the way we saw extraordinary contortions to avoid saying anything about the most expensive project currently on the state's books. I described this approach during the budget debate as throwing up a Berlin Wall of bureaucratic BS in an attempt to hide even the most mundane disclosure from public sight.

Eventually, we managed to get part way there, although there are significant elements that are still stamped 'top secret' in the Premier's bunker. It is one thing to engage in bureaucratic overkill to protect government secrets from the taxpayers who pay the bills; however, it is an entirely different level of arrogant disdain to build a bureaucratic wall into administrative arrangements when public safety is at risk.

The tale of fire service reform is an extraordinary indictment of the minister and the Government. This is an issue that has been on the books for years, and it has been examined to death. Everyone agrees on the need for reform. The minister's extraordinary achievement is to manage to turn that support into universal condemnation of the path he has chosen.

Mr O'Byrne - So he has done one thing.

Mr TUCKER - This is an Olympic gold-medal performance, Mr O'Byrne. It is not as though there is a shortage of people with experience and expertise who are willing to provide advice. There are 430 professional firefighters and emergency services personnel, 4000 members of volunteer fire brigades across the state and plenty of highly experienced former fire chief officers, all more than willing to lend a hand, and who have said so publicly. The trouble is the minister is not talking to them. Not only that, he is not listening. He is taking no notice of what they have to say. This has to change.

Mr Ellis has managed to get everyone offside by putting forward a plan that meets none of the objections. How that is even possible when the bush telegraph is burning with this stuff and there is real anger in our fire stations is frankly beyond me. To help the minister, let us look at what our fireies are saying.

We know we live in one of the world's hotspot - south-eastern Australia - for devastating bushfires in hot summers, and this fire season promises to be particularly bad. We know that we will be going into the next fire season off the back of a record-breaking warm winter and with a projected El Nino promising a hotter-than-average summer. These conditions are a recipe for devastating bushfires.

Responding to those fires requires highly trained firefighters, well-equipped brigades, experienced professional leadership and clear lines of command and communication. The big concern is that the minister's changes will reduce that traditional autonomy enjoyed by fire and emergency services, add layers of bureaucracy to decision-making and ultimately impact on fire safety across Tasmania. That is a risk that no responsible government should entertain for a second.

Let us have a look at some of the commentary on this issue that the minister and the Government have been happy to overlook. The United Firefighters Union Australia has said:

Royal Commissions over the past few decades, they all point in the same direction. There is an additional loss of life and property when decisions on fire ground or during a flood aren't made by firefighters or SES. It's also when decisions made in the weeks, months and years leading up to the event aren't made by people with operational knowledge.

We all agree that a reform was needed, but the proposed reforms have meant decision making powers have shifted to the departmental secretary.

At the moment, the fire Chief Officer doesn't even have the power to take basic actions he needs to keep his fire fighters safe ... His (Dermot Barry's) concerns were that this reform locks in the current model and makes it even more extreme and erodes other powers away.

Mike Brown, a highly regarded former Tasmanian fire chief officer, says this:

Fires, botanical gardens, parks, SES, MAST and a few others had to come under a departmental secretary for a limited range of purposes, such as staff discipline, dismissals, senior executive appointments and it worked quite well, but as time went on for some reason it changed to being under police ... the pressure has come on from police for more control over the fire service.

The police have undoubtedly a very difficult job, you've got youth crime going through the roof and motor vehicle accidents, surely, they must focus on law and order and not the broader spectrum of emergency management.

I think there has got to be some real reconsideration done to the arrangements that have been put forward at the moment.

We are going to be approaching a fire season - that's not too far away - and most probably the entire senior management, or senior operational management, arrangements in the TFS are going to be in 'acting' arrangements.

I think that's a pretty dire situation we've somehow got ourselves into.

Dermot Barry, the most recent fire chief officer, in an email addressed to the minister, Mr Ellis, wrote:

I do not believe the actual changes endorsed by you reflect the spirit of the reforms announced or are in the best interests of the TFS/TFES.

I am aware of the argument that the TFES commissioner doesn't report to the commissioner of police but instead to the secretary of DPFEM.

However, this is legal fiction as when the police commissioner role was advertised it included the secretary of DPFEM role also. They are one in the same person, and one in the same role.

Then we had the response of the 4000-member-strong Tasmanian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association:

The sudden resignation today of well-respected Chief Officer Dermot Barry, has left a significant void on the pathway towards emergency services legislation reform, namely the creation of Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services (TFES), under a statutory Head of Agency, being the TFES Commissioner.

Along with the partner representative bodies, the TVFBA lobbied long and hard for this preferred option, most recently with Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Felix Ellis MP. On the Ministerial announcement earlier this year of the creation of the TFES under the new legislative act, the TVFBA wholeheartedly supported Chief Officer Barry as the inaugural TFES Commissioner.

Following today's announcement and considering the lack of TFES detail in Tuesday's budget papers, the TVFBA has received information from the Minister this afternoon that the original intent of TFES will be implemented alongside meaningful and representative legislative reform.

The TVFBA remains committed to the following actions which have previously been announced by Government:

- The position of the new Commissioner of Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services (TFES) will be equal to the Commissioner of Police/DPFEM Secretary and have improved required statutory powers.
- The Commissioner will report directly to the Minister of the day and oversee the new Tasmania Fire and Emergency Service. The Executive Director of SES will remain in the TFES's key leadership group.

- The Commissioner will have complete oversight of TFES's funding arrangements and decision-making processes around operations, finance, corporate services and employment.
- The Commissioner will be Head of the Agency with clear responsibilities and accountability.
- The intent of the TFES announcement in January is not watered down, and is reflective of the requirements and wishes of the current TFS and SES population. The TVFBA sends a heartfelt note of appreciation to Dermot for his advocacy and vision for the Tasmania Fire Service and the State Emergency Service, and wish[es] him and Terri all the best for their next chapter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that was all pretty clear. You would have to think that it could not be much clearer if it was whacked into the minister's head with a hammer. The trouble is that not only was the minister not listening, he was utterly and insultingly disdainful. This was his dismissive reply:

I've heard all sorts of funny speculation that the police commissioner is trying to take over the fire service and emergency services. I mean, it's just ridiculous.

Except it is not speculation and it is not ridiculous. We heard from Dermot Barry, one of the few people who had actually seen the reform, that the police commissioner will also be the secretary of the department and will carry the whip. This is not a reflection on the commissioner, nor is it a reflection on Tasmania Police. It is a reflection on the ham-fisted structural arrangements proposed by the minister.

There is no doubt that the police have a very difficult job and they do it incredibly well. All Tasmanians can be thankful that we have such well-trained and committed police enforcing law and order and protecting our state. But we need both our police service and our fire and emergency services operating at full capacity to provide the best possible protection for our community.

The service the TFES provides is exceptional and we need a reform that reflects their hard work and determination. We also need a reform that allows them to operate at their maximum capacity, in a way that is efficient, effective and safe for all Tasmanians.

When we are warned by someone as experienced, level-headed and community-minded as Mike Brown that we have a serious morale problem in our fire and emergency services, we need to fix it, not retreat to our corner, resort to cheap two-word slogans and dig in.

There is also concern that money solely allocated to the TFES through the fire levy will no longer be given exclusively to the TFES. How can the minister justify allocating that money elsewhere when the TFES is already so grossly underfunded?

A member of the United Firefighters Union had this to say:

At the moment, the fire service is legitimately almost defunded, it's at the point where they are almost not able to staff trucks.

Not only is the TFES nearly at the point where they do not have enough money to staff trucks, but some of the trucks attending emergencies are almost 40 years old and they cannot afford to get them serviced. How this has been allowed to happen, and happen for so long, is a disgrace.

Overlooking the concerns and advice of those who have spent the better part of their lives dedicated to the fire service has the potential to be fatal, and it has been said so repeatedly. I am aware that the minister has addressed some of these concerns and referred to them as 'myths' - we saw that today, probably. However, from what I keep getting told by career and volunteer firefighters, what the minister is claiming as 'myths' seem to them to be the truth.

Why is there such a disparity in what the minister and members of the TFES are alleging? It is because he still has not sat down and consulted with them on a reform that is for them.

Mr Ellis cannot wait until the fire season is upon us to listen and make the changes necessary. It will be too late at that point and there is a very real possibility that lives will be lost if the minister continues with his stubborn inaction. We cannot allow to continue a position where a vital element of our emergency services sees a conflict of interest and believes its autonomy, effectiveness and morale is being steadily eroded.

Our fireies see this as a simple matter: it does not make sense to have a trained police officer in charge of the state's fire services, even if the minister keeps denying that that will be the case. The simple solution would seem to be the obvious one: keep them separate.

Today, I am not seeking the support of the House to require the minister to do that. What I am doing is seeking support for the minister to sit down with our fire service organisations and negotiate a solution that wins support, lifts morale and will give Tasmanians confidence that we will be in good hands leading into the coming fire season.

However, I will say this: this is the last chance I am prepared to give the minister on this issue. It is a vital matter to people across my electorate, and if it takes stronger action to get the minister to act, I will not be backward in coming forward.

Minister, it is time for you to stop being so arrogant and it is time to listen.

[12.13 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management) - Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr Tucker, for his contribution. To be honest, it sounds like we are probably closer to agreement than is probably characterised.

Mr O'Byrne - That sounded like it, yes.

Dr Woodruff - You just walk back from the public statements you have made and we will all be happy.

Mr O'Byrne - Opinion is divided on that; you say yes, everyone else says no.

Mr ELLIS - I am not too sure about the commentary from the Greens and others. To me it sounds like we agree on the key parts of this reform. First, that we need to unite TFS and the SES to become the Tasmanian Fire and Emergency Service. Second, that we need to

remove the bureaucracy that we currently have with our operational chief officer reporting to State Fire Management Council headed by a civilian State Fire Commission, which is headed by a civilian. The secretary of the department, whom Mr Tucker knows, is also the Commissioner of Police. That is our current model. What we are looking to do as part of these reforms is to empower our chief officer to become the commissioner of TFES, for that organisation to be led by a person in uniform rather than as it is currently, governed by civilians.

Dr Woodruff - Another misrepresentation of reality. You continue to gaslight Tasmanians about what is really going on.

Mr ELLIS - That is absolutely true, Dr Woodruff. Who is the chair of the State Fire Management Council?

Dr Woodruff - You continue to misrepresent the way things are.

Mr ELLIS - He is not a firefighter. Who is the chair of the State Fire Commission?

Dr Woodruff - You continue to misrepresent the way things are.

Mr ELLIS - You do not know, obviously, but it is Allan Garcia.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - His experience is in local government.

Dr Woodruff - You know that is not who is in charge when there is a bushfire.

Mr O'Byrne - This is why you are in trouble.

Mr ELLIS - We currently have a situation where those government bodies are headed by civilians. We want to transfer the powers of those government bodies to an operational leader, to the Tasmanian fire and emergency services commissioner. That will be a person with operational and technical expertise with regard to fire and emergency services being able to deliver in that role. The clear indication from reviews, from our operational experts in emergency management, is that the current failed governance model does not work and that we need to put an operational leader in charge. That is what we will be doing as part of these reforms.

The other thing we agree on is that we need a fair, simple and sustainable funding model so that, as Mr Tucker says, people are not driving around in 40-year-old trucks, that they are not trapped in a funding model that is failing them because it is complex, unfair and unsustainable - whether that is local councils not having the capacity to fund SES in their vital work to protect people during floods, storms and road crash rescues, or whether it is our current funding model for fire that clearly makes it difficult to plan, prepare and provide the resources that are needed.

Those arrangements are ring-fenced but they do not work. They need reform and they need to be fixed. We hear this from the union. I acknowledge Mr Hills in the gallery. We hear this from operational firefighters and acknowledge their outstanding service. We hear this from the community about the need for this investment in their services.

I was pleased to hear that Mr Tucker wants to see this brought on quickly. We want to see this as well. You can expect that this legislation will be consulted imminently. This is an opportunity for our state and our parliament because we need to act. We have been told that the current situation is not good enough. As you acknowledge, Mr Tucker, there is need for significant reform.

As you also mentioned, our fire and emergency services people support the reforms that we announced in January. Those are the reforms that we will deliver. The legislation will be coming to this House and the community very soon. It will clearly demonstrate that we will do those three things I spoke about that we agree on.

It will reform the Tasmanian fire and emergency services so that we are stronger together and better able to save lives in our community. It will empower our operational leader to become the Tasmanian fire and emergency services commissioner who will have significant, broad-ranging powers, not only in response day to day but in preparation, planning, making sure that person, the commission and TFES have control of the ring-fenced funding for Tasmanian fire and emergency services, as I confirmed in my answer to Mrs Alexander's question earlier today.

There will also be new powers over workforce and employment, and new powers over budget and finance, operations, strategy and policy and a range of key matters. The things that the commissioner needs to make sure that not only do we respond well, but we prepare well.

I am heartened to see the support from Mr Tucker for the broader reforms that need to be made in this space. There is a range of important matters that we need to deal with and we also need to be really committed to listening to the community when the consultation happens during this legislation. I can give assurance to this House as well that we will listen and are very focused on making sure that we can deliver these reforms for everybody so that we are able to save lives. There are massive opportunities for this House to engage in hard reform that has been difficult to land.

The case for this being hard reform and the difficulty is clear, because this legislation is more than 40 years old. It does not work. It does not deliver a framework that all the outstanding people in fire and emergency services can do their best work because it holds them back. It separates our first responders and does not provide a strong, clear chain of command. It is not clear who is in charge at the different points throughout preparation and response. It does not provide them with a funding model that is fair, simple and sustainable.

Broadly speaking, I appreciate that Mr Tucker has brought this motion to the House. We really want to see that the community is focused on these reforms and is engaged with these reforms as well because this is critical. We are one of the most bushfire-prone places on Earth. There have been three one-in-100-years flood events in the last 10 years. Mr Tucker spoke quite well in providing the clear case for change and also the threat that we have in Tasmania because of our geography and our need to respond.

There are some political matters in the first part of Mr Tucker's motion that we cannot support and also in terms of personal employment matters. I have indicated on a number of different occasions that we are not going to be engaging in people's personal employment matters in the House.

What I can say is that we are supportive of the second part of the motion which is supportive of the reforms. As to the House calling on us to urgently consult, that will be happening imminently and we are very committed to that. As I mentioned earlier today, I will be providing a briefing to Mr Tucker and Mrs Alexander and am looking forward to the opportunity to do so with Jeremy Smith, our chief officer, and others who are experts in this space.

Dr Woodruff - Can other members of the House be party to that briefing?

Mr ELLIS - The Greens did not take this up but we provided a briefing previously that Ms O'Byrne was at, as was Ms Forrest in the other place.

Dr Woodruff - That was with Mr Blake.

Mr ELLIS - Yes.

Mr Tucker - She is asking if she can be involved with this one.

Mr ELLIS - I am more than happy to provide you briefings as well, Dr Woodruff. I am very keen for this House to understand these reforms, what we are trying to achieve and work collaboratively across the House.

It is remiss of me that I have not had the chance to welcome Mr Bayley. Welcome to the House, Mr Bayley. I was very interested to see your commentary around deciding to join the Greens after Black Summer.

While we may not politically agree, certainly we need to all agree that in terms of our response to the challenges of the changing climate, fire and emergency services being able to support our community is absolutely vital. That is why we need to make these reforms now; we need to take this opportunity. This is the moment that this House has to do something about this.

Dr Woodruff - Do you support 3(b) in the motion?

Mr ELLIS - I do not have a (b) on my sheet in front of me.

Dr Woodruff - It is about the formation of an independent statutory fire authority to oversee and report directly to the minister, not be required to report to the Police Commissioner.

Mr ELLIS - I have that as (2). I will have to follow up; the one I have in front of me is slightly different.

Dr Woodruff - I want to put you on record. Do you actually agree with 3(b), which says that the Police Commissioner -

Mr ELLIS - Because I am on my feet, can you repeat it for me, Dr Woodruff?

Dr Woodruff - Do you agree with 3(b), which would provide for the formation of an independent statutory fire authority to oversee fire and emergency services under the

management of the CFO, who will report directly to the minister and not be required to report through the Police Commissioner?

Mr ELLIS - There are a few language changes in there. There will not be a CFO. We will not have a CFO. We will have a commissioner of the TFES and there will be a statutory body because the State Fire Commission will be retained but reformed. It needs to be expanded because it does not currently include SES. There is no SES volunteer association on there or the union that represents the SES. The opportunity there as well is to make it so that the commissioner of the TFES is in charge.

Dr Woodruff - Who do they report to?

Mr ELLIS - To the minister.

Dr Woodruff - But not through the Police Commissioner as the secretary?

Mr ELLIS - To the minister.

Dr Woodruff - Not through the secretary, which is -

Mr ELLIS - No, directly to the minister.

Dr Woodruff - Without the Police Commissioner involved at all?

Mr ELLIS - We are still going to have a secretary of the department.

Dr Woodruff - That is the Police Commissioner.

Mr ELLIS - That is who it is currently. The framework we are establishing is where we will have the Commissioner of Police and the Commissioner of Fire and Emergency Services, both empowered and sitting as equals. I mentioned before that they will report directly to the minister on key matters, so budget and finance including the ring-fenced funding, employment and workforce.

Ms O'Byrne - What does ring-fenced mean?

Mr ELLIS - As I mentioned previously, the ring-fenced funding will be made available for Fire and Emergency Services in Tasmania under -

Dr Woodruff - After the secretary has dealt with the matters.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - the auspices of the Commissioner of Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services.

Dr Woodruff - And after the secretary of the department has been involved.

Ms O'Byrne - With an instruction from the secretary.

Ms Ogilvie - Point of order; it is very hard to hear the minister.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you. The model we want to put in place going forward that we propose has been that the secretary of the department could be either the Commissioner of Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services, the Commissioner of Police or a separated person, an independent secretary - a white-collar public servant. I have heard a range of different feedback in the community from our fire and emergency services people.

Dr Woodruff - I'm sure the police don't like the idea of being told what to do by the TFES commissioner.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - I think our first responders work really well together and it is important that they do and that they continue. We have heard feedback about whether we should commit to just having a white-collar independent secretary of the department and we are open to consultation. The identities of secretaries and things like that are not matters that will be within the Fire and Emergency Services Act but that is something we are more than happy to consult on in terms of the approach going forward.

Ultimately, we think that there is a lot of strength, and I know Labor think this as well, in our fire and emergency services and our other first responders like police being within the one department. There is a lot of strength to that, noting Ms O'Byrne's supportive comments of them staying within the one department. The fruits of that labour are being seen.

The TasGRN, Government Radio Network, has been rolled out around Tasmania and we are in the final months of commissioning for our emergency services, which has seen an uplift in capability of a scale we have not seen before in Tasmania. This is a phenomenal piece of infrastructure-building. It is more than \$700 million. It is as large as the Bridgewater bridge and it has been delivered on time, on budget and is enabling our first responders to keep safe while they are out in difficult terrain, in the bush, whether they are doing search and rescue and a whole range of other important work - GPS tracking, duress buttons on these radios themselves - they are a phenomenal bit of kit. They are made possible because we are able to work together and deliver those important things for the community as well as our first responders, because the community must always be front and centre of our minds when we are having these discussions.

The legislation, as I mentioned, will be imminent to consult with the community. We are committed to that consultation and, Mr Tucker, very keen to consult with you and others around it because this is a significant piece of reform.

The other key matter, as well as the governance we have mentioned before, is about empowering a new commissioner of TFES - which, as you mention, our volunteers are very supportive of doing - who reports directly to the minister that is advised by our new State Fire and Emergency Services Committee, which will have members of our State Fire Commission as well as the expanded membership to take into account our SES, who will be brought alongside in the TFES. As well as that, there are important financial reforms. This House will work through those matters.

Ultimately, we need to make sure that we have a system that is fair, simple and sustainable. The royal commissions that Mr Tucker mentioned, for example, the 2009 Royal Commission into the Black Saturday Bushfires, which killed 173 people in Victoria, found that levies on insurance are a terrible way to be funding a fire service because it does a few things. It effectively penalises people for doing the right thing, which is taking out insurance. We know the devastating impacts of people having to live in tents because they were not insured and do not have the means to rebuild their homes and businesses, their communities. It is also an enormous loophole because it means that only those businesses, in the case of Tasmania, where the insurance levy applies to businesses, only those businesses that take out insurance are the ones that actually pay contribution through that levy to the fire service. That means that the 30-40 per cent of businesses not taking out the insurances they need do not make the same contribution as their neighbours who do. We need to make sure that our funding model is fair, simple and sustainable. That is a key part of what we are looking to do there.

One of the things I can reassure Mr Tucker and the House on as well is, there was speculation in some of these expert reports provided to the Government that perhaps you would put on an additional levy for people in bushfire-prone areas. We do not think that is the right way to go. Frankly, in Tasmania about 90 per cent of our land mass is a bushfire-prone area, and we all need to live on this beautiful island. Making sure that we are all making a fair and equal contribution is in tension with those who say there should be an additional levy put on people who live in bushfire-prone areas, including Mr Tucker in his community and I, in mine. We think we can work through a better model.

Moving past politicking on this matter to a model that will fund those people to save lives is really important. Fires, floods - they do not necessarily stop at council boundaries and nor do our first responders. Gone are the days where a brigade would just respond within their local government area. Also gone are the days where we could guarantee that there would be a small, more manageable event. In the Rosebery bushfire that impacted my community in December last year, it was not just the Rosebery brigade that turned up. It was Strahan, Zeehan, Queenstown, within the West Coast Council area -

Ms Ogilvie - Same happened in the Huon.

Mr ELLIS - Exactly, in the Huon. It was Wynyard, Ridgley, Burnie, Devonport, Penguin people making a contribution to help -

Dr Woodruff - I am just drawing your attention, minister, to the fact that there are many other members who would like to speak and it is only an hour.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Dr Woodruff, I am keen to enable that to happen. It is just that it is very important that we are making sure that, as part of these reforms, we are all mindful of the fact that we are all Tasmanians and we all need these services. We all need these services, that we all need to keep our neighbours safe and that when one of our communities is safe, we can say that all of our communities are safe. Firefighting has changed. Aerial appliances able to cover the whole state are a massive part of what we do. Fifty per cent of bushfires from last season has aerial appliance support. We need to be making sure that this system is fair, simple and sustainable, and that is what we will be seeing in the legislation, which, as I said, is imminent.

I will talk through a few matters that, hopefully, can clear things up. I will start with the current Fire Service Act and the State Fire Commission, and how this impacts the authorities of the current chief fire officer.

Within the act, the commission is mentioned 283 times more than the chief officer, the chief officer being the operational leader who we want to be in charge of the fire service. There is a short part in the act that outlines what the chief officer is responsible for. That includes managing firefighting resources, inspecting brigades and other functions imposed by the commission. In comparison, there is quite a long list in the legislation of what our commission is responsible for. This includes, generally, the strategy, the direction of the service preparation. It is the commission that determines overarching policy to oversee the direction of the fire service, to extinguish fires, to develop plans to manage equipment, to maintain facilities, to conduct fire investigations and generally oversee the service. That is part 2, division 1, section 8.

Importantly, in the current act, it is the commission that is legislated to advise the minister on any matters relating to the act or that they believe should be brought to the attention of the minister of the day. There is a delegated function from the commission to the chief officer of the commission by resolution agrees to this. That means that a group of 10 people including an independent chair, a civilian, needs to collectively decide whether they should give powers of the commission to the chief officer.

Dr Woodruff - This is a complete waste of time. Why not allow other people to talk about this because this is not the matter that is under disagreement?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff, enough. Settle.

Mr ELLIS - I have heard that we are moving from a model that is not bureaucratic to a model that is. This is clearly demonstrating that we currently have a model that is bureaucratic and we are moving, I assure you, and you will see imminently, to a model that is not. That is very important because, as Mr Tucker said, people's lives are at stake in this.

It means that key powers are not inherently the chief fire officer's. Allow me to say it clearly: it means that the chief fire officer is not in charge of their fire service. It means that the State Fire Commission is. It is not a clear chain of command for critical emergency services. That is what our experts have found. They outlined some of the failures of this governance. It is obvious that members in this place need to acknowledge the significance of these issues.

When I raised that the commission did not meet to oversee the 2016 fire response, which burned across the state for months, Ms O'Byrne asked, 'Why do you say this, why is this an issue, what do you mean?'

Ms O'Byrne - I did not say 'what do you mean'. I said in what way did that make it more dangerous. How was that a failing? How was not the effective operation of the commission?

Mr ELLIS - That is what you said, that is direct quote. Mr O'Byrne, hopeful future Labor leader and ex-minister in this space, 'why do you keep saying this, it is a rubbish thing to say'.

Mr O'Byrne - Thank you for quoting me and endorsing that stuff.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - They did not meet for three months. This is the body that is in charge of advising the minister.

I strongly believe that the commission brings incredible value in terms of a representative voice. I am bringing to the House the collective attention that this, as a governance model, does not work. As Mr Tucker and our volunteers and others have pointed out, we need an operational leader in charge.

I have spoken about the value of stronger together and being within the one department. That means that we need to be empowered to be equals within the department, but it does not mean that we should be separated. Our people are ultimately stronger together. When there is an emergency, a fire, our SES, our police and others are there to assist and they work closely together.

Another great example is the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management wellbeing response. We have a nation-leading model that provides the support for fire, SES, police and even ambulance, because some of these services can be provided best when we are providing them together and working closely together. I am confident that we will be able to build on these strengths, address concerns and progress together to continue to take our emergency services from strength to strength.

This is the opportunity that we have as a parliament. When the legislation is put out for consultation I encourage you all to read it. There are members who have not read the reports. There is an extraordinary opportunity in this place to act. Everyone is calling for change and have been for years. Their voices are well documented across a number of reviews that this House has access to and that this House commissioned, with an inquiry into the State Fire Commission after Dunalley and some other tragic events.

I have been visiting SES and TSF brigades for more than 12 months in every corner of the state, from King Island down to Queenstown, from George Town down to Huonville and Southport to hear their stories and concerns. We need to be meeting with these people and we need to understand what their concerns are on every level. The commentary that has been demonstrated by Mr Tucker supports these reforms.

Reform is hard. I understand people want to see the legislation. I can assure that will be happening imminently. I met with the former chief fire officers, who Mr Tucker mentioned. I heard their views. The chiefs have been briefed by Mr Mike Blake. I believe this was a highly worthwhile meeting. I meet with volunteer associations and the union on a very regular basis, monthly, and there is a multi-agency steering committee. The chief fire officer, executive director of SES has been undertaking working groups in forums for the last eight months. There is often more than 100 first responders in those meetings. I have been meeting with communities as well as part of the change management.

I joined volunteer and career members in Ulverstone on 22 July at an event. We heard from them about some of the key matters they want to see from this legislation for their service. I was pleased and proud to speak there, as I know my shadow spoke in Launceston. Mr O'Byrne

spoke in Hobart. We heard unequivocally that we need to merge Fire and SES. We need a strong clear chain of command so that we know who is in charge and that we need a fair, simple sustainable funding model.

These reforms will not be easy but if we are serious about hearing the concerns of these people then when these reforms are brought to this House, and when they are brought to the community, we support them if they live up to those key values, which they do.

The benefits of these reforms will be felt by our members, with \$10 million to inject in upgrades and improvements for our volunteers. There are some 30- and 40-year-old trucks that are getting around, that have not been funded by councils because they do not have the capability to do so. There are roller doors that do not work because our funding model for Fire does not work. We need more money for resourcing and we need a commissioner who is empowered to act, advised by representatives who also advise the minister, but a commissioner who is empowered to act, is empowered to prepare and who is empowered to report directly to the minister.

We will continue to listen. Soon we will release our bill for consultation. We are here to step in, step up and fix decades of inaction. The Fire Service Act is more than 40 years old. We are a Government of conviction and good governments do hard things. We are not going to shy away from these opportunities and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the emergency services, continuing to meet with them and I hope to work in partnership with this parliament, because we will have the opportunity to work together, even if reform has been hard. I look forward to bipartisan support for these reforms because that is what our emergency services and our communities deserve.

[12.45 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, after jumping second, I thank the minister for taking almost all of the time and making it very difficult for Dr Woodruff and Mr O'Byrne to make their contributions well. I will try to leave some time for Dr Woodruff.

It takes a special kind of arrogance and incompetence to take a long-awaited, much-desired, incredibly important reform process and turn it into a hotspot which has united fire and emergency services across the state as one in fierce and vehement opposition. Our career firefighters, our two independent volunteer fire brigades, the SES, former fire chiefs - anyone who knows anything about governance and operations in fire services thinks that this minister is making a serious mistake. It speaks of hubris and arrogance and shows that this minister is fundamentally out of his depth. We see it across all of his portfolios and we see it writ large today. He is incapable of leading a consensus-based reform.

It is a policy and political failure that we have rarely seen in this House. It has led to the constructive dismissal of one of the most respected fire chiefs in the country, a term that apparently the minister did not even understand whilst he was in the process of achieving Mr Barry's resignation. This minister speaks confidently, brazenly and talks about all of the language we want to hear, but he speaks with disinformation. He takes elements of the truth and distorts them to create his own language, his own version of events and his own narrative. It is thin and it misrepresents the outcome, because he does not listen to the experts in this sector.

He talks about who he visits but he does not listen to them. He talks about who he meets with but he does not listen to them. These are the people who have run fire and emergency services. These are the people who turn out every day in fire and emergency circumstances who are saying he has got it wrong.

No-one is arguing that reform is not necessary or that we do not need more funding. We all want a properly resourced and funded emergency service. We have all supported the many reviews that have been undertaken. When the Blake review came in with a raft of recommendations, I was in the Estimates process when former premier Gutwein categorically ruled out the abolition of an independent statutory authority for very good reasons: he knew it would undermine the independence and decision-making capacity and line of authority of the services. You tore that promise up, minister. You have got us where we are today.

I was there - we were all there - in Estimates when Mr Ellis tried to explain ring fencing. He clearly does not understand the term because his fence has more holes and more gaps than I have ever seen on any kind of property. It is appalling. He is going to spread that funding as far and wide as he chooses and plug gaps across the entire state budget. Years of fire and emergency services and skills on the ground up to the highest decision-making level are being ignored. If you want to listen to those experts and the people who are committed, they say we need to ensure that we have an independent statutory body, not what the minister is talking about but an actual independent statutory body.

We need direct reporting with a clear operational chain of command, not through the Commissioner of Police in their role as secretary. Let us remember that when the current Commissioner of Police took that job they were also taking the job of secretary; that is the job that was offered, accepted and contracted for that five-year term. They are very clear that the new commissioner of TFES must have powers and authority for day-to-day running of the service and incident management. We must have an adequate, sustainable and fair funding model. It has to reflect the needs of the SES and the future needs of a modern fire and state rescue service. It has to be genuinely ring fenced, not whatever cobbled-together bit of rubbish this minister was talking about in Estimates. They have to have employment powers that enable the service the ability to determine their structural needs to provide the adequate emergency service for the community in their time of need and a proper transition for the SES to the new model.

Minister, if your plan does not work, it has been made very clear by a number of members - and Mr O'Byrne raised it in Estimates - that it will not be you facing the coronial inquiry. It will not be you turning up to a commission of inquiry. It will be the very people whose voices you are ignoring.

You forced the former fire chief out the door because he did not agree with you. He raised genuine concerns. He said he would do his job and you did not care. The bloke was out the door. How contemptuous. What a disgusting way to treat anyone, let alone someone of his experience and integrity.

We have a significant and important piece of reform that should be coming to this House. It is due to be tabled soon. It must respond to the concerns raised by our emergency and fire service experts, those people who understand it far better than this minister does. His bizarre explanation of the governance model beggars belief.

If this opportunity falls over it will not be because of people on this side of the House. It will not be because of the former experts who have come out. It will not be because of those people who turn out day by day. It will be because you have stuffed up this process. You have been so arrogant, so self-centred, so committed to getting your own way that you are going to destroy an opportunity that this state needs because you are so far out of your depth.

[12.52 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, what a puerile, deliberately misleading and saccharine speech from the minister. He is clearly not reading the room. He is not listening. In fact, he is not even reading the motion we are debating today. He pretended to misunderstand what was being asked. It is clear that he does not understand that there is strong unity among the members who have spoken. If he does not listen he has a big problem coming his way.

Everyone agrees that the Fire Service Act needs to be updated. Everyone has been looking forward to the TFS and emergency services coming together. There are critical issues here about control of resourcing and the amount of resourcing available for that body.

The bottom line is how does the management of a huge volunteer fire fighting and emergency service organisation happen? This minister does not understand that a clear line of command already exists in relation to volunteer fire fighters. I spoke with John Gledhill and Mike Brown after the Budget Estimates debacle, where the minister debased himself, he demeaned the office of a minister of the Crown by publicly attacking and smearing the reputation of recent fire officer, Dermot Barry. Mr Barry is a man who gave a life of service to communities in emergency and fire fighting. The minister was so low as to attack him and smear his reputation.

I spoke to two long-standing past CFOs after that. Neither had been invited to give their views on what the minister is cooking up with his legislation. Between them they must have 70 years of responsibility for saving Tasmanian lives, yet he did not deign to have a conversation with them.

I believe after that Budget Estimates debacle he was forced to have a meeting. His response the whole way has been division and attack. He is not listening. I do not know where he thinks this is going to go, but it does not take a genius to read the crystal ball we are all looking into, and it is going to end in tears. Unless this minister changes what he is doing and listens to career and volunteer fire fighters, unless he listens to people in urban and rural areas, unless he listens to SES and TFS professionals and volunteers, he will not achieve the legislative outcome he wants. We have to have commitment to a sustainable funding model that is wholly within the control of a TFS that is an independent statutory authority.

It does not matter what the minister tries to pretend. Everyone else in this room understands that the model he is proposing would lead the new commission to go through the secretary of the department to get to the minister. There is absolutely no way that the fire and emergency services can support having the police commissioner, who under the State Service Act is the secretary of the department, in charge of their resourcing and their operational and volunteer management. The problem is that Tasmania Police is, necessarily, an autocratic hierarchical structure. There is a difference when you are managing volunteers between an acute emergency management and in between the operational management. Volunteers cannot be run with the same approach as people who are sworn members of the police force. It will

not work. It will put our state in more danger, it is disrespectful and a flawed idea for the minister to continue down this path.

What Ms O'Byrne and Mr Tucker have said is that we are all on the same page here, pleading with the minister to read the room and understand that he has to engage on these key issues. Stop pretending that we are talking about something else. We are all in agreement about wanting to have an updated service. We disagree with the characterisation he has made of the fire service as basically being a failed state as it is.

We support the motion.

[12.57 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I support the motion but I would say that Mr Tucker has every right to be a bit harder. You are very lucky that Mr Tucker has put this shot across your bow. This is your opportunity to reflect on what you have done and what you have not done, minister.

This is not just a shuffling the deckchairs kind of restructure. This is a matter of life and death. This is a matter of how you structure a service that responds to a significant threat that will face Tasmania. This is not about Tasmania Police. This is about fire and emergency services. The consequences of getting this wrong are significant. Royal commission after royal commission, commissions of inquiry, and reviews of events across the country over the last generation have raised issues around chain of command and clarity and decision-making on resources.

Minister, you get up here and say 'we are consulting'. By virtue of your answers to questions on this matter in question time, by your contribution today, it shows that you are not consulting and you are not listening. You are not a stupid man but some of the answers you gave in the Estimates were embarrassing. They were obtuse to the issues that we were raising and you either chose not to or completely missed the point that we were trying to make and that Mike Brown and Dermot Barry were trying to make. That point he was trying to make cost him his job. Gledhill; volunteers; career firefighters, current and former, are all saying the same thing. You say you are consulting. You are not. You are turning up and listening but you must have a tremendously thick hide.

If you bring the legislation in as you have proposed it, fumbled it and terribly explained it, this will not only cost you your job but the Government will fall. These are the consequences of this kind of reform. If you are trying to use this pretend 'oh, the reform is hard', bloody oath, it is hard but it is important you get it right and you do not put people at risk. There is a consequence of this reform. If you get it right, you support the front line, you support the emergency services workers, you save lives.

Motion agreed to.

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

MOTION

Select Committee on Ambulance Ramping

[2.31 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That -

- (1) A select committee be appointed with power to send for persons, papers and records to inquire into and report upon ambulance ramping in Tasmania, with the following terms of reference:
 - (a) the causes of the significant increase in ambulance ramping since 2015;
 - (b) the effect ambulance ramping has on:
 - (i) safety for ramped patients;
 - (ii) ambulance response times and availability, and any associated increased risks to the community;
 - (iii) wellbeing of healthcare staff;
 - (iv) emergency department and other hospital functions;
 - (c) the adequacy of the state Government's data collection and reporting for ambulance ramping;
 - (d) the state Government's response to ambulance ramping and its effects to date, and the efficacy of these measures;
 - (e) successful measures taken by other Australian and international jurisdictions to mitigate ambulance ramping and its effects;
 - (f) actions that can be taken by the state Government in the short, medium, and long term to address the causes and effects of ambulance ramping; and
 - (g) any other related matters incidental thereto.
- (2) The number of members appointed by the House to serve on the committee be six: two nominated by the Leader of Government Business; two nominated by the Leader of Opposition Business; one nominated by the Leader of Tasmanian Greens Business; and Lara Alexander MP.
- (3) The committee report by 28 March 2024.

Mr Speaker, ambulance ramping has spiralled out of control under nearly a decade of Liberal government. As ramping has rapidly increased, we have heard many desperate calls for action from healthcare staff and we have seen more examples of the tragic harm that ramping is causing to Tasmanians. There has been recent damning criticism from the Coroner and community outrage has grown but rather than seeing a real response to this critical issue, we have seen the Government repeatedly saying that they are doing enough. Every year they have trumpeted their health spend and every year ramping has become worse. By their refusal to accept the worsening situation and to act to reverse it, the Liberals are putting the Tasmanian community at greater risk and healthcare staff under greater strain. Enough is enough. The Greens cannot stand by as the Liberals continue to normalise their increasingly dangerous hospital mismanagement and we do not accept that nothing can be done to improve the situation. That is why today we are moving to establish an inquiry into ambulance ramping in Tasmania, to examine its causes and effects, and the changes that would make it better.

Before going further, I will provide a brief explanation of what we are talking about today for those who might be listening. Ambulance ramping, or 'ramping', is a term used for what happens when patients arrive at a hospital in an ambulance and remain in the care of paramedics for an extended period rather than being admitted to the hospital. The Government will often try to avoid the use of this term and instead talk about 'offload delay' or 'transfer-of-care delay'. These terms refer to the same situation and are their attempt to sanitise and euphemise what is happening.

A patient is recorded as being ramped when they remain in the care of paramedics at hospital for longer than 15 minutes. The term 'ramping' comes from ambulance vehicles being lined up on the ramp outside emergency departments because of a delay in transferring patients to hospital care.

Exactly where an ambulance patient is cared for while they wait to get admitted is different for each hospital. At the Royal Hobart Hospital, patients used to wait on stretchers in a corridor but, more recently, they are being taken to a room that was previously a dedicated emergency medical unit, the EMU. At the Launceston General Hospital, patients are stretchered in an entrance area between the ambulance bays and the emergency department.

Wherever patients are ramped, it is always the case that they remain in the care of paramedics. Despite their great skills, paramedics do not have the training or scope of practice to provide hospital care and they cannot provide testing or specialised medicines. It also means they are stuck, unable to respond to 000 calls.

Mr Speaker, the first part of the terms of reference for this inquiry relates to the causes of significant increase in ambulance ramping from 2015. And, wow, that increase has been significant. According to the Australian Medical Association collation of government data, in 2015-16 fewer than 8 per cent of patients arriving by ambulance to Tasmanian hospitals were ramped. The number now is close to 40 per cent. That means two in five patients who have to go to hospital in an ambulance are ramped.

From July to March in 2021-22, the total time patients were ramped at Tasmania's hospitals was just over 20 000 hours. Across the same period in the next year, that number had increased to over 31 000 hours. That is a 50 per cent uptick in one single year.

In 2020-21, one in five patients arriving at hospitals by ambulance across the state were ramped for longer than 30 minutes. Two years on, in 2022-23, this has grown to one in three of all ambulance patients. The Government's own stated target for this measure is that zero patients should be ramped for more than 30 minutes.

All up, nearly 16 000 patients were ramped in the first nine months of the 2022-23 year. That is over 1700 patients ramped every month.

In the Government's suggested amendments to this motion, they are seeking to remove the reference to 'significant increase in ambulance ramping since 2015'. We reject this entirely. The increase since 2015 is a fact. If the Government were serious about this issue, they would not try to deny it.

There has been significant community conversation on the causes of ramping. The lack of bed space in hospitals is obviously a massive issue. There is a range of underlying matters contributing to that, including the increase in demand, lack of allied care staff and the rate of readmissions due to a lack of community health services. It is important for an inquiry to look at these issues.

The second part of our terms of reference relates to the effect of ambulance ramping. A Victorian study released last year showed that once patients are ramped for longer than 17 minutes, they are at increased risk of harm or death. This is not an issue the Government has shown any interest in examining in Tasmania.

In considering the impact of ramping on patients, I want, at this point, to give a voice to some of the people who have very bravely spoken to the media about the real effects of ramping and their firsthand experience.

Last year at the Launceston General Hospital, there was a terrible situation where a woman called Anne Pedler died after being ramped for eight hours. The Coroner released a scathing report on the situation, saying that if Mrs Pedler had received treatment in a timely manner, 'her chances of survival would have been significantly increased'.

Speaking to media, her daughter, Stella Jennings, said:

People are dying because they don't have the staff, and because they don't have the staff their morale is so low that they make mistakes, they have more sick leave.

...

It all snowballs until you have one night like when my mother went to hospital and there was no-one there for her.

Ms Jennings also said:

I don't want to be doing this interview. I don't want my mum to be gone. I just don't want this to keep on happening.

Thank you so much for speaking up about your terrible circumstances, Stella.

In another tragic situation last year, a woman named Kathleen Schramm died in agony at the Royal Hobart Hospital after being ramped for two hours. I note that two hours is now the average time that patients are ramped at the Royal Hobart Hospital. The circumstances around Mrs Schramm's death are harrowing. Her daughter Rebecca courageously spoke about the pain she suffered and her shock at what happened just days after it occurred.

Nine months later, Rebecca spoke again on ABC radio last week, saying:

Nothing has changed in the nine months since my mother died in a lot of pain. There has only been talk and that is all. There is nothing. Nothing has happened except the public are putting faces to the numbers and saying, 'This has to stop', because it affects everyone. It could be anyone this happens to. It is very upsetting because it can affect any of us. It is not just because my mother was old. She may have been 80 but she lived a very happy and independent life, looking after other people as well.

Rebecca, we know it must be difficult for you to keep talking about this but we want you to know that we have been listening and that you are making a difference.

We have also heard in recent days from two paramedics, Sophie and Cam, who spoke to the ABC. Sophie said:

It's awful and my condolences go out to the families who have been affected by this. They are not alone in their experiences. There have been a lot of near-misses that just don't get reported and they get swept away. Even as a student being on the road there was very little ramping. Fast forward to now, it's not uncommon to be ramped for several hours with the one patient and take no other patient, so crew isn't clear and can't get back out on the road.

Cam said:

The equipment of the paramedics and the hospital doesn't match up. We've got ambulance equipment inside a hospital and then we have a significant patient adverse event and then the hospital bring their trolley. We don't know what we're doing. It's messy.

Asked about a Government comment on ramping being related to the availability of GP access and a high demand on services, Cam's response was:

I wrote down that quote of 'high demand on services'. I find that a little but offensive, to be honest. It's the state Government. The Government and the Department of Health could step in tomorrow and say enough is enough.

Mr Speaker, our motion also refers to the effect ramping has on ambulance response times and availability and any associated increased risks. This is a crucial part of the terms of reference as it relates to one of the most serious effects of ramping. As Robbie Moore, the industrial manager at the Health and Community Services Union said earlier this week:

This situation has gone on for far too long. We're seeing lives being put at risk because of ramping every single day. When ambulance and the

paramedics are with patients in hospital corridors, that means they're not responding to emergencies in the community. That's putting lives at risk. It's leading to increase response times and it's time the Government and all politicians took this seriously.

Tasmania has the slowest emergency response times for ambulances in the nation and this is being made worse by ramping. Just this morning a woman named Julie called in to ABC radio to talk about calling an ambulance and being told she needed to go to hospital but would have to take a taxi there because there were no crews available.

In July last year, a Hobart woman had to take her teenaged son to hospital because no ambulance was available and ended up performing CPR on the side of the road. Even though this 13-year-old boy was in such a dangerous situation it took a full 19 minutes for paramedics to get there - and I say again, this was in Hobart. That is what we are seeing more of now in Tasmania as more paramedics are stuck in hospitals.

I note the Government's amendment to our motion wants to move a reference to the increased risks posed to the community by ambulance response times, but with situations like this occurring that is why we feel it is so important to include that in the terms of reference.

The impact of ramping on healthcare staff is significant. In 2019 paramedics in the state's south wrote to Ambulance Tasmania's CEO to tell him ambulance ramping was causing 'widespread and undeniable psychological injury'. Since 2019-20 the percentage of patients ramped at the Royal Hobart Hospital has increased substantially. Rather than highlighting this issue in general terms, I want to read into the *Hansard* a submission made to us by an anonymous paramedic specifically supporting the inquiry and providing his experience. I will read a small part of it:

The practice of ramping has had a profound effect on myself to the point I have considered resigning from the organisation and even sought employment in areas not related to health or emergency services.

I am a paramedic of 22 years' experience, having worked for three different ambulance services, and whilst ramping did occur at one other service and not at all at the other, this practice in Tasmania is by far the worst I have experienced and is getting worse over time.

It has resulted in me seeking out help and attending regular psychologist sessions to manage the effects it has on my mental health, other physical symptoms and impact on family relationships.

He goes on to say:

As demand has increased on ambulance services from the community, now the ramped paramedic is required to look after two or three or more patients at once, so a complete ambulance crew can be released from the corridor or ramp ward to respond to the caller in the community.

Not only are we nursing but we are also acting as nurses' aides and medical orderlies, pushing patients around the emergency department to X-ray or CT

or other hospital areas for diagnostics and interventions. That adds the extra pressure on leaving ramped patients unattended while we're away from them.

Despite requesting the storage of our own scheduled medication in these ramped wards, nothing has been actioned, so we are reliant on hospital staff to attend the patient and administer their supply. This often comes with considerable delay once you make the phone call to the ED nurse in charge, wait for the doctor to come and review the patient and then wait further for another nurse to attend and administer the medication and chart it.

This is stressful and can result in patients being in pain for longer and time is of the essence with conditions such as seizures, which happened, and result in a prolonged period of no treatment that would normally be rectified immediately by a paramedic inside their home or the ambulance from our supply.

You can see from that testimony that ambulance paramedics are in a nowhere zone when they are in a ramped situation. They do not have access to the normal recourse for treatment that they would have when they are in a person's home and neither do they properly have access to the emergency department supplies. That was exactly the situation for Rebecca Schramm's mother when she died in pain without proper palliative care while she was on the ramp.

We have included a clause in the terms of reference on data collection and reporting because this is a really important issue. The Government collects ramping data on a monthly basis for internal use and does not release this information on their health stats dashboard. The only published location for ramping-related information is in the Department of Health's annual report, which only has basic information about the rate of ramping at each hospital.

The Greens have sought to understand the true extent of ramping through questions at annual Budget Estimates, and I will note here that I had to ask nine or 10 times for some basic information in this process this year and was told by a senior bureaucrat that the information I sought was publicly available when it was not. It is a real concern to see senior management of the Tasmanian Health Service not understanding such basic details.

While we did get some basic information in Estimates, we have also been left to piece bits and pieces of it together ourselves in order to get a true picture of what is happening. I pay tribute to my staff and one in particular, who has done this incredible body of work that should have been available to us as members of parliament and to all Tasmanians. Meanwhile, we have seen the Government try to mislead the public by using information that is two years out of date to defend the state of ramping in Tasmania's hospitals in the present day.

Despite years of questioning by the Greens, the Government still will not collect or report information about the number of medical emergencies that occur among ramped patients or the number of deaths that occur on the ramp. Some of these cases make it into the media but so many others would occur without public awareness whatsoever. We understand other jurisdictions collect this information and make it publicly available. Tasmania does not, under the Liberals. This is not good enough and we hope this inquiry will make some real changes around that specific issue as well.

I do not feel the need to go into further detail on the remaining clauses as they speak for themselves. However, before I finish I refer again to the minister's intended amendments. What the Government is putting forward in the amendments I have seen would erase any mention of the term 'ambulance ramping' from this motion and from the name of the inquiry. In our view, that is ludicrous and is a desperate attempt to try to fix a political problem that the Government believes they now have. The fact is, ambulance ramping is the commonly used term in the community and in the media and it is also the language that is used by health staff. Although it might not be the preferred language of the minister and senior bureaucracy, we believe that trying to change it from what everyone understands is simply trying to muddy the waters and we do not accept it and cannot support it.

I will finish today by reading the words of a paramedic called Jan who spoke to the media on Monday. Jan told the media:

Ramping is an insidious problem that affects everyone. No-one is immune to it but it's the weakest members of our community that are really affected by it. This kind of inquiry is going to give them a voice, it's going to give a voice to paramedics, to ambulance staff, to all the staff affected by this, and hopefully provide us with a positive outcome and an excellent direction for a health service that is struggling. I sincerely hope all members of this place can agree on that and will vote in support of this motion.

[2.50 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on this notice of motion and indicate that we will be supporting it. Labor has been working for many years very closely with the Health and Community Services Union and others to highlight the issues across our ambulance service.

Ramping is a symptom of a health system that is in crisis. It is a symptom of a health system that is not supporting and looking after our healthcare professionals in the way that it should. There is no doubt that ambulance ramping has devastating consequences for the individuals and families who are impacted by it.

I put on the record my condolences to those families, particularly to the family members of Mrs Anne Pedler, whom we spoke about in question time earlier this week, and the disgraceful series of events that led to her death.

It also affects our healthcare workers. Our paramedics enter their profession to provide care for people every day. They just want to do their job, get people to where they need to be, get them to the care that they need in emergency situations. They are hamstrung by a system that does not support them to do that.

Nurses and doctors working in the emergency department do not have the resources to provide care to Tasmanians when and where they need it. You only have to look at all those coronial reports, in particular those about the Launceston General Hospital, to see what a dire situation this is and the devastating impact it is having on Tasmanians.

You need beds and staff for a well-functioning healthcare system. Despite this Government saying it spends record amounts on health, it is not delivering for Tasmanians. It

is not making any difference to the services Tasmanians are receiving, or to the care outcomes that they are receiving. The Government needs to think differently. It has had 10 years. It is not good enough just to take the word 'ramping' out of a motion because that is exactly what it is. That is how the community identifies the issue. It does not take the issue away by trying to sanitise it, by trying to spin the words about the severity of this situation.

We are very focused on solutions. You would have heard us speaking about our Right Priorities plan, which focuses on investing in our district hospitals. This means there would be more subacute beds available, teams of multidisciplinary health professionals providing care to people closer to where they live. To say in your amendment, Minister, that you want to remove the part of this motion that refers to any associated risk to the community is terrible.

There are so many risks to the community associated with ramping. That might be the Tasmanian who is on the ramp, the health professional who has terrible mental health and wellbeing after the duress they go through, the patients' family, the elderly person in a rural and remote community who waits five hours with a fractured pelvis because there is not a paramedic and an ambulance to provide emergency care to them in their time of need. The consequences of this go on and on.

During your most recent interviews, you have demonstrated that while we might have a new Health minister because the Premier has decided he did not have the time and resources as the Premier to do what is required across the health system, we still have the same old issues.

Ramping, as Dr Woodruff said, is the worst it has ever been across the state. No matter where you look across those key indicators across our health system, you will see the same. You will also see the same when you look at health outcomes for Tasmanians. We have to start looking differently at the way we do things. You cannot hope the federal government will solve your problems. These are your problems, they are your issues, it is our community. You are our state Government and you are responsible for adopting and providing solutions to these issues that Tasmanians are living with every day. It feels as though you are starting to absolve your responsibility to do that. You have a duty of care to Tasmanians. It is your problem and you need to start looking at ideas to fix it.

We are committed to doing that. We are supporting this motion. We will look at all aspects of this motion and be involved in this inquiry. The most important thing about inquiries is the input from a cross section of the community, whether that be health professionals who are working in clinical settings, the communities that are impacted by ambulance ramping, other community service providers involved in patient care who see the adverse impacts of ramping, or Tasmanians who have experienced or know someone who has experienced being ramped.

Many of us would have received an email from Bruce Levett from Health Consumers Tasmania who made some important points, particularly about regional and remote communities. Where I come from on the north-west coast there are significant shortages of paramedics and numbers of unfilled shifts day and night. The unions raised that with us. The Government does not appear to have a plan for recruitment.

The recent report commissioned by the Government showed we were 126 paramedics short across the state. It took a long time to convince you to employ the 97 paramedics who had an uncertain tenure and non-permanency in their roles post-COVID-19. You finally did

that. You took the credit for it, but it is was the health unions' advocacy, the community advocacy and our advocacy about making those jobs permanent.

The other day someone spoke to me at the supermarket about the fact that their granddaughter could not get a job as a paramedic in Tasmania. When we are crying out for more paramedics across our service, we should be giving locals the opportunity to fill those intern paramedic positions and to stay here and work in our ambulance service.

In his email, Bruce raised the importance of regional and remote areas. That can be picked up when we look at the last point of Dr Woodruff's motion.

In Estimates, the former minister committed to providing more detailed data around ramping. We are yet to see this. The current data does not provide regional ambulance response times. Tasmanians are waiting far too long for ambulances in regional areas.

He also puts in his email that he believes we should have consumer or Tasmanian resident input into the committee. I explained to him that I did not think that was possible through a parliamentary committee but suggested they make a submission and present it to the committee. It is important that Tasmanians feel they have the opportunity to participate in this inquiry.

We will not be supporting these rubbery amendments by the Government, which are just there to hose down the severity of this issue. We will not be accepting that this is a federal government issue. This is a state Government issue.

We support the motion. We have ideas on how you can reduce the pressure on our major hospitals across the state through investment in our district hospitals, through investments in regional ambulance stations and the paramedics who are available to serve their community. We have put forward those ideas and we will continue to do so.

The Government has talked about trying to address bed block. You have talked about meetings. You have had meetings with aged providers. Very little has come out of that. We have not heard much about that since. There must be ways to free up sub-acute beds, working better and closer with aged care providers to look at how you can alleviate pressure on bed capacity across the state.

You have all of these master plans to increase bed capacity across the state, but there is very little funding allocated to any of those master plans to increase capacity. We need more beds, we need more subacute beds. The Government has been in power now for nearly 10 years and it is pretty clear that if you have not fixed it in 10 years, you never will.

[3.00 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Health) - Mr Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion and outline the Government's response. As the Premier shared yesterday, as a government we are absolutely open to debating and discussing these very important matters. That is why there is a real opportunity to work with our healthcare sector and the community to ensure that we get the best possible care that Tasmanians deserve when it comes to our emergency departments and when it comes to Tasmanians wherever they live, so that we provide the right care in the right place at the right time.

Health is a top priority for our Government. That is why, thanks to the former minister and Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, we have record funding to support the community, more than \$8 million a day, \$12 billion over the forward Estimates. It is a great honour for me to stand here as Health minister and speak to this space and indicate very strong support for our healthcare workers. In fact, we have increased the healthcare workforce by some 2300 since we have been in government. We acknowledge that there are plenty of challenges still out there but we have increased the workforce by 2300. I will have more to say about the ambulance workforce more specifically but they have had an increase of more than 200 as well.

I want to indicate upfront with respect to the tragic loss of Ms Pedler that I have reached out to her daughter, Stella Jennings; I spoke with her just a few days ago and passed on my sincere condolences and sympathies. We had a good discussion and I offered the opportunity to have a further meeting. That was agreed to so we will be meeting in the next couple of weeks at a convenient time to Ms Jennings where I will respond in further detail to that matter that is so important to her and her family. Be assured that is something that is concerning to me as Health minister.

As I said, the Premier has indicated a willingness, as have I, to step forward to ensure there is debate and discussion and a forum in and around the importance of the transfer-of-care delays that occur, the bottleneck or the pinch points, whichever you like to call it. There is a whole range of reasons for that and having a spotlight on that to look at that very carefully is very important. We know that four out of 10 people presenting to our emergency department are non-urgent. That is not lost on me or others in the healthcare workforce or the community.

It is important to acknowledge that there are responsibilities of the state and the federal government. Primary health care is a responsibility of the federal government. I am very pleased to be working with the federal government as the former minister has been, successfully and collaboratively and positively, to progress attention and focus on the importance of primary health care and likewise with respect to the pinch points and the bottlenecks you have got the front end and of course the back end. The Premier spoke to that matter yesterday in terms of bed block and the aged care challenges we have in Tasmania to move them through in terms of patient flow to the aged care services that they dearly and importantly deserve, as well as those with disability in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

I will address more specifically some of the matters that have been referred to in the discussion and then I will come to those amendments that have been raised. First of all, we need the access to primary health care to deal with the health of all Tasmanians; nothing could be more important for Tasmanians themselves individually, their families and their community. Health is a top priority and that is why I am so honoured to be in this role. I have a passion for helping; people know that. With my diabetes I am an ambassador for Diabetes Australia and have been a former president for Motor Neurone Disease Australia in Tasmania and former ambassador as well.

I was on the board of an aged care facility for 10 years in Tasmania prior to my role in the Senate, so it is not new to me and I know there is a lot more to learn. That is why in my first 15 days in the job I have been out meeting with frontline workers and patients. I am so admiring of the doctors, the nurses, the allied healthcare workers, the cleaners, the orderlies, the builders, and those in the construction sector who are building new or upgraded

infrastructure, whether it be on the north-west coast, at the LGH or in Hobart. We want to make a difference. My modus operandi is to make a positive difference.

We have committed, with the federal government, some \$13 million for an innovative new employment model for general practice and training. That is with a single employer model for GP registrars. I was at the Campbell Town Community Healthcare Centre last week and could see the benefits of the new arrangements there, which will be of terrific support to the local community in the Northern Midlands.

Shortly after the fifth hour of my being sworn in, I went to the emergency department at the Royal Hobart Hospital with the consent and agreement of the general manager, CEO and the team there. I really appreciated the tour. That was my priority, the first thing I did. I take this really seriously and I do not want anybody to suggest otherwise. The second day I was at the Royal Hobart Hospital again and had the tour which was greatly appreciated and I thank Mr Ayre and the team. Yesterday I was at the endoscopy unit which has had \$13.8 million investment there to support Tasmanians and a \$38 million commitment over the forward Estimates to roll out more endoscopies, colonoscopies and the like, to deal with issues like bowel cancer, which is the second most impactful devastating cancer in Tasmania.

I look forward to further and future visits to the Royal Hobart Hospital, as I do all of the other major hospitals and I have visited all those major city hospitals and many rural and regional hospitals in the last 15 days, including on King Island with the Premier and others just last week.

There is a whole range of initiatives that I want to note, including the GP after-hours initiative which is an \$8 million investment, the innovative new hospital avoidance service, the community rapid response service and the rural medical workforce centre at the Mersey Community Hospital, with a commitment to getting that established.

With regard to total workforce since we have been in government, there are some 2300 but in terms of paramedics across the state, there is an additional 220 including our policy to employ 42 paramedics specifically in rural and remote communities. During COVID-19, 97 were employed to deal with the pandemic and thank you to the Premier, to the former premier and to our health workforce big time. Thank you for supporting Tasmanians during that very challenging time, in particular. A huge effort, a monstrous effort, in fact. As the new minister, I want to thank the workforce for stepping up to ensure our two top priorities as a government - first, to save lives and, second, to save lifestyles in terms of livelihoods, in terms of protecting and supporting the economy. Tasmania stood out in a magnificent way. It was very challenging and we had to step up and the health workforce stepped up big time.

I will address a range of other matters before I address the amendments. That relates to the patient flow and the integrated operation centre I visited last week at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I saw that in action and saw the level of professionalism, capability and technology at work, and the care that came through, as in the big hearts of those I met. I met the senior management team. Thanks to Stephen Ayre and the CEO for setting that up. Going to that operation centre, you could see the brilliant array of technology with the human acumen and professionalism in terms of managing patient flow. That is the objective of those at the hospital: to provide the best care possible and the care that all Tasmanians deserve. It is a complex, multifaceted challenge for all of us, particularly our healthcare workers, including our paramedics.

I toured the Ambulance Tasmania headquarters last week, thanks to Jordan and the team there. It was excellent. I have met with and toured many Ambulance Tasmania offices, on King Island and in rural and regional areas, at St Helens, St Marys and right around the state, including at Latrobe last week. I am so admiring and grateful for their commitment and care for their fellow Tasmanians. It is brilliant.

In terms of that 220 extra paramedics, it is there. You have innovative ways of dealing with these matters. Sure, we need to find more innovative ways but it is happening with this secondary triage commitment that is rolling out. That is along with our community paramedic program and our innovative mental health emergency response. I know the Premier is particularly keen to note that and acknowledge the important role of that mental health emergency response model. It means that more Tasmanians are receiving the care they need without the need to be taken by an ambulance to an emergency ward. This PACER model is certainly at work.

You have the community paramedics. I met them last week thanks to the visit to the Ambulance Tasmania headquarters. I saw the vehicle and met with a community paramedic. I have heard more about their great work where you do not always have to get to the emergency department. Tasmanians can receive the care they need in the right place, at the right time and the right care. That has to be a priority and that initiative is rolling out. If they are transporting a patient who is critically ill or injured, they will ordinarily pre-notify the hospital that they are coming in so that urgent offloading and treatment of the patient can take place. That is another way of ensuring that best care is rolled out. That is through the triage system.

I know there can be delays in admitting patients who arrive by ambulance but significant progress is being made to minimise those delays. There is no denying the facts and, of course, more work is being done and needs to continue to be done. We need to look at this acutely and that is why I welcome a debate and a forum around these important matters.

There are big challenges with the bed block and there is no denying that. That was clear at the operation centre when I was there and the discussions around the lengthy time of Tasmanians with disability who could be elsewhere but there was no room for them. That was made very clear to me last week at the operation centre: a very lengthy time at the hospital because there was no room outside the hospital in an appropriate place.

Likewise, with aged care. That was made clear to me at the Royal Hobart Hospital about the many dozens of Tasmanians in that hospital because they cannot get adequate residential aged care support.

We cannot be blind to this fact and there needs to be a good focus on that as we go through this inquiry so that it will deliver the healthcare outcomes for Tasmanians that they deserve.

The federal government does need to step up and do more to sort this out. I would suggest that those opposite could be a little more energetic in encouraging your federal colleagues to do that. We are doing our bit but we have to do more. We are delivering on our commitment to the 298 new beds, with the remaining 35 beds to be available this year.

In summary, it is in the face of a multifaceted challenge that we are making significant progress and ensuring timely transfer of care for ambulance patients. It is an area of particular

focus for me and I can assure all Tasmanians I have asked and tasked my department, and raised these matters specifically with my secretary and my department. We have had a number of discussions about it already and I have asked and tasked my department to continue to make this a priority for ongoing improvement. That has been very clear. Getting the right care in the right place at the right time is a priority for me and my Government.

I want to thank Ambulance Tasmania again for the tour of the headquarters. In terms of those triple-0 calls being successfully answered and responded to, the level of professionalism, the level of care for their fellow Tasmanians, it was so obvious and I am so admiring of the team at the Ambulance Tasmania headquarters, as I likewise visited in Launceston and Latrobe last week. In 2022-23 there were 4263 triple-0 calls successfully diverted from emergency ambulance response. These sorts of things are important.

I do not want to forget that with those opposite, there were cuts to health when you were in government. There was a nurse a day sacked for nine months, there were wards closed, beds put in storage and elective surgeries cut and downgraded in rural and regional areas. That is another area I will be focusing on with special interest.

There has been reference to the ambulance service demand review. I mentioned that since we have been in government there have been 220 extra ambulance team members, including 97 made permanent following the COVID-19 pandemic. I mentioned the record funding and that should be acknowledged. We want to build better healthcare services so that more Tasmanians can be helped. We need more people in our health workforce to care for more Tasmanians in a timelier way. That is the objective.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move the following amendments:

Remove all occurring references to 'ambulance ramping', and insert instead, 'transfer of care delays'

In paragraph (1)(a) remove the words 'the significant increase in ambulance ramping since 2015;', and insert instead 'transfer of care delays, acknowledging Federal and State responsibilities;'

In paragraph (1)(b)(i) remove the words 'safety for ramped patient', and insert instead 'patient care and outcomes'

In paragraph (1)(b)(ii) remove the words 'and any associated risks to the community'.

Paragraph (1)(e) remove the word 'successful'

Paragraph (1)(f) before 'actions' insert 'further'

I will speak to what I think are quite reasonable amendments. We welcome the spotlight and we welcome the debate, as the Premier said yesterday. In terms of replacing 'ambulance ramping' with 'transfer-of-care delays', this is based on clinical advice, professional advice based on the experts. This is the language that is used by Ambulance Tasmania. It is evidence-based, it is clinically based and that is the way I think we should progress this particular matter. There is a reference to all of this evidence and the increase since 2015. We have just deleted

the word '2015' so that we can look at all the evidence, wherever it comes from. There is no particular date so that is why that has been removed.

We want to include the words 'acknowledging federal and state responsibilities' so the motion reads 'transfer-of-care delays acknowledging federal and state responsibilities'. This is not rocket science. It makes it very clear it is a state responsibility and a federal responsibility, and that should at least be acknowledged in the motion. We are not running away from anything, we are actually welcoming it, so that is why it should be supported.

There was a reference to 'any associated risk'. That is because it is ambulance response times and availability. It is going to look at all those issues as well as any other related or incidental matters.

There is a reference to safety for ramped patients. We have just made that 'patient care and outcomes'; surely that is what we should be talking about, patient care and patient outcomes. Again, it is not rocket science. This is just trying to be open and transparent.

Ms White - Why eliminate 'ramping' by censoring words?

Mr BARNETT - It is not censoring words. We are using words that are clinically based and used by Ambulance Tasmania based on evidence and clinical advice. It is very simple; it is not a trick.

I acknowledge the Bruce Levett email. I have communicated with Bruce and we had a good discussion, particularly about the importance of rural and regional Tasmania, so there are no issues there. I come from Hagley, the rural and regional electorate of Lyons, one which I love and want to support, so I certainly take into account those important matters and I am sure that will flow through the inquiry as we progress. They are very minor so do not blow these up as if they are some major amendment. This is a very minor amendment and it is based on clinical evidence and professional advice used by Ambulance Tasmania, so that is the reason for those amendments which we hope the parliament will support.

I think that pretty much wraps it up for me. I am happy to have more discussions either here in the Chamber or offline. My commitment is for a better health outcome for Tasmanians, and to ensure that we get better and build better healthcare services for all Tasmanians and they get the right care in the right place, at the right time.

I have a passion for health. We have not talked much about preventative health measures, but I am more than happy to discuss that in due course because I am totally committed to ensuring we provide and help build healthy, active lifestyles. Active lifestyles and healthy diets go together and we need to build for the next generation, for the kids, our future generation; we need to take them on board.

I am really keen to get involved, I have a passion for health and there are so many opportunities ahead and lots of challenges. I am ready to grasp the nettle 15 days into the job; I am looking forward to this. I hope these amendments can be supported, I hope we can get on with the job and I am looking forward to hearing from the public and the stakeholders to ensure we can get the best possible outcomes for all Tasmanians.

[3.24 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I am very glad that the Government has realised it is politically untenable not to support this inquiry into ramping. I have listened very closely to the minister's comments about the amendments he is proposing and the Greens will not be supporting them. He has made his own argument in relation to (1)(b)(ii) where he is trying to strike out the words 'any associated increased risks to the community'. He said in relation to another matter he was trying to change that 'any other matters related incidental thereto' will cover all the things he is concerned are not covered properly, like federal responsibilities which he is concerned to raise. The Government, I expect, would make a submission in that regard but as Health Consumers Tasmania's Mr Bruce Levett has indicated very strong support for the inquiry, he is very keen to have rural and regional issues focused on and obviously there are increased risks to the community. The point that Ms Dow made before is really important as well.

The issues outside the narrow frame of the hospital response time and availability, the burden, the stress, the burnout of paramedics as well as the difference across Tasmania is a very strong motivation for why we put that into the inquiry focus in the first place.

We disagree with your interpretation about changing the words in paragraph (1)(b)(i) to 'patient care and outcomes'. We believe safety for ramped patients is important. We do not believe removing the word 'ramped' is appropriate. You can say whatever you like about it being the formal language of Ambulance Tasmania. That is okay but we do not have to speak in bureaucratic jargon. It is there as a term at the top of a spreadsheet for recording data. That is not the way Tasmanians understand what is really going on. They know it is ambulance ramping. On a small fact, Tasmania is committed to trying to use 26Ten simple plain language. Let us do simple plain speaking to Tasmanians. It is a 'ramping' inquiry because that is what people understand.

Minister, on the matter of the role of the federal government, of course, we accept, as you said, that it is a multifaceted issue. We know it is complex and we know that for the whole health system and funding in the health system federal and state governments have a role to play in what happens in any individual hospital. However, it is a bit rich to lecture the Labor Party that they should be energetically encouraging their federal colleagues to take a more active part in this space when you have been in government for eight of nine-and-a-half years and over that time it was a Liberal federal government under Scott Morrison, who did absolutely nothing in this space, and I never once in eight years heard any Health minister - Michael Ferguson, Sarah Courtney, Jeremy Rockliff - talk about pointing the finger at the federal government. Now, all of a sudden, with a change of federal government, all of the finger-pointing is happening up north instead of at yourself.

This is a ramping inquiry on a very critical state health issue. We would expect that some of the recommendations might include that the state Government should advocate with the federal government to make changes to federal funding for hospitals and changes to federal funding for Medicare support rebates to GPs. That is the appropriate role for you as the Health minister to be advocating on these issues. We do not support the amendments and we hope that the rest of the House goes with the simple terms of reference as have been tabled.

Time expired.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The question is that the amendments be agreed to. Those of that opinion say Aye, to the contrary No. I think the Noes have it.

Division required; ring the bells.

The bells having been rung -

Mr Ferguson - Do we all know what the question is before the Chair?

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

Mr Ferguson - The amendments. Did you make that clear?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - We will have to do that paper again. Members cannot move during the vote. I am sorry. Mrs Alexander was sitting here when we commenced the vote, when you handed out the papers. She has to remain on this side of the House. I am sorry. You can recommit the vote if you wish but she actually cannot wander to the other side of the parliament during the middle of a division. If you wish to finish this vote and then the Government can recommit it, that is up to them.

Mr FERGUSON - In responding to that, Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that there has been some misunderstanding in the House about what the question is before the Chair. I noticed Dr Woodruff busily speaking with Mrs Alexander when you were putting the question. I sense that there was not that awareness in the House.

Dr Woodruff - Excuse me, that was after Mr Barnett was busily speaking to Mrs Alexander.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'BYRNE - On the point that I have raised, that may very well be the case about a point of confusion, Mr Deputy Speaker. The reality is that you have put the vote, the tellers were counting the vote, and members cannot move to other sides of the Chamber during -

Mr Ferguson - Mrs Alexander was over here.

Ms O'BYRNE - No, she was not. If you wish to pause the House and go to the tape it will show that. If you wish to have this vote and then attempt to re-commit it, that is entirely up to you. The reality is, whether by intention or accident, Mrs Alexander was on this side of the House. She cannot move during the vote.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - I would like to ask Mrs Alexander if she understood the question when I put the question to her?

Ms O'Byrne - That is not the point.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - No, Ms O'Byrne.

Mrs ALEXANDER - Just for clarification we are voting on the amendments not on the motion because I will vote on the amendment. I support the motion but with the amendments. My support is with the motion but with the amendments.

Ms O'BYRNE - My apologies, Mr Deputy Speaker. You cannot do that in the middle of a count. You can recommit the vote at the end. It does not matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, you do not have the Floor at the moment. Now, because of the confusion, I will put the question again to the House. I ask everyone to sit down and I will put the question to the House again.

Ms O'Byrne - In the middle of the vote?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Yes. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 10

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

NOES 10

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

PAIRS

Ms Archer
Mr Street

Ms Butler
Ms Haddad

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - The division is 10 Ayes and 10 Noes. In accordance with Standing Order 167, I cast my vote with the Ayes.

Amendments agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

**AFL Deal and Proposed Stadium -
Advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance - Motion Negatived**

[3.39 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Calls on the Treasurer, the Hon. Michael Ferguson MP, to seek formal, written advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance about the Australian Football League (AFL) deal and the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point.
- (2) Orders the Treasurer to table any such advice by Tuesday, 5 September 2023.

We are doing this because from the moment the Liberal Government announced the push for the new stadium in Hobart, there have been more questions than answers about the cost to Tasmanians and the effect on the economy.

The stadium business case was dropped by Jeremy Rockliff just two days before Christmas, which is good evidence that the proposal is a complete dud.

In our last sitting, the Premier said in a ministerial statement:

As I have always stressed, my Government is absolutely committed to the highest standards of transparency and integrity. I am more than happy to work cooperatively with the entire Chamber to improve and enhance processes that achieve just that.

That is why we think that the best thing the Government can do to provide transparency is to get an independent analysis of the stadium and the AFL deals by the Treasury. That is what the Treasury is good at. It is independent of government and therefore will be able to provide a sober analysis of the Macquarie Point stadium project and the AFL deal.

We know that Treasury was not asked to assess the project or the deal. It should be. That is why we have brought this motion before the House today. If the Government votes against this motion, the question should continue to be asked, what does it have to hide? We know the lengths the Government has gone to already to hide the details of the stadium deal. Time and time again, we have had to drag information out of this Government through every possible avenue available to us: through RTIs; through trying to get the Government to honestly and transparently provide documents; we have even had an order of the House for the Premier to produce documents.

What we see is the Government not being transparent, not being honest about the details of the deal and relying on what I will demonstrate are rubbery figures. That is why we need to vote yes to this motion today, so that we get an honest assessment of the deal and of the stadium.

We have had so much continuing dishonesty, starting with the fact that the Premier, for a long time, said that the stadium was not part of the AFL bid when clearly it was. We have heard evidence that the AFL insisted on the stadium being part of the deal in an early part. We have heard just recently that the state cannot afford big projects like Marinus because it is not able to be effectively managed within the fiscal capacity of the Tasmanian Budget.

The Government is heading towards at least \$5.6 billion of debt. This is a serious problem, yet the Government, and especially the Premier, are happy to commit to an uncapped project and a contract heavily weighted in favour of the AFL.

We know the business case does not stack up, yet the Premier continues to mislead with ridiculous statements about the economic impact of the stadium. We need to get independent analysis of this and we think that Treasury should provide that information.

In his 'State of the State' address, I think, the Premier said the stadium on Macquarie Point 'will propel Tasmania into the national and international conference and convention stage'. We are told there will be 44 events a year at this proposed stadium. We are told international cricket, rugby union, rugby league, gridiron and A League games will be played there.

This is simply not true. We heard evidence in that Public Accounts Committee that international cricket cannot be played under a roof, yet the business case relies on international cricket being played regularly at this proposed stadium to help justify the funding.

We have seen these magic pudding assessments that people in Tasmania will have money to attend all these 44 additional events, and there will not be a decline in current spending on currently available activities. The Premier says it will give us the ability to attract events on a scale never before possible. He mentions Harry Styles, Ed Sheeran, Robbie Williams. The problem with that is that it is really hard to attract big bands and big artists like this because the logistics are very difficult. The artists lose at least a day each way because they have to travel across Bass Strait, obviously, but it is much easier to put on another concert in Melbourne and Sydney.

Then we hear the ridiculous statement from the Premier, which was widely panned, about Taylor Swift. We know that Taylor Swift tickets were the hottest item that have been put up for people to buy in a long time. The demand was immense. There are people like my daughter, for example, who did not get tickets who are absolutely devastated. There were only shows in Melbourne and Sydney and they were sold out within minutes. It was basically a lottery as to whether you got tickets or not, yet the Premier claimed that if the stadium was built we could attract an artist like Taylor Swift. What an absolute joke. Taylor Swift is not even going to Canada or New Zealand but would, apparently, come to Tasmania if a new stadium was built. It is not just me who thinks this is a completely ridiculous statement. You only have to look at the editorial from *The Advocate* on 6 July, which said:

It's not okay to take us for fools over the stadium.

The editorial goes on to say:

Taylor Swift's Eras tour will no doubt be a boost for the New South Wales and Victorian economies when she comes in February. Many hotels in Melbourne, especially those that you can take easily by a tram ride to the MCG, swiftly upped their rates for the weekend by 400 per cent. Then there is the food, transport and airfares.

I doubt any fan would disagree that it would be nice to save money on the whole experience, but would you really save if, as Premier Jeremy Rockliff told the national broadcaster on the weekend, Taylor Swift could perform in Hobart.

The whole notion is separated from reality but the idea that staying in Hobart is more convenient or cheaper is also laughable. More than 50 per cent of

Tasmanians live outside Hobart and for some it is cheaper to fly to Melbourne than make the drive.

It is not that Taylor Swift would struggle to sell out. She is possibly one of the few broadly popular artists who could sell 30 000 tickets in our small state, but to suggest that Taylor Swift would play to 30 000 people when her average nightly crowd is 70 000 is not ... smart. The idea was rightly ratioed on social media for being nothing more than a pipe dream.

Mr Rockliff's comments did not come from a place of malice. It is clear he wants a future for Tasmania where we are on a more equal footing with the mainland, but Hobart's demographics are very different from Melbourne and Sydney. We do not need a stadium on the scale of the MCG here. It is not okay to take Tasmanians as fools.

I would like to point out that Taylor Swift was also not visiting the new stadium at Perth. They had to come to Melbourne and Sydney. Taylor Swift was also not going to the much talked-about stadium in Adelaide and yet we hear that if this stadium is built, Taylor Swift would come here. This is a bit of snapshot of the economic argument that the Premier has been putting forward about the stadium. It is not based in reality and that editorial in *The Advocate* calls it out.

What is happening in Townsville? We hear that Townsville has a new stadium and what that has done for the region, but I would like to point out an article on ABC News on Friday, 2 June 2023 which said:

Regional Queensland misses out on big-name live music acts amid rising costs, logistical risks.

It goes on to say:

It has a \$300 million stadium and legions of music fans - but the unofficial capital of northern Australia is struggling to attract major music events. Townsville's 25 000-seat stadium opened in early 2020 and was christened by music royalty Elton John as part of his Farewell Yellow Brick Road tour.

I point out that Elton John has also played in Tasmania, well and truly before there has been a massive stadium at Macquarie Point, but I will go on:

Since then, the venue has hosted plenty of NRL games but no live music. It is a source of "bitter disappointment" for Townsville mayor Jenny Hill. 'You can't build a stadium worth well over \$300 million and just have it for sporting events', she said. 'The community is crying out for that ability to see the odd stadium show, even if it's only once or twice a year'. She says it has forced thousands of fans "genuinely starved" of live music to travel south to attend concerts in capital cities.

This is the situation in Townsville with their new stadium, yet we hear the Premier making claims that Taylor Swift can come to Tasmania. Taylor Swift is not going to

Townsville, Brisbane or Adelaide. In fact, Taylor Swift is only going to Melbourne and Sydney.

Mr Jaensch - Do you have a PhD in Taylor Swift now?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Dr BROAD - Well, it is one of those moments where you have this massive issue. There are millions of Taylor Swift fans in the country absolutely disappointed, so what the Premier does is try to piggyback on that issue and say, 'If you build a stadium here they'll all come. Taylor Swift will rock up'. For all these very disappointed teenagers who were sitting on the phonedlines, including their parents with every available device trying to log on and get what was very difficult tickets to obtain, the Premier wants to jump on that and make some sort of claim to get his little social media hit. Instead he was massively ratioed, because even teenagers, who are not particularly politics watchers, could see how stupid that statement was, considering that Canada is not getting Taylor Swift, yet he is saying Tasmania would. What a complete joke.

The economics need to be looked at and that is why we need a sober analysis and people like the brains at Treasury to have a good look at it. Instead of relying on Premier Rockliff making claims about Taylor Swift we need real figures. The Premier claims things like it will deliver \$2.2 billion of economic activity over 25 years, support thousands of jobs, create new opportunities for sporting, tourism, hospitality events and so on, and seven AFL games a year.

The Liberals' own analysis says that you would spend at least \$460 million and get a total payroll tax return to government of just \$300 000 a year. This is the stuff that is supposed to pay for health care and education. The cost-benefit analysis has a net present value of the stadium at negative \$306 million which means that the state would actually be \$306 million worse off if the stadium goes ahead. That is before even taking into account things like interest payments, not to mention losing the GST and things like that which I will come back to.

So much for the economic boost that the stadium will be funding health. That is why we need the reality from Treasury. It is obvious that Treasury has not looked at it. The analysis that the Government puts out says the economic costs outweigh the economic benefits. This is a reckless waste of taxpayers' money and a massive broken promise from the Premier who has repeatedly pledged to cap the state's contribution to \$375 million. We know that that is well and truly out of the ballpark, but how much out is it? Maybe Treasury could tell us how much out that figure actually is. What does Treasury think about this?

The stadium's cost-benefit analysis, which the Government did not provide immediately - we had to wait for that one - did not come out in the pre-Christmas drop hoping nobody noticed but we did. The cost-benefit analysis came out heavily redacted. The full cost-benefit analysis showed that the new stadium is a financial and economic dud. I repeat that the economic costs outweigh the economic benefits. In fact, the business case is so bad that if Premier Rockliff builds this stadium the state will be \$300 million worse off and the analysis does not include interest repayments on the debt, which we know will be well in excess of \$400 million if not a lot more.

What we have seen with the other projects the Government has on the books are massive cost blowouts. We have now heard that Marinus has blown out by so much that it is beyond

the state budget's capacity to pay for it. That is why they are abandoning it and hoping the federal Labor Government picks up the cost. We have also heard that pumped hydro is looking like being way more expensive than predicted, along with the north-west network upgrades. We know that the Macquarie Point wastewater treatment plant is also going to be more than the expected cost and Treasury has expressed this concern. Treasury has said in the Budget documents that:

It is currently expected that the financial project costs will exceed original estimates. Under the terms of the established agreement a proportional increased contribution will be required to be paid by government to meet project cost overruns.

All these projects - Mariner, pumped hydro, network upgrades, Macquarie Point - are facing massive cost blowouts. What is going to be the cost blowout for the Macquarie Point stadium? The Government is saying there will be no cost blowout, that they are going to manage this project within the budget. Treasury obviously has expressed a view on that because in the budget papers they said, in regards to the Macquarie Point urban renewal project, or the stadium:

As a large infrastructure project and with the scope of the project yet to be fully defined, the project may be subject to the same ongoing supply constraints and cost escalations that other major projects across the public and private sectors are experiencing as a result of high levels of activity in the Tasmanian construction sector.

They obviously had an opinion that the costs are going to blow out. Maybe if they were asked to have a look at the deal and have a look at the stadium, they would come up with how much they think the project will blow out. These are significant risks to the state Government. Why are they concerned that the project costs may blow out? Because we have seen the original costings. We have it through an RTI and, as I have said before, it was just a back-of-the-envelope calculation:

25,000 seats @ \$13,000 = \$325,000,000

Add roof at say \$250,000,000

Total = \$575,000,000

Add escalation for say 2 years @ 5% / yr = \$57,500,000

Add Tas market loading at 20% = \$115,000,000

Total = \$747,500,000

Add site specific costs = \$?????

I reiterate this is ballpark cost advice.

That was the original estimate, \$750 million if you round up. That was when it was the floating stadium off Regatta Point at the Regatta Grounds but then they shifted it to Macquarie Point, just down the road, and miraculously it is the same costings.

Now they have managed to find a little bit of extra savings. They have realised that Macquarie Point Development Corporation is already spending money on some of the things that they might need to spend money on, so they have managed to whittle the budget down to \$715 million, which nobody believes. Treasury has already expressed concern. We would like to see what they think about the whole thing - the AFL deal, lock, stock and barrel.

We also know that the GST, this money from the federal government, will be clawed back. That means that the state Government will be paying for all of it.

The billion-dollar stadium has no input from Treasury and almost as little from the Treasurer. When the Treasurer presented to the Public Accounts Committee, he said Treasury advice was not asked for and was not needed. We think it should be sought and it is needed. It is now clear that the real reason Jeremy Rockliff did not take this deal to Cabinet was that he knew his team would not sign off on it. Therefore it did not go to Cabinet, did not seek Treasury advice, relied on consultants' reports that are full of holes and has costings based on the back of an envelope. Yet will not get Treasury to have a good look at it. We think that Treasury should have a good look at it.

Mr Ferguson, when he presented to the PAC, was also unable to say how much the port upgrade, the housing and the transport corridor would cost or how it would be paid for. Despite not even having an estimate for these numbers, Tasmania has signed up to delivering them. What does Treasury think about all these associated projects? We think the Treasurer should ask Treasury to look at it and, in turn, should provide any such advice to the parliament by 5 September 2023.

The committee also heard that the federal government funding would be lost in future GST distributions. It seems clear that the Government knew this all along, having not actually written to the federal Treasurer seeking a GST exemption until after being asked about it in question time.

The Treasurer, in his PAC contribution, was also unable to substantiate previous Government claims that the stadium would pay for government services, once again hanging his Premier out to dry. We know that every stadium in Australia loses money, and so would this one. What would Treasury say about this?

A lot of what I have expressed I have discussed before. I am not a big fan of the economic reports or the business case for this stadium but it is not only me. An independent economic analyst has had a look at it. His name is Graeme Wells from Wells Economic Analysis. In a public hearing at PAC, he gave some quite detailed evidence about the business case for the stadium.

By way of background, Mr Wells is an independent economist and has had a long career as an academic economist in various countries. He has done a lot of consulting to treasuries and reserve banks in Australia and New Zealand, and a lot of consulting in Tasmania to the Treasury and various government departments and private institutions. He went to PAC as a private citizen because he thought it important for Tasmanian electors to be able to make up

their minds about the merits of the stadium based on accurate reports and facts. He did not think the reports the Government is relying on were accurate and went on to say why. He said that the initial report by PricewaterhouseCoopers just evaluated the stadium without really knowing whether it was going to be at Regatta Point or the now favoured site at Macquarie Point. He regarded this as a serious deficiency.

He said about the PricewaterhouseCoopers report:

... I think that's deficient in a couple of ways. It is surprising that they were given data and parameters by the State Government to evaluate this. They didn't do any estimates of the cost of building the stadium or anything like that. They just said, 'here is a \$750 million capital works project that happens to be a stadium, you evaluate what that's going to be.' The only thing they appear to have done themselves in that regard - I'm not sure who did this, whether it was Pricewaterhouse or the State Government - but they came up with a list of events.

Mr Wells goes on to say:

You will be very surprised to know that the list of events includes seven Rugby League games a year - surprise - and even seven AFL games which will be played in Tasmania, but only four of those were actually additional AFL games. So, they came up with a list of events per annum, which includes these Rugby League games with an inflated number of AFL games, and that, in the post-construction phase, is how they work out what the operational benefits of the stadium are going to be.

He goes on to say:

Where they got this list from, I don't know, but it's obviously not a realistic list. The other major problem I have with the report is that they use a 'computable general equilibrium' model, which is fine. ... It is a major construction project, so if you looked at direct employment and all the employment that's induced by the stadium - and there will be quite a lot of that - surprisingly, the largest number of indirect employees is in the arts, sports and recreation sector.

Mr Wells says further:

Now, I just don't believe that. You would've thought that apart from the people involved in construction, there are going to be people involved in transport, design and a whole lot of things that are normally related to building a construction centre, not people doing murals on walls and kicking a football around. But they would have you believe that of the 1400 jobs per year, ...

- during the construction phase, that is -

... most of them are going to be in arts, sports and recreation sector. Well, I just think that is unbelievable.

Mr Wells goes on to say:

There are two other points I'd like to make about the PricewaterhouseCoopers report. It doesn't ever really make clear as to the funding assumptions that underlie the construction cost. We are only ever told that it is going to be a \$750 million build, and I guess they did this report before the state Government revised the build cost ...

Basically, they handed it over to PricewaterhouseCoopers and said, 'The stadium is going to cost \$750 million. Do an analysis.' One of the crucial things is we do not believe it is going to cost \$750 million. We think it is going to cost a lot more. Treasury has expressed a concern about cost blowouts. What does Treasury think the real cost is going to be? Treasury needs to have a look at this so that the public can understand that maybe what the Government is saying is optimistic at the very best.

Mr Wells goes on to say:

... the borrowing costs will depend on what those funding assumptions are, but we don't know what they are, and so it's impossible to tell from this report what the budgetary implications are; except to rely on the general sort of notion that increased activity will increase tax collections via the Commonwealth Grants Commission distribution and so on. The claim that it is going to provide more funding for roads and hospitals and so on, is something that you really can't evaluate on the basis of -

Mr Wells goes into some detail.

What PricewaterhouseCoopers do is to add a lot of supposed benefits that flow from the things which they did not quantify.

That is on page 8 of their submission. These are socioeconomic benefits. They come back to your point, Chair. They claim it is a benefit that it is probably going to increase house prices in the area and surrounding areas by 3 to 4 per cent. Given that most of the health workers in the middle of the city cannot afford to live in the city now, I would have thought that further cranking up house prices is hardly a benefit.

Mr Wells makes a good point there. He says:

In any case, I looked up the academic papers which they cite. Both of those papers refer to stadia in the United States that were built in low-income areas as part of an urban development project. One is near the University of Southern California, for instance, which is hardly the best part of LA. Another one is in a town, I forget which state it was, but it was in an area where house prices were already quite low. So you can imagine they would have an impact on urban renewal and improvement, but I wouldn't have thought the centre of Hobart was really a site ripe for urban renewal.

Mr Wells goes on to say:

Then they quote a paper that says that attendance positively correlated with self-graded health as though what they want to imply is that the stadium is going to improve people's health. When you read the paper, it explicitly says that you cannot interpret this result in that way, and yet they quote that in support.

...

I think that firstly, the Pricewaterhouse report's outcomes are not very plausible. Secondly, it's been done in a vacuum as though all the other bits around it are complete, which they won't be, and a lot of community benefits they claim I think are inaccurately reported.

Yet this is probably the crucial report that the Government is relying on. We think that Treasury should express an opinion on the business case. We know that they have not been asked and we think they should be. That is why we have brought this motion today.

When you look at the cost-benefit study you are trying to look at a different kind of economic analysis from the so-called computable general equilibrium model. What you are trying to do there is work out the social costs and the social benefits rather than the contributions to gross domestic product and so on.

Mr Wells says:

The first problem with this is that they haven't really followed the Government guidelines on how to do a cost benefit study. If you look up the Commonwealth handbook on cost benefit analysis, when you're working out the costs of a stadium, what you're trying to work out is the opportunity cost of the resources that are going into the stadium. By opportunity costs we mean how would those resources have been able to be used in some other project. When you look at, say, construction costs, it's pretty easy to do - if you pay a plumber \$100 an hour to work on your project, that is the opportunity cost because they could've got \$100 an hour somewhere else. But when it comes to the land on which the stadium is built, the cost benefit analysis assumes that it didn't have any other alternative use when obviously it does. So the costs of the stadium are understated by quite a significant amount, and some of those alternative uses could be readily evaluated.

...

That is an opportunity cost of the land for the stadium, and it had an alternative use and it's a cost. There are various other commercial enterprises on the stadium which won't now go ahead. That should be included in the cost because that land has alternative use, it's not free.

Mr Wells goes on to say:

Even the land that is not presently occupied has alternative uses, so to completely omit that as part of the costs seriously underestimates the cost that should be taken into account in the cost benefit analysis.

He goes on to talk about the 44 events. In the MI Partners cost-benefit analysis, the interesting thing that he pointed out is that it is an entirely different list of events from those in the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, yet miraculously they still come up with 44 events. Mr Wells says:

If you look at the list, it's quite a coincidence that they come up with the same number of events, but the list is totally different. The Rugby League matches have disappeared, and instead we have various concerts and so on. I was a bit bemused by the entry at the top of the list, which is an AFL home final every four years.

My guess is that apart from the fact that some of these proposed events are optimistic, not all of them will occur in the time horizon and the frequency.

He then talks about how that should be taken into account. As Mr Wells points out:

... if you added the costs incorrectly and allowed for the fact that these events aren't all going to occur with the frequency that this table suggests, straight away at any rate, then you could get a number like 0.3 [for the cost-benefit ratio].

In other words, he thinks that the real cost-benefit ratio is that you put in a dollar and you get back 30 cents. That puts the cost-benefit ratio in an even worse light.

That was the analysis of an independent economist who obviously has a very different opinion to the state Government. It puts a number of holes in the reports that the Government is relying on when it says the stadium will be a massive boon for the state. Any analysis draws into question the figures the Government is relying on.

What figures should we rely on? Should we rely on the economic analysis of an independent economist like Mr Wells or should we get Treasury to have a look at it and give us some answers?

We think that Treasury should be given the opportunity to provide written advice to the Government. We think that they should have been asked and that information should be transparently disclosed to the parliament. We would like to see some facts and not government spin. The Government has tried to use every trick it can to justify what is basically an uncapped project it has committed to at a time when the Budget is in such a state that the Treasurer's own words say that the Government's balance sheet cannot handle a project such as Marinus.

The Government is still willing to throw money at a stadium in Hobart. How much is it going to cost? What are the risks? What is the reality rather than relying on these reports which have serious flaws? That is why we have brought this notice of motion to the House today. That is why we think it should be supported. That is why we should get Treasury to do the work so that the Tasmanian public can have a greater understanding of the cost and benefits of the stadium.

[4.12 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Treasurer) - Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government in relation to the motion brought on by Dr Broad. Before I turn

to the substance of this motion, the House needs to understand a bit of context around stunt motions. I am not talking about the motion before the Chair at the moment, but I would like to remind the House that yesterday, in a procedural debate, I made the point that if the censure motion on Mr Barnett was not a stunt motion, it was so urgent it had to come before every other item of business yesterday, then we would expect the Labor Party to bring on that motion for debate during their private members' time today.

I predicted that they would not to prove that it was a stunt. It seems that I might have been able to accurately predict the behaviour of the Labor Party. This morning there was an urgency motion to refer the Premier of Tasmania to the Privileges Committee for some spurious claims that were being made by Ms White. This was a motion that was attempted on urgency before question time. Mr Speaker made the point that, in declining, that it was a matter of privilege that needed to pull rank ahead of everything else today, including Mr Tucker's and others private members' time today, and the Labor Opposition Leader would be able to seek leave during other formal business or during private members' time.

Ms White is not here arguing just how urgent that motion would have been. Having a quick look at the Notice Papers, I can count that there are two sanction motions sitting on the Notice Paper, both of which were so urgent on the day they were moved, but when Labor has dedicated time it chooses not to move those sanction motions, which at the time were so important they had to come before everyone else. There is also a contempt motion on the Notice Paper against the Premier and two ministers. I have already mentioned the privileges motion from this morning.

I just want to open my comments with those observations very fairly made about the stunts which amount to abuse of this House by the Labor leader, who is not here arguing when Labor has dedicated time that she would want to move on those. It is useful background

The proposed Macquarie Point urban renewal precinct and stadium, as the Government's position has been repeatedly made, is about opening doors for Tasmania, Dr Broad. I invite you and your colleagues to be a little more open-minded to the possibilities. Even though your party has taken a dead-set position against the project, you should at least be open-minded as some other MPs are about allowing it to be supported through the planning commission.

You have biased yourself against it and in the process have found yourself in very direct conflict with your federal leader who, of course, runs your party. The federal branch of the ALP runs your state branch because your state branch is in administration because of a civil war. In your contribution you quoted other people, including Mr Wells, who is respected by me. I respect his opinions and comments and well I should, but that does not mean that is the only opinion and the only objective truth. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese seems to have been persuaded to fund the Macquarie Point urban renewal project and if Dr Broad had made those comments on their Canberra anti-trade mission when they went to Canberra arguing against Tasmania receiving funding, then perhaps in the form and delivery of Dr Broad's arguments here today you can see why the Prime Minister did not agree.

To quote Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who supports this project and travelled to Tasmania to talk it up -

Dr Broad - But he gets the money back.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr Winter - Where were you?

Mr FERGUSON - I do not normally take interjections but I will. Mr Winter asked me through his rude interjection where I was. I was standing with the Prime Minister for the announcement at York Park and what a great announcement it was with Catherine King in my electorate and I was proud to do so. It is very good that we have been able to secure 50 per cent of the \$130 million towards the York Park upgrade. I was pleased to accompany the Premier on that occasion. I note that you were not there, Mr Winter.

To quote the Prime Minister who supports this project, he said:

One of the things a sporting precinct does is it brings economic activity, which generates revenue, which generates taxpayer dollars that can then be put back into other services.

I know you are uncomfortable with that but that is what our Prime Minister, who is your federal leader, of this country said.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr FERGUSON - I listened to you very carefully and believe I did not interrupt you once. It is expected that the arts, entertainment and sporting precinct will aim to host many events per year, generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity during construction and an expected \$85 million economic stimulus each year thereafter. On this side of the House we are very supportive about the unlocking of the opportunities at that frankly derelict site. One thing that even 'no' campaigners I would have thought might have agreed with is that it is ripe for urban renewal. I heard Dr Broad saying, 'No urban renewal for Hobart'. It is an old industrial abandoned railyard.

Dr Broad - I never said that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad. You were heard in silence from minister Ferguson. Can you please give him the same pleasure?

Mr FERGUSON - I cannot help you with your misunderstanding of what you said, Dr Broad. Hobart really does need some urban renewal and it is important that the site of an industrial heritage past which has been abandoned for many years experiences urban renewal and unlocks opportunities.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad; first warning. There will not be another one.

Mr FERGUSON - It would be a shame if you got kicked out during your own motion, but you were listened to and I ask you to listen to an alternative view.

On our side we are passionate about that urban renewal. It is not just about AFL, by the way. It is about unlocking a Tasmanian AFL and AFLW team for Tasmania, but it will also revitalise Hobart's waterfront in a new and fresh way. Briefly on the team, I should not have to restate this, but I will: no stadium, no team; you kill the stadium, you kill the dream. That is what you do when you act this way and you take that position.

We want to create a centrepiece of activity right here in the heart of the city, with restaurants, bars and other attractions not just on game day but the many other events that will be supported by this generational infrastructure project.

I will only mention Taylor Swift once during my contribution, but Dr Broad mentioned that name many, many times. You do not get a chance at headline acts if there is no venue at all even to be competitive. That is as much as I will say about that matter.

This project has been comprehensively discussed in the public arena and in our parliament. Many questions have been asked; many motions have been moved and debated. There have been rallies for and against the project, if you like, rival rallies, and fair enough too in a democracy. Passionate groups have drawn thousands of people to their respective causes, although as I said yesterday, it was hard not to notice that at the rather large gathering of people in Hobart against the stadium the Leader of the Opposition was nowhere to be seen, which was the first sign, I believe, of them crab-walking towards supporting it. This is the most heavily and transparently debated project in our Government's history.

I have a list of things that have been presented in support of transparency. We have tabled pre-feasibility estimates, site selection and site feasibility advice; the Oricon site auctions report; work by PWC on the economic impacts of the precinct and the economic contribution of commercial uses of the site; the MI Global report, including a full cost-benefit analysis; the Bellgrove Advisory feasibility scoping reports; architectural renders by Liminal Architecture; and the Government's strategic business case.

I am humble enough to say I respect Dr Graham Wells and his opinions and commentary. I ask others to respect the different advice, opinions and commentary from other respected leaders in their respective fields.

In addition to the items I have mentioned, we have also provided a list of the various documents submitted to Cabinet. That was in response to a commitment I made on behalf of the Premier, which the Premier honoured, in respect of a motion that was tabled by former member, Cassy O'Connor, member for Clark and Leader of the Greens at the time. In good faith that occurred the very next day if not the same day. I depart from my comments here to say I wish Cassy O'Connor well post her time of service in the House of Assembly.

Dr Woodruff - Thank you, minister, I will pass that on to her. She would not be happy to hear it after that sentence, though, because that is fully misrepresenting the reality of what happened. I know if she was here she would be interjecting at your lack of truthfulness on that.

Mr FERGUSON - You are being churlish and false in your own comment there, because in fact, Dr Woodruff's record on telling the truth is very poor. I will say it again: the Premier tabled a list of documents that had been presented to Cabinet which I think -

Dr Woodruff - You said a full list.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, order.

Mr FERGUSON - is unprecedented actually, to do that, and that list of occasions where information had been presented to Cabinet was entirely -

Dr Woodruff interjecting.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - a voluntary undertaking that the Government went through with. It is unfortunate that you would mischaracterise it the way you just have. I was going to say something nice about Cassy O'Connor and I will not be dissuaded from doing that. I do wish her well and I thank her for her service to this House.

In total, nearly 800 pages of economic, financial and other analytical information has been tabled, although I wonder how much of that has been read by Dr Broad who has brought on this motion. There is an inquiry underway by the Public Accounts Committee. Many have given evidence to this inquiry, including the Premier, minister Barnett and me. When I gave evidence I highlighted the immense promise that the project holds for our state, including a state-of-the-art stadium to support our hard won AFL licence as part of the broader arts, entertainment and sporting precinct, and together with the establishment of our new club and high performance training and administration centre.

I gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee, with officials from the Department of Treasury and Finance and, as openly and transparently as I could, answered questions for nearly an hour and a half. I explained to the committee that this project will create, whether you support the project or not, numerous job opportunities during construction. The construction industry has spoken up and highlighted the need for another large project such as this to maintain current levels of activity once the Bridgewater bridge has been completed. In that sense, the timing and, if I can put it this way, the sequencing of those projects is valuable.

Dr Broad is a member of that committee. In case he was not paying attention, I also spoke to the role of Treasury. For the benefit of members, I will reiterate the evidence that I gave. The Government is involved in many transactions each year, from small contracts to very large procurements. It is not the norm to seek Treasury advice or involve Treasury staff in each and every negotiation just because of the value of the project. As I advised the committee, individual agencies manage their own procurement and their own projects. State Growth delivered more than half a billion dollars in road projects last year alone. Agencies such as Health, Education and Justice are all managing significant capital programs in their own right. Each agency has its own qualified and experienced staff to manage these works but will go to the market for specialist expertise as required. I might have given some examples where some agencies that are not typically involved in large building projects might need to seek and bring in that advice but for a department like the Department of State Growth that is quite different - it is the most experienced agency in government in building anything.

The business case was prepared at a point in time for the specific purpose of informing a discussion between the Premier and Prime Minister Albanese at the prefeasibility stage of a large and complex project. The Government's position on the Macquarie Point multipurpose stadium has always been that this stadium is subject to Australian Government funding, which has now been confirmed. Now that the project is funded rather than aspirational, there are

further steps. There is a lot more work to do. We will need to negotiate a formal funding agreement with the Australian Government. There is more work to do in relation to this and this is entirely consistent with the normal life cycle of a project.

Now, to the point of where Dr Broad may be coming from, any assessment of work to date needs to consider this context. Notwithstanding this, and I will never walk away from this role, Treasury does have an important role to play. It is primarily through budget development and budget management. As the project proceeds to actual development, Treasury will be a member of the project control group, which is an important role to support and keep the project on track and manage risk.

However, as I have made clear to the Public Accounts Committee, Treasury did not have a formal role in the process that is being led by the Premier with the support of the Department of State Growth. Treasury advice was not asked for in relation to the project, or the AFL deal, and was not needed given the expertise within the Department of State Growth, by the way, which also houses Infrastructure Tasmania, and the significant body of work commissioned from expert consultants.

As Treasurer, I am satisfied and trust the Premier's ability to negotiate the deal in good faith on behalf of the Government. I am able to do this because the Premier and I are a good team, we are a strong team, unlike those opposite as we have again seen this week.

It is clear that this motion brought on by Dr Broad is another stunt to distract from the division of the Labor Party through this week. I will repeat again, despite nearly 800 pages of information being tabled here at this box, hours of debate, many hours of evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry, here we are again talking about Treasury advice, and it is necessary for me to say many of the same things again, that I provided to the committee. Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe you are on that committee; Dr Broad is certainly on that committee.

I do not think those opposite are disputing that thousands of jobs will be supported by the construction of the stadium, although I would have to go back and review Dr Broad's *Hansard* because now he may be.

Dr Broad - Mr Wells has said that.

Mr FERGUSON - Now you are saying - well, okay, I am going to call you out here. You present your arguments at your terms, speak to your motion, and now you want to walk away from them citing, 'Oh, I was quoting Dr Wells'.

Dr Broad - You are verballing me.

Mr FERGUSON - What I am doing, Dr Broad, is challenging you with the statements you are bringing to this debate. If you want to quickly run away from the argument you presented, that is a matter for you. I cannot explain your logic in presenting comments from Dr Wells in your argument and now wanting to distance yourself from them when I challenge you. It seems uncertain now, whether or not the Opposition would dispute whether thousands of jobs would be supported by the construction of such a large project.

Dr Broad - How many?

Mr FERGUSON - Now I have to question myself. They are not saying that the precinct will not revitalise the Hobart waterfront into an exciting hive of activity but now I am not so sure because I think I did hear Dr Broad challenging the question of the need for urban renewal in Hobart.

I did not think the Labor Party were even suggesting that our AFL and AFLW teams will not be successful or will not sell out on game day like the JackJumpers do every week of the season. One thing is absolutely clear and that is that Labor is against it. They are blockers not builders. It seems that while we have a mountain of information that is being provided in good faith, Dr Broad is still looking for a reason to be against this project against his federal leader, the Prime Minister.

I mention again that the Opposition did have the chance to kill off the project for good but they squibbed it yesterday when they allowed the second reading stage -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - I have explained this already. I sense your sensitivity but I call you out. If that bill does not pass, the Independents have made it clear, they are dead against the stadium. They want to see the project of state significance -

Mr Winter interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - Are you not listening? If you have a go at listening, you might understand the point. The Independents have insisted that the project be considered by the Project of State Significance process with two votes: one at the beginning and one at the end. The Government has agreed with that. That is why the bill was critical and thank you for your support.

Mr Winter - The Independents are running this Government. Thank you, Treasurer, I have got it down.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Winter, you have a lot to say but you do not have an argument. You have a problem. Yesterday, you had an opportunity to kill the bill but you did not take it. There are lot of people wondering what your strategy is.

If the Labor Party had realised that the AFL is serious, no stadium, no team and what is more, they might be realising that the community knows this, and maybe some of the Labor base knows this. Ms White has even suggested to her dwindling supporters that she could single handedly renegotiate the licence deal. That has been thoroughly disputed by the AFL. The new CEO put that one to bed in his own evidence to the Public Accounts Committee, again of which Dr Broad is a member. A new stadium at Macquarie Point or the deal is off. You cannot continue to trick Tasmanian people that somehow you are going to get the team without that pre-condition.

You will find that you are the ones with the problem in the community because I believe what is occurring - and I accept that not everybody is for it; I get that. I am a northern Tasmanian representative and I understand this. By the way, there is a lot of enthusiasm for our York Park initiative as part of the team dream. You need to grow a backbone and take a position and not try to appeal to the yes group and the no group at the same time. You are

misleading people. It is one thing to oppose a project for political reasons but imagine being the reason, the party that is responsible for Tasmania never getting its own team in the national game. Imagine being the political party that said 'no' to the AFL's investment of \$360 million in grassroots football and killed the sport in our state.

I come back to the point that there is a preponderance of information on the public record, a vast amount. Hundreds of pages of tabled documents, hours of evidence and debate, again today. Not only that, but we have been faithful to our word to the Independents and to the people of Tasmania that we are to be prepared to progress this project through a robust and trusted assessment process by the Tasmanian Planning Commission under the Project of State Significance process.

The proposed precinct and the deal have been exhaustively discussed and debated and the POSS project will require comprehensive analysis of a range of aspects of the project including many of the debating points made by Dr Broad of his own, or whether he is quoting somebody else, and the views of people in the community. The legitimate concerns that may be raised including by people who do not support the stadium but would like to make their views known - the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission process accommodates that. Through the Project of State Significance process the project will be subject to further detail and public analysis and assessment based on more definitive information available at that time.

If Labor does get on board and the order is approved, the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission will undertake an integrated assessment, a consideration of the relevant environmental, social, community and economic - and I stress, economic - issues. That is important. This assessment, which includes opportunities for the community to have their say, will be undertaken by the commission at arm's length from the Government: away from me, away from the Premier, away from you Dr Broad, and away from politics.

Dr Broad - Not Treasury.

Mr FERGUSON - You say it is not true but you are just not able to sustain that

Dr Broad - I did not say that.

Mr FERGUSON - Somebody said it. Just not true, I heard.

Mr Winter - He said, just not Treasury.

Mr FERGUSON - Just not Treasury? Well, I will come to that. In fact, I have addressed it in part and I will come back to it. Treasury will be part of the project. It is going to be sitting on the program control group.

Mr Winter - What does that mean?

Mr FERGUSON - You ask me what that means. Treasury will be partly responsible for the health of this project going forward.

This assessment which includes opportunities for the community to have their say, I will repeat, will be undertaken by the commission at arm's length from the Government. That is what the Independents demanded and that is what will happen. Once it has completed its

assessment, the commission makes a recommendation to the Premier as to whether or not the project should proceed and, if so, under what conditions.

Even if the order at the end of the assessment is no departure from the original order, even if there is no change, the bill that the House unanimously endorsed at second reading stage yesterday will still have an opportunity for that second vote so that parliamentary role can be exercised. Given what I have just said about a unanimous position on a bill at its second reading stage at least, perhaps not the third reading stage - there will be some debate on some amendments - here is a motion that tries to subvert it. Labor has voted for a comprehensive and independent analysis, it would seem, but they are still playing games.

I have a concern that I want to give voice to. This motion potentially politicises the work of the Department of Treasury and Finance. This is not a request for a particular document that can be found, for example, and released through RTI or some other mechanism to be released. This is requesting Treasury to, in effect, provide advice to the parliament on this matter creating a risk that such advice would be politicised which may cause adverse perceptions about the independence of the department.

Dr Woodruff - Making information public would be very political for you.

Mr FERGUSON - Given Dr Woodruff's outburst I will say it again: the request in effect creates a risk that such advice will be politicised which may create adverse perceptions about the independence of the Treasury. That is a very fair comment. In reality, Treasury would be providing its advice and assumptions based on the same publicly available information that has already been the subject of much debate and opinion.

Given the current development stage of the project there are number of uncertainties. I can assure the House they are uncertainties that will be clarified as the project progresses through its different stages yet to come. There will be future budgets, budget Estimates scrutiny hearings, there will be a public process hopefully by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. There will be many times, including when the department ultimately goes to tender again for more visibility, more clarification, more information including information, I have no doubt, that will be made publicly available and to the House. Similar to other advice that has been provided and released in relation to this matter any advice and assumptions provided at this stage would need to recognise the current uncertainties and therefore is unlikely to be definitive.

Therefore, for the reasons that I have stated, the Government does not support the motion of Dr Broad. I have tried to be fair and balanced in my responses and reasons as well as accepting that good people can disagree on the merits of a large project like this, pointing to the fact that there will be different, including economic, commentators who will have their own points of view including those that Dr Broad has given voice to and then quickly run away from by interjection, which I find puzzling.

We do not support the motion. I do want to encourage members to trust the process that will be run not by me, not by the Premier, not by the Government but by the planning commission.

If the first two votes of a future order are supported by each House of the parliament - the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council - then we are effectively getting the

commission to get on with it, with our support, to do the assessment. That is where much of the body of further detailed clarification and scrutiny will be undertaken. That is the process that I invite members to trust and speak well of in the community because that will be your opportunity for a very robust assessment to be undertaken.

[4.42 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, trust is in very short order in this parliament when it comes to believing anything that you say, Treasurer, on this matter. That is because we have been burnt a number of times.

We very much support the motion of Dr Broad and Labor to actually understand Treasury's opinion on this stadium project. We have been through a process where it is clear the public interest is for all of the information that the Government used to make the decision should be in the public domain. We now know from the record of Mr Kim Evans, through the Public Accounts Committee, that the decision to go ahead with the stadium prior to an announcement to the public was taken. What we wanted to know - and what we still want to know is - was there ever any information and briefing advice provided from Treasury to the Government on this matter? What the House has been able to determine to this point on the information that the Government has provided, kicking and screaming at every opportunity resisting providing information even when ordered to by the House, it appears that there was not any information and advice provided at all. I still found that hard to believe where we have landed at the end of that winter recess.

What we had was a succession of motions ordering the Government to make available to Tasmanians all of the information that had been provided to Cabinet in the deliberations that they made about the stadium and around the decision for a stadium. On 24 May, the House ordered the Premier to table all the signed agreements and documents relating to the AFL agreement to the House by 1 June, as well as all departmental and departmental commissioned assessments, advice and reports relating to Macquarie Point stadium by the same date, Thursday 1 June.

That was an order of the House. It was not something that the Premier got to decide whether he did or not. It was a matter of this House ordering the Government to undertake an action. That was meant to happen on 1 June 2023, and it was not until 20 June that the Premier tabled some documents. Some of the documents - all the documents - that he provided at that point were on the public record, and were already in the public domain. What was missing - and we know it was missing, from a right to information request from the Labor Party, providing information that had been given to them - was more information that had been provided, than was on the list the Premier had given parliament.

We knew that was the case. We did not know how much of that information that the Government withheld was from the Treasury, or not, but we certainly knew the Government had not done what the House had ordered them to do, and had not provided a full list. It was then that the Premier used a blanket claim of cabinet-in-confidence to try to justify not revealing any deliberations that came to Cabinet, and on not providing the House with information that went to Cabinet.

The Government is misusing the Westminster tradition of cabinet-in-confidence to apply to anything that might come into the Cabinet's room, or any part of the conversation about a deliberation on a matter. That is not the practice of cabinet-in-confidence. What we are finding

is the extent to which this Liberal Government is abusing the tradition of cabinet-in-confidence and purposely using it to make sure Tasmanians do not know what is happening.

On 21 June, the Premier was subsequently ordered by the House to table a list of all documents that did go to Cabinet, including a general description of the topic of each document, the type of document, the length of the document, the agency or department the document originated from, and the date.

What we received from the Premier on 22 June, the day before parliament rose, was a short list - not the complete list. It was clear at that point, from that list, that the Department of Treasury and Finance could not have provided advice to the Cabinet prior to the known date when a decision had been made internally - by at least the Premier, or a subsection of the Cabinet, if not the whole Cabinet - to go ahead with the stadium.

Here we are now. We have had another tranche of documents provided. They have had a deep-dive over the holidays and had a look, and three additional documents have been given to us - ostensibly, the complete list of documents from Treasury and Finance. They all relate to Budget committee decisions that were taken on 6 April this year. They have nothing to do with advice that was provided prior to a decision being made about the stadium.

Unfortunately, what we are forced to conclude is that the Government made this decision in the absence of Treasury advice. I find that shocking. I find it incredible, in a housing crisis, when we know there is a lack of commitment from the Government to put money into hospital infrastructure and to fast-track things like the Launceston General Hospital expansion. We know there is some secret dealing happening in relation to the Marinus commitments, that we are concerned might be going ahead prior to an investment decision for support from the federal government for that project.

We know the Government is now, by their own evidence, making decisions on individual large pieces of infrastructure without advice from Treasury. In the fiscal sustainability report of two years ago, there are huge fingers of concern pointed at the Liberal Government's mismanagement of the state of our finances - very huge concerns.

We are putting on the record that we are really concerned that this Government is driving us to a state of extreme debt. Potentially, within a five-year period, according to some commentators, the state could be looking at bankruptcy. I do not use that term lightly. I am putting it on the record today because we need to understand and investigate what has been happening.

We have to understand what Treasury really thinks about the level of debt the Liberal Government has been walking us into over the last eight years, and what they have planned ahead, because what they are doing now is signing deals for an AFL licence that is contingent on them spending likely \$1.5 billion - and they did not get advice from Treasury about what would happen to the state debt.

They are signing pre-commitments for the Marinus Link cables, but they have not had an agreement from the Commonwealth Government that the project would be funded as a regulated asset.

They are going ahead spending taxpayers' money, driving us into enormous levels of debt - and they are doing it all in secret. We absolutely support this motion, because we have to understand where we are. We have to know the money is there to build the houses we need. Where is the money to build the houses?

Where is the commitment in the Budget? It is not there. They only talk about 10 000 houses, but they do not talk about \$5 billion or \$3 billion or the number that is needed to build 10 000 houses. It is not in the forward Estimates. It is not there.

Instead, what they are doing is pretending, without advice from Treasury, that we can build a stadium by October 2028, which has a time line of two to four years; that is the average time if it went through the Tasmanian Planning Commission as a project of state significance, an integrated assessment project. Then it has to get built - and if it does not, we will start having to pay millions of dollars to the AFL, just for the pleasure of them getting the stadium that they want, in their time frame.

It is all wrong. We desperately need to understand what our experienced public servant bureaucrats from Treasury think about this issue. Of course we understand why minister Ferguson, the Treasurer, would not want his department giving us information. It is not about us politicising this. It is about us looking at it and recognising what the risks are.

People have a right to know. They are sick to their back teeth about these huge issues of fiscal responsibilities being hidden from them, and being treated like they are children who do not know, do not care and do not understand. People really understand there is limited money in the bucket. It is not a magic pudding. We need to use it responsibly and they want to know what the Government is signing us up for.

[4.54 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to make a short contribution in the six minutes or so that I have left.

I cannot see why a responsible government would not have done this anyway, but I cannot see why the parliament, or the House, would not require the Government to get Treasury advice about the fiscal capacity of the state to build this stadium, and there is now clear evidence that they have not done this.

I say the 'fiscal capacity of the state' to build this stadium, because that appears to be what drove the decision to write that letter to the Prime Minister about Project Marinus. I know Treasury had concerns, and the Treasurer had serious concerns about the fiscal capacity of the state to build that project. One of the key drivers to send that letter was the Department of Treasury and Finance. It provided advice to the Government saying there were serious risks. Some of those were in the Budget. Like this project, Treasury provides within the Budget a list of risks. One of those risks was Marinus. One of those risks was the stadium.

The Treasurer says it is not the norm to engage Treasury. The Government does a lot things and it might not be the norm but I would have thought, given that this proposed stadium would be the largest infrastructure in Tasmanian history assuming Marinus does not go ahead or is not built by the Tasmanian Government, that it would. Throughout this debate where we have been seeking advice, the original motion said 'Treasury advice' because we were sure it must exist. I was absolutely sure, because what government would not seek advice or attain

advice about its fiscal strategy to build this project? This Government. This Government has managed to get through this process, sign a deal with the AFL, and tell Tasmanians they can build this stadium for \$715 million with no Treasury advice.

What is the House to do to hold this Government to account? One of the things it can do is what is on the notice paper and what we are debating. That is calling on the Treasurer to seek formal written advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance about the deal and the stadium and then table it here.

That is how we hold this Government, that does not appear to have any skerrick of understanding of transparency, to account. We call on the Treasurer to get the advice he has refused to get so far and table it here so we can see it. It will not be Treasury that is politicised. Treasury is beyond reproach when it comes to its outstanding staff and advice that it provides to this Government and to governments beforehand. There is no intention of any members of this place to politicise Treasury.

The reason we need this advice is because we know they are apolitical, they are beyond reproach. The only thing that will be politicised is the decision of this Premier. This project started with the former premier Gutwein announcing this project without telling anyone on his team: not the current Treasurer, not the current Premier, not the current Sports minister, and not the Attorney-General. None of them knew about this project. Why did he not want to tell them about his announcement? He knew they would not agree. Why did the Premier not take the AFL deal through Cabinet or through the parliamentary Liberal Party? He knew they would never agree because no due diligence has been done.

All the risk lands on Tasmanian taxpayers. It is left to this House to hold this Government to account for its own failings. It is left to the House to protect Tasmanians, Tasmanian taxpayers, from the situation we are in.

The Treasurer says Treasury will be involved in the build of it. We want to see what Treasury has to say about our Budget's capacity to build and fund this. The Tasmanian Budget has debt rising to \$5.6 billion by the end of these Estimates. The long-term fiscal sustainability report has one projection of \$30 billion by 2035 in net debt. That is where we are at fiscally.

The Treasurer does not want to admit he has a problem. I understand the political reasons why he does not want to admit there is a problem, but there is one. We know there is a problem because we have seen the Budget papers and we know there is a problem. It is in the letter to the prime minister and the Energy minister of Australia saying the Tasmanian Budget cannot sustain the additional costs. We know there is a problem.

As a responsible parliament, as a responsible House, we want to understand what is going on with this project. The Government wants to talk about it, it also needs to understand it needs to be transparent. Transparency has been a word used a lot over the past few months. It has been a key reason why the circumstances of this Government and this parliament have changed.

Transparency is what his motion seeks. It seeks to know about the project, the risks of this project, and potentially the benefits. We do not know what the advice is going to say; it is independent advice. That is why we want to see the Treasury advice. The first thing is it has to be sought and gained.

Time expired.

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

The House divided -

AYES 10

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

NOES 10

Mr Barnett
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

PAIRS

Ms Dow
Mr Winter

Ms Archer
Mr Street

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - The result of the division being 10 Ayes and 10 Noes in accordance with Standing Order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes

Motion negatived.

MOTION

Sustainable Forestry Sector

[5.06 p.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Notes the importance of the \$1.2billion sustainable forestry sector to the Tasmanian economy.
- (2) Further notes that native forestry -
 - (a) is sustainable;
 - (b) provides timber to build our houses;
 - (c) is fibre for a plastic-free future;

- (d) helps actively manage our bushfire-prone landscape;
 - (e) sequesters carbon; and
 - (f) supports thousands of secure jobs in regional communities and has done for generations.
- (3) Further notes -
- (a) recent ideological attacks on the sustainable forestry industry, including Labor's devastating decision to shut down native forestry in Western Australia and Victoria by the end of 2023; and
 - (b) that more than 300 Labor branches have backed a push to see native forestry shut down across the country at the upcoming ALP National Conference.
- (4) Agrees to stand with the industry and timber workers and support Tasmania's world-class native forestry sector.

I am proud of our sustainable native forestry sector and the many hundreds of Tasmanians who work in it. As a member of the great electorate of Franklin, I know how important this \$1.2 billion sector is to the community. Forestry is inseparable from the Huon. It has provided secure jobs for generations and it is still doing so. The simple truth is that forestry in Tasmania is good, it is sustainable, it provides timber to build our houses, fibre for a plastic-free future, and it stores carbon naturally. It is the lifeblood of many communities across the state, providing secure jobs - jobs not just for now but into the future, year in and year out. It is the ultimate renewable industry.

The Tasmanian native forestry sector has a bright future but faces two key threats. The first is a potential future Labor-Greens government intent on delivering the Greens' promise to shut down the industry completely in Tasmania. Second, Dan Andrews' shutdown of native forestry in Victoria and the thousands of desperate families given more than \$800 million in taxpayer subsidies just to walk away.

We face these threats from a position of strength. Sustainable Timber Tasmania's wood supply contracts with major Tasmanian customers are in place until 2027; all sawlogs from Tasmanian publicly managed forests are supplied to Tasmanian-based sawmills for on-island processing; and more than 70 per cent of Tasmania's wood harvest now comes from private estates.

However, Tasmania is not immune from the fallout in Victoria. This is why we are working closely with the four key pillars of our local industry - big millers, small millers, contractors and special species - on a forward looking plan to support the industry through this external shock while taking advantage of the exciting new opportunities. Long-term thinking is vital for our forestry because plantation sawlogs can take 30 years to grow to maturity and regrowth native forest more than 60 years. This is an intergenerational and sustainable industry supporting good, ongoing jobs in Tasmania, supporting good families in Tasmania.

Unfortunately, from Labor we have heard silence, followed by hypocrisy, with their job-destroying love affair with the Greens a dark stain. They did not make a peep when Dan Andrews and Mark McGowan sent native forestry to the wall in Victoria and Western Australia. Only recently, they voted against protecting forestry workers from radical activists invading the worksites and have been eerily quiet at the opportunity to back the Government's position of no lock-ups in the Tarkine.

There is more when it comes to Labor and their lack of commitment to the forestry jobs. The media report that more than 300 Labor branches have backed a push to see native forestry ended across the country. This increases pressure on Rebecca White and Tasmanian Labor. The green-aligned Labor Environment Action Network, or LEAN, has been lobbying Labor branches to endorse a motion to remove support for native forestry from Labor's national policy platform. This anti-jobs and perversely anti-environment position is being lined up for debate at Labor's national conference later this month. It would come as no surprise to anyone that LEAN's national co-convenor was a high-profile member of the New South Wales Wilderness Society and, reportedly, an ex-Greens member. Despite claims to the contrary, it is anyone's guess as to how long Ms White can hold out to Labor's anti-forestry membership base. We have already seen Labor governments in Victoria and Western Australia cave to internal and external pressure and end native forestry, devastating timber towns, communities and families.

Tasmanian Labor faces intensifying pressure to support ending native forestry from its own activist members, as well as the Tasmanian Greens. New Tasmanian Greens Leader, Dr Woodruff, has already belled the Labor cat saying that many Tasmanians expect Ms White to follow the lead of her mainland Labor colleagues and support ending native forestry in Tasmania.

Things are no easier for Labor's leader-in-waiting and ex-Kingborough mayor, Mr Winter, with the Kingborough Labor branch proudly flying the green flag, enjoying LEAN's job-destroying campaign. Branches in Mr Winter's own backyard will not support native forestry. Will he be forced to choose between backing timber workers' jobs or his own? The potential return of left faction-backed David O'Byrne further muddies the waters on Labor's support for forest workers.

If Ms White wanted to show leadership, she could start by moving a motion to back sustainable native forestry at the ALP national conference in Brisbane, rather than surrendering it to the LEAN green activists in the party. I would say a good first step would have been doing it at the state Labor conference but we know that is not happening.

While Labor sit on their hands and throw rocks from the sidelines, our Government has been working closely with industry since our election in 2014. Under our approach, jobs are up. Tasmanians well remember the devastation of the Labor-Greens' Tasmanian Forest Agreement, where two out of every three jobs in the sector were lost. Now, over 5700 Tasmanians earn a living directly or indirectly from our forestry sector. These are real jobs supporting Tasmanian families and communities, allowing them to build a future of their own choosing, not one scripted by Labor and the Greens.

Exports are up. The TasPorts annual report for 2021-22 shows that the volume of forestry products transitioning annually through our ports is now over 3.5 million tonnes. This is a more than 45 per cent increase on the 2014-15 year - our first full year in government, a sign that our approach is working. With the world increasingly demanding sustainably produced

wood and fibre from tier one jurisdictions, Tasmania is in the box seat to support our own needs and that of others.

Investment and confidence are up. Leadership matters and this Liberal Government makes no apologies in standing up for our forestry sector. Our unwavering support has given the industry the confidence it needs to invest, to grow and create jobs. From when we first came to government with Ta Ann opening a \$15 million Smithton plywood mill and Forico reopening their \$9.5 million Surrey Hills mill, through to Timberlink's \$63 million expansion of their Bell Bay mill and the up to \$23 million investment in production and processing across the state brought about by a \$6 million injection from our forestry On-Island Processing Program, Tasmanian forestry has had the confidence to invest and grow under a Liberal government.

Some of the people thrown out of work in Victoria through Dan Andrews' catastrophic decisions are Tasmanians now looking to come home, displaced not once but twice by an anti-forestry Labor government. In a state with more timber jobs than available workers, we should welcome them with open arms to help lift our industry's capacity and capability. With the right approach, Tasmanian industry can benefit from new markets for our premium timber, and new skilled workers to fill longstanding vacancies.

It would be remiss of me not to speak of our public forest managers, Sustainable Timber Tasmania, in my contribution. STT's most recent annual report was laid in this place late last year. It showed our sustainable native forests provided nearly 1.4 million tonnes of timber, including over 115 800 cubic metres of high-quality sawlog - wood that includes the appearance-grade timber we love in our homes and public buildings.

Alongside paying over \$100 million to almost 650 Tasmanian businesses, STT also prepared more than 6 300 hectares for growing. It also planted approximately 117 million tree seeds in a single year to regenerate new forest in Tasmania. They undertook fuel reduction burns on 5600 hectares of bush to protect it from catastrophic wildfires. They managed 10 000 kilometres of roads to give access to remote parts of Tasmania to firefighters, bee keepers and tourism operators. I thank the team at STT for their efforts and hard work in managing our forests sustainably for the benefit of Tasmania, now and into the future. I know they are proud to be part of this fantastic industry, and many of them are part of the communities they work in too - very valued people.

Forestry enables us to meet the needs of a modern society in a carbon-constrained world, whether we are planting a natural forest or an industrial plantation. In time, we will grow the only renewable building material, our best alternative to single-use plastics, and a store of carbon for decades, if not centuries. While the Greens may not like to hear this, sustainable forestry management is part of the solution to climate change - not the opposite.

Our sustainable forest manager approach is reinforced by the IPCC and supports jobs in forestry, rather than the job-destroying lock-ups by those opposite. Unlike the Greens, we do not agree that ceasing all native forestry is the best approach for mitigating bushfires and climate change. Our strategy is informed by science, not opinions. It aims to balance conservation and use, to provide the optimal framework for atmospheric carbon reduction and timber production.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Tasmania's large productive forest estate sequesters carbon and provides society with low-emission products. More than half of Tasmanian forests - almost 1.8 million hectares - are already protected in reserves. Further, the overwhelming majority of trees harvested in Tasmania are plantation and regrowth forests.

Plantation timber alone cannot provide the full range of products, or meet current market demand. That is a fact. Sustainable native forestry helps fill the gap, and Tasmanians want Tasmanian timber. They want to support Tasmanian jobs. They are not interested in seeing our forestry sector offshored to countries with weaker environmental protections than our own. This is what will happen if the Greens shut our sustainable native forestry sector down. Unlike Labor in Western Australia and Victoria, we do not intend to shut our sustainable native forest sector down.

Despite the Greens' fantasies and Labor's neglect, the reality is that Tasmania does forestry as well as anywhere in the world. We do it well because we are blessed with a geography and environment that is suited to growing trees. We do it well because we do forestry in a way that is sustainable and renewable. We do it well because of the people the industry attracts - innovative, hardworking, creative and dedicated.

On this side of the House, we are committed to the long-term sustainable management of our forests for the benefit of all Tasmanians. Tasmania is already a bright spot, but we can be the shining beacon. We will deliver on this with industry in a way that finds a place for everyone, millers big and small, the special-species supply chain, and the contractors who make it all possible.

Madam Deputy Speaker, now is our opportunity to grow Tasmania forestry for the generations to come.

[5.20 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, first of all, I would like to state for the record something that is pretty obvious to anybody who has been in this place for a while and actually listens. Tasmanian Labor absolutely supports the native forest sector in Tasmania, and we absolutely, 100 per cent, stand behind Tasmanian timber workers. We do not support the end of native forestry in Tasmania. We absolutely do not.

It is a shame we come to this point today, where we have a backbench member who no doubt thinks it is a great idea to really ramp up the politics of the Tasmanian native forest sector, when what we could have done - and we may still have a chance today - is to do something really positive for the Tasmanian native forest sector: for the Labor and Liberal parties to come together in an unequivocal statement of support for the native forest sector. That would be a really good thing, instead of the petty politicking that we see.

If the member who brought this motion today had been paying any attention, he might have noticed, on 24 July, Labor launching our Tasmania First Forest Policy. This is not a policy to shut down the native forest sector. This is a policy to try to help the Tasmanian native forest sector. It states in the media release associated with the media event at Neville Smith's Forest Products in Mowbray:

Tasmanian Labor will seek to work with independent MPs John Tucker and Lara Alexander to create a Tasmania First Forest Policy.

This is in the media release from Rebecca White:

Today, I toured Neville Smith Forest Products at Mowbray.

Saw mill operators and forestry industry leaders have shared their concern about the future of the industry under Premier Jeremy Rockliff and Minister Felix Ellis. Mills like this one at Mowbray face an uncertain future unless Minister Ellis is pulled into line.

They also expressed concern that Minister Ellis and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania will award a contract to a mainland saw miller at the expense of a local Tasmanian company, putting Tasmanian jobs at risk.

In the middle of a housing and cost-of-living crisis, this approach means that intergenerational Tasmanian businesses may be forced to reduce jobs or even close.

After 10 years in office, it is clear that the minority Liberal Government has done little to protect our forestry industry and ensure that regional businesses and jobs continue to thrive across the state.

A Labor Government will get to work on putting Tasmania and Tasmanians first, ensuring that regional businesses, jobs and economies are protected.

That is our position. That does not say, shut down native forestry. That says, protect Tasmanian jobs. The way you do that is by giving them some certainty.

Let us go to the motion just for a second before I come back to the Tasmanian First Forest policy that we are proposing. There is a lot in this motion that we can agree on. The first point notes the importance of the \$1.2 billion sustainable forest sector to the Tasmanian economy. It is crucial, especially for regional economies, that the Tasmanian native forest sector continues to operate.

The problem is, there is a lot of uncertainty at the moment around the contracts. We know there are 137 000 cubic metres of high-quality sawlogs legislated to be supplied every year. We also know that those logs are not being supplied. We also know from Sustainable Timber Tasmania's *Sustainable Yield* report that before we get to 2027, those major sawmillers are going to have to rely on plantation timber, especially *Eucalyptus nitens*, which is not a great product for sawing in a sawmill. It is not the same as native forestry. That is happening under your Government's watch, Mr Young. This is the uncertainty that is being created.

The other question on the lips of sawmillers in Tasmania is not Tasmanian Labor's stand on the native forest sector, because we have been very clear. We support the native forest sector. The question on their lips is, what is this Government - and especially this minister, Mr Ellis - going to do about the plantation sawlog supply? What is the future there? Is it going to go to open tender? Are the Victorians, who you have just been speaking about, going to come in and buy up all these plantation sawlogs? What about all the sawlogs that are going across Bass Strait every week? I did not hear you mention that. This is the uncertainty this Government is creating.

This motion could be so much better.

Point (2) further notes that -

(a) native forestry is sustainable.

We agree with that.

(b) provides timber to build houses.

It does, except most of the timber going into build houses is actually pine from plantations. That is only a minor detail.

(c) is fibre for a plastic-free future.

Absolutely. There are some really exciting things that could happen with wood fibre being turned into other products via plastics. We can agree with that.

(d) helps actively manage our bushfire-prone landscape.

That is correct. If we do not have roads going into these areas, if we do not manage the forests, then they will burn and it will be very difficult to control. We agree with that.

(e) sequesters carbon.

(f) supports thousands of secure jobs in regional communities and has done for generations.

We agree with that. Why we have created the Tasmania-first forest policy is to try all we can to protect those thousands of secure jobs in regional communities. That is what we are trying to do. The uncertainty that your Government is creating is not helping to secure jobs in regional communities. It is putting them in doubt.

Then we get to point (3), the politics, the ideological attacks.

Then we get to point (4), 'Agrees to stand with the industry and timber workers and support Tasmania's world class native forest sector'. We can do that. We can agree with that.

Let us talk about our Tasmania-first timber policy. Nick Steel, from the Tasmanian Forest Products Association, wrote a letter to Jeremy Rockliff, the Premier:

I write to formally express our dismay at the decision of Sustainable Timbers Tasmania (STT) to commence an open Expression of Interest (EOI) process for some or all the hardwood plantation resource under the control that has been managed for future saw log supply. It has been previously understood by all parties that the saw log managed (ie thinned and pruned) plantation resource would not be contracted for supply in part or in whole before 2027 when current high quality saw log (HQSL) contracts expire and the native forest saw log volume drops by some 60% below the legislated annual volume of 137,000 m³.

We have been seeking to have this process delayed and we have made that request in writing and in formal meetings involving STT and your Minister for Resources about when, how and under what conditions the saw log resource will be managed, priced and allocated. To date our request has been denied and STT has confirmed that it fully intends to commence the open EOI process within a matter of weeks.

We hereby request your intervention to put the open EOI process on hold and to establish a process and formal meetings between TFPA's existing HQSL contract holders, STT and the Minister for Resources to negotiate a resolution including an agreement that recognises we are in a transition period where HQSL from STT will no longer principally be supplied from native timber post-2027 but also from STT plantations. TFPA believes the outcome must be underpinned by the following principles -

- The Government recognises that it needs to develop a framework for prioritising access to STT's wood supply capacity that is in the best interests of the State with a particular reference to regional Tasmania; and
- As a starting principle the Government preference is to provide confidence to existing STT HQSL customers and they should have the opportunity to negotiate on commercial terms with STT to recontract, as a minimum, their existing volumes as current contracts expire; and
- That the Government recognises each of the current STT HQSL contract holders is a valued employer and economic contributor to the State and therefore should have first opportunity, ahead of potential new customers, to reach commercial terms with STT for its volume of available HQSL; and
- Some contracted sawmills have plans that could expand their saw log demand. These potential supply needs are not currently contracted, and this highlights the importance of a prioritisation framework for access to STT's HQSL supply capacity as STT manages this transition phase until sufficiently new supply is available; and
- That the Government publicly state that no STT HQSL will be exported from Tasmania in log or flitch form if it can be processed to lumber or finished product onshore; and
- The Government acknowledges the market dominance of STT and therefore agrees that an independent pricing mechanism is needed to ensure contract terms are reached that guarantee fair market price for the public resource whilst at the same time providing a mechanism to make sure that STT's demanded price can be independently audited to determine if the terms are fair and reasonable and not subject to an abuse of market power.

Premier we seek an urgent meeting with our member HQSL contract holders, yourself and the Minister for Resources about these substantive matters of concern to us.

In the interim and as an effort to preserve the status quo whilst such a meeting is being scheduled and all matters in dispute are being progressed, we request that the Government instruct STT not to proceed with the open EOI process for the plantation resource, tender it for sale or otherwise allocate that hardwood plantation resource.

Yours sincerely
Bryan Hayes
Chair

This was CCd to the Minister for Resources, Felix Ellis.

Labor supports the stance by the Tasmanian Forest Products Association and in a letter to Mr Nick Steel, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Forest Products Association, it said:

Thank you for taking the time to meet Dean and myself yesterday morning. It was extremely concerning to hear about the risk currently faced by the industry as a result of the recent decisions and actions of STT and the Tasmanian Government.

I would like to thank you for the constructive solutions presented during the meeting.

Subject to a more detailed policy discussion, the Tasmanian Labor Party supports the six proposals outlined in the TFPA's letter to the Premier and yesterday I also publicly expressed the Labor Party's strong support for the actions the Government needs to take immediately to rectify the current situation.

I will be writing to members of the crossbench and seeking to work with them and the rest of the parliament to ensure Tasmania's interests are protected.

However, in the long term, I believe Tasmania needs a Tasmania-first Timber Policy and would be grateful for a further opportunity to formalise the intent of your proposals within this policy.

Rebecca White, Labor leader, said:

I would also be interested to discuss the opportunities that exist to expand the downstream processing capacity of the Tasmanian timber industry and would welcome any proposals you might have in this respect.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with us yesterday. When Shane Broad returns from leave he will be in touch with you to discuss these matters further.

That is 100 per cent in support of the industry. The question is, where is the Liberal support for the proposals the TFPA has raised? There are concerns about the TFPA not being given the opportunity to speak with the minister. It was quite clear in the letter that engagement has been lacking.

We can all move on from this. What we can do today is have a motion before the parliament that unequivocally states that the parliament supports the Tasmanian native forest sector.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the motion be amended by deleting point (3).

All I am doing here is deleting all the politics out of this motion. It would then be an unequivocal statement that the House supports the Tasmanian native forest sector.

We can all come out of today looking a bit better than some of the political toing and froing. The member bringing the motion, Mr Young, said Tasmanian Labor is going to shut down the Tasmanian native forest sector. It is clear we are not. Let us pass this motion so that we can all stand together and hold hands in favour of support of the native forest sector. It would become quite clear when the vote is taken that -

Dr Woodruff - We are not going to be holding your hands, Mr Broad.

Dr BROAD - I know that the Greens are not going to support such a motion but would it not be a great way for the timber industry to see that in the Parliament of Tasmania we are moving beyond petty politics, which I think is involved in point (3). An unequivocal statement of support for the Tasmanian native forest sector would be a good thing. The industry really wants to see this. The industry wants to see the two major parties in Tasmania stand united behind the jobs that the native forest sector creates and put that statement out there that we do not support the shutdown of the native forest sector. Let us do that today, let us do something positive for the day. This is the last debate that we are going to have before the adjournment. We could have something quite positive come out of the Tasmanian parliament today. If the Government votes down this simple amendment to delete clause (3), then it is obvious to everybody, including the Tasmanian timber industry, the native forest sector, that this Government would rather play politics and have a motion like that create that wedge rather than operate in the best interest of the native forest sector.

Let us all stand together today. Let us work together and put that clear statement out that the Labor and Liberal parties, and maybe the Independents - everybody except the Greens; I am pretty sure the Greens will not support this - stand united in support of the native forest sector. Why do we have to put the politics in this motion? You are obviously concerned that the Tasmanian Labor Party is going to shut down the native forest sector. We are not going to do that. We stand behind the native forest sector and our Tasmania First forest policy clearly demonstrates that we see a very bright future for the Tasmanian native forest sector and those sawmillers reliant on the Tasmanian native timber. Why not do something positive today? There is an opportunity here.

I have proposed the amendment. I hope it is supported because that way, the timber industry will see that Tasmanian Labor and the Tasmanian Liberal Party stand behind the

Tasmanian timber industry, that we note the importance of the \$1.2 billion sustainable forest sector and that all of those things in point (2) are absolutely true: that it is sustainable; provides timber for houses; is this plastic-free future that we are working towards; it helps actively manage our bushfire-prone landscapes; sequesters carbon; supports thousands of jobs. And we agree to stand with the industry and Tasmanian timber workers to support Tasmania's world-class native forest sector. How about we do that today, instead of the politics that carries on in point (3)? We could do something really positive instead of simply playing politics because I know the timber industry wants to see us stand together, wants to see us hold the fort, wants to see us not do what the Greens want. We absolutely want a native forest sector that thrives, that creates jobs, one that processes timber in Tasmania, does not slab it up and send it to Victoria, does not see hundreds of trucks go every week to Victoria. We as a parliament stand behind the native forest sector. How about we do that today instead of the rank politics that is contained in point (3)? Therefore, I move my amendment.

[5.38 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, the Greens will not be supporting the amendment and we will not be supporting the motion.

Let me explain our reasons why we will not support the amendment. Labor is in a very hard place here. I do not think anyone who has been watching what has been happening across the country, who understands what is happening in forestry and native forestry in Australia, will be surprised to understand that the Labor Party is on a lose-lose policy here.

Mr Winter - Why is that?

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr Winter, we are in a climate emergency, because we are in a global biodiversity crisis, including and especially in Australia. Tasmania has both the greatest carbon-rich stores of native forest in the country and the most substantial intact ecosystems remaining in Australia. We are responsible not just on behalf of lutruwita/Tasmania's and the Australian community but the global community for the protection of our carbon-rich stores and our biodiversity. In this century we have not decades but five years, two years, one year, the scientists tell us, to dramatically and urgently cut our carbon emissions. There is no doubt and all the evidence is very clear. I do not think anyone in the Chamber would disagree that Tasmania's native forests are an enormous carbon store. What happens every time they are logged and burnt is that all of those carbon emissions are released into the atmosphere. It is clear from the evidence globally that about 12 per cent of global greenhouse emissions are caused by deforestation and logging.

I take exception with Mr Harriss's characterisation of support from the global scientific community for deforesting native communities around the planet because, obviously, we have to do everything we can at this point to keep our carbon stores intact. We know that if we focus on reducing Tasmania's logging and burning of native forests, we would be removing 4.21 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere each year. That is greater than our entire transport sector. Every single year the emissions from our transport sector are exceeded by emissions from native forest logging.

It is just a question of this year, next year or in five years' time that native forest logging ends in Tasmania. It is a question of how long Tasmanian Labor holds out against the views of the Labor Party across the country, which are pushed into this space by the increasing awareness about the urgency of acting on the climate emergency, and by young people who

are voting for a future that is liveable on a planet that still has a biodiversity that is rich and beautiful like it is in Tasmania. We know we have the children of the future standing with us when we say we have to end native forest logging and burning, and we have to do it immediately.

It is incumbent on the Labor and Liberal parties to stop playing opportunistic politics with regional Tasmanian communities and start talking about a just transition. We only have a matter of years and here they are, pretending that we can have a sustainable native forest logging industry. They are using regional communities for political advantage. They are using them to win elections. Dr Broad made an adjournment speech before we rose for the winter break and accused the Greens of putting regional communities, forest contractors and sawmillers out of work in regional communities, and he listed a whole bunch of things that are done in the native forest industry. The amusing thing is that if only Dr Broad would read the Greens' policy, he would understand that we recognise the skills of people who are working in the native forest industry. We recognise the value of those skills as we transition very quickly into repurposing the people working in the native forest sector into working on restoring forests and protecting communities from the increasing threat of bushfires, rather than getting rid of intact, moist forests, making the landscape, particularly around regional communities, drier as the ground gets clearfelled and burnt, then left to regrow. It grows woody habitat and it takes years and years for that to become a growing forest, and it will take hundreds and hundreds of years for it to start to get to the level of carbon stores that we have today.

We do not even have five years and I do not know how anyone in this Chamber can talk about time lines where we replace carbon stores in hundreds of years. Go and talk to your children and have that conversation. See what they think about that. See if they think that is okay. We will get rid of something that is a 200-year-old or 500-year-old tree. 'Don't worry, we'll grow it back. It will be 300 or 400 years but the carbon will come back.' This is not a one-for-one exchange. That is what underlies the myth of native forest logging that is perpetuated by both parties - that it is a great carbon-neutral exercise. You cut a tree down, you grow another tree, isn't it beautiful? Well, that is not the way it works because when you cut a tree down, you release an enormous amount of carbon - not just from the log itself and from the stand itself, but from under the ground and all the forest carbon, as well as the burning that goes on.

I think you would know by now - and if you do not, I will give you this report, which is being released by the Wilderness Society, The Tree Project, and includes the scientific work of Dr Jennifer Sanger. From the total forest biomass of 100 per cent of the carbon-intact rich forest, we end up with 1 per cent of that wood being turned into sawlog and timber in Tasmania - 99 per cent of it does not get used as furniture, houses, all the other things you like to pretend. That is not what happens to it -

Dr Broad - What happens to it? Does it evaporate?

Dr WOODRUFF - About 24 per cent ends up in paper products that are disappeared. Carbon gone. It is not locked-up carbon. That carbon is gone in one to two years. That is how long it lasts. You have 10 per cent mill waste - where does that go? It disappears. It turns into methane as it is composting. You should know that.

You have slash-burning and woody debris left on the site - 60 per cent of the biomass is left on the site. So, in total, you get 4 per cent that is saw logs, and only 1 per cent of it turns into timber; 7 per cent is peeler logs, 29 per cent is pulp, 60 per cent is burned.

Dr Broad - What is your alternative?

Dr WOODRUFF - The alternatives are there on the table. We already have a plantation timber forest sector that provides more than enough wood than we need for Tasmania.

Mr Winter - No, it is not enough. You are so ignorant.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, the work has been done, Mr Winter. We have to transition. We have to find another way of doing things because the planet demands it.

Mr Winter - There is not enough plantation -

Dr WOODRUFF - We do not get to play. We do not get to decide how much carbon goes into the atmosphere anymore. We have already exceeded our budget, gone past the amount that scientists consider is the tipping point. We cannot put any more in there.

This is an opportunity for the Labor Party to take a look at itself. Maybe the Liberal Party should try too, but at least the Labor Party is getting a lot of pressure. I am very confident this is something that will be resolved in a couple of years, but in the meantime, every single day, there are forests being logged in Tasmania that are habitat for critically endangered species such as the swift parrot - in the very area that Rob Blakers took his beautiful photographs, the most moving pictures of beautiful little parrots that fly around to different places each year depending on where the flowering happens. This parrot, the fastest parrot on earth, that comes to Tasmania to feed and breed each year, only goes to old nesting trees and certain types of trees.

The Government appears intent on actively identifying the coupes where swift parrots go, and chopping down those trees. It appears to be a systematic approach in identifying the threatened forest communities and exterminating them, with the purpose of making the pesky little parrot no longer with us.

Right now, we have people who have protested peacefully in those forests out of real desperation because the Government is allowing critically endangered species to walk very close to extinction, and allowing forest carbon to be released when we need to keep it in the ground - when scientists around the world are decrying what is happening and pleading with governments that have the responsibility to change their course.

This is the opportunity for the Labor and Liberal parties to look at employing and reskilling forestry workers to increase the carbon sequestration opportunities available on all land tenures in Tasmania, on private land and on Tasmania's forest reserve estate. It does mean repurposing staff from Forestry Tasmania and moving appropriate staff into a new agency, which we would call Forests Tasmania, which would restore degraded forest landscapes to make more of the carbon we sequester there. We can have even more carbon in our forests.

Why would we not want to increase the amount of carbon we have captured? That would be a great thing. It seems like we should not be having these conversations, because some

things are really hard to reduce our carbon emissions from and other things are really easy. There are regional communities around Tasmania with people with skills, and they should be looking at restoring landscapes to make them safer for local communities in bushfire events, so that they are less likely to burn, to help forests move as quickly as possible towards being a wetter, moister understorey, to remove the sorts of things that slow forests down to regrowth.

We do not support the amendment that is being proposed. We do not think Labor should get off the hook on this. It is true that 300 Labor branches have backed a push to see native forestry shut down across the country. We understand it is true that there is a motion to be moved from the floor at the ALP national conference to end native forest logging in all states.

That is a great thing and we support that which is why we will stand with everyone in Tasmania and around the country at the End Native Forest Logging rallies that are going to be held across the country leading up to the Labor Party conference. We will give our support to members of the Labor Party who are trying desperately to draw the attention of their party to the walk of death - which is what the party is taking. To continue with native forest logging is walking us into a future that will no longer be habitable for human beings.

Antonio Guterres, the Secretary of the United Nations, has used some very strong language about the dangerous situation with the climate heating. 'Climate boiling' is what he has called it. He has been ridiculed for using strong language, but I have been watching him over the years. He has been listening and speaking to scientists from the IPCC. He is a very measured person who has obviously been driven to use increasingly strong, clear language because people are not listening. He is doing his best. Good on him, he is doing his best. He is trying to reflect the reality of scientists who are very anxious and concerned about what is happening so quickly to the climate.

We should all be concerned to do everything we can to bring down our emissions, and to put the way we do business under the microscope - and to identify everything we can be doing to reduce emissions and increasing habitat for birds, animals, butterflies, bees and all the other insects and wildlife that are not just beautiful in their own right, but an essential part of the cycle of life - a cycle of life that we humans are a part of. Sometimes we forget that. It is time to wake up and remember it.

[5.54 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon - Minister for Resources) - Mr Speaker, I will be reasonably quick because I know the Independent member wants to speak again. I will say, however, that without the former leader of the Greens in this place, these debates certainly seem to have lost a bit of vim and vigour from the Greens. I think the new leader of the Greens has not quite got the same fight in her, even if I did not agree with the former leader. However, one of the things she is quite good at is telling the truth. She really has told the truth about the Labor Party and what their future plans really look like. The carry-on from the Leader of the Greens saying that it is only a question of time.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Mr Speaker. Could you please draw your attention to the members misuse of my title? It is the Leader of the Greens.

Mr SPEAKER - I do not have a standing order to be able to do that. The member should refer each individual member appropriately.

Dr Woodruff - By the correct title I think.

Mr ELLIS - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Dr Woodruff did say it was only a question of time before Labor bans native forestry, and that the Greens will be supporting any members of Labor that do so. Frankly, the truth is out there. You do not even need to vote for a Labor-Greens government like we sadly did in Tasmania a decade ago. You just need to vote for a Labor government, certainly interstate. It is interesting that Labor supports so much of this motion, so ably moved by Mr Young, and absolutely spot on.

The reason they support it is because everything in there is the truth. Number three is also the truth. Dr Woodruff did make this point quite clearly. Labor has shut down native forestry in Western Australia. Has Labor shut down native forestry in Western Australia? I will take that as a yes: Victoria, by the end of 2023; this year.

Dr Broad - How about you get on and do your job instead of playing politics? Is that the place you are exporting our jobs to?

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ELLIS - That is the truth. More than 300 Labor branches have backed the push to see native forestry shut down across the country and at the upcoming ALP national conference. Is that the truth? We know it is the truth.

This is a factual motion that clearly just sets out what is going on when it comes to forestry. We have a federal Labor government. That is a significant risk for this place. Mr Young spoke about the significant risk from Victoria's shutdown as well. We will not be supporting Labor's amendment to remove the truth from this motion. We know Mr Winter is very touchy and awkward about this, because his branch is part of the Labor's environmental 'green ginger group' that wants to shut down native forestry.

Mr Winter - I am not in that branch.

Mr ELLIS - We know he struggled with pre-selection. We know he is one of the three Labor contestants for the leadership at the next opportunity. He is trying to differentiate himself from the leader who shut down forestry in Triabunna, from the other former leader who was part of the Cabinet that shut down forestry under a Labor-Greens government, that shut down and locked up hundreds of thousands of hectares. We know Mr Winter is just trying to differentiate himself from his colleagues in a lame attempt to try to make a pitch for what is left of the sensible part of the Labor Party.

We will not be supporting the amendment that seeks to remove truth from this motion, but we will of course be supporting the motion. Mr Young is an outstanding representative of the Huon and Franklin that is really part of the heart and soul of the timber communities in Tasmania. I thank the House for its time.

[5.59 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I have been following this motion and reached out to industry people to understand their position and what they like to see happening. Their position is that they would like to see some consensus happening in this parliament. They would like to not see wedge politics; there is no need for that. It is a serious matter. There are

many things that need to be considered. I personally do not like wedge politics either. We need to debate on substance, and if we are to be truthful to the industry, we need to be truthful in fact, not in just words.

For me, as nice as parts of this motion sounded, and recognising the importance of the industry, they are just words. What the industry wants to see is consensus. It wants to see how we move forward.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER - The question is that the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 17

Mrs Alexander
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ellis
Mr Ferguson
Ms Finlay
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mr Tucker
Ms White
Mr Winter
Mr Wood (Teller)
Mr Young

NOES 3

Mr Bayley
Ms Johnston (Teller)
Dr Woodruff

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Women in Business

[6.07 p.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark - Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about women in business. Having taken on the ministerial responsibility for women I take the opportunity to speak of the significance that this role plays in the advancement of Tasmanian women and girls. This role is critical no matter where you are at in your life or your life stage.

The inroads made by women, particularly Tasmanian women, in business is a testament to a mindset change and a testament to our Government's approach to empowerment and

mentoring of women. It is a testament to the confidence women and girls have in their own abilities: abilities that I really do want them to have the opportunity to hone in on and grasp to the fullest of their potential.

Take, for example, the many businesses I meet with and hear from. I need to look no further than the many wonderful small businesses that set up early at Saturday's Salamanca Markets. Businesses like Simone and Co Design, Bagdad Pottery and Emma Hope Retro and Vintage. They are examples of highly successful women in small businesses. In my electorate of Clark, I also have the aptly-named Suffragette Records. I highly recommend that you go to see their store of female recordings and female artists. It is a marvellous space. I am delighted for their success.

Today I spoke a little of Kelly Elphinstone, who we all know and have deep respect for at Elphinstone. That company was recently successful in a joint bid with Hanwha Defense Group to be part of the LAND 400 Phase 3 programs. It is a multi-billion dollar project. It is quite remarkable and the success has been a long time coming, with a lot of hard work by many.

There are many more - too many fantastic women to list. Please know that I am proud, and this Liberal Government stands shoulder to shoulder with them. We will always stand with our female entrepreneurs and our small business women and our business women in general.

These are the sorts of endeavours that warm my heart, not just because of the quality of the products and services that are provided. The makers and the women who work from home are fantastic providers and makers all. These are tangible outcomes of a renewed confidence knowing that you can achieve things if you set your mind to it. Reducing and removing those barriers to success in this area is something that we are focused on.

Across all facets of my portfolio responsibilities women are playing a more strategic role and taking up more leadership roles than ever. Whether it is advanced manufacturing, defence industries, science and technology or the preservation and telling of our important cultural heritage stories, women are at the forefront.

We are a government supportive of enterprising Tasmanian women and girls. As a government, it is up to us to set the tone, set the investment and policy settings to ensure that the context is conducive to greater female confidence, participation and inclusion. Investment is good - investment funds programs and develops strategies. Investment also amplifies impact, and we see this time and time again.

Having been fundamental to the establishment of the Tasmanian SSLW - yes, a league of their own - I know the power of the greater good. By opening the doors truly and equitably to women, we see amazing things start to happen. Women's football is important and it is powering in Tasmania. On that note, I also want to give a big shout-out and congratulations to the Matildas for their win on Monday night. We are hoping for an Australia-Sweden showdown so that my Swedish sister-in-law and I can Zoom and watch that game together. And how about those Diamonds with their fourth World Cup title? Quite remarkable work.

As a mother of a daughter, mother of three and sons, I want to give sureness to future generations of Tasmanian women that all is possible. As a government, as a community and, broadly, as a cohesive society, addressing gender inequalities is not a quick thing to be achieved. It is a journey. We do not want to be haphazard. We want to keep our eye on

working through the issues. It requires conversation, engagement, critical thinking and, yes, at times there will be debate.

Our Government continues to support women, and foster and nurture an environment in which aspirations can be fulfilled without so much as a glass ceiling being encountered. Through our Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-2027 we emphasise that equal means equal. Ensuring a commitment that all women and girls in Tasmania feel and are safe and can fully participate in economic, social, political and community life is very dear to my heart.

Junior Sports - Tribute to Volunteers

[6.12 p.m.]

Mr YOUNG (Franklin) - I rise tonight to talk about something very important to time-starved parents, the last weekend of the year for junior footy, a time when we celebrate three crucial things: our kids not breaking any bones, our eardrums surviving the screams of both joy and agony and, importantly, the unbelievable magic spun by our great volunteers. Tasmania is not just known for its majestic landscapes or the love of Vegemite toast. It is known for our junior sports and the tireless troop of volunteers who make it all tick.

Being a parent in the stands is not the tough gig. I have lost count of the times I have yelled, 'That is my kid', only to remember a moment later it is not or the number of Saturdays I have accidentally cheered louder for the coffee cart arriving than for an actual goal. If I am the mightily embarrassing parent on the sidelines, the volunteers are the real MVPs. They are the ones drawing up plays, tying shoelaces and occasionally diving in as amateur referees when 10-year-olds passionately debate the meaning of holding the ball.

Speaking of sidelines, have you ever noticed how our volunteers are everywhere? They are at the barbecue stands ensuring our sausages are cooked to perfection with just the right amount of accidental charcoal. They are collecting the balls that get booted into orbit and somehow calming down Tommy when he is adamant he saw a UFO mid-game. To all the volunteers, I salute you, with my extra-large coffee in hand.

Many of you might see junior sports as a rite of passage or a character-building exercise but did you know there is an economic angle to all this chaos? Behind every triumphant fist pump and occasionally misdirected kick, there is an intricate economic dance happening. For instance, those early-morning bakery runs, when you dash to grab those fresh pastries to console your kid after they put in what can only be described as a unique performance. That is local business thriving. Think of the jumpers, the shoes, the sporting gear flying off the shelves, all branded with our local teams. We are not just raising the next Richo or Ricky; we are keeping local businesses booming. Junior sports might just be the secret weapon to Tasmania's GDP. Just to be sure, though, make sure you buy that next coffee.

Our volunteers, in all their multi-talented glory, are key players in this narrative. They are not just fostering sportsmanship. They are driving an economic force. Every whistle blown, every fixture rearranged, every spilt orange slice replaced: they are strengthening a Tasmanian ecosystem of business, communities and overexcited children.

Yet for all the dollars and cents we can chat about, what is the real currency is junior sports? It is the memories, the laughter and the undeniable sense of community. Every time a

volunteer comforts a child who has missed a goal, or celebrates an unexpected win, they are weaving the social fabric of our great state. They are teaching our kids that Tasmania is not just an island; it is a home, it is a family, it is a community.

As we wrap up this rollercoaster of a sports season, with its highs, its lows and its questionable referee decisions, politely questioned, of course, let us remember the true heroes of the day. Not the high scorers or the flashy dribblers but the people who make it all possible. To our magnificent volunteers, especially those who have helped my kids this year, a heartfelt thank you from a parent who, thanks to you, has had countless hours of epic weekend battles, hilarious mix-ups and triumphant victories to recount. Let us keep the ball rolling in Tasmania - and if anyone sees my kid's left shoe, which has been missing since March, give me a shout.

Climate Change - Requirement for Responsible Use of Natural Resources

Cassy O'Connor - Tribute

[6.16 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I rise on this adjournment to talk about climate change. The United Nations' climate change report was put out in March 2023. The Greens raised this in parliament at the time.

I would like to mention Ms O'Connor and her leaving, and thank her for her service to the parliament. She was an incredible force of nature in this House. I have learnt a lot from her and enjoyed working on committees with her. We did not always see eye to eye, but most people in this room could say that about Ms O'Connor. She was extremely articulate, a fantastic user of language, and a very powerful woman. She will be missed in the House.

Going back to climate change, in 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which works within the United Nations, highlighted the unprecedented scale of the challenge required to keep warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Five years later, 2023, that challenge has become even greater due to a continued increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The pace and scale of what has been done so far and current plans are insufficient to tackle climate change. We have seen Europe, in places like Italy, Sicily and Syracuse, record their hottest temperatures ever. You hear the sceptics say, 'So they have been doing really good temperature monitoring for the last 2000 years in those places, have they?'. It is done through core samples and it is science.

What amazes me about the sceptics is they do not question the science when they need some form of surgery. They do not question the science behind astrology. They do not question the science behind NASA. When it comes to something as important as climate change, I do not know whether it is fear, commercialism or whether it was all the anti-marketing that happened in the 1980s but this is a very serious issue and something we all need to take extremely seriously from now on, especially as lawmakers.

More than a century of burning fossil fuels, as well as unequal and unsustainable energy and land use, has led to a global warming of 1.1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This has resulted in more frequent, more intense extreme weather events which are causing increasingly dangerous impacts on nature and people in every region of the world.

We are unique in Tasmania. We are emissions-negative and we have a small population. We have some of the cleanest water and air in the world. We are unique in that situation and we need to ensure that we look after our natural resources as well as we can. We need to harvest timber, we need to have some balance with that because we need timber to build houses. We have to be practical but we have to make sure that we have a balance with our natural resources. We are at an incredible advantage already compared to many places around the world. We can be seen as leaders in this area.

We are not doing enough at all. This Government's record of sustainability reporting is absolutely disgraceful. They are still using it as a buzzword. They are still trying to find consultants to tell their government departments how sustainable they are but they are not taking these things seriously. Otherwise you would have a decent public transport system. You would have decent legislation on electric vehicles. You would have decent infrastructure in place to ensure that we can reduce emissions and become leaders in this area.

I thought Dr Broad spoke very well and I thought Dr Woodruff spoke very well. This is beyond politics. Some people use it for campaigning. Some people use the opposite for campaigning purposes. It is beyond that. Everyone in here has families, everyone in here has children. If you do not have children, you have nephews and nieces. Everyone here has an obligation. Our generation has not done enough. Our parents' generation did not do enough. It should not just be up to the young people to step up. We all have an obligation as lawmakers to really step up in this space.

Forest Protesters - Tribute

[6.21 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Ms Butler, I could not agree more. Well spoken.

Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the peaceful defenders of Tasmania's threatened forests. The right to peaceful protest in Australia is deeply ingrained and held by all of us. It is part of our identity. It is a core value of the Tasmanian Greens. We know that change only comes when we listen to people and give everyone in the community a voice. That involves allowing them to speak and peacefully protest on issues they care passionately about.

Peaceful protest has a long history in Tasmania. It has helped us to protect our wild places. It has helped us to secure the rights of workers, of women and of our LGBTI community, and, especially importantly, of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Tasmanians are passionate about their community and its natural places. We will always unite together to make things better. The peaceful defenders of our forest will continue to protest, to draw attention to and make a statement about the extent of environmental destruction under this Liberal Government, and about the special places on the island that need to be permanently protected.

If it were not for them, we would not be seeing the extent of destruction. Forest defenders are fighting every day in Tasmania to ensure, peacefully, that our children and grandchildren have a safe planet to live on and they have the beauty of lutruwita/Tasmania to be around as they grow older.

We know the Liberal Government does not share the same love that we do for the natural environment, and it has taken Tasmania onto a slow but steady march towards a police state. What we have now is draconian, anti-democratic anti-protest laws that were designed by this Government, with the support of Labor, to instil the fear of arrest in the community and to undermine our state's long, proud history of peaceful protest.

The Greens proudly voted against the anti-protest laws when they were introduced last year. We saw them for what they were. The Government was bowing to the interest of corporations, selling out the rights and interests of Tasmanians, selling out our wild places, our biodiversity and our children's heritage. They were bringing in severe sanctions for people who are non-violent.

At the time, they were some of the strongest in the country. Since then, successive Labor Party governments around the country have brought in their own versions of draconian anti-protest laws.

What we are increasingly seeing is Liberal and Labor governments together, the Labor governments around the rest of the country, overturning the rights of members of the community who are desperate to stop corporations from destroying the natural environment and our life-supporting atmosphere.

Tonight I want to pay tribute to the brave, peaceful protesters in our forests who are standing every day while we are here and putting their bodies on the line to protect the environment for all of us. They are standing up against bulldozers that clear-fell carbon-rich ancient forests. They are standing up for the animals that exist in lutruwita/Tasmania like nowhere else on Earth and those who have no voice in the parliament. They are forest defenders who protest peacefully as their constitutional rights allow them to. We know that our laws are anti-constitutional. People in Tasmania care about our forests so deeply. They are unique to our state, unique in the world.

Last year we said that the draconian anti-protest laws that came through parliament would not deter peaceful protesters in our forests and they would not stop people from standing up against governments and corporate actions that are contributing to the breakdown of the climate and the very fast destruction of diminishing biodiversity.

Five people were arrested at peaceful protests last year following the introduction of these laws. That includes two people arrested at the Venture Minerals mine site in the takayna/Tarkine and three arrests in swift parrot habitat in the Eastern Tiers, one of whom was Bob Brown. Last June, one of our dearest and most renowned wilderness photographers, Rob Blakers, was also arrested in the great forests of the Eastern Tiers. He was peacefully protesting to protect an area of habitat for the critically endangered swift parrot that was being clearfelled. Rob Blakers had last summer photographed it and was privileged to sit there and watch a group of 30 parrots who were nesting and feeding in the area. The 30 swift parrots make up 4 per cent of the remaining wild population, but still this Government continues to allow Forestry Tasmania to log their habitat.

Rob's reaction at the time was: 'How dare they? How can they so brazenly ignore all of the science, all of the advice they have received and just go in and smash this forest?' When he knew what was happening, he felt that he had to take a stand. His heart was breaking from the pain of watching the very trees that had been the nesting and feeding habitat for those

30 swift parrots that he had photographed last year being logged in front of his eyes. It shows that there are no regulations in this state to protect the natural environment that are worth the paper they are written on.

Dr Colette Harmsen is a qualified veterinarian who has worked for the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program for many years. She was jailed in July for three months for continuing to peacefully protest in our forests. It is the first time in 12 years that an activist has received prison time in Tasmania. I recently heard from Colette, who is currently in the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison. She is in good spirits and has written the following poem that I committed to reading into *Hansard*:

Rehabilitate me like you should
A forest's use is only wood
A masked owl's home is for the chop
I must obey the loggers' cop

A prison cell where I belong
To protect the Earth
Is never wrong

And if I ever disagree
The paddy wagon is for me

Mr Speaker, we thank these brave protesters. They are on the right side of history and they will continue to protest peacefully despite the threat of incarceration.

There will be logging rallies statewide this weekend and we look forward to hearing the people who stand up.

Time expired.

AFL and AFLW Player Pathways

[6.29 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - I rise this evening to comment on an important issue that has been in the Tasmanian community for months. It is about the elite pathways for Tasmanian football players.

Tasmanians are keen for an AFL team. Tasmanian Labor is keen for AFL and AFLW teams in Tasmania, but there is a gap in the pathway for players playing at the elite level.

Months ago, I wrote to the minister for Sport about players who are at the beginning of that pathway and see themselves with a future in the AFL. What is going to happen in Tasmania between now and when we achieve that outcome? We know there are players who are leaving Tasmania to secure this future for themselves, and that is not what should be happening right now, when we have such big ambitions for this state.

I took the opportunity a few weeks ago to meet with the NTFA and two of the standout clubs in the north, Launceston Football Club and North Launceston, and players as well.

I raise this tonight because there was a meeting today between the Launceston Football Club and AFL Tasmania. Over recent weeks there has been a lot of conjecture about the right way, or not the right way, to engage in those conversations to secure the future of elite football in Tasmania and, importantly, to secure that elite pathway for young Tasmanians who have for years dedicated themselves to their passion and their sport but are now being faced with a gap, at a time when they should be so excited about what is happening in the future.

I want to acknowledge both Launceston and North Launceston. They are organisations with significant history in Tasmania, and some of the oldest and most successful footy clubs in Tasmania. It seems to me that when they express concerns they should be heard, because they have a serious contribution to make to the conversation. It is unusual - it is a bit like the north-south, Melbourne-Sydney, those counterpoints that happen in conversation. It is a bit unusual for Launceston and North Launceston to stand together, but a few weeks ago they did stand together to raise their concerns to AFL Tasmania about the future of the TSL.

I know these concerns were expressed at the board level, coaching and support levels, and also by players of the club. It is not just about that elite pathway. In the absence of that elite pathway and the absence of successful clubs, you are also undermining those grassroots and junior opportunities, because both clubs have really strong programs right across the spectrum in footy.

Some meetings occurred. North Launceston chose not to attend the first meeting, but they did publicly and directly raise a series of questions that remain unanswered. I am happy to report that today the vice-president of North Launceston met with AFL Tasmania in what has been described as a first step in building a bridge to ongoing constructive conversations.

I suppose the questions that really remain are: is it actually possible to restructure and deliver an elite-level program in Tasmania in the time period that has been set out? Has there been a commitment made that there is no gap in that elite pathway for Tasmanians? Is it really the best thing to bring an end to the TSL in Tasmania?

These clubs and others across the state have been calling for more conversations and consultations. I trust that AFL Tasmania, from the feedback they had from the club today, are genuinely open to engage with and hear from the clubs to ensure that, as a state, we work towards having the best level of football in Tasmania; that the people who are there and have been building it for such time with great regard, great history, great clubs and great community are considered and listened to respectively in that conversation.

Mr Speaker, I also rise to shout out to the organisers of an incredible event called agriCULTURED. I had the opportunity to engage in a number of community and industry events over the days it was held in Launceston. It is one of those beautiful events that brings together a whole range of different sectors in our community. There are producers, people who deliver incredible food in our community, there are creatives, there are people talking about food security, or about the most elegant gastronomical creations of Tasmania. They bring in people from across the state and further afield into Tasmania and Launceston to have great conversations about the future of food, food security and food environments for our communities here.

I had a chance to engage with the community gardens network at the community garden at Inveresk, which has been a really fantastic development and is open to the community at any

time. On arrival at the Inveresk precinct, there were two school groups that had been in and around the community garden. There were a number of community gardens from the Tamar and Meander Valley area that held masterclasses and showcases. That was one of the great first days of the program. There were a lot of conversations in the city over dinners. There was a producers' dinner on one evening. One of my favourite events, that I have attended three years in a row, is a Saturday night dinner that brings together fire and ferment. Ferment Tasmania partners in this dinner at Timbre to celebrate the great produce and the great delivery of service in Tasmania. It also raises funds for RAW. Anyone aware of the work of Rural Alive and Well will know how important it is. On the night, over \$5000 was raised. We wish you well in future years.

Fred 'Chocka' Bloch OAM - Tribute

[6.36 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, tonight I rise on the adjournment to pay my respects to Fred 'Chocka' Bloch. Today, hundreds of people gathered in Adelaide to say farewell to Fred Bloch OAM, celebrate his life and mourn his passing. No doubt hundreds of people across the country and across the world tuned in via the online service.

I played two years of football at the Adelaide University Football Club, where I forged some of the greatest friendships and learnt some of life's greatest lesson. A big part of that was due to the influence and leadership of Fred 'Chocka' Bloch. The Adelaide University Football Club posted a tribute today to Fred on its Facebook page. I would like to read some of that into *Hansard*, and pay my respects to Fred Bloch.

Fred Bloch OAM was a beloved leader of the Adelaide University Football Club. Fred forged the modern day-culture of the footie club. He changed the lives of a generation of footballers with his irreverence and compassion. He inspired us to be more tolerant and kinder. He was a towering figure in the history of the club, a club he loved passionately. Fred passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family. He was 83.

Chocka was a creative genius that turned a great football club into the World's Greatest Football Club. When people notice how different The Blacks are to other clubs, it was Chocka who inspired it.

The Blacks is the club's nickname.

He was a champion footballer with North Adelaide and worked at the NAB in Adelaide and then became a well-regarded professor of economics at the University of Adelaide. He coached at the Adelaide University for a number of years, and then he switched his attention to running the club for the next 25 years.

Chocka changed things. He upgraded the Saturday night post-match presentation. Rather than just reading out lists of goal kickers, best players and sponsors, Chocka turned it into an early evening floor show. Perched on a chair at the back of the Queens Head Hotel, he introduced group singing, sometimes a live band, and told stories from all the matches. Minor, less talented footballers were talked about as much or more than the best ones.

The show was called 'Hold your Bowlies' and it was spellbinding, hilarious, generous, inappropriate and reckless all at the same time.

Chocka gave me the responsibility of doing a couple of those Hold your Bowlies sessions and a couple of times I did it with my good mate and fellow teammate, Anthony Lehmann, who you have seen on *Utopia*. He is a good mate of mine, and we did that together over a number of weekends.

It was the hour that brought the club together, made everyone feel welcome, made everyone feel like they belonged. It was a night out for those who didn't have anything better on offer. It was the cornerstone of a community, a celebration of kindness and silliness, and a reminder of the importance of not taking yourself too seriously.

Chocka signed up every new player and gave everyone a new nickname. Some nicknames were better than others, but you wore it like a membership badge.

My nickname was Boonie. I was a short stocky Tasmanian, but after a few drinks at the Loxton pre-season game in Berri, I did a Boonie impersonation and therefore Chocka anointed me with the nickname, Boonie.

He bustled around checking on everyone, high and low talent. When The Scum was formed in 1983, a legendary team, it was the lowest grade in the club. They had eight teams, and this was the lowest grade. Chocka prioritised going to watch them play ahead of all others.

There was method here. This wasn't just childish or subversive. Chocka was building and binding the club around important principles. He made sure everyone got a regular game, no matter how bad they played. He allowed communities to evolve in the middle and lower ranked teams. There was still the focus on performance in the top teams.

In Chocka's club, everyone was welcome, everyone was equal. Maybe not in football ability, but Fred's view was everyone had something valuable to offer. You just had to let them show what it was.

A procession of A grade coaches signed up, determined to change the culture of the club, to get them more professional. Each one of them left, having instead being changed by the culture of the club.

A young, softly spoken Bob Neil joined The Blacks in the 1970s. He was one of many lower grade journeymen who played football at university, simply for the love of the game. His contribution was to help out around the place, tapping kegs, cooking sausages and a spot of coaching. His three-quarter time addresses were brief and unremarkable but that didn't matter.

In a tight last quarter of a 1986 grand final, a pack of lower grade university footballers spontaneously inserted Bob's name into their frenzied singing of

the national anthem. The Blacks won the game. The Bob Neil phenomenon was born. It was unique to the club, a celebration of the archetypal journeyman footballer.

As it turned out, Bob's name could be sung to almost every song and so it was. Things escalated. Bob Neil T-shirts were made followed by other Bob Neil merchandise like stubby holders and badges. Supporters started to make, hang and photograph Bob Neil banners all over the world, off the Eiffel Tower, cricket, the Berlin Wall, international golf tournaments.

Fred Bloch delighted in this fervent embrace of the spirit of the club. He kept going. He noticed an odd quiet guy called Ken Lucas who was coming to watch home matches. Ken had led a troubled life and found himself in his later years living in supported men's accommodation. Chocka embraced Ken into the club, made him the club's number one ticket holder. Ken came to every training session until he passed.

Chocka was adamant that The Blacks should never pay anyone to play, no matter how much its competitors did. It wasn't only the principle, it was that paying just a select handful of people to play football was an anathema to everything the club stood for. How you conducted yourself as an individual, as well as the club, was far more important than winning at all costs. Football was, after all, only a game.

Chocka was a father figure, and friend, a mentor and a mate to thousands of people who he played with and worked with, from Barrie Robran to Bob Neil. He always remembered your name and your nickname and was as delighted to see you whether it had been after three years or three days.

He was a real-life 'Captain, my Captain', our own John Keating with an Aussie accent, a bald head and bushy moustache. Chocka was a highly intelligent, warm and passionate man with a ribald sense of humour, a love of beer and music, and a powerful sense of fairness and inclusiveness.

It wasn't just what you did but how you did it that mattered. He forged the soul of this wonderful football club that is the Adelaide University Football Club, a gift to the next generation to do with as they see best. It was a privilege to know him. He was loved by many, and will be greatly missed.

Some of the tributes today were heartfelt, humorous but it spoke of a great human, a great footballer, a great football administrator and a great friend. Vale Chocka Bloch.

Forest Primary School

[6.43 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about my recent visit to Forest Primary School in the far north-west. Some time ago, the school association at Forest Primary School wrote to me and a number of other members in this place, on the other side of the Chamber and in the upper House, about the situation at their

school in accessing specialists to assist children who have a whole host of needs that are not being met.

I gave my commitment to them to read their letter into the *Hansard*, which clearly outlines the situation that those parents and the school community find themselves in. The letter says:

Forest Primary School Association wish to share their concerns regarding the level of support for regional and remote children to access specialist services. We wish to highlight gaps in access to specialists in assisting the school to meet their students' needs.

We have surveyed parents for examples of their experiences and looked at the time allocation received by the school for these types of services and believe that our children are greatly under-serviced in this area, greatly reducing our opportunities for access and participation.

We acknowledge the difficulties in attracting and retaining staff and the demands on these professionals in working across multiple sites. However, we feel it is important for us to provide a realistic view of the challenges families face in trying to get support for their children.

Under the education funding model, students with disability can be funded for additional support with evidence from a paediatrician. This funding is dependent on a formal diagnosis by a paediatrician. Many families have been seeking a paediatrician appointment for 12 months to two years, sitting on a waiting list to be seen. Without diagnosis the school cannot receive funding for these children. One parent has been transferred to the Tasmanian Autism Diagnosis Service for an assessment and has been waiting on this list over a year.

A student from our school has been on a waitlist for a paediatrician appointment for 18 months, with the parent receiving a text to see if she still wanted to be on the waitlist, which is what we hear all the time from many people waiting to see specialists across our state. The parent has since rung North West Paediatrics to see what was happening and they were unable to provide any information.

During 2021 another student's report requested paediatric referral and the parent went to her GP. They sent through a referral to go on a waitlist for paediatrics. They have followed up a number of times without any response about when their child will be seen. A third child at our school requires paediatrician appointments for formal diagnosis. The parents have tried to access a private paediatrician through the NDIS without success. They tried to access a paediatrician through Community Services without success, and contacted North West Paediatrics about where they sat on the waitlist and were told that it was unknown. This is simply not good enough. Parents from our community reported other difficulties in accessing services. At one point a parent rang every paediatrician in the state to try to access an appointment privately.

These chronic shortages are not only for paediatricians but other specialists such as ear, nose and throat specialists, with parents reporting that books were closed or they were waiting

over six months to be seen. There is a six-month waitlist to see someone privately, or over two years on public waitlists. In this place we have highlighted up to a four-year wait to see a paediatric ear, nose and throat specialist in the south of the state.

Access to doctors in rural and remote areas is of great concern, with practices closing early and parents unable to get there in time. There are long waitlists for GPs, with some local GPs having up to a four-week waitlist for an appointment.

In terms of access to external providers, families are finding the NDIS extremely difficult to navigate. With families receiving significant funding through the NDIS, this support is of little benefit where there are no professionals to provide the services. Many families are not accessing their NDIS plans because it is too hard.

In-school services by professionals are extremely stretched as well. For a school with 25-plus students requiring social work intervention relating to a wide range of issues, from grief to trauma, family breakdown, attendance, anxiety, behaviour difficulties, and the list goes on, for a school to be provided a one-day-a-fortnight service, it does not take much for access to a social worker. It becomes extremely difficult if they have a meeting, are attending a priority at another school or are sick. Students at risk must have reassurance and consistency with a service which for so long has been inconsistent. We believe we are doing more harm than good for these students when they are continually let down by the service - not to mention the frustration it must cause our social workers and psychologists when they are stretched beyond capacity in our system.

As a community, we are asking that diagnosis for children from specialists occur in a timely manner with avenues of support at the conclusion of these assessments. We are asking that students in our schools receive a consistent delivery of support for areas such as speech pathology, social work and psychology. Our school association and broader community expect the Education department and the Department of Health to work in collaboration in addressing these chronic shortages to services. They requested a meeting with the recipients of the letter, which is what I undertook last week with members of the school association and teaching staff. I want to see a review of the specialist service allocations for their school, believing that the students are very underresourced across these essential services.

I have committed to read this letter into the *Hansard* because I think it is important that these facts and the severe disadvantage these children in a fairly remote school and their parents are experiencing in accessing the support services they need are put on the record in this place. I will be following up with a letter to Education minister Roger Jaensch and the Minister for Health, Guy Barnett. I asked Mr Jaensch to meet with the school association and affected parents at that school, which is in our electorate, to discuss their needs and what could be put in place to meet them.

Power Supply - Bell Bay Gas Turbine

[6.49 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise tonight, firstly, because there are 11 minutes to go this evening and we still have not heard the Premier correct the record from his answer earlier today when he said that the open-cycle gas turbine at Bell Bay was not operating and had not been operating when, of course, it had. There was some lame excuse by

the Energy minister about context - there was no context in the question. It was a simple question and it was given an incorrect answer that should have been immediately corrected but once again with this Premier, he just pretends as though there is no problem here. This just keeps happening. If it is a mistake, it is an error, then look, it might be a bit embarrassing because then the Energy minister told him that the open cycle was not operating. Just correct the record. He knows he misled and he is just going to, so he thinks, let it slide.

Tonight I will talk about the fantastic native forestry sector, particularly in the electorate of Huon, but right across Tasmania that I have had the pleasure of working with over my time in parliament but particularly over that winter break where I was able to speak to them about some of the issues they are facing, and hopefully help to rectify some of them. I hope in the long term a Labor government will be able to make sure that we have a Tasmania first timber policy that Tasmanian mills and timber workers deserve and have been promised by successive Tasmanian governments.

I speak first about Tammy Price, who is a force of nature in the Huon Valley and Channel region and who has been a force of nature for the entire industry in the way that she has advocated for Bennett's Timber over the last six weeks or so, not just on behalf of herself, but on behalf of her family owned-business, on behalf of contractors like Watsons Haulage and, as it turns out, on behalf of the whole industry.

When the Bennetts lost their timber haulage contract, the worst fears of the industry were realised. They could see the writing on the wall of what STT was planning to do. When they lost that contract to a Victorian company, that told the rest of the industry that there was a serious problem. When the Government did not put the correct loading, in our view, on that contract it allowed a Victorian company to come in and take the work that Bennett's had been assured they would have.

Bennett's stepped in at the last minute to save this contract when another contractor could not do the work. They stepped in with a few days' notice and got the contract up and running with the help of Adam Watson and his team. His sons, Jacob and Braddon, got this contract back up and running and kept doing the vitally important work that happens in the Huon Valley. That was unfortunately lost to them when they lost the contract, despite the fact that they had a promise. They had written advice from STT that their contract would simply be amended. They went out for tender and, lo and behold, a Victorian contractor won and the Tasmanian contractor and those jobs are potentially lost.

I am pleased that STT and the minister have announced that there will be a review into this contract. I understand that Ms Price has received some further correspondence about that today. I am very pleased that there is a review but we cannot rest at this point in time. The last thing we need is for Tasmanian businesses to lose this contract because of what it might mean for STT and this minister's approach to the rest of the industry.

Since that time we have heard from sawmillers who are deeply concerned about whether this is the canary in the coal mine for their sector, for their industry; whether this is the sign that we are going to start seeing more whole logs put on the *Spirit of Tasmania* and sent to be milled in Victoria. This Government needs to understand that if they export the logs, they export the jobs. They export the logs, unmanufactured, sent straight across Bass Strait, then we are doing ourselves a disservice.

We should be doing more downstream processing in Tasmania, creating the fantastic timber products that Tasmania has been making for more than a century, making it in Tasmania, doing as much of it as possible in Tasmania. That is the message that these millers are speaking about. We have had fantastic advocacy from the TFPA, from Nick Steel, from the sawmillers, Matthew Torenius, who have been talking about this. They want to make sure that we have got enough timber supply into the state so that our mills can get access to the timber first. That is what they are saying.

It is a very fair and reasonable request they are making of the Government and of STT. They want to make sure that they can get access to it. If other states are going to make decisions to shutdown native forestry, I think they are the wrong decisions but that should not disadvantage our own industry here. We are a state that makes our own decisions. We are a parliament that makes our own decisions. This a government that makes its own decisions. If it wants to make its own decision about this matter, it needs to make sure that Tasmanian businesses and Tasmanian workers are prioritised.

I went down and spoke to Anthony and Todd Watson at Huonville. They have the Watson Sawmill yard, a fantastic family-owned small timber sawmilling operation. They cannot get access to enough logs in the Huon Valley of all places. They had access to a private supply from a private provider but they were out-bid again by Victorians and they lost that supply. Every time they successfully quote on a product, they need to scrounge around and figure out how they are going to get the wood supply to do the work to supply the timber, mostly for Tasmanian businesses here in this state. The approach the minister and STT have been taking is the wrong decision.

Dr Broad spoke extremely well earlier about what the industry is telling us what they want. They want to make sure there is a bipartisan agreement from both sides of politics that we support native forestry, that we support Tasmanian-first timber, particularly millers, but loggers, carters, everyone so that we can make sure this industry can continue to be a strong sustainable one for Tasmania. We need to have a change in direction from the Government and Labor is willing and they hope that we can work with them into the future.

Family Violence

[6.56 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, family violence in Australia is at epidemic proportions. It is a national emergency and it has been for many decades. On average, one woman is killed by a partner or former partner every week.

According to statistics cited by Our Watch, the nation's leading organisation for the prevention of violence, one in four women has experienced violence by an intimate partner in their life time compared to one in 13 men. One in three women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15. One in four has experience emotional abuse by a partner or former partner since that age, and one in five has experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

In December last year, within a period of just 20 days, 10 women were killed in Australia - 10 women killed in 20 days. In July just passed, in one-fortnight period, six women were killed, allegedly, at the hands of men's violence in just 10 days.

Every single loss of life matters. Every one of these deaths also leads to a horrific impact on family, on friends and on our broader community.

There is also a financial cost of violence against women. The total annual cost of violence against women is estimated at nearly \$26 billion. The flow-on effect on children adds billions to that again. The staggering costs reflect the economic, the social, the familial of the health and wellbeing impacts of violence and is a devastating impact. Last year, 57 women were killed by male violence in Australia. In the first 30 weeks of 2023, the Red Heart campaign has noted the killing of 35 Australian women. The majority have been allegedly killed by a current or former male intimate partner. It puts Australia on track for yet another year where the annual rate of women being killed by a current or a former male partner is one death a week. We know these numbers are the tip of the iceberg of a national crisis of domestic and family violence.

In the year to 31 March 2023 in Tasmania, Tasmania Police recorded a combined total of 5589 family violence incidents and arguments. The number of family violence incidents is an 8 per cent increase on the same period of 2021-22, which was 3223 incidents. The number of family violence arguments to 31 March 2023 was 2097, a 12 per cent increase on the same period of 2021-22, which was 1857.

In Estimates, the minister at that time - and I appreciate that there is now a new minister - committed that that number was expected to grow. What we have seen in women's funding is an increase in and welcomed funding that are often on new initiatives. What we are not doing is funding the base. The new five-year agreements are, of course, of great value. However, they were announced over a year ago in a budget that has only just been started to being rolled out now. That is a significant delay in that commitment. We know that there is a significant gap between what is needed and what is funded. That is a serious problem.

If we genuinely want to start working towards decreasing the rates of women who are dying at the hands of intimate and former partners for which they are being intimate, then we need to start collecting the data better. There is a real call now that we should not only publicly release the level of funding committed to domestic and family violence, we should identify the gap between funding committed and funding needed. That is the sort of thing that we should be reporting against if we genuinely and honestly believe that we can make a difference to the number of women who are dying at the hands of men.

The House adjourned at 7.00 p.m.

Appendix 1

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 15 of 2023

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Ella Haddad, Member for Clark

ANSWERED BY: Hon Elise Archer MP, Attorney-General

QUESTION:

Ms Haddad to ask the Attorney-General – In relation to the surveillance device warrant issued in June 2017 by a magistrate under the *Police Powers (Surveillance Devices) Act 2006*, permitting the use of a concealed recording device in a meeting room at Risdon Prison's maximum security unit from 15 June 2017 to 17 August 2017 ('the time period'):

- (1) Were any professional visits conducted in the meeting room containing the recording device during the time period, and if so, how many?
- (2) Did any inmates attend professional visits in the room containing the recording device during the time period, and if so, how many?
- (3) What types of professional visits for inmates were represented in those using the room containing the recording device during the time period, for example:
 - (a) lawyers;
 - (b) Ombudsman's office;
 - (c) Centrelink;
 - (d) community organisation/Non-Government Organisations; or
 - (e) other?
- (4) If records of the type of professional visits in the meeting room are not kept, how many times did professionals attend the meeting room area during the time period? (29 September 2022)

ANSWER:

Professional visitors are required to book their visit with an inmate or remandee, and a room is assigned for that meeting. However, when the professional visitor arrives, they may be assigned a different room to use by the correctional staff in the visits area (for example, if another meeting in the booked room is running overtime). In this case, the change of room is not recorded.

For that reason, it can be said that a range of types of professional visits to inmates would have occurred in the relevant room in the specified period. However, the precise number of visits and visitor types is not able to be answered.

To provide an indication, the total number of professional visits which occurred during the time period in the meeting room area, which includes four meeting rooms, was 723.

The number of professional visits per week during the requested period is below:

Week 13/06/2017 – 49 Visits

Week 19/06/2017 – 53 Visits

Week 26/06/2017 – 55 Visits

Week 03/07/2017 - 65 Visits

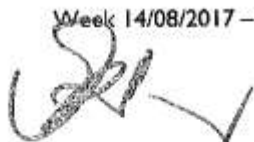
Week 10/07/2017 – 59 Visits

Week 17/07/2017 - 50 Visits


Week 31/07/2017 – 68 Visits

Week 07/08/2017 – 54 Visits

Week 14/08/2017 – 46 Visits



Hon Elise Archer MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation

Date  August 2023

Appendix 2

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 20 of 2022 House of Assembly

SPONSOR: Kristie Johnston MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP and Hon Elise Archer MP

The petition of the undersigned residents of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House:

- (1) LGBTIQA+ people are a valued part of the Tasmanian community.
- (2) They are not "broken", cannot be "healed" by conversion practices, and suffer great pain and trauma when conversion practices are inflicted on them.
- (3) Research surveys from the University of Tasmania and from La Trobe University show that 1 in 20 LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians are survivors of conversion practices and that these survivors are three to four times more likely to have PTSD and attempt suicide than other LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians.
- (4) There is ample evidence that conversion practices continue to be inflicted on LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians.
- (5) Major health bodies including the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Psychological Society have condemned conversion practices because they are based on false and misleading claims about sexual orientation and gender identity, involve discredited pseudo-science, do not work and inflict great harm.
- (6) After an inquiry in which it heard from all sides, the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute (TLRI) recommend a prohibition on conversion practices.
- (7) In particular, it recommended amendments to the Mental Health Act, the Health Complaints Act, the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Civil Liability Act and the Criminal Code.
- (8) Survivors of conversion practices have welcomed and endorsed the recommendations of the TLRI report following years of courageous advocacy to ban these harmful practices.
- (9) Legislation prohibiting conversion practices will neither impinge religious freedom, nor strain health professionals if they work within existing professional guidelines.
- (10) But it will ensure LGBTIQA+ Tasmanians are treated as full, equal and valuable members of the Tasmanian community.

Your petitioners, therefore, ask the House to support legislation that will prohibit conversion practices.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

Our Government wants Tasmania to be a place where everyone feels valued, included, encouraged and supported to be the best they can be.

The Attorney-General and I have each considered the Tasmania Law Reform Institute's Report and have met personally with people who have been subjected to conversion practices in the past. We have always acknowledged the harm and distress that these practices have caused.

We are aware that other jurisdictions have introduced various laws in relation to this matter. The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute has looked into this matter to consider options and areas that might need review in terms of our laws.

It is a complex matter, and it is important we get this right.

The Departments of Health and Justice have been undertaking policy analysis to properly evaluate the TLRI's recommendations and provide further advice to the Government around reform.

Our Government will always make decisions on the basis of expert advice and best practice.

While I have indicated we will be legislating to ban conversion practices, it is important the Tasmanian community have adequate opportunity to participate in consultation.



Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier
Minister for Health

Date: 23/7/23



Hon Elise Archer MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice

Date: 25/7/23

Appendix 3

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 1 of 2023 House of Assembly

SPONSOR: Lara Alexander MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP and Hon Elise Archer MP

The Petition of the undersigned Citizens of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House:

The recently released Tasmanian Law Reform Institute (TLRI) report into conversion practices, including the 16 recommendations, has taken by surprise many parents, health practitioners, counsellors and the teaching profession.

Whilst acknowledging that some consultation has taken place, we are concerned that:

- A great number of people in our community have been left out of the discussion including parents, schoolteachers, counsellors, medical professionals, faith representatives and those from non-English speaking background/multicultural communities;
- The implementation of the 16 TLRI recommendations will not only restrict parents and medical practitioner's capacity to choose what is in the best interests of their children and patients, but potentially criminalise them and others who seek to assist;
- The report has given little weight to the evidence (in Australia and overseas) of physical and mental harm done to children through transition treatments and has downplayed the globally available evidence of this damage;
- The report recommends the law to set guidelines that would specify which medical professionals can assess and treat conditions like gender dysphoria and what procedures they must use. Parents should be free to choose their preferred specialist and the medical profession should be free to exercise their profession.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to:

1. Assist gender confused children and others by protecting the rights of parents, health practitioners and others as they seek best outcomes; and
2. Support a rigorous and impartial community consultation being conducted prior to the drafting of any legislation, to include discussions with health practitioners, legal experts, religious and ethnic community leaders.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

Our Government wants Tasmania to be a place where everyone feels valued, included, encouraged and supported to be the best they can be.

The Attorney-General and I have each considered the Tasmania Law Reform Institute's Report and have met personally with people who have been subjected to conversion practices in the past. We have always acknowledged the harm and distress that these practices have caused.

We are aware that other jurisdictions have introduced various laws in relation to this matter. The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute has looked into this matter to consider options and areas that might need review in terms of our laws.

It is a complex matter, and it is important we get this right.

The Departments of Health and Justice have been undertaking policy analysis to properly evaluate the TLRI's recommendations and provide further advice to the Government around reform.

Our Government will always make decisions on the basis of expert advice and best practice.

While I have indicated we will be legislating to ban conversion practices, it is important the Tasmanian community have adequate opportunity to participate in consultation.



Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier
Minister for Health

Date: 23/7/23



Hon Elise Archer MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice

Date: 25 July 2023