

**Tuesday 12 June 2018**

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

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**  
**Eastside Lutheran College Students**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, I welcome the captains and vice-captains of Eastside Lutheran College, who are here with a person well known to us, Matt Blunt. Some other gentlemen are in the Gallery, and we will welcome them before the member for Rosevears' special interest matter.

**SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS**  
**Encore Theatre Company**

[11.07 a.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, on 4 April this year a local community theatre group in Launceston, the Encore Theatre Company, celebrated its 10-year anniversary.

In April 2008 Encore was founded with a mission to bring family, friendship, love, laughter, curiosity, risk, hope and possibility to the masses via the theatre. The theatre group's objectives include promoting an appreciation of the arts, particularly live theatre, within the community; presenting public performances of live theatre, concerts and any other activity which promotes the arts; encouraging, assisting and developing the full range of talents associated with the development of the arts; providing local, talented individuals more opportunities to refine and develop their skills by staging at least two productions per financial year; achieving the highest possible production standards with the resources available; and positioning the group as a valued local cultural icon.

Encore is a not-for-profit community theatre group that involves from 150 to 200 people in each production. These volunteers spend innumerable hours covering all facets of theatre, including acting, singing, dancing, costume design and making, set design, making and painting properties, hairdressing, make-up, orchestra, advertising and marketing, ticket sales, directing, stage managing, lighting, sound, transport, ushering and more.

Encore successfully debuted in 2008, with its production of *The Sound of Music*. Many wonderful theatrical experiences followed, including *Les Miserables*, *Fawlty Towers*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Mary Poppins*, *Wicked*, *Hair*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *High School Musical*, *The Boy from Oz*, and the crowning achievements of presenting Jon English in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Sue Hodge in *The Vicar of Dibley*. Over the past decade Encore has provided entertainment for more than 110 000 theatre patrons in 28 productions. The group uses the Princess Theatre, as well as the Earl Arts Centre, to house its shows, and aims to do at least two productions each calendar year.

The group has been the recipient of many awards over the past 10 years, including the Launceston Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Event Award - for *Mary Poppins* - and the Enhancing Regional Cultural Award, the City of Launceston Outstanding Achievement in the Arts, Cultural and Heritage Volunteer Recognition Award and, as an outstanding community event, the Australia Day Award for *Jesus Christ Superstar*. It has also won recognition at the Tasmanian Theatre Awards, established in 2015.

In four years, these productions have earned a staggering 51 nominations and won 15 awards, including Best Musical Theatre Production twice, for *Mary Poppins* and *Wicked*. Not content with just working towards its own successes, the company actively engages with the Launceston private and public school communities, supporting their school productions in meaningful ways through mentoring opportunities with visiting sound and lighting theatre practitioners. There is free loan of microphones, stage sets, equipment, costumes, stage props and more. The company assists with marketing school productions to the wider community, with an eye on building engagement and audiences for all future productions. Attention is also paid to developing artists with the Encore Theatre Company investing in a number of bursaries to assist emerging performers and theatre artists to pursue their passion for a professional career in the arts.

All of this is achieved without the support of Arts Tasmania or Australia Council funding. Rather, the company has been supported through its engagement with the private sector and the City of Launceston events sponsorship program. This collectively amounts to just under 15 per cent of its needs, with some 85 per cent-plus of funds coming through the box office as the company strives to deliver one successful production after another. Since launching in 2008, Encore has built an audience of up to 16 000-plus annually, whose members are able to experience high-quality musical theatre at a third to a quarter of the price of mainland professional productions. I am sure many members, particularly those from the north, have been to many Encore theatre productions.

**Ms Forrest** - Absolutely, and I hang around backstage afterwards.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Absolutely and I can certainly attest to how good they are.

**Ms Forrest** - They are very good.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Fifty-nine per cent of Encore's audience is drawn from within the City of Launceston. Of the 41 per cent audience drawn from outside council boundaries, 9 per cent travel from as far as Hobart, and up to 5 per cent comprises interstate and overseas visitors. Invariably Encore is responsible for providing up to 20 per cent of the total annual audience at the Princess Theatre and the Earl Arts Centre, and has done so for a number of years now. This is a company that punches way above its weight as it delivers social capital to the community, demonstrates enormous benefits to local business economy and successfully taps into intrastate and interstate tourism, all the while adding to the variety of quality entertainment available in Tasmania.

To borrow from one of its productions, like *Mary Poppins*, 'Everyone deserves the chance to fly' and Encore has given the Launceston arts scene a set of new wings.

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**Recognition of Visitors**  
**Bill Lawson and Mark Redmond**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, I welcome a face known to many of us - Mr Bill Lawson, founder and co-chair of the Reconciliation Council of Tasmania and founder of the Beacon Foundation. With him is Mr Mark Redmond, Chief Executive of the Reconciliation Council. Welcome to both of you. The member for Rosevears will talk about part of the reason why they are here.

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## Reconciliation

[11.13 a.m.]

**Mr FINCH** (Rosevears) - Thank you, Mr President. Of course, it is an oh-so-slow process, but optimists like me see the almost imperceptible progress in achieving reconciliation between the longstanding Indigenous community and relatively recent settlers.

The brilliant Uluru declaration has been put into the too hard basket by the federal coalition government, but it is here to stay and is likely to be the future basis for meaningful reconciliation. The process takes small steps. At the moment we are having a debate about 'nipaluna', a name suggested by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre - TAC - to be shared with the name of Hobart. Lord Mayor Ron Christie is prepared to embrace the community discussion. You might remember I tried to change the name of my electorate from Rosevears to kanamaluka in March 2017 - a move quashed by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre at the very last minute.

kanamaluka is a palawa kani word for the Tamar Estuary, but my move became a pawn in a political campaign by the TAC. As Archie Roach sang more than 30 years ago, 'Out of little things big things grow.'

The Northern Territory Government is endorsing a treaty and some other states are approaching a similar outcome. While the federal government is dragging its feet, Labor Leader Bill Shorten says he wants a referendum on a treaty. For the life of me, I cannot see why or what is holding back the Turnbull Government. As you are no doubt aware, we marked National Reconciliation Week earlier this month. I attended a couple of events, one of which was at the University of Tasmania Stadium, the AFL reconciliation Indigenous round. The game was a tribute to Sir Douglas Nicholls, an Aboriginal player who stood at just five foot two. He played fantastic football for Fitzroy, 54 games. I quote his grandson, Jason Tamiru, reflecting on his grandfather -

What grandfather said is, 'To get a tune out of the piano, you can play the black notes, and you can play the white notes. But to get harmony, you've got to play both.'

I also went to an event in Launceston held by Reconciliation Tasmania. The lead speaker was Mick Gooda, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner from 2009 to 2016. Mick Gooda was an inspiring speaker. He has long argued that there needs to be a deeper and stronger relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the rest of the population. He pointed out that relationships are built on understanding, dialogue, tolerance, acceptance, respect, trust and reciprocated affection. He said that anything is possible when we have respectful, meaningful relationships. I will quote the first words of his speech - you were there, member for Windermere - he was very good -

My Aboriginal brothers and sisters, my non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters, thank you for coming.

That says a lot, setting a good tone for his speech. He said the National Apology in February 2008 was an opportunity to move reconciliation forward, but somehow the momentum was lost. There are many reasons for this. Some stem from the treatment of Aboriginal people who bore the brunt of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response - 'the Intervention' - and the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act. Mick Gooda said this triggered in Aboriginal peoples' collective memory reminders of all the past injustices they experienced in their communities and

families. The theme for this year's Reconciliation Week was 'Don't Keep History a Mystery'. In his speech, Mick said -

This is a part of what we now need to move forward, a process of truth telling. Because in my opinion, there cannot be real reconciliation until there is an acknowledgment of our past, including the good, the bad and the ugly. Unlike some other people on my side of the equation I am not going to get stuck on semantics of whether we were colonised, invaded or settled. All I know is that around 230 years ago an event happened in Australia that changed all of our lives forever. There were brutalities, there were killings and there were reprisals.

In the early 1800s many Aboriginal people were killed and injured at the Risdon Cove massacre. 1824 marked the beginning of a six-year war against Aboriginal people who resisted their lands being taken and women and children being abducted.

Mick Gooda seals his argument about the importance of confronting history and the reconciliation process by quoting Aboriginal leader John Kristoffersen, who argued we should not think of loss as part of reconciliation -

Don't think about losing 200 years of your history; think about sharing 60,000 years of our history.

We are moving far too slowly towards reconciliation, but out of little things big things grow.

### ***High School Musical - Marist Regional College***

[11.20 a.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I recently attended one of my favourite pastimes, a musical production at a high school in my electorate. This time it was Marist Regional College's production of *High School Musical*.

All involved in this great production did an incredible job. The energy was palpable and the opening night went off without a hitch. I thoroughly commend all who took part in this production, including the almost 90 students involved as actors, musicians and backstage and front of house staff. They have been working on this show for eight months, with rehearsals three times a week until more recently, when they had rehearsals every second day in their own time.

The production was directed by Mrs Penny Thomas, the drama teacher, who incidentally grew up just down the road from me and taught my four children drama. These are skills they continue to use. There were five shows and two matinees. One of those matinees was a community show attended by primary school students and Multicap and Umina Park residents.

When my children were at high school they were involved in school musicals so I am well aware of the enormous effort that goes into such a successful production. I was wardrobe coordinator for some of these shows so I know the work involved. More importantly, I witnessed the benefit to students of being engaged in such productions. It was a joy to work with such enthusiastic and talented young people.

My recognition includes the voluntary support and work of teachers and other staff, parents, students and friends of the school, above and beyond the staff member position descriptions.

The principal, Mr Adrian Drane, in his comments contained in the program, noted and thanked those involved -

I can see that it requires an extraordinary amount of commitment, discernment, skill, talent, communication, negotiation and patience. A production of this scale is not a one off event for the College, but something that is a culmination of six to eight months work for young people and staff. They work together in achieving a common vision and goal which requires great synergy and trust.

...

The skills they learn and the experience they acquire from being part of this production will carry on with them throughout their lives. We know that these skills learnt and developed, will serve them well in whatever field they choose. Certainly the memories they have will have last a lifetime.

It is my hope as well that they continue with their involvement in the Arts as it is a driver of our culture and innovation in our modern day community.

Director Mrs Penny Thomas said -

*High School Musical* is a story for teenagers. It covers the big issues involved in surviving at High School, a time in our lives that a few of us look back on with mixed feelings.

The play deals with the cliques, the ambitions, the crippling peer pressure, the highs and lows of teenage love and the awful pain of making mistakes while acquiring maturity. The cast understand those feelings. The play is about them. You can hear it in the conviction with which they sing the songs and present their characters.

Mrs Thomas also commented on the contribution of a number of students who added so much to the show. She said -

It has been very exciting to work with talented student choreographers Sophie Graham-Jones, Olivia Williams, Emma Walker and Stella Nibbs. The show beats to the rhythm of the Rock Band and special mention must be made of Joel Humphries on keyboards, who learnt all the songs in the show early and played for auditions and rehearsals. Madison Gleason has been adaptable, focussed and capable as the student deputy stage manager. I know that these students reflect the ability and dedication of their music, dance and drama teachers in and out of school.

I acknowledge and thank the many others who gave their time and energy that went into making this show such a success. Unfortunately time does not permit me to name them all. Many volunteers filled the roles of director, production managers, music directors, choreographers, American accent coach, choral directors, stage managers, backstage crew, front of house manager,

set design, construction and production, costume design and coordination, technical production and hair and make-up.

Many people were dedicated to making such an experience possible, and the benefit to all students involved is unparalleled.

Thank you to them all for a thoroughly enjoyable evening's entertainment while reminding us of some of the pressures of high school - the cliques, the ambitions, the crippling peer and parental pressures, the highs and lows of teenage love, the awful pain of making mistakes while acquiring maturity as well as the important messages included in the storyline for us as well as the students, of which there were many.

We all win if we work together; as the song said, 'We are all in this together.'

### **Studentworks**

[11.25 a.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I draw members' attention to an organisation in our community that is working hard to prepare our youths for their lives ahead. Studentworks is an educational organisation with a difference. It is all about developing skills for life and developing work-ready skills for 14- to 16-year-old students from northern high schools. It has been operating successfully since 1978.

Located in the old Four Roses factory at Rocherlea, Studentworks is not like any other school in the area. You will not find classrooms with desks and chairs and blackboards; you are more likely to be surprised by the large workshop full of machinery and the kitchen.

The program operates in conjunction with local high schools, industry and community groups, and aims to support students in re-engaging in education, and transitioning to further education and employment opportunities. Studentworks aims to fill that gap between academic education and relevant everyday life skills education. Attendance is usually alternate - a week on, a week off - with the students' regular high school. At Studentworks, students learn things such as catering, woodwork, metalwork, gardening, packaging and life skills, as well as literacy and numeracy - that is not forgotten.

All the classroom, workshop and kitchen activities undertaken at Studentworks are mapped against the Australian Curriculum general capabilities of literacy and numeracy, and personal and social capabilities. In addition, Studentworks provides assessment in generic employability skills. Students are provided with a progress report each term and, at the completion of that time, receive a certificate recognising their participation and achievement in all areas of Studentworks.

Over the past 40 years, it is estimated that in excess of 1200 students have been enrolled in Studentworks. The majority of students referred to Studentworks have experienced trauma, bullying, stressful home environments, and learning and social disabilities, and consequently they have difficulty remaining and learning in a mainstream classroom environment. By developing positive, respectful relations with instructors, combined with a safe, supportive and meaningful real-life industry workplace, Studentworks aims to help students build their confidence and feel their sense of belonging, while providing them with employability skills and fostering in them a desire to continue their education and training.

Studentworks promotes four values - support, engagement, connection and improvement. It provides a positive environment through empowered leadership, where students are supported to develop community and workforce connections and experience respect and success. Studentworks employs trade instructors in woodwork, metalwork and catering; there is also a part-time life skills teacher and an administration and financial officer. Studentworks operates as a fully functioning joinery and engineering workshop.

Studentworks provides catering for local businesses and organisations, morning teas and lunches. Organisations such as TasNetworks, TasRail and other not-for-profits are regular customers. TasNetworks recently stated -

We prefer to have Studentworks do the catering as we have seen the skills development of the students and the money stays in the local community.

Students also prepare and serve Thursday lunches for the local community. Residents of a local aged care facility used the Thursday lunches as an outing and enjoyed talking to the students.

The day-to-day running of Studentworks is the responsibility of the general manager, Education department employee Mr Shon McIntee, who holds the ultimate duty of care for the students and oversees the commercial side of Studentworks Inc. in a managerial capacity. Shon has been with Studentworks for five years and has been instrumental in developing Studentworks into a sustainable organisation through his knowledge of production and his desire to see students achieve.

Over its 40 years of operations, Studentworks has only had four general managers, all provided by the Education department. Sheryl Thomas is the current chairperson of Studentworks and has been for the last seven years, but for thirteen years before that she was on the board of Studentworks. She is doing a marvellous job, as are all the other people working there.

Mrs Marjorie Knox, the founder of Studentworks, must also be credited for her foresight. Marjorie now lives in a retirement village at Norwood.

At Studentworks, staff and students work as a team to produce items of a professional standard and quality, designed for schools, councils, parks, churches, businesses and domestic use. At least 90 per cent of Studentworks students continue to Launceston and Newstead colleges on completion of year 10 at Studentworks. Many students return to Studentworks to catch up with instructors, to talk over what they have been doing, show off a new motorbike or car and demonstrate their other achievements. Some even bring in their new babies to show at Studentworks.

But perhaps the best evidence of Studentworks' success in supporting and engaging and inspiring our local youth comes from the youths themselves. One, 'I feel safe and able to make friends at Studentworks'; two, 'Studentworks is better than school because it is more hands-on'; and, from a school, 'Students' behaviour improves on their return to school following Studentworks.' It is a wonderful organisation and should be supported.

### **Young People - Community Engagement**

[11.30 a.m.]

**Ms SIEJKA** (Pembroke) - Mr President, I welcome the Eastside Lutheran College students here today. I would like to highlight the invaluable role that community engagement and work

participation involving young people are playing in my electorate of Pembroke. A number of excellent examples involving local services, schools and young people are worthy of our attention and congratulations.

Young people and community services in Pembroke recently collaborated to provide items to young people experiencing homelessness in the area. Young people identified this as a key issue for action. On any given night in Tasmania, it is estimated over 400 young people aged from 12 to 25 years are experiencing homelessness. As a previous chair of the National Youth Coalition for Housing, I worked to raise awareness in the broader community through the annual Youth Homelessness Matters Day national campaign about this issue and encourage communities to take local action.

I am pleased young people in Pembroke decided to have an event for this year's Youth Homelessness Matters Day. I had the privilege of being invited to speak to students at Eastside Lutheran College about youth homelessness. They were keen to learn as much as possible to feed into their project. The Eastside Lutheran students, along with members of the Clarence Youth Network Advisory Group, decided to create bags with items that could be given to young people experiencing homelessness in their community. To ensure contents would be relevant, young people worked with Loui's Van for advice about what young people in the community needed. Fifty bags were created and tailored to the needs of young men and women. They included items such as non-perishable food items, toiletries and useful information about accessible services. Apparently they had quite the factory floor system to pack the bags and had them packed in no time.

I attended and spoke at an event on 12 April, and saw the young people hand over these bags to Loui's Van for distribution to the community. To be honest, they are probably quite sick of me talking at this point, so thank you especially for coming in today. The Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre hosted the event. A representative accepted the bags on behalf of Loui's Van and said distribution of the bags would start that night, demonstrating there was a real need. I know the young people involved were keen to have an event again next year and to look at more ways they could support Youth Homelessness Matters Day in their community and raise awareness of this important issue.

Another example of community collaboration is a pilot project led by TasWater to provide spaces for young people to create street art on reservoirs on the eastern shore. TasWater developed the project after community members complained about offensive graffiti on reservoirs and related security concerns. TasWater worked with the Clarence Council youth services to engage young people and artists to help create street art on these reservoirs. This led from an earlier youth development program, FreeSpray, which involved professional graffiti artists working with local young people to learn basic skills, enabling them to participate in the reservoir project. Street art projects have been shown to reduce graffiti, because they discourage tagging and random graffiti over pieces of art. Art that has been created is often respected and prevents the need to remove graffiti, which is not only costly, but also creates a blank canvas encouraging more graffiti.

I had the opportunity to visit young people painting the Bellerive reservoir on Sunday, 20 May. The theme for this reservoir was 'Nana's lounge room wall'. Participants painted frames to surround their artwork to make them look like prized images. I was impressed with the creativity of participants and their skill in making their pieces of art come to life. I regretted taking my dog to the event because she disgraced me, but everyone else enjoyed her presence. Never again.



The event also attracted community members passing by, who stopped and chatted to participants and event organisers. I received feedback from members of the community who were pleased a positive event which included young people was tackling an issue within the community and beautifying a space that had previously been quite ugly. The street art on the reservoirs has transformed these areas and is something the community can be proud of.

Another example of youth participation and community collaboration in Pembroke is the creation of a trailer to help young people transport their trail bikes to the Cambridge Moto Park. This is a dirt bike park situated in the member for Rumney's electorate where people are able to ride bikes safely and legally; however, getting bikes there is often a challenge for young people. This means some young people ride their trail bikes inappropriately in the eastern shore community. Many residents are concerned about the noise and safety.

The trailer project, led by Crime Stoppers, aims to reduce inappropriate trail bike riding by young people by helping them transport their bikes to the park. The trailer was built by students from Rosny College. Many local business provided resources for and guidance on the construction. The Clarence community trailer helps young riders transport their trail bikes and enjoy the sport safely and legally. It is wonderful to give young people the chance to contribute to the community and to showcase their skills and talents, which challenges negative perceptions often associated with young people.

These projects in Pembroke demonstrate the benefits of youth participation in community projects, not only for the young people, but also for the broader community. It is important to acknowledge the strengths within the Tasmanian community, and to draw upon these when developing solutions to community issues. I acknowledge the young people who have been involved in these community projects and the support from organisations and businesses.

I look forward to continuing to support young people and community projects within the Pembroke electorate.

### **Jemima Carins - Tribute**

[11.37 a.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I add my welcome to our guests in the Chamber this morning and hope they enjoy their time in the parliament. I will also speak about a young achiever.

A young lady from the north-east recently received the Girl Guides Queen's Guide Award, the highest achievement within this organisation. Jemima Carins is a member of the Bridport Girl Guides and has been working for the last four years to achieve this prestigious honour. To earn this award Jemima had to complete service within the community, undertake self-development, complete outdoor challenges and pursue an interest and focus on advanced skills in areas such as boating, camping, emergency skills, sport, technology, the arts and world guiding.

Integral to the Queen's Award is choosing a challenge to suit your interests, and focus is extremely important. Jemima chose as her interest cake decorating. I can attest to her talent in this area, as her skills were on display at my daughter's baby shower last year where the cake took pride of place on the table.

In the leadership area Jemima had to organise a camp fire event, including a risk assessment. She then had to build a camp fire and organise the activities, which consisted of singing. I expect heaps of fun was had by all. Finally she had the task of safely putting out the fire.

The Queen's Guide Award is undertaken over four years, and Jemima tells me that the age chosen to commence this journey is 14 years. Jemima's sister, Teigan, is following in her footsteps and is commencing her own journey towards this achievement. Jemima said the most rewarding part of her journey was documenting her growth over those four years.

Jemima has had strong support as a Girl Guide from the Dorset district manager Lyn Commane, ably supported by Katrina Barnett, Maree Grace and Racheal Knott. Their leadership has enabled guide members to achieve at the highest level in a supportive and nurturing environment.

It is well recognised that receiving any award requires valuable family support, and this case is no different. The Queen's Guide Award is a well-deserved reward for the dedication, effort and commitment by Jemima, who has been fully supported by her parents and family who have shared this wonderful Girl Guide journey over the past nine years.

This huge undertaking by Jemima and others is recognised with this award. They received a signed certificate from the Queen, and it is a wonderful achievement that will be a proud part of Jemima's curriculum vitae as well as a significant personal achievement and a highlight of her life.

Jemima travelled to Hobart last month for the presentation of the 2018 awards at Government House. The Governor, Her Excellency Kate Warner, presented the award. The presentation was followed by a well-deserved celebratory dinner with all the Queen's Guide and Scout awardees.

I congratulate Jemima and wish her the best for the future. I feel sure she has a very bright future when already at a young age she has committed four years of her life to achieve the highest achievement for the Girl Guides - the Girl Guides Queen's Guide Award.

## **MOTION**

### **Consideration and Noting - Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Annual Report 2016-17**

[11.42 a.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I move that -

The annual report of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management 2016-2017 be considered and noted.

While it is almost time for the 2017-18 report and while this report is no different from others in showing a fabulous year for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, some matters are worthy of recognition and comment.

I do not want to come across as being pessimistic or a pest to the department, but the police should be doing better in some areas - placing more emphasis on collecting data to make a safer and more secure state and providing improved knowledge of the harms and benefits to the state of certain activities.

I first raised drug testing in 2011-12 because of appalling statistical data that showed drug driving was not of any real interest to the senior people within the department. To be fair, police at the coalface can only do what is condoned, approved and required to be policed by senior department management with the resources they are given.

After 10 years of continual harassment from me, speaking on these reports during budget and Estimates sessions, and with questions from time to time, it is now being accepted drug driving is a greater problem than alcohol and it is finally receiving police attention.

Is it getting enough? That is the question. No. To highlight my concerns, I had a study undertaken into the problems associated with both licit and illicit drugs and driving. The report has been completed, but at this stage I am unable to produce that report. Once I get the go-ahead, I will bring it to this place for consideration and noting at a later stage. I am impressed with the contents of this great report from an intern at the University of Tasmania.

These sessions should not just be a talkfest. Information coming from them should be considered and accepted because it is intended to help make Tasmania a more secure and friendlier place in which to live, work, drive, visit and socialise.

First, I go to the secretary's report, to comment on a few issues raised by the Commissioner of Police. The commissioner talks about 57 additional police through the recruiting process and a number of fast-tracked police. We need to remember this is the 2016-17 annual report. I raise this because until midway through 2017, the actual police numbers were not much different to what they were in about 2012, when the Labor-Greens government - as some members here will recall - slashed and burned the police, and quite a few police officers were made redundant and left the organisation. Her Excellency the Governor referred to 125 additional police over the next four years in her Speech on the opening of Parliament here a few weeks ago.

If you look at the growth in police numbers in the other states and territories, we lag well behind most. As a senior police officer confirmed with me, our numbers have not really changed since the 2012 problem that arose when a number of police officers were made redundant. I will quote some of the figures from other police services around this country. From 2008-09 to 2015-16, New South Wales had an increase of 860 police personnel - a 4 per cent increase in its organisation. Victoria - and these figures relate to operational, sworn and non-operational FTEs - over that same period, 2008-09 to 2015-16, had an increase of 2284 - a 12 per cent increase. During that same period, Queensland had an increase of 1593 - an increase of 13 per cent. Western Australia had an increase of 654 - a 9 per cent increase. South Australia had an increase of 228 - a 1 per cent increase. Tasmania had a decrease of 40 personnel, minus 5 per cent, in that same period. The ACT had minus 2 per cent, a decrease of 27 staff. The Northern Territory had an addition of 164, an increase of 7 per cent.

When you look at those figures, you can see we need to do a lot more in Tasmania to increase our police numbers. Those figures are taken from the Report on Government Services by the Productivity Commission, dated 31 January 2017. It shows we have gone backwards during that period.

When new recruits are referred to, there is never a mention of police exiting the service during the same period. That must be taken into account. A question that needs to be asked here is: How many police were lost to the service in 2016-17 by way of retirements, resignations, dismissals and secondments? How many are on light duties due to work injuries, are taking extended leave or

otherwise are not available to work? On page 67 of the report, the numbers show 29 separations from the service in 2016-17, but we are not told about those who were on extended leave or missing from the service for other reasons.

I am not sure what will happen to the department if it follows what the Victorian fire service is considering, which is probably in place now. Members might have read the media releases on the fire services in Victoria and what is happening there. Looking at the reasons those people can take leave throughout the year, if they took all the leave they are entitled to take under the new award, it would leave them with only 169 days of the year when they would have to be at work.

**Ms Rattray** - How do you apply for that job?

**Mr DEAN** - I do not want to refer to it here, but here is the document on it - 'Victoria defends \$150m firefighter deal that offers 196 days' leave'. Some of our members have probably read that. It sends a strong message that we need to take notice of what is happening elsewhere because this is what might happen here in the future.

**Ms Rattray** - That would be unsustainable for any business. It does not matter whether it is government-funded or not.

**Mr DEAN** - It is not to be overlooked. We need to take notice of what is happening elsewhere and in other organisations.

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**Recognition of Visitors  
Elizabeth College Legal Studies Students**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, I welcome students from Elizabeth College Legal Studies. I note they are sitting and listening - they could be doing that at the bench of the Magistrates Court or the Supreme Court in a few years' time.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

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**Mr DEAN** - Mr President, I welcome the students and wish them all the best in their studies.

I was talking to a police officer on Launceston Cup Day about police numbers at Launceston, who told me they were desperately short-staffed. I asked what staffing numbers were in Launceston. It is the lowest district in the state for police numbers per head of population and always has been. I am not quite sure why.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - As a result of the ex-commander not wanting to drive up there.

**Mr DEAN** - The ex-commander was in a lot of trouble because he voiced that position very strongly and it did not go down well. Probably that was one reason my contract was not renewed.

**Mr Valentine** - Is it one reason why you are in this House - retribution?

**Mr DEAN** - I have provided a number of questions to the Leader that I think have gone through to the police service. We might have the answers to some questions later on. I had no problems providing them. It was a good cause in my view.

The Commissioner of Police also compares our policing community satisfaction levels with the national position. The national satisfaction rating is 73 per cent and here it is 79 per cent. You would expect that in a smaller state we should set the levels there.

The commissioner also talked about the fluctuation in crime rates - a decrease in 2015-16 and increase in 2016-17. There has been a decrease in crime over the past 17 years from about 64 000 reported cases to about 25 000 crimes per year. This was reflected in the commissioner's and the secretary's report.

I am not sure how accurate these figures are. We are seeing more bollards set up to protect businesses and more protective infrastructure. You see grilles on business premises now that were never there before. The number of security personnel seems to have increased in the state. I am not sure if that is right or not, but you see them all over the place now. A lot of things have changed over the past years, which suggests crimes are still being committed. People now no longer report a lot of crime, especially minor crime. Even some of the more serious crime is not reported.

**Ms Rattray** - I wonder if the reason we have more security systems in place is because of insurance. If you do not have the appropriate security measures and if you have an incident, you are not covered under your insurance.

**Ms Forrest** - You pay a bigger premium. They still cover you, but your premium is higher.

**Mr DEAN** - That might be one reason, but I suspect there are a number of other reasons. If you read what is happening, sadly it is all doom and gloom if it is not advertisements. It is all reports of a bad nature or about crime; the visual news is the same, with many bad stories coming through, not that many good ones, so crime is still fairly high.

I question some of the statistical data in this report, and I will refer to some of those as we move through. For example, the reporting of domestic violence - that is, whether it is reported as family violence or a family argument. I have some issues with this. There are some baffling statistical data listed under 'Violence against women and children'.

On public safety, it is disappointing that in our state close to half of the populace do not feel safe walking in our streets at night. It has fallen only 2 per cent since 2015-16, when 59 per cent of people felt safe. In 2016-17, it was 57 per cent. It is still well above the national average of 48 per cent, but it is disappointing this is the case in Tasmania. We are a small state; our police do a great job; we have all of these other things in place - and yet only 57 per cent of people feel safe at night.

Why do people generally feel unsafe walking at night? I certainly do not. I walk a lot late at night and I see many other people out and about, walking. I suspect the elderly - I am talking about the very elderly here - have problems with safety at night. Maybe these statistics could be explained and understood better if the details around the survey were known better. I guess there would be a good mix of people being surveyed in getting these details. Tasmania is not unsafe at night, in my opinion. I agree with the police that it is a safe environment. You do hear of some issues arising from time to time, but that happens everywhere. I think it is a safe place.

Public place assaults - on page 26 of the report - have dropped, if we use the 2015-16 figures, by 20; if we use figures from the 2016-17 report, they have dropped by 21. It is only a difference of one, but I am not sure why that is the case.

Public order incidents - this is also interesting. The figures recorded for 2015-16, and then referred to again in the 2016-17 report, are significantly different. The 2015-16 report records these offences in this category as 15 556; the 2016-17 report records the 2015-16 offences as 16 511, an additional 955 offences. Where did the additional 955 offences come from? It needs explaining. By way of explanation, on page 28 we are told the figures were revised. What were the circumstances? I guess it is reports coming in late and going back to that previous year, but what were the types of offences and why is it occurring so much?

As I said last year, I am not sure what the intention here is with these statistics in any event, as some of them tell us very little. In this case for instance, public place assaults are measurable but licensing breaches are not, in my view. With licensing breaches the only thing that is measurable, is the number detected or known by police. In other words, if police did not do any licensing work, no breaches would be recorded. If all abusive language was reported or recorded, the offences in this category would be millions. I am not sure why that is the case and why we need it. I am yet to be convinced that this area of recorded offences is of any value at all. Yes to recording vandalism, damage and assaults, but not the other categories.

Body cameras - are they being used? We know that money has been made available, but in the report we could not find too much on this. It is not referred to under 'Operational readiness' that I could find. Funding has been provided, so when can we expect to see them being used? I hope to get an answer to this question; if not, I will put it on notice. I think body cameras will help police tremendously, and that we will probably see more convictions and control.

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**Recognition of Visitors**  
**Elizabeth College Legal Studies Students**

**Mr PRESIDENT** - Honourable members, I welcome another group of Elizabeth College Legal Studies students.

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**Mr DEAN** - Welcome to you all and all the best with your studies.

Mr President, 'Summary of performance' on page 28 refers to licensed premises checks. During 2016-17, police did 2213 fewer checks than in 2015-16. In cases of large differences in performance, it would be helpful for an explanation to be included. Why was there this huge decrease in performance? Were police resources deflected somewhere else? What is the reason?

Gambling - there is nothing here at all about the checking of gambling venues or offences. Is this a responsibility for police; if so, what checks were done and how many breaches were recorded?

Serious crime - again it seems figures have been revised, not that I can see where it says this. In 2015-16, 474 serious crimes were recorded with 410 cleared - 86 per cent of serious crimes were cleared. That is, murders and home invasions - those types of crimes. The 2016-17 report says 494 serious crimes were committed in 2015-16 but that only 403 were cleared - 82 per cent, so fewer clearances. I have tried to pick up the reason for the change in the report, but if it is there, I missed

it. It needs to be explained. The 2015-16 report says 410 were cleared, but the 2016-17 report contradicts that and says that in 2015-16, only 403 were cleared. While not a large figure, nevertheless that is seven serious crimes. One report saying 410 were cleared while the following year the reporting looking back at 2015-16 says no, only 403 were cleared. We need an explanation for this.

These reports take some understanding and working out at times. It raises questions when the 2015-16 report says 410 serious crimes were cleared and the 2016-17 report disputes the figure and says 403 only were cleared. If an error was made, it needs to be claimed and advised.

When in executive support as a commander, I was responsible for doing these annual reports. I always thought they were perfectly clear and easily understood. I do not think anybody in this or the other place had a police background, so maybe I was lucky enough with those reports because they went through fairly quickly and easily without too much checking.

**Ms Rattray** - Never had a question?

**Mr DEAN** - No. I think it was good luck, but I understand the problems associated with annual reports. It is not easy to get all information and report in the following year.

Motorcycle gangs are referred to in the annual report, and legislation is likely to come here in relation to how we handle this matter. I do not like the police making comments like 'Tasmania Police will continue to use a variety of tactics to interfere with the activities of all OMCGs to ensure a hostile environment for them within Tasmania.'

**Mr Valentine** - What page is that?

**Mr DEAN** - Page 30. Why do they need to use a term like ensuring 'a hostile environment'? Many people identify that term with force or aggression. Why would the police demonstrate hostility towards these people? Why do they not carry out their functions and police the way they should police. It is not the word I would use. We know that police are not going to be hostile to them in that way. I assume they mean they will be strong in the way they police issues regarding motorcycle gangs. I hope it does not mean anything more.

**Ms Rattray** - It appears they are not going to be welcomed with open arms.

**Mr DEAN** - That statement is repeated in the press and in the annual report.

**Mr Valentine** - Are you suggesting that is putting a policy position on the way they do their policing?

**Mr DEAN** - It is. It is not the right word to use. I know people involved in these motorcycle gangs. A friend was a member of the Outlaws. They ask, 'Why do the police use the word "hostile"? Why do they want to be hostile with us?' In their mind, it conjures up physical aggression by police. We are trying to get away from that. I recommend the police find another word.

Victoria makes it hard for these bike groups to operate by taking strong action under its new firearm prohibition orders. If named bikies and crime families are found in possession of a firearm, they will be jailed for up to a decade. I think it is mandatory.

**Ms Rattray** - Is that mandatory?

**Mr DEAN** - I am not sure if it is mandatory, but they can be jailed for up to 10 years. FPOs will be issued to these people and searches by police without warrant are provided for at any time and in any place. This includes the person, property, vehicles and any person the crime figure may be with at the time. This is getting hard on crooks and in the right way, in my opinion.

**Ms Rattray** - FPOs?

**Mr DEAN** - Firearm Prohibition Orders. It mainly relates to bikies. If our laws, the Firearms Act and regulations, do not provide for this now, the Government should consider this when it considers changes to the act.

On page 33, the report refers to 86 firearm-related offences, which was higher than the past three years. It means little because there is no table to identify the types or seriousness of the offences. In 2015-16 there were 61 firearm-related offences, 25 extra offences this year. What were the offences? Were they licence holders offending or firearms stolen or a combination of everything?

I have heard of some disturbing cases of firearm ownership and offences. I want to briefly refer to a couple of them. A select committee has been set up to look at this so I need to be careful about what I say. From the police annual report, during an inspection a hunting club member was challenged on his alarm system because it did not report directly to the firearm owner's phone. The inspecting officer was told he was wrong and that the law requires it to be to an alternative device. The licence holder was correct, the police officer was wrong. A number of other examples of issues have occurred. I will refer to two others. This hunting club member was then told a firearm he had was not licensed or registered. The inspecting officer was told he had owned it for 20 years, and that it had been inspected previously. The inspecting officer said there was an obvious mix up and that it would need to be surrendered for destruction. This did not please the owner. He then told the police officer that another police officer had only recently removed that firearm, had it tested and returned it, saying it was okay. The inspecting officer did not accept this, took the weapon and has now told the owner it will need to be re-registered, which will take five to six weeks. He will then get it back. At the time of reporting he did not have it back. I hope it has been returned by now.

In another case, a hunting club member had been spotlighting, came home and put the two firearms he had used under his bed for part of the night - this is an interesting one - rather than putting them in the safe. About 5 a.m. he took the firearms to the safe to be stored, when he noticed the safe had been broken into and his four other firearms had been stolen. When police attended they wanted to know - as he says - not too much about the four that were stolen, but where the other two that he owned were, and they were not registered. He owned up and was very truthful about the situation. He explained the position that he had failed to secure them when he came back from spotlighting and that he had placed them under his bed.

The officer attending the burglary was quite annoyed with the situation. The gun owner pleaded for some common sense to be shown, saying that his action had prevented two further firearms being stolen and going on the black market. His plea was ignored and off to court he went, only to be told by police at the court that they were withdrawing the charges. But as a part of this action, police confiscated the two firearms and his entire ammunition and suspended his licence, preventing him from undertaking his hunting work. One stolen firearm has been recovered from



the real criminal, but he had yet to be charged with any offences at the time this report was put together. It has probably changed now; I do not know.

It is not surprising that good, honest, law-abiding people are seeing themselves as the criminals and are being treated much more harshly than the criminals. The police, and we, have it wrong. Good, honest people are being treated in this sort of a way while the real criminals are enjoying the harsh treatment being dealt out to some of the victims. We need to put right many things in this area. I hope the select committee and its terms of reference will come back with a good solid report at the end.

Adrian Pilcher was right when he said - I did not write down the date, but it was in the *Examiner* -

... sentencing for crimes committed with illegal firearms and by unlicensed persons needs to reflect the seriousness of the crimes rather than the law continuing to harass law abiding firearm owners.

Adrian Pilcher would probably be known to some people here; he is known to me.

There are many other issues relating to firearms and the military look-alikes, and these need to be considered. I have referred - five or more times - in this place to the case where a military look-alike weapon was taken into possession, a firearm worth in excess of - I am told - \$20 000, because it was the number one production of that firearm by the Joneses at Kempton. It has been around the world; it was in America at one stage. Finally, this gentleman found it online, bought it and brought it back here to Tasmania. I think the police still have it. I do not think this matter has been sorted. We are talking about two-and-a-half years now. This was going to be this gentleman's superannuation. I have pleaded with the police to sort this matter out and get it right, and pay this man his entitlements. The firearm was licensed for many years. He had the permits; everything was done right, and all of a sudden it was taken possession of. If it is not yet sorted, it needs sorting.

Domestic violence. In the 2015-16 report, 3182 family violence incidents were reported. In the 2016-17 report, 3223 family violence incidents are reported for 2015-16 - an increase of 41 reports. I can find no explanation. If the explanation is again a revised figure, how much notice can we take of previous statistics? If we look at the combined figures for violence against women and children - that is, if you add family violence incidents and family arguments together - in 2015-16, there were 5140 incidents, while in 2016-17 there was a total of 5182 incidents, an increase of 42 incidents. Use the amended increased 2015-16 figure, and it basically evens up on those two years - 2015-16 and 2016-17.

There comes a time, or there should, where police can no longer rely on using any increase as a positive backer. Police have said for the past decade that -

An increase in incidents does not necessarily mean that family violence is increasing; it may instead mean an increase in reporting to police, which is positive.

You can rely on this for a time and they could have gone back a number of years, but to continually refer and use as an explanation for reported domestic violence attended by police is long gone. It is high time the police say that it is obviously increasing, or not decreasing, and, yes, we need to do a lot more. They need to take a good look at all the strategies in place. It is a shocking

crime and it is time to treat offenders as the criminals they are. It needs to be placed in the category of a crime where the serial offender should be registered and traced, as is the case with sex offenders and paedophiles.

I am pleased the Attorney-General is to pursue a new offence of persistent family violence. I have raised this a number of times and refer to them as serial offenders. Many people move from one relationship to another and behave in exactly the same way. No changes at all. Queensland Police are now attending a graduate certificate in domestic violence course at the Queensland University of Technology. Up to and including this year, 60 police will have gone through the course. Do police here have that opportunity? Will UTAS show interest in such a course? Will police here undertake the QUT course, maybe through distance education? I quote from an article in the Lifestyle, Life and Relationships, Domestic Violence section of the *Sydney Morning Herald* - it was published this year; I am not sure of the date - 'A new weapon in the fight against family violence' -

After more than 20 years in the police force, she thought she understood more about domestic violence than most people.

This what the female police officer says -

'I learned far more than I ever thought I would,' she said. 'It really helped me understand how people get lost at the intersection of race, class, sexuality and disability. Services don't cover all of those issues together and if you don't understand how they're all working against someone you can't help them effectively ... Doing the course really helped with that. I'm a lot more aware of the risks police don't always see and I can explain those risks to all the people I deal with in police, courts and domestic violence services. It helps me do more to keep people safe.'

There is a lot more in that document. I suggest members who have any interest in this matter might want to read this. I reiterate, with all the changes made and specialist teams set up, there is no evidence I can see to support the claim that the crime of domestic violence in Tasmania is decreasing. It is not a good reflection on us, the parliament. Do we have the right legislation in place? Is there more we should be doing to help curb and control domestic violence?

Do we really know the impact of gambling on domestic violence? We know there is an impact, but as currently there is no data being collected on gambling and crime, or gambling and domestic violence, we might never know. I will refer to James Boyce in a moment and some of the comments he made in his book on poker machines, *Losing Streak*. He raised this very matter.

Offences against the person - in 2015-16, there was an increase of 298 offences; in 2016-17, there was a further increase of 170 offences. In 2013-14, there were 3778 offences, and it has increased ever since. There is nothing to say it is of concern and what is intended to be done to prevent those offences and the increase. The table is not a good one because it also reveals an increase on total offences in the 2016-17 year of 2354, an increase in serious crime of 56 crimes, and an increase in offences against property of 1115. What is disappointing with these reports is that good increases and decreases are given explanation and recognition, but reports are fairly silent on the other side.

Gambling - does anyone in this state have responsibility for policing gambling? The police annual report is silent on gambling, and if I am wrong, please point it out to me. I went through the report and I could not find anything on it. Why does it not rate a mention, and why does the police department refuse to collect any data on gambling, offences committed to support gambling, underage gambling, offences committed by establishments - or are they offence-free? Most of us here and maybe some of the police have read James Boyce's *Losing Streak*. To my knowledge, the statements in his book have not been challenged. I quote from page 203 -

A significant reduction in problem-gambling will also alleviate pressure on overstretched health, community and criminal justice services. Given the cost of prisons and courts, the reduction in crime alone, which research has directly linked to poker machine addiction, will save millions of dollars.

He forecasted about 270 people would lose their jobs because of their addiction. About 300 would serve time in prison for crimes committed in relation to their gambling problem. Approximately 540 new cases of depression and clinical psychological distress would arise. Four hundred-and-fifty committed relationships would break up. Social issues like domestic violence and homelessness would increase the devastating effects on some families.

The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies has confirmed the link between poker machine expenditure and nearly all crime rates. Courtroom stories of theft and robbery committed to feed pokies addictions are common in Tasmania. Forty-one people went before the Supreme Court in the five years to 2010 for gambling-related theft and burglary charges. A comprehensive Victorian government-commissioned study completed just after SACES released its report found that poker machine addiction was second only to drug addiction as a direct cause of crime.

I am referring here to gambling and its impact on crime and on domestic violence in this state. With the figures not being collected and collated, we are not going to know. I am not quite sure why they are not. As former commissioner Mr McCreadie told me about 10 years ago - it would be recorded in the *Hansard* and in Estimates transcripts - it would be a simple thing for police to collate the information. It could be done easily. Nationally there is no requirement for it to be recorded and if that is the case, that is wrong.

Traffic policing. There is no doubt the greatest deterrent to speeding and dangerous driving is mobile high-visibility police patrols on roads. The set cameras remind drivers there is a need to drive responsibly, but other than revenue I am not convinced they are providing a high level of safety. If they are, it is for a short distance only.

Coming down last night north of Campbell Town where a set camera is in place, cars speed by and you catch up to them when they slow down because they know where the camera is. They slow down to about 90 and then off they go again. Speed is the issue to take care of, but other than revenue, do they do a lot for road safety? Probably a lot more of them might.

**Ms Rattray** - It is 110 until you hit the 90.

**Mr DEAN** - North of Campbell Town the set speed camera is at the weighbridge area. It is 110 right through there, but while people are doing in excess of 110, they slow right back to about 90 past the camera so they are absolutely on the right side.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - It is the same in Burnie. There is a set camera. It is 80 kilometres per hour and someone goes through doing 70, then they will speed up again.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, that is what happens and at Rosetta, and all of those places. We need to do more. With all the roadworks going on and dividing fences, we really should be seeing significant decreases in fatalities and serious injuries within the next years. We continue to hover around the 300 mark for fatalities and serious injuries so with everything happening we should hopefully see a marked decrease over the coming years. Look at the work on the Midland Highway. It is great, although I hate the flip-flopping from two lanes to four lanes. It is all over the place and not a good position to adopt.

It is clear in the annual report that police are issuing a high number of cautions to drivers. That is to be applauded because many traffic offenders are law-abiding people who for whatever reason have had mental lapses. We are all subject to that at times; in fact, if it were not for Lois telling me occasionally I am above the speed limit, there but for the grace of God go I, so it is great to have that speed.

**Ms Rattray** - I did not realise you were taking the member for Launceston around.

**Ms Armitage** - I do tell him quite regularly he is speeding and to listen to the little voice in the car.

**Mr DEAN** - This is why I named my electronic device that tells me my car is speeding. My son named his Lois, and I picked it up from him. A lot of the new cars are fitted with the devices that automatically slow. They read the speed limit signs and they automatically slow to the speed limit so you do not have to do anything at all.

**Ms Rattray** - There is not one in my WRX.

**Mr DEAN** - They are in some of the new vehicles. Evading police - 1598 cases of evading police were recorded by police. That is over four-and-a-half cases of evading police a day. It is appalling. We did have an opportunity to give stiffer penalties but did not get that far. All these evaders have already offended to evade police - stolen a vehicle, unlicensed, disqualified, driven dangerously, drunk, drugged or wanted on a warrant or committed a crime or carrying illegal substances. It is clear some evaders bait police. They want a good chase and to have police on their tails. Normally there are no or stolen number plates, so they know if they get away from the police, they have probably gotten away with it - that is why they do it.

They are not entitled to any protection at all, in my view, but the public are. The families who are on the roads are entitled to protection and to know that their roads are safe. In 2016-17, of these evaders, 460 were tracked down and charged with 510 evade offences. In 2014-15, 693 evade police calls were logged. In 2015-16 that figure went up to 1211. In 2016-17 that figure went up to 1630. These are significant increases. It is a strong signal that we need to do something about it. These people are driving dangerously on our roads; they do not give a damn what happens as long as they get away. It is a deplorable situation.

Three weeks ago I asked about the results of some of those people evading police. We know the terrible case of Sarah Paino, when a young fellow was evading police. It is not acceptable. The minister reported to me that in Roope Street, New Town, a driver was not being chased by police,

but he had seen the police close by and was trying to get out of their sight when he crashed. That accident caused the death of another person.

The police are doing their best with the laws that are there. I am not sure that the legislation is right. I think we should be saying - and I suspect the minister is saying to police - what can we do to try to get on top of this terrible crime? It is a dangerous game of Russian roulette. The police told us that mandatory penalties would be a deterrent.

Mobile phones - the police issued 3006 infringement notices for offences involving mobile phone use in vehicles. If you were to pick up everybody using mobile phones while driving, it would be probably half a million. You see them all over the place. They are just so blasé about it. The use of phones has caused death and serious injury. The fine should be no less than \$500 and loss of licence for three months. It should be mandatory. Send a message strong and clear to these people - you do it, you lose it.

In 2015-16, 3273 notices were issued. It could be a full-time job for police if they had nothing else to do. A national survey revealed 23 per cent of Tasmanian respondents had, in the last six months of the survey, driven while using a hand-held mobile phone. It identifies a blasé attitude to it. They use them, they are texting - just crazy stuff.

**Ms Rattray** - Most cars now have Bluetooth in them. There is no need to use a hand-held phone.

**Mr DEAN** - Some older vehicles would not have that in them. The main offenders seem to be very young people. It would be interesting to see how many infringement notices were given in what age brackets, how many were under the age of 20 years, for instance.

**Ms Rattray** - You can buy an after-market Bluetooth. They clip on your sun visor.

**Mr DEAN** - Maybe there should be more publicity that they are available. I do not know what they cost?

**Ms Rattray** - I have one in my car because the Bluetooth in the Subaru is not effective.

**Mr DEAN** - We need to do a lot more there and have publicity around that.

Drink-driving and drug driving - I was extremely disappointed over the Christmas break as testing for drink-driving was heavily advertised and referred to, but I did not see one advertisement identifying with drug driving. They could have been there, but I did not see them. I saw many on driving while affected by alcohol but drugs were missing.

However, during the Easter campaign I saw a sign saying 'Drug and alcohol testing'. Drug driving has recently had more emphasis placed on it, which is good. I ask the police, the Government and the Road Safety Advisory Council: What is the greatest menace on our roads today? Is it alcohol or is it illicit and licit drugs? The report I have had done identifies that there are probably more drug drivers out there than alcohol-affected drivers.

One of the reasons for this is that alcohol is an area where you can have a few drinks and safely drive, but with drugs, you cannot have any drugs at all. Any ingestion of a drug, to whatever extent, is an offence as I understand it, there is no limit on it.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Did your inquiry differentiate between prescription and illegal drugs?

**Mr DEAN** - I will table a report as soon as I get the right to do so. It is an interesting report. Because of the areas this lady was looking at, the time available and the size of the report, she said she had taken licit drugs out of the report.

If you look at alcohol in the annual report, 505 445 tests were done, with 2187 charged. In round figures, for every offending driver, 230 tests were done to record one person driving in excess of the alcohol limit. For drugs, 3726 tests were done, with 2055 drivers charged. That equates to less than one in every two drivers tested. At the time these figures were released, 191 blood tests were still pending analysis so if you add those, it was really less than one in two.

The police will tell us that they are targeting drug drivers, in other words, watching closely those they know to be involved or suspected in using drugs. However, police do not know all the drug users. If that were the case, there would be many more drug drivers on our roads not being tested. That is clear. Victoria has set the pattern in what they do with drug drivers and how they police drug driving. Victoria is taking a very hardline approach to it.

Police, by way of advertisements and media statements, are quite openly stating they are now carrying out breath-testing operations in areas where they know drink-drivers are likely to be. They are targeting drink-drivers to some extent. That is what we have been told. Police are going into the back streets which they know the drink-drivers are using, rather than the main roads. All of this tells me much more needs to be done about drugs on our roads. It was only a decade ago that there was little drug testing taking place.

What is the position of licit drugs on our roads? I am not quite sure what the position is there but we would have some of those offenders not complying with their doctor's requirements. That is why I am now having the study to which I earlier referred undertaken.

I finish on some minor issues on sick leave, which I briefly touched on at the beginning when I referred to police numbers. Twenty-nine sworn police officers left the service in 2016-17. That is greater than one new intake. Sick leave for the year for sworn members increased on the previous year and quite substantially - by nearly 8000 hours. I think I have read the report correctly. All of this equates to about seven days' sick leave for every sworn member in the police service. Is the reason known for the increase? Is it workplace injury? I am aware a police service will always have much of this because of the nature of the work.

The State Service within police is even higher, with the average being nine days per employee. That is an increase in sick leave in 2015-16 of about 8400 hours. Do we know the reasons? When you take into account the nature of their jobs, you would expect police to have more sick leave than a person, with greatest respect, who works in an office. Most people in the State Service working for Tasmania Police service would be office-bound.

What caused that increase in numbers? It would not be due to there being more employees. It certainly was not police numbers. Excess annual leave is also increasing from 52 to 61 for sworn members, and State Service from 26 to 43. These matters impact on policing, which is why I raise it. We are talking about recruiting extra police to the service, but we need to know what is happening with the police already there and the staff we already have there.

I thank the Department of Justice for its briefing on 11 April 2018 on police in courts in Launceston. I am told training and other changes are well underway and that, all going well, we will see police removed from the Magistrates Courts in Launceston by July 2018. Additional correctional officers are being trained for the purpose. I raised this matter when I first came into this place in 2004. The member for Launceston has also taken it up.

**Ms Rattray** - It has taken 14 years to get an outcome.

**Mr DEAN** - Yes, 14 years. You just have to keep working on these things. I commend the report to the House for consideration.

[12.42 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I would like to contribute on the motion put forward by the member for Windermere. He has great interest and expertise in this area. We have been told since the Liberal Government was elected in 2014 that there was going to be an increased police presence in our state. We see regular ceremonies when officers have completed their extensive training. How many weeks training is it?

**Mr Dean** - It is 37 weeks.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is a lot of training. Then those police officers are out in the communities. Are we seeing an increased police presence in our communities? I do not think that is the case in my community. We have had no police officer in residence at Gladstone for many weeks. I know the department is working on that placement, but how many other smaller communities are still waiting for a placement? It appears that no one is keen to go to Gladstone. I cannot understand why a police officer would not be keen to go to Gladstone. On your days off, you might like to head out to the coast to Musselroe or Ansons and do a bit of fishing. It is not far from St Helens. It is a great rural lifestyle, but it obviously is an issue to entice somebody. You do not want necessarily to have people placed there when they do not want to be there, but it appears that might have to be the case.

**Mr Dean** - Is it still an open station?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is an open station. There are other areas where the officer in residence is not in residence very often and only for their shifts.

**Mr Valentine** - He is out doing his job.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, they are there for their shifts, but on their days off, they head back to wherever their home base may be. It is not necessarily seen as a home base anymore for officers. They do not get opportunity to invest themselves more in the community when their shift finishes on a Wednesday night and Thursday morning they are straight out and back to the city where perhaps their families are based.

I am not sure why we are seeing this change. Often working partners do not necessarily want to move their family away from where they are working.

**Mr Valentine** - Cost of housing perhaps.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is no issue with housing, because the houses provided by Tasmania Police in some, not remote, but rural areas are first class. They have been spending significant amounts of money. At Derby, \$200 000 was spent on a house makeover. That is a lot of money on a makeover. It is not the quality of housing. That may well have been something in the past, but is not my understanding at this point in time. The Gladstone residence has been brought up to pretty good accommodation. That is obviously a concern. I do not want to get to the stage of the Avoca situation and lose our police presence.

**Mr Dean** - The longer it is left open, the more likely it will not happen.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is right. There may well be a mindset that we do not need a police officer, the one from Bridport or the officers at Scottsdale can service it. We do not want that. We want police presence. It is really important people feel safe within their communities.

The member said 57 per cent of the Tasmanian community does not feel safe. That in itself is concerning. It may well have only dropped by 2 per cent, but it is still a concern people do not feel safe to go out at night in their communities. I assume that means out in your car as well as walking the dog. That is of concern. I urge the department, if it takes a carrot to entice some officers into these more outlying areas, so be it. Perhaps they get a loading. Perhaps they get some promise of a higher level of status when they finish their tenure like the Education department - if you do so many years on the west coast, when you come back you are often elevated or a choice of being able to go elsewhere.

**Mr Dean** - When I was there, it used to be to serve on the west coast, you were given every consideration to go to a posting of your selection if you had qualifications. That was one of the carrots, plus a greater salary, housing support, energy support and suchlike. At country stations there are advantages.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I will be interested in how that process unfolds. I received a call a couple of weeks ago, because I had followed up with the local commander, inquiring about the situation and why the post had not been filled. They said they were still working on it. There was no interest from officers within the force, particularly new officers who have just been through their training, and you would think they would be breaking their neck to get into a station where they are in charge. They have the responsibility. I would have thought that it would be a great springboard to further your career in the Tasmania Police force. This is something I will be watching. I hope we can entice people to come out to those country stations. I assure you that the lifestyle is pretty good if you want to embrace it and be part of the community - not that I would expect them to be at the pub every second night having a beer.

**Mr Dean** - Perhaps the recruiting process is not looking strongly enough at country boys and girls. They used to like members from the country coming into the service, but there may not be that focus.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My experience, from all areas of employment, is that often you will hear city-based employers say they put on somebody from the country and they have a very good work ethic. That is no disrespect to my city cousins in any way, shape or form; it is just that they have a reputation for being hard workers. If you have already come from the country, you understand the lifestyle, as it can be a bit different from the city. Shops are not as prevalent, so you have to think about that lifestyle, particularly if you have a partner. They have to be part of the decision to go there.



**Mr Valentine** - It is a good reason for a day out.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Absolutely. I am interested in how that is unfolding and if there are any other communities that are also finding challenges in the placement of officers for our country stations

I acknowledge and agree with the member for Windermere in regard to the police presence. Whenever you see a police car, you take your foot off of the accelerator - it is a given. Even if you are sitting on cruise control, you just automatically slow down. Yesterday I drove from Bridport to Scottsdale then down to pick up some things from the office. On a Monday afternoon on the long weekend, I saw one police car.

**Ms Forrest** - There are more. I stopped at the servo in Campbell Town and there was an unmarked car that you would never have picked as a police car, and an officer got out of it. You do not know where they are, but they are out there.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I saw one marked car then, from there to Hobart.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - I saw four marked cars and one unmarked car as the policeman was looking in the boot. I thought, 'What is he searching for?', but it was his car. I passed a police car on the way down, too.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is good, and I am pleased. Obviously the time of day can make a difference. That police presence is a very strong deterrent. It certainly does make a difference if you see them around.

I have a question in regard to the Trunk Mobile Radio Network. This has been on the radar for a number of years now in regard to becoming a whole-of-government network.

**Ms Forrest** - Slower than grass growing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is why I am asking the question: how is the grass growing? Because it is referred to in the annual report, I thought it was worth getting some information that may well be followed up in Estimates. The report states that the existing radio networks will be replaced by the whole-of-government network by 2020. Is that still on track for 2020? That is not far away now, when you think about it. We are now halfway through 2018, so it is not far away, and 2020 to me is not December 2020, it is early 2020. I am interested in how that project is coming along.

In regard to fisheries security, a new 24-metre, fit-for-purpose offshore police patrol vessel called *Cape Wickham* has been added to the fleet. It was delivered to Hobart in the first quarter of 2017-18. The report then talks about the work that vessel and others do in our fisheries security. Is the boat working to its expectations? We had trouble with the last one. Did we give it away in the end?

**Mr Dean** - They virtually gave it away.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The PV *Fortescue*, it was called. Or could you say WE, white elephant? I am interested in how that vessel is being used. Fisheries security is a significant issue. There are significant penalties for anyone found doing the wrong thing in regard to fisheries.

**Ms Forrest** - While it is on shore they come in and inspect them there. They do not need the boat for that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is the boat being used for fisheries security? It says in the report that 1412 marine offences were recorded in the 2016-17 year. The report says the method of capture for marine offenders has changed in this period. Manual reporting has changed to an automated process.

We cannot talk much about broader security in Tasmania, but do police have elevated requirements because of the way we treat security in our state now? We have threats. We saw on the news last night that a terrorist attack had been planned on the Melbourne Victoria Markets. I think nearly everybody in Tasmania, when they go to the big island, goes to the Victoria Markets. We have our own significant market in Tasmania on a Saturday morning. I was there recently and you could not move through Salamanca.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Is your question general or specific to Salamanca or the airport?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is just a general question. I do not want a security focus on the public record. I want to know whether there are heightened security requirements by Tasmania Police for our state and for our country in general. Hearing about these events causes concern that was not necessarily previously there. It is worth looking at any annual report. We always find some area of interest in these reports. I thank again the member for Windermere for his continued interest in this area, but also for his expertise and knowledge of Tasmania Police and the work they do. I look forward to noting the report next year.

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

## QUESTIONS

### *John Duigan - Sailing Schedule*

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

[2.31 p.m.]

With regard to the King Island shipping service provided by Bass Island Line - this is a repeat of a question I asked a few weeks ago because that part was not answered -

(1) Since the commencement of the *John Duigan* -

- (a) What was the proposed schedule of sailings, including docking times, to date?
- (b) What was the actual schedule of sailings, including docking times, to date?
- (c) Of the delayed or cancelled scheduled services, what was the reason for the delay or cancellation?
- (d) How were the delays or cancellations communicated to King Island residents?

- (e) Where did each service dock on the Tasmanian mainland?

**ANSWER**

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

- (1) (a) The commitment from Bass Island Line - BIL - is for the *John Duigan* to operate on a weekly schedule, departing Geelong on Sunday, departing Grassy on Monday and departing Bell Bay on Wednesday.
- (b) The *John Duigan* is operating as per this schedule.
- (c) There is no commitment to leave at a particular time on those days. That is impractical for a range of operational reasons, including the weather, delivery and load times for the cargo presented to port and customer demand on a given voyage.
- (d) BIL releases via email and through telephone contact the intended departure and arrival times to assist our customers and their transport coordination. Any changes to upcoming departure and arrival times are always communicated in a timely manner via email, again to assist the customers.

I have a table that I will seek to table shortly. This table proposes the actual departure and arrival times since the *John Duigan* came into service. Following this, it should be noted that a total of 87.5 per cent of all *John Duigan* voyages arrived and departed in line with the proposed schedule. Vessel movements during the first two weeks followed an exceptional schedule due to the fact the *John Duigan* was transitioning into service and the need to be at Grassy Port on Friday 18 May 2018 for the official community event and naming ceremony. This was well attended by customers and stakeholders.

Post-event, *John Duigan* has been operating exactly as per BIL's commitment departing Geelong on Sunday, departing Grassy on Monday and departing Bell Bay on Wednesday. There is also no commitment around the other ports of call. BIL makes such decisions based on operational requirements and customer demand.

In line with that commitment to customer service, BIL has agreed with JBS Swift that it will add a Devonport call for livestock cargoes only and when cattle bookings are made. Minor upgrades are required to Devonport ramp infrastructure; therefore BIL has called at Stanley for livestock until the Devonport works are completed in July.

**Ms Forrest** - Does the table include the answer to which dock they went into?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It has a voyage number, it has a date, it has a depart place, it has a time, it has an arrival place and a time of arrival. I seek leave to table the answers and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

**Leave granted.**

Mr President, the table reads as follows -

Port Schedule King Island Service

(Proposed schedule in black and actual schedule in red)

Voyage	Date	Depart	Time	Arrive	Time
V001N G	5 May 2018	Devonport Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V001N G	5 May 2018	Devonport Tasmania	17:30	Grassy, King Island	12:00
V002S G	6 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Devonport, Tasmania	AM
V002S G	7 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	10:00	Devonport, Tasmania	07:00
V003N G	8 May 2018	Devonport, Tasmania	PM	Stanley, Tasmania	PM
V003N G	8 May 2018	Devonport, Tasmania	13:30	Stanley, Tasmania	19:30
V003N LS	8 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V003N LS	8 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	23:00	Grassy, King Island	07:00
V004S LS	9 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Stanley, Tasmania	PM
V004S LS	9 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	15:30	Stanley, Tasmania	23:00
V004S G	10 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	AM	Bell Bay, Tasmania	PM
V004S G	10 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	02:30	Bell Bay, Tasmania	13:30
V005N G LS	12 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V005N G LS	12 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	14:00	Grassy, King Island	07:00
V005N G	13 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Geelong, Victoria	AM
V005N G	13 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	13:30	Geelong, Victoria	10:30
V006S G	14 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	PM	Grassy, King Island	PM
V006S G	14 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	22:00	Grassy, King Island	17:00
V006S G	17 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	AM	Stanley, Tasmania	PM
V006S G	17 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	08:00	Stanley, Tasmania	15:30
V007N G	17 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V007N G	17 May 2018	Stanley, Tasmania	23:00	Grassy, King Island	07:00
V007N G	18 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Geelong, Victoria	AM
V007N G	18 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	18:00	Geelong, Victoria	11.30
V008S G	20 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V008S G	20 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	14:30	Grassy, King Island	09:00
V008S G	21 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Bell Bay, Tasmania	AM
V008S G	21 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	15:30	Bell Bay, Tasmania	09:00
V009N G	23 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V009N G	23 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	13:30	Grassy, King Island	07:00
V009N G	24 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Geelong, Victoria	AM
V009N G	24 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	13:30	Geelong, Victoria	07:00
V010S G	27 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	AM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V010S G	26 May 2018	Geelong, Victoria	09:00	Grassy, King Island	09:00
V010S G	28 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Bell Bay, Tasmania	AM
V010S G	28 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	13:30	Bell Bay, Tasmania	07:00
V011N G	30 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	PM	Grassy, King Island	AM
V011N G	30 May 2018	Bell Bay, Tasmania	13:30	Grassy, King Island	07:00
V011N G	31 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	PM	Geelong, Victoria	AM
V011N G	31 May 2018	Grassy, King Island	13:30	Geelong, Victoria	07:00

**Poker Machine Licences - Gifts to Pubs and Clubs - Prospective Legislation**

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

[2.35 p.m.]

In the last parliamentary sitting week, I asked when the Government would introduce a bill to parliament to give effect to the Government's policy to gift poker machine licences to pubs and clubs. The Government's response was that a number of key tasks are to be completed before 30 June 2023 to implement the Government's gaming reforms and the Government has ensured that

appropriate resources are available to Treasury to complete the work in a timely manner. The Government did not answer my question or give an estimated time frame -

- (1) What are the key tasks to be completed by Treasury?
- (2) When will the Government introduce the bill to the parliament to give effect to its policy?

## **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for Elwick for his question. The Government has a comprehensive policy on the future of gaming in Tasmania. That policy sets out a number of matters to be resolved for the policy to be implemented. This includes the finalisation of specific fees, taxation rates, licence terms, transition arrangements and the finer details of the individual venue licence model. The completion of this work will be informed by expert advice and will follow consultation with relevant stakeholders. Once complete, the outcome of this work will then inform the nature of the legislation required and the consequent time frame for its introduction to parliament.

### **Bell Bay Industries - Pollution Concerns**

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

[2.36 p.m.]

As the Government may be aware, there is increasing concern by residents across the Tamar from Bell Bay industries about noise and other pollution. Residents at Clarence Point, in my electorate of Rosevears, for example, are worried about a black residue found on their houses and decks. Can the Government assure them that this residue is not toxic and that water stored from their roofs is safe to drink?

## **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for his question. The Environment Protection Authority has met with concerned Clarence Point residents and has inspected the black residue on their houses and decks. The black residue has been sampled and sent for laboratory testing at Analytical Services Tasmania, and results are expected in the near future.

The TEMCO health, safety and environmental coordinator has also met with the concerned residents and sampled the residue for analysis. TEMCO has been monitoring deposition throughout the Tamar Valley for 20 years, including in West Tamar. The results of this monitoring are provided in the TEMCO-Australian Energy Regulator environmental management plan - EMP - and indicate a negligible impact. The source of the black residue may be smoke particles from fuel reduction burns and Clarence residential wood fires.

The EPA air section has developed a mobile air monitoring station at Clarence Point for the purpose of monitoring PM10 and PM2.5 parameters typically associated from wood smoke from fires. The EPA cannot make guarantees regarding the safety of tank water from individual residences as multiple variables, which the EPA cannot regulate, influence the safety of tank water.

## **Roadworks - Mud Walls Road Upgrade - Status**

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

[2.39 p.m.]

Before I ask my question of the honourable Leader, I would like to tell the member for Prosser that this question is a commitment to a former Apsley constituent. I promise I will not be meddling in your patch again. Good luck for your inaugural speech.

What is the current status of the upgrade to the Peckham Hill area around the extensively frequented Mud Walls Road?

### **ANSWER**

Mr President, I thank the member for McIntyre for her question. The Tasmanian Liberal Government has committed \$2 million for shoulder widening and service improvements on Mud Walls secondary road over the next five years to continue improving the important road link between the Midland Highway and Colebrook. Mud Walls secondary road was widened and strengthened in a substantial upgrade in 2012 between Colebrook and the Ringwood Creek culvert, a distance of 12 kilometres.

In 2015 the safety of the Mud Walls Road junction with the Midland Highway was also upgraded as one of the first projects in the Midland Highway 10-Year Action Plan. The Department of State Growth will be prioritising sites on Mud Walls secondary road to deliver best value for money on delivering the \$2 million election commitment.

While the department has no plans for the Peckham Hills section of the Mud Walls secondary road at this stage, all sites will be assessed as part of the shoulder widening and surface improvement program.

## **Public Housing Waitlist**

### **Ms SIEJKA question to LEADER of the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Mrs HISCUTT**

[2.40 p.m.]

On the Department of Health and Human Services - DHHS - dashboard as at December 2017, 3512 applicants were on the public housing wait list. On these applicants, can you please provide the following information -

- (1) How many applicants require a disability-modified home?
- (2) How many applicants are eligible for a one- to two-bedroom home?
- (3) How many applicants are eligible for a three- to four-bedroom home?
- (4) How many applicants are eligible for a four- or more-bedroom home?
- (5) How many applicants are kinship carers?
- (6) How many applicants are foster carers?
- (7) How many applicants have children?

## **ANSWER**

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

- (1) 484 applicants required a disability-modified home.
- (2) 2821 applicants were eligible for a one- or two-bedroom home.
- (3) 654 applicants were eligible for a three- to four-bedroom home.
- (4) 34 applicants were eligible for a four- or more-bedroom home.
- (5) Kinship carers are not identified in the application process; therefore, this information is not available.
- (6) Foster carers are not identified in the application process; therefore, that information is not available also.
- (7) 1198 applicants had children.

### **Costa Berries - Grant for East Devonport Facilities**

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

[2.42 p.m.]

I will provide some background information. I note that Costa Berries has yet again received a taxpayer-funded grant of - I think - \$1.4 million from the Tasmania Jobs and Investment Fund to construct and upgrade new facilities at East Devonport. Can the Leader please advise -

- (1) How much in federal and state taxpayer funds has been received by the Costa Group, and what is the breakdown of those funds?
- (2) Why is it that Australia's largest horticultural company with significant assets and access to finance continues to get financial assistance from the Tasmanian taxpayer, when almost all smaller growers have to obtain their finance through commercial lending institutions?
- (3) Is it also not a fact that while Costa employs some locals, the vast majority of its employees are foreign backpackers, and therefore most of the salaries and wages paid are not retained in Tasmania and disappear offshore?
- (4) In the provision of the support for the Costa Group, what has the Government done to require the engagement of local workers during the harvest season?

## **ANSWER**

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

Since Costa established operations in Tasmania in 2009, the company has received two grants from the Australian Government.

- (1) In 2013 the company received a \$1 million grant through the Australian Government Innovation and Investment Fund for the development of its modified-atmosphere packaging - MAP - facility at East Devonport. This facility enabled Driscoll's Australia, blueberry suppliers in Tasmania, to extend product shelf life and offset imports from New Zealand into the domestic market. In addition, the project included significant improvements to the warehouse and coolstore facilities. The distribution centre services six third-party Driscoll's Australia growers.

In 2017, the company received a \$1.4 million grant through the Tasmania Jobs and Investment Fund for the expansion of the distribution centre and MAP facility at East Devonport. The total project cost was \$5.2 million and incorporated state-of-the-art cooling and refrigeration facilities, additional packaging lines and a larger MAP facility to accommodate the increased supply from Tasmania. At its distribution centre in East Devonport, all Tasmanian fruit grown for Driscoll's is consolidated, quality-assured and transported to market.

- (2) The Department of State Growth has not provided any grants or loans to the company. I suggest that if the member has concerns relating the criteria of the Australian Government's funding program, he should contact them directly.

Costa has made a \$40 million investment in berry production in Tasmania. Across the company's Tasmanian berry operations, it employs about 95 full-time staff; this figure increases to 2000 in peak berry season. In addition, the company owns and operates the mushroom growing facility at Spreyton, where it employs over 60 staff.

- (3) Due to the scale of Costa's operations, local employment is insufficient to fulfil its seasonal picking requirements and interim labour is used. This practice is consistent with most horticultural producers in Tasmania. Interim workers inject income into the local economy through their demand for accommodation, services, food and entertainment. The Tasmanian Government continues to encourage all horticultural producers to utilise local labour where possible; however, it is understood the horticultural industry relies on seasonal workers being available to harvest at the right time, to achieve premium market prices.
- (4) Skills Tasmania is working with the industry to support the growing skills and labour requirements for the horticultural industry. In this regard it has funded Fruit Growers Tasmania to investigate workforce development needs for the industry and has also funded the work lab to examine the cyclical workforce and seasonal work requirements.

## **MOTION**

### **Consideration and Noting - Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Annual Report 2016-17**

**Resumed from above.**

[2.39 p.m.]

**Ms HOWLETT** (Prosser) - Mr President, it is a great honour and privilege to be elected as the inaugural member for Prosser. As I stand here in this historic Chamber, I am reminded of the



significant responsibility entrusted to me and I pledge to work tirelessly to the best of my ability for the benefit of the people of Prosser and our great state. Few people get the opportunity to influence the lives of 520 000 Tasmanians in the way we, as members of parliament, do. The Legislative Council of Tasmania has a long and proud history of delivering for Tasmanians, and I look forward to working with colleagues for the benefit of Tasmania and, more specifically, the people of Prosser.

Mr President, I thank you, the Leader and fellow members for your warm welcome and support upon my election. I also acknowledge the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Nicole Muller and all the staff of the Legislative Council for their professionalism and patience as I have been introduced to the procedures and practices of this Chamber, allowing me to hit the road running in serving the needs of the people in Prosser.

Prosser is a large rural electorate spanning over 8500 square kilometres; it captures the Midlands, east and south-east of our beautiful state. I acknowledge the first inhabitants of our land, the palawa, their Elders past and present, for whom, thousands of years before European settlement, Prosser was home. Prosser's largest population centres are Brighton, Sorell and the southern beaches; its other major centres include Bagdad, Bicheno, Campbell Town, Swansea, Triabunna, Nubeena and Oatlands. The seat is named after the Prosser River, which flows through the centre of the division. Prosser has 22 500 constituents. Much of Prosser has been formed from Rumney and Apsley, with the remainder from the Western Tiers and Brighton areas. The seat encompasses the Glamorgan-Spring Bay and Tasman council areas, and incorporates large parts of the Brighton, Sorell, Northern Midlands and Southern Midlands councils. While some of my colleagues may justifiably call me biased, I believe I represent the best and most beautiful electorate of the 15 Legislative Council divisions.

Prosser is a broad electorate with diverse needs. Its primary industries consist of farming, fishing, forestry and vibrant urban centres. It also has very large tourism, racing, winemaking and spirit-making industries. We have Port Arthur, the most visited destination in Tasmania. We have Freycinet National Park, Wineglass Bay and the multi-award winning Saffire Freycinet. We have businesses such as the McHenry Distillery in Port Arthur, named as producing Australia's finest gin by *Australian Gourmet Traveller* in 2016. We also have very fine offerings at Redlands Estate in Kempton.

Prosser is home to three of Tasmania's finest authors - Nicholas Shakespeare, Rachael Treasure and Alice Hansen. Alice is building a house in Prosser, and it will soon be showcased globally on *Grand Designs*. Koonya is home to the annual garlic festival, a unique food experience that celebrates all things garlic. The Falls Festival in Marion Bay and the iconic Freycinet Challenge are hosted in Prosser.

The community is equally diverse. We have farming families that have lived in Prosser for generations. In Sorell and Brighton, two of the fastest growing areas in Prosser, we have young families that have moved to Prosser for the fantastic lifestyle it offers. We also have people that have recently moved to Prosser from interstate and overseas. My vision is to see Prosser continue to grow, for its industries and businesses intrastate to become the most prosperous in the nation, and for our lifestyle to remain the envy of the world.

I was educated at Campania District High School, and I spent much of my youth working on the farm with my father. If I were not on the farm driving machinery, I was travelling around our state competing in equestrian events accompanied by an extremely dedicated and supportive mother. My parents have played, and continue to play, an important role in my life. It would be

fair to say they have provided me with a solid grounding of what it truly is to give back to one's community.

My father, Colin Howlett, served as a long-term and dedicated mayor of the Southern Midlands Council. Most evenings, around the dinner table, conversations would invariably turn into the goings-on of the council and community issues and concerns. My Dad's passion for his community was the inspiration for my own political ambitions. Leaving school after completing year 10, I commenced and completed a trade certificate in hairdressing. At the age of 20, I built my first house in Sexton Court, Brighton, and I lived there for many years.

This period of my life was not without its challenges. My then husband decided he would leave Tasmania for Queensland, leaving me with the many challenges that come with being a single mother. However, I did not let that stop me. I created a distribution company based in Brighton and I distributed hair products throughout the state. During this time, I also went to university as a mature age student. However, with the competing demands of motherhood and running a business, I could not find the time to complete my degree.

After 10 challenging yet successful years, I sold my business and was invited to join the multinational company Procter & Gamble. I spent five enjoyable and rewarding years working at Procter & Gamble. Fortunately for me this multinational company has a strong belief in investing in its people, and I was extremely fortunate to undertake a number of executive development courses and travel the world, allowing me to expand my skill set.

At the age of 30, and during the 2006 Lyons state campaign, I met an extremely dashing man named Sergei, who would later become my husband and father to our 10-year-old daughter Penelope and son Dimitri. Sergei and I were later married at the Campania Anglican church, followed by the reception and many celebratory drinks at the Campania pub. It is still one of my favourite pubs in Tasmania today.

My roots run deep in the electorate of Prosser, and I am privileged and honoured to be its first representative in this House. I am so proud to stand here today representing the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the vibrant community I grew up in.

I was fortunate to grow up in a household that understood not only the value of hard work, but also the value of giving back to the community. With Dad serving on the council, from an early age I learnt to appreciate the adage that all politics is local, as well as the need to put in the hard yards if you truly want to make a positive difference.

It is no secret I have been trying for many years to become a member of the Tasmanian Parliament. My detractors over the years have labelled me a serial candidate. However, I prefer to think of myself as determined. I am determined to represent the people and the community I am passionate about and love. I am determined to see Prosser prosper.

My political journey began over 12 years ago when I stood as the Liberal candidate in the 2006 state election. At that time, my only previous political experience was helping my Dad during his local government election campaigns. I campaigned the way Dad campaigned - in a true grassroots fashion. I went from door to door, not to talk at or to people, but rather to listen. I stood again in the 2010 state and federal elections, and I stood as a candidate at this year's state election. Along the campaign trails I have gained knowledge and experience, and there are friends who have been there with me from my first campaign to my most recent.

As with all of us, I am sure there is a campaign story or two. One I often reflect on involves a very dear friend of mine, Alison Eaton. Alison sadly passed away at Christmas time. She had early onset dementia. Alison was always a fantastic campaign asset as she could start a conversation with anyone, and she possessed an addictive smile that I believe won me a large amount of votes during many campaigns. This particular year, we were driving along Ansons Bay Road to a Liberal Party branch function when our car was struck with two punctures. We could not believe our luck. Here we were, three resourceful women stuck in the middle of nowhere with no mobile reception, two punctured tires, one spare wheel and only a bottle of wine between us. We had bought that bottle as a raffle gift for the meeting. In fact, the only argument I think Al and I ever had related to the rationing of that wine while we waited to hitchhike on the side of the road. Finally, we were able to hitch a ride to St Helens and from there we waited for Sergei, who at 1.00 a.m. drove from Birchs Bay to rescue us. Mr President, that was when I realised that this man was a keeper.

Each time I put my name on the ballot paper, I gained an understanding of the needs and wants of the community. Even though it has been a long journey, I have endured my fair share of defeat. Each and every campaign increased my desire to represent the community and be their voice in this parliament.

The creation of the new Legislative Council division of Prosser provided me with another opportunity to once again throw my hat into the ring, slip on my RMs and hit the pavement. I am very proud to say my team and I ran a positive grassroots campaign in Prosser. We spent every single day meeting with a diverse range of people from all walks of life, all of whom were incredibly generous with their time.

I am grateful to every constituent who took the time to discuss with me their individual concerns and aspirations of their families, businesses and community organisations.

I would like to see a time when our children no longer leave Tasmania to seek education or employment elsewhere. While the Hodgman Liberal Government has done a sterling job, there is still much to achieve and I want to be part of a team that delivers the turnaround our state deserves.

As Tasmanians, we deserve to have confidence and pride in Tasmania and in calling Tasmania home. I am tenacious, a fighter and determined. I assure the people of Prosser that I will use the determination and tenacity that put me here to fight for them every day.

I take this opportunity to thank my extremely dedicated and hardworking campaign team. What a team. Back-to-back campaigns across a six-month period were not easy and I could not have done it without the help and assistance of so many people.

To Brad Stansfield, Sam McQuestin, Ben Gourlay, Brian and Alison Scullin; my parliamentary colleagues; the Tasmanian Senate team; Young Liberals - in particular Ed and Johnny; Liberal Party members and volunteers, including Heath Michael, who first encouraged me to stand back in 2006, and Laura Eaton, Helen Quinn, Melina Gargalacos and Asimina Marios - thank you for being such supportive friends.

I thank my siblings Michele, Craig, Robyn and their families, and my wonderful in-laws Bruce and Penny. To the rest of our family and friends, thank you. To my husband Sergei, son Dimitri and daughter Penelope, thank you for believing in me and supporting me to run again, and, finally to my parents, thank you. Dad, this is for you.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - I congratulate the member for Prosser for her thoughtful, well-researched and well-presented inaugural speech. As she well knows, the courtesy of no interruptions has now ceased and when you stand interjections can flow as freely as the Chair will allow. We look forward to your future contributions, well done.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

[3.05 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, once again the annual report for the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management paints an optimistic picture of life in Tasmania. I thank the member for Windermere for once again putting it on our agenda so that we could discuss it. It found 79 per cent of Tasmanian residents are generally satisfied with policing services. Home burglaries decreased and public order incidents also fell. Public place assaults decreased. Tasmania has the lowest crime rates in the country. The overall crime rate over the past 17 years has decreased significantly from 64 000 per year to around 25 000. All this is great news.

At the other end of the scale, statistics from the police corporate performance report figures show that Launceston is Tasmania's crime capital, and by a big margin. The Launceston area had an annual crime rate of 1004 offences per 10 000 residents and its serious crime rate was double that of Hobart. This crime rate seems to correlate with the northern district having the lowest number of police officers per 1000 people. I am pleased to see that police have been taken out of the courts. As of the first week in July, six new correctional officers will take over the duties of Tasmania Police in the Launceston Supreme Court.

The Government's commitment to add 15 additional police officers to Launceston has been very well received by those of us in the north, as was the appointment of the second detective inspector last year. Offences against the person rose by 4.1 per cent, against property by 11 per cent, and fraud and similar offences by 10 per cent. The clearance rate for total offences reduced slightly from 48 per cent in 2015-16 to 47 per cent in 2016-17. Can the Leader tell me how the department's implementation of the recommendations from the independent review of the emergency management arrangements in Tasmania is going? I think 22 recommendations were in place.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - We will need to take that question on notice.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - The police focus on public safety achieved positive results through high-visibility strategies and enhanced public order capabilities, with a focus on alcohol and drug-related public order issues. I agree with the member for McIntyre that marked police cars are very important. In Launceston they will often park in the mall or at the end of the mall. Whether the police officers are there or not, seeing the vehicle makes you think they might be nearby. It gives some of the residents a feeling of safety and potential perpetrators might think twice when they see the vehicle.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Agreed, wholeheartedly.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Tasmanians felt 2 per cent safer walking locally at night compared to the previous year. Now, 2 per cent is not a great deal, but it is an improvement. I must admit in Launceston I am probably not inclined -

**Ms Forrest** - Who did they survey? They did not ask me.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - No. It depends on who is surveyed. I would not walk too far in Launceston of an evening. Even if I am going to a restaurant that might be only half a kilometre away, I tend to drive. You do not know who is going to be on the streets on your way back. If they had asked me, I would say after dark is not the time you would want to be walking on your own on the streets.

It was also sad to read that almost half the fires that occurred during the year were deliberately lit - I think it was 46 per cent. I do not know the answer to this, but it is a sorry situation, as is the number of people who are charged with not wearing a seatbelt, which came in at 2753. I find it really hard to understand that anyone would choose to forego this more often than not lifesaving device.

I also notice in the report that the Southern District showed a marked decrease in the number of home burglaries, due in part to Operation Saturate.

Leader, does Tasmania Police have any plans for a similar operation in the north and the north-west? I could not find any information in the report on that.

We all know that being an emergency service worker is a highly stressful job, so it was very heartening to see that the wellness program has now shifted its focus to the mental health and wellbeing of the workers. All in all, I believe our police officers do a magnificent job, to the best of their ability. I support the report.

[3.11 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, as usual, I thank the member for Windermere for bringing this motion forward and giving us the opportunity to scrutinise this annual report.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to speak on the 2016-17 annual report of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management.

The report provides a record of the department's performance against a range of statutory requirements, business priorities and the Government Services budget paper 2. It should be noted, however, that the department's annual report 2016-17 does not substantially cover the Tasmania Fire Service. Information about Tasmania Fire Service and the State Emergency Service is available in the Tasmania Fire Service annual report, published by the State Fire Commission.

Highlighted in this report are a number of projects undertaken by the department during 2016-17. This includes design of the new Emergency Services Computer-Aided Dispatch system, which will replace the disparate systems used across Tasmania Police, Tasmania Fire Service and Ambulance Tasmania - I think the member for McIntyre was asking a question about that - and it will support the operations of the State Emergency Service. The new system will provide significant operational efficiencies and enhance the safety of both the community and first responders.

The 2016-17 year also saw the final phase of the Endeavour project, with the completion of the police vessel *Cape Wickham*. It is a new fit-for-purpose 24-metre offshore patrol vessel. The vessel was delivered in August 2017 and provides Tasmania with an enhanced search and rescue and law enforcement capability.

Total crime figures did increase during 2016-17. However, despite year-to-year fluctuations, Tasmania remains a safe place and has one of the lowest crime rates in the country. Over the last 17 years, crime rates have decreased significantly in the state, from approximately 64 000 per year to a five-year average of 25 000 in 2016-17. Despite the increase in total crime figures, home burglaries decreased by 18.3 per cent statewide and the number of public order incidents fell by 3.1 per cent, with public place assaults also decreasing by 2.5 per cent. In 2016-17 there were also better road safety outcomes, with the number of fatalities and serious injuries for that year being lower than in the two previous reported periods.

These positive outcomes are further reflected in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Policing in 2016-17. The survey shows the percentage of the community who felt safe walking locally both during the day and night was at or above the national average in each of the past five years. The survey results also indicated that a higher proportion of Tasmanians were generally satisfied with policing services - 79 per cent - than the national average of 73 per cent.

Mr President, I commend the police officers and State Service employees who have contributed to the department's achievements. These men and women have made a substantial contribution to keeping Tasmania a safe place to live and work. I am grateful for their efforts, as is everybody. It was good to have some prepared answers for the member from the annual report. I will work my way through them. Thank you, it has made life easier. I will start with the question and then deliver the answer.

The first question was: the Government has said it will increase police numbers by 125 over the next four years. Is it 125 on top of the established strength? That is, will it be over and above the police retiring/resigning in the same period in previous years of about 100 lost to police over four years?

The answer is that the increase of 125 police is in addition to the current establishment strength of 1233 FTE police. In addition to this increase, Tasmania Police will continue to recruit to cover normal attrition rates through retirements and resignations.

The member also asked: Will Tasmania Police numbers increase above the current establishment level? If so, by how many?

The answer is that Tasmania Police is currently undertaking a two-part review into staffing levels as a consequence of election commitments. The first stage is a capability review to determine future workforce needs. The second stage will focus on resource distribution modelling. The additional numbers of police being allocated to particular areas of the state will not be finalised until these assessments are completed. The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management has advised that Launceston is a candidate for early recruitment under this policy.

The member's next question referred to public order incidents being recorded at 15 556 in the 2015-16 report, while in the 2016-17 report, the number is corrected or revised to 16 512, an additional 955 offences. He asked: what caused the larger revised figure and what offence has made up the majority of increases?

During 2016-17 system changes were made affecting the way public order incidences are counted. This predominantly affected the counting of incidences in the category of public disturbance, with more of these incidence types now being captured in the reporting process. All

reports of public disturbances are made to police, and the offence is not always disclosed by the incident.

The member also asked what progress has been made with body cameras. The answer to that is that the Tasmania Police project to introduce body worn cameras for frontline police officers commenced in July 2017 and is progressing as planned. Following a tender and a valuation process, a supplier has been selected and a contract is expected to be finalised in the coming weeks. The full rollout of cameras to frontline police will commence in coming months and some logistical and policy issues are being finalised in the interim. It is anticipated the deployment of body worn cameras will initially commence in the south of the state and progressively continue to police stations in the north and the north-west.

The member also referred to the 2213 fewer licensing checks done in 2016-17 compared with 2015-16 and asked what happened in this area.

The answer to that is that 10 782 licensed premises checks were undertaken in 2015-16 compared to 8569 in 2016-17. This reduction reflects a change of approach to addressing licensing enforcement. In 2016-17, there was a shift towards more targeted enforcement utilising an intelligence-led investigative approach as opposed to the former reliance on spot checks of licensed premises. Coinciding with this change has been an increase in licensing prosecutions with 85 liquor licensing infringement notices issued in 2016-17 compared to 60 in the previous financial year.

However, checks of licensed premises continue to form a significant part of Tasmania Police activities because they provide public reassurance in and around licensed premises and provide for the detection and enforcement of other types of offending, including a range of public order offences.

The member's other questions are: What responsibility do police have for policing our gambling laws? Where are the statistics held on gambling offences, and what are police doing in this area?

The answer to these questions is that Tasmania's laws regarding gambling are contained within the Gaming Control Act 1993. This act is administered by the Department of Treasury and Finance. The gaming regulations are overseen by the Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission and the department's Liquor and Gaming Branch.

With a dedicated regulator, Tasmania Police do not have direct involvement in gaming enforcement. It is acknowledged that some crime is committed by problem gamblers as a means to support their addiction; however, other drivers of crime are more significant, and problem gambling does not usually involve gaming offences.

Another question was that 'Serious crime' in the 2015-16 report records 474 crimes with 410 cleared. The 2016-17 report shows 494 serious crimes in the 2015-16 year, with only 403 cleared. I can see no explanation for these revised figures. What has happened in this case? Why does the 2015-16 report show a clearance of 410, while the 2016-17 report corrects this figure to 403 cleared? I could not pick up an explanation in this case.

So the answer is that offence details may be updated months or even years after they are reported, and a variety of changes can result in them no longer counting as cleared offences in a reporting period. For example, if it is found that the offence did not actually occur - that is, if the

complainant reported the offence dishonestly or was mistaken - the offence will no longer be counted as cleared. New information may result in a cleared offence having the clearance type and/or date changed, which could potentially move the offence into a different clearance year. It could have been caused by human error when officers entered material on the crime recording system, which may affect clearance rates when the data cleansing process identifies errors corrected at a later date.

The member asked questions on firearms offences referred to in the 2016-17 report: what are the types of offences and their nature? He noted that some offences provided were quite minor. For the 86 firearms-related incidents referenced in the 2016-17 report, I only included incidents where a firearm was used as a weapon or where a firearm was discharged, as noted in the report. They do not include minor regulatory firearms offences. The type of offences covered include homicide, robbery, assault and sexual assault, as well as specific offences involving the discharge of a firearm. Given this definition, none of the captured offences is considered minor in nature.

The member also asked whether Tasmanian police will have an opportunity to access a Queensland University of Technology course for a graduate certificate in domestic violence. He further asked whether any discussion has taken place with UTAS to run a similar course. The answer is that Tasmania Police and the University of Tasmania have previously funded police attendance at this course. Access to undertake courses at QUT remains open to all officers through the department's tertiary education assistance scheme. In addition, the University of Tasmania has developed a unit, 'Responding to Family Violence Realities', which is available to police officers studying for professional honours in investigative practices. This unit promotes comprehensive analysis of the range of behaviours that may compromise family violence, different perspectives on the causes of, and solutions to, family violence, and contemporary legal and other system responses to family violence. It includes a focus on issues of vulnerability and diversity, as well on as new and emerging forms of family violence. Family violence training is also provided to police recruits as a component of the course. Additionally, Tasmania Police are currently involved in three family violence-related research projects through the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies. They are: first, development of a risk framework for the Safe Families Coordination Unit; second, the evaluation of Family Violence Offender Intervention Program outcomes; and, third, the evaluation of Project Vigilance - Electronic Monitoring of Family Violence Offenders.

The member also asked where we were with point-to-point speed control checkpoints. Point-to-point speed enforcement was identified as an option by Tasmania's Towards Zero Action Plan 2017-19, the first of three action plans under Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-26. The plan recommended the introduction of point-to-point speed cameras on high-risk rural roads. The feasibility of this technology in the Tasmanian context has since been reviewed by Tasmania Police. The results from this assessment will soon be provided to the Road Safety Advisory Council for consideration.

The next question was: will we see red light cameras operating again in the state in the foreseeable future? Tasmania's road safety priorities are contained within the state's Towards Zero - Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2017-26 and subordinate action plans. Both the strategy and action plans are the result of significant research and community consultation and identify strategies intended to provide substantial road safety benefits for Tasmania. Red light cameras have not been identified as a high-priority item. Consequently they are not currently being considered by Tasmania Police as an enforcement option.



Another question was about the number of police on extended leave - that is, sick leave, maternity leave, special leave or other leave - in the 2016-17 financial year. The answer is that Tasmania Police does not collectively categorise leave in this way and members on sick leave and maternity leave commence leave and return to duty throughout the year. Special leave is exceptional and would not typically apply to a long-term absence. Members who chose to take extended leave are not counted towards Tasmania Police's establishment strength. During the period of their leave, these members are transferred to the non-operational unattached list.

The next question relates to sick leave. Sick leave for police in 2016-17 increased substantially. The member asked: In what areas has sick leave increased? What are the causes? Can it be broken down into sick leave due to work injuries? The answer is that although the average sick leave hours per employee increased for police in 2016-17 - 49.81 hours over 44.29 hours in the previous financial year - the figure fluctuates from year to year. Given this fluctuation, the 2016-17 figure is not disproportionate with historical trends. For example, in 2012-13, the average figure was 50.52 hours. Above certain thresholds, police employees are required to provide medical certificates to justify sick leave. However, there is no requirement to identify the causes of the illness. As a consequence, it is not possible to identify trends in the causes of sick leave. Work injuries do not impact on sick leave statistics as work injuries are dealt with under workers compensation entitlements.

The member asked about a significant increase in sick leave among State Service employees: Are the causes or reasons known? Stress, work, injury, maternity leave and so on? The answer is as with police sick leave: the average hours per employee fluctuate from year to year. Again, although the 2016-17 figure of 54.15 hours was higher than the previous financial year's 50 hours, it is not disproportionate with historical trends, with 2012-13 and 2014-15 recording average hours of 60.54 and 60.84, respectively. Another factor may be the increase of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management State Service workforce because of the integration of corporate and business services.

The member for McIntyre had a couple of questions. One of her questions was about incentives to encourage police to country locations and the vacancy at Gladstone, in particular.

Tasmania Police offers a number of incentives to members to transfer to country stations. This includes allowances, housing with ongoing upgrades and other benefits. The Gladstone station was vacated in November 2017 and was subject to departmental review of the position and classification. The vacancy was first advertised in the *Police Gazette* on 3 May 2018, but no applications were received. It was advertised again in the current gazette, with applications due to close on 14 June 2018. The station has been reclassified to a country and community police station.

The member also asked about the Tasmanian Government Radio Network. Basically there is a current business case before government and as a consequence it is not possible to confirm time lines at this particular time.

**Ms Rattray** - In the annual report it says by 2020.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It might be earlier.

**Ms Rattray** - That will be a first.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It is not possible to say at the moment. The member also asked about the police vessel *Cape Wickham* meeting expectations and how the vessel is being used, including use with regard to fishery security.

The PV *Cape Wickham* has been employed by Marine and Rescue Services since 4 August 2017. Induction training and familiarisation for crews was completed in October 2017, and by all accounts the vessel is performing to expectations.

The PV *Cape Wickham* is rostered to conduct a six-day sea patrol per month. The patrols focus on recreational, commercial fishing and safety regulations. The vessel regularly patrols state and Commonwealth marine reserves.

The PV *Cape Wickham* has also responded to a number of search and rescue operations since coming into service. The vessel has been berthed at Hobart since its arrival and will be deployed in the north of the state for six months from July 2018.

PV *Cape Wickham* and PV *Van Diemen* provide an offshore capability in both the north and south of the state.

The member for McIntyre also asked about Tasmania Police's increased requirements for security: is there a heightened security requirement in light of recent events, especially the media reporting of a plot against Melbourne's Queen Victoria Markets?

The answer is that Tasmania is a safe place and Tasmania Police work diligently with other law enforcement and security agencies to address and prepare for terrorism threats; however, our state is not immune from these dangers and the current national terrorism threat level is 'probable'.

Events overseas influence the Australian security environment and indicate that the preferred target for terrorist attacks are crowded places. These present opportunities for mass casualties, symbolism and high-impact media coverage as well as posing a broad range of security challenges for owners and operators. In response, in 2017 the Australian Government, through engagement with states and territories, delivered Australia's strategy for protecting crowded places from terrorism.

Tasmania Police proactively engages with owners and operators of crowded places and critical infrastructure about counterterrorism preparedness. In addition, Tasmania Police maintains a range of specialist capabilities that are well developed and in line with national doctrine while still being appropriate to the particular needs of this state.

The member for Windermere's last question referred to police numbers. I have a graph dealing with the issue, and I seek leave to table it.

**Leave granted.**

[3.35 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I was pleased our newest member, the member for Prosser, Ms Jane Howlett, made her maiden speech on my motion. I am not so sure she mentioned too much about policing but, anyway, you did because you got into trouble with punctured tyres.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - She had the protection of the police while she was speaking.

**Mr DEAN** - Is that so, Mr President? Well done. The next episode, as Mr President said, might not be as easy as that one. I have a son in the police service, but I do not believe that gives me any conflict of interest when talking on the police service. I need to say that.

**Mr Valentine** - You are talking broadly.

**Mr DEAN** - I am talking broadly about the police service; I am not talking about his position in the police service, albeit I want to make one comment that targets his position. It relates to the Government and the fact that the Government has said, as I understand it, that it will be making the Special Operations Group in this state full-time. It will be interesting to see if that is the unit where my son is so I need to identify that, but it is not for his benefit - I just need to be very careful there.

The Government's undertaking to do that relates to what the member for McIntyre said when we talked about the emergency level and ratings in this state. If the Government is going to provide the funding for that, it would be interesting to see where the Special Operations Group goes. It ought to be a permanent structure in this state; there is no doubt about that.

The matter of marked cars versus unmarked cars was raised by a member. There is no doubt about it, the marked car is the greatest deterrent on our roads. Unmarked cars are no deterrent at all unless they are publicised. There is a lot of publicity that we have marked cars out on the roads all over the place, and it would be good for the police to say on a regular basis that they have 20 marked cars on the Tasmanian roads daily, or whatever it is. They are out there; they will see what you are doing, and if you are speeding, you are likely to get caught. All the unmarked car is doing is catching those who are offending, and we want to stop those who are offending in the first place because speeding is extremely dangerous. You want to stop it in the first place, and the marked car does that and does it very well.

We have a great police service. I have never gone back on that. It is, no doubt, the best in the country and that is not being parochial - it is. If you relate what it does, the return and where we are, it is a great service. There is no doubt about that.

I need to look a little closer at the answers given by the Leader before I comment on those matters. I am just concerned that no interest is given to gambling crime, which really irks me. I am surprised. I had some of the answer, but not all. I will take a close look at that and might comment on it later.

All of a sudden we are told that red light cameras are not now a priority. It was a priority at one stage - we had red light cameras in this state. Members would remember where they were. Those cameras were fairly successful. They were mainly at intersections - not junctions - with high accident rates. There was one at the intersection of Tamar and Brisbane streets in Launceston, a high-crash area. There were others around the state. Suddenly they are off the agenda and are not a high priority at all. It would seem that we do not have a prevalence of crashes at some intersections around the state.

**Ms Forrest** - They have put roundabouts at some of them, such as Illawarra Road.

**Mr DEAN** - They have, and that has removed a lot of the problems in those places. We will hopefully see roundabouts at the other main crash areas in this state, such as at Mowbray and Alanvale. Having said that, Mr President, I commend the motion to the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**

**Government Administration Sessional Committees A and B - Re-Establishment**

[3.59 p.m.]

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

That the Legislative Council agree to the re-establishment of two Government Administration Sessional Committees in the following terms -

**1. SESSIONAL COMMITTEE A ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**

- 1.1 The Sessional Committee A on Government Administration is re-established.
- 1.2 The committee consists of not less than 5 members.
- 1.3 The functions of the committee are to inquire into and report on any matter relating to -
  - (a) Any bill or other matter referred to it by the Council;
  - (b) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, government business enterprise, state-owned company, or other entity for which the following ministers are responsible -
    - i. The Treasurer
    - ii. The Minister for State Growth
    - iii. The Minister for Local Government
    - iv. The Minister for Health
    - v. The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management
    - vi. The Minister for Science and Technology
    - vii. The Minister for Resources
    - viii. The Minister for Energy
    - ix. The Minister for Building and Construction
    - x. The Minister for Veterans Affairs
    - xi. The Minister for Disability Services and Community Development
    - xii. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
    - xiii. The Minister for Women
    - xiv. The Minister for Sport and Recreation
    - xv. The Minister for Human Services
    - xvi. The Minister for Housing
    - xvii. The Minister for Planning

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity including those entities in which local government has an interest.

1.4 And that the members proposed to serve on the committee be appointed by resolution of the Council.

## 2. SESSIONAL COMMITTEE B ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

2.1. The Sessional Committee B on Government Administration is re-established.

2.2 The committee consists of not less than 5 members.

2.3 The functions of the committee are to inquire into and report on any matter relating to -

- (a) Any bill or other matter referred to it by the Council;
- (b) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any department, agency, government business enterprise, state-owned company, or other entity for which the following ministers are responsible -

- i. The Premier
- ii. The Deputy Premier
- iii. The Attorney-General
- iv. The Minister for Justice
- v. The Minister for Environment
- vi. The Minister for Arts
- vii. The Minister for Corrections
- viii. The Minister for Education and Training
- ix. The Minister for Infrastructure
- x. The Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
- xi. The Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events
- xii. The Minister for Trade
- xiii. The Minister for Parks
- xiv. The Minister for Heritage
- xv. The Minister for Primary Industries and Water
- xvi. The Minister for Racing

- (c) The administration, processes, practices and conduct of any other entity including those entities in which local government has an interest.

2.4 And that the members proposed to serve on the committee be appointed by resolution of the Council.

Mr President, I am sure members are aware these committees have operated well over the past eight years. They enable the timely scrutiny of matters that fall under the various portfolios described in the motion. They help us do our job of scrutinising government activities, policy decisions or legislation that comes to this House that may not have received the consultation members of this House believe it should. It is one of the suite of options. We have the joint House committees; we can establish select committees.

These committees enable a committee of its own motion to establish an inquiry, which is really important for times when parliament is not sitting, such as over the winter break or the Easter period, even the budget session, when there is no private members' time to put a motion on notice, then debate it for several weeks. I encourage members to support the motion. We have all participated in these committees. I think we have all found them quite beneficial.

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I support the motion. These committees have operated quite well. The honourable Tony Fletcher was the first one to raise these sessional committees. It was discussed, I think, with the honourable Sue Smith and others; that is how long it goes back. I notice that two committees have been set up. There are some changes there. There ought to be some changes from time to time within committees. That works well. I look forward to serving on one of these committees.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**  
**Government Administration Sessional Committees - Membership**

[3.42 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison)(by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the following members be appointed to serve on Government Administration Committee A -

Mr Finch, Mr Gaffney, Ms Lovell, Mr Valentine, Mr Willie and the mover.

That the following members be appointed to serve on Government Administration Committee B -

Ms Armitage, Mr Armstrong, Mr Dean, Mr Farrell, Ms Howlett, Ms Rattray and Ms Siejka.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**  
**Government Administration Sessional Committees - Sessional Orders**

[3.43 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison)(by leave) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council agree to the 32 sessional orders to govern the operation of the Government Administration Committees A and B, which sessional orders were distributed to all honourable members on Monday, 4 June 2018.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**  
**Safe Reproductive Health Services for Women in Tasmania**

[3.43 p.m.]

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

That the Legislative Council notes -

- (1) Access to quality, safe reproductive health services for all women is an important public health matter and an essential part of public health services in Tasmania;
- (2) All Tasmanian women should have access to safe, accessible and affordable termination of pregnancy services within Tasmania;
- (3) That currently women who wish to access a termination of pregnancy for reasons other than serious foetal anomalies or maternal medical conditions and do not have private health insurance and/or cannot afford to travel to mainland Australia to access termination of pregnancy services are being disadvantaged through the lack of access to termination of pregnancy services within the public health system; and
- (4) That this House calls on the Minister for Health to ensure all Tasmanian women have equitable access to termination of pregnancy services, a legal procedure, through the delivery of this health service in the public hospital system with appropriate protection for medical staff with a conscientious objection to assisting with this medical treatment.

Mr President, this motion is not about whether termination of pregnancy should or should not be legally available or about women's choice. That question was decided in 2013 by this parliament. Termination of pregnancy is a legal medical procedure, as agreed by this parliament. This debate is about equity of access for all Tasmanian women to a medical procedure that is legal and safe to perform in any of our major hospitals, is an important part of our sexual and reproductive health services and forms part of a comprehensive public health service.

In 2013 Tasmania was a leader in the decriminalisation of pregnancy termination. The Australian Parliament has also acted proactively to legalise access to medical termination. Access to safe and affordable reproductive health services is vital for the health and wellbeing of all members of our society. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many parts of the world, although much work continues to be done around the world and progress does continue to be made. Just last month we saw Ireland vote overwhelmingly to decriminalise abortion, with 66.4 per cent of the Irish population voting yes compared to 33.6 per cent voting no - a vote of 2:1 in favour of

decriminalisation, with a majority of 706 349. This followed an Irish referendum to legalise marriage equality, well before Australia did. This shows clearly the change we are seeing across the world with respect to the rights of women and others from marginalised groups.

This is why it is vital we in Tasmania, who have made significant positive inroads into access to sexual and reproductive health care, cannot allow this access or these services to be eroded, undermined or threatened. Some might argue access to termination services is available in the public health system, and this is true, but it is only on a very limited basis. The current arrangement disadvantages women who do not fit in the narrow gap or range of reasons for termination. It also significantly negatively impacts on poor women and women from regional areas of the state. This is not equitable, reasonable or defensible.

This issue has been the subject of investigation, and research confirms this negative impact. A recent, peer-reviewed FactCheck published in *The Conversation* stated that Tasmanian women can find information about terminations from not-for-profit organisations like Family Planning Tasmania or other community health services. However, this information is generally not publicly available. This lack of information, as well as the cost we must incur, constitutes significant barriers to accessing an abortion in Tasmania.

Tasmanian women may face other barriers to abortion, as noted in other Australian research. This can include conscientious objections from health professionals, unwanted counselling, harassment from protesters and gestational limits requiring the approval of more than one health provider. As a side note, just last week the New South Wales Parliament agreed overwhelmingly to put in access zones around their hospitals and clinics where terminations are provided, as we did in Tasmania in 2013. That is a positive step to stop the harassment. I saw a Facebook post showing one of the churches in NSW saying that harassment is not freedom of speech, it is abuse, so some of the churches actually get this.

Returning to the quote from the FactCheck -

International research has found that places where abortion is difficult to access are associated with high maternal mortality and unsafe abortion rates. Barriers to abortion access in Australia particularly affect young women, those in rural areas and women of low socioeconomic status.

Many women in our state, many in my electorate and in electorates with rural areas, are disadvantaged and treated differently from the women in the cities, particularly Hobart. The *Mercury* reported on the 27 April 2018 that Melbourne clinics have reported a dramatic increase in the number of women presenting for medical termination since the closure of the Tasmanian clinic at the beginning of the year. The article states -

Not-for-profit provider Mary Stopes Australia says the number of Tasmanian women travelling to Melbourne for terminations in their clinics has increased from about 1 to 2 per month previously, to up to 10 women a month since January.

Some women may choose to travel to Melbourne because they have family support there - not saying they should never do it, but they are now being forced to travel. In an article titled 'The legal and non-legal barriers to abortion across Australia: a review of the evidence' published in the *European Journal on Contraception and Reproductive Health Care* in 2017, Caroline de Moel-Mandel and Julia M Shelley, from the School of Health and Social Development, Deakin



University, Melbourne again raised this concern. The review's findings identified evidence of a range of barriers to pregnancy termination in Australia, even in jurisdictions where abortion is legal such as Tasmania. The paper states -

As the majority of women may use any means to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, any barrier that restricts safe abortion access will force them to travel to less restrictive states or countries, or to use unskilled and unsafe abortion practises.

We do not want to see that - the real risk is we are, and we will, if this does not change. Furthermore, the World Health Organisation's publication *Safe Abortion, Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems* states, under 'Recommendations for health systems' -

To the full extent of the law, safe abortion services should be readily available and affordable to all women. This means services should be available at primary-care level, with referral systems in place for all required higher-level care.

...

Financing of abortion services should take into account costs to the health system while ensuring that services are affordable and readily available to all women who need them. Costs of adding safe abortion care to existing health services are likely to be low, relative to the costs to the health system of treating complications of unsafe abortion.

Under 'Recommendations related to regulatory, policy and human rights considerations', the policy guideline states -

Laws and policies on abortion should protect women's health and their human rights. Regulatory, policy and programmatic barriers that hinder access to and timely provision of safe abortion care should be removed.

What we have here is the legal framework saying we agree that termination should be part of our health services. It is legal and it should be part of those services. What we are seeing here is a policy position that is not allowing access to that service to be equitable. The quote goes on -

Amending regulatory and policy environment is needed to ensure that every woman who is legally eligible has ready access to safe abortion care. Policies should be geared to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of women, to achieving positive health outcomes for women, to providing good-quality contraceptive information and services, and to meeting the particular needs of poor women, adolescents, rape survivors and women living with HIV.

In Tasmania we have a legislative framework that provides access to medical and surgical termination of pregnancy. However, the policy settings within our health services need to match the intent of this legislative framework to ensure all Tasmanian women have access to sexual and reproductive health services, including access to safe termination of pregnancy.

Medical termination has made access much easier and is to be commended, but that is not an option for all women seeking this health care. Access to surgical termination remains an important and necessary part of our public health service and should be included in the service plans. In Tasmania, we face far fewer challenges in access to safe termination of pregnancy than in some other parts of the world. As a developed nation, we should. However, currently Tasmanian women are being disadvantaged and are not being treated equitably because access to safe, affordable and accessible surgical termination of pregnancy services is not being provided within our public health system, particularly for women from regional areas who lack the financial resources or do not have a foetal or maternal anomaly that enables them to access our public health system. This flies in the face of the 2013 support of the parliament for such access.

I recently met with the chair of the steering committee of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, Baroness Jenny Tonge. The group is a cross-party platform for peers and MPs in the UK, the purpose of which is to raise awareness on key development and right issues, with a specific focus on population, sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The group was established in 1979 and is one of the oldest all-party parliamentary groups in Westminster. It has more than 80 members, with representation from all major political parties and from both Houses in the UK parliament. Baroness Tonge is also a very experienced medical practitioner with a particular interest in sexual and reproductive health, making her the ideal chair for this group. The UK is still to make some of the legislative changes we have already achieved here. It is great we can lead the way, but we need to follow through with the policy settings.

This was highlighted in a recent report of this group titled, *Who Decides? We Trust Women: Abortion in the Developing World and the UK*. This report was released in March 2018 so it is very current. I will quote from several sections of this report that highlight the importance of ensuring provision of safe, affordable and accessible termination of pregnancy services in Tasmania to Tasmanian women as an integral part of our public health services.

This publication, which I am happy to share with members - it is available online - clearly illustrates why it is not just legislative frameworks that need to facilitate access, but the right policy settings and service delivery plans and agreements within our public health service. Baroness Tonge notes in her forward that -

It is not widely known that abortion rates are roughly the same in countries where it is legally available (34 abortions per 1,000 women of childbearing age) and countries where it is banned (37 per 1000) and yet 68,000 desperate women die from unsafe abortion every year in countries with no provision for safe abortion procedures. It is disgraceful that they are so condemned by their governments' failures.

The executive summary notes the following -

It is no longer politically or morally acceptable for governments or international bodies to use arguments of culture or religion to avoid creating a supportive policy and legal framework for safe abortion that would eliminate a major cause of maternal death and injury.

Gillian Kane, Ipas, is the author of that particular quote. The executive summary continues -

Access to therapeutic or induced abortion is essential to allow women to participate fully in modern life and bear only the children they wish and feel able to raise ... Women will take things into their own hands if you do not assist them and I know from bitter experience that they can die in the process.

That quote was from Wendy Savage, a retired UK obstetrician and gynaecologist in Doctors for Choice. Further, the executive summary states -

Abortion rates are roughly the same in countries where abortion is legally restricted (37 per 1000 women of childbearing age) as it is in countries where it is readily available (34 per 1000 women). Restrictive abortion laws do not prevent women from seeking abortion -

That is the important thing. You could apply that statement here and say that restrictive access to abortion policies does not prevent women from seeking abortion -

... they only endanger women's health and lives as women seek unsafe procedures. There is a correlation between restrictive abortion laws and higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

The report also notes the compelling human rights arguments for the need to ensure both the legal framework and policy setting support access to sexual and reproductive health -

Human rights bodies recognise that to protect the basic rights and dignity of women and girls, it is necessary to increase access to quality reproductive health services. The Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights has said the right to health must include necessary SHR services, including safe, legal abortion care. Human rights bodies have affirmed laws restricting abortion access contravenes human rights standards. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) found that it is discriminatory to fail to provide health services only women need.

It is interesting to reflect on progress made and positive outcomes in termination rates in other jurisdictions where termination pregnancy services are managed as part of a standard health practice, as other medical services are, which is what I am suggesting should be the case here. Canada is one such example. The report notes -

Canada decriminalised abortion completely in 1988, rather than have a list of conditions where abortion is 'legal'. Canada's abortion rate is lower than the UK's and there have been few issues as a result. In fact, Canada enjoys the lowest maternal mortality rate from abortion in the world.

This is where it is part of the public health system and service in Canada. The report continues -

Since 1988, Canada has managed abortion as part of standard health practice and there is no control by any civil or criminal law.

It is part of the health service and Canada has the lowest maternal mortality rates in the world from abortion. The Canadian law is further described in the report and some of it is slightly repetitive, but I want to read the quote in context -

Canada has had no criminal laws around abortion for 29 years and has shown that women and doctors act responsibly without criminal laws to control them. The Canadian abortion rate has continuously declined since 2000 and Canada now has an annual rate of 14 abortions per 1000 women of childbearing age. (The corresponding rate in the UK is 16 per 1000 women aged 15 to 44 in 2015 and 2016). There is no gestational law in Canada and 90% of abortions take place in the first trimester -

That is the early part of the pregnancy, Mr President -

... and less than 0.5 per cent take place after 20 weeks. Canadian doctors are accountable to their professional associations and the majority of women present as early as possible for abortion.

I suggest that is because it is easy to do so - it is part of their health system. There is no stigma, which makes it easier for women to access abortion earlier and avoid the need for surgical termination. They are more likely to seek a medical termination. The report continues -

The situation is governed by Canadian Medical Association policies, clinical protocols and codes of ethics, as with all healthcare. The decline in the abortion rate in Canada is seen primarily as a result of good access to contraception.

Access to safe, affordable and accessible sexual and reproductive health services, including surgical termination of pregnancy, is a matter of equity and inclusion. There are existing barriers that remain difficult to overcome including financial barriers and social stigma. These and other barriers were noted in this same report -

Rich women are likely to be able to access safe abortion services whatever the legal framework in which they live. This is not true for the poorest women who are least likely have the information they need, the funds to procure or the ability to access safe abortion services. These are the women who are still using the least safe abortion methods and are most likely to require post-abortion care.

...

The obstacles to safe abortion delivery are varied and many. This includes restrictive laws, poor availability of services, high cost, stigma and refusal to care by healthcare providers, non-medical requirements such as third-party authorisation, mandatory waiting periods and counselling.

The stigma associated with women seeking a pregnancy termination was also discussed in the report, and this stigma is about power, gender stereotyping and sexuality -

Abortion stigma is intertwined with issues around power, gender stereotypes and sexuality. Stigma affects the women and those providers who try to help them. In addition, it drives abortion into the hands of unsafe providers. Women suffer stigma in the community when they ask where they might find safe abortion services, so they don't ask. Women, particularly young women, are frightened to obtain abortion services because they fear the judgement they will receive from healthcare providers. Healthcare professional's disapproval might take the form

of outright refusal of services or abuse of the women. Providers need to better understand their own attitudes to abortion. South Africa, with one of the most liberal laws on abortion in the world, still has healthcare providers that experience burnout from being victimised, stigmatised and isolated from their peers and from their community.

Unless you have been in the position where you have had to face the decision about an unwanted and unplanned pregnancy, and gone through the system - and I have talked to women who have - you do not know what it is like.

The report also comments on the matter of conscientious objection to assisting women with access to a termination. In a number of countries, there is no option for conscientious objection. The report states -

Conscientious objection in reproductive health is not actually CO but Dishonourable Disobedience to laws and ethical codes. Healthcare providers are using their position of trust and authority to impose their personal beliefs on patients, who are completely dependent on them for essential healthcare.

Christian Fiala, from Gynmed Clinic in Vienna, Austria, said that -

Religious beliefs have no place in evidence-based healthcare. As mentioned earlier CO was introduced in 1967 with the UK Abortion Act. Since then, CO has been used worldwide by healthcare providers as an excuse to shirk their duties to care for their patients. The exception is Finland, Iceland and Sweden where there is no provision for refusal to treat. Rather than coming from a deep moral position, it is often noted to be an excuse to avoid a necessary task. The imposition of a doctor's religious beliefs on a vulnerable patient is a way to harm women and CO nearly always involves services needed by women (contraception and abortion).

Members will note in part two of the motion, I call for this approach to be continued - that medical staff who have a conscientious objection be protected. I personally believe arguments put in the report are valid, but it is something that should be considered at a later time. This leaves us in Tasmania with an important responsibility to ensure we do not allow access to public health services to be eroded through spurious argument or personal views regarding women's health matters.

The provision of safe, accessible and affordable termination of pregnancy services within the public health system must be part of the services provided in Tasmanian Health Service plans. Sexual and reproductive health is important to all Tasmanians. It is not a question of gender, age, geographic location, education or any other aspect. It is vital that quality sex education is an integral part of Tasmanian children's education. This along with access to publicly available quality sexual health services, advice and contraception must be part of our health services, and this will assist in reducing the number of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, and thus the need for termination of pregnancy services.

However, even with this, the provision of safe, equitable and accessible medical and surgical termination of pregnancy services will continue to be needed within our public health system. Access to termination of pregnancy is not an issue of choice for women or the health system. As I

stated at the beginning of my contribution, that debate was settled in the past with the decriminalisation of abortion agreed to by this parliament in 2013.

This is a health service required by some women that should be safely performed in all our major public hospitals. It requires policy decisions and settings that support and give effect to the legislative framework we all agreed to. We know not all pregnancies can be avoided, particularly in a marriage or in a long-term relationship. The only form of 100 per cent reliable contraception is total abstinence, and I do not think many married couples or couples in long-term relationships see that as an option. Even vasectomy and tying of a women's fallopian tubes does not guarantee success. If you have been around the traps as long as I have in this area, you would know that the odd surprise turns up - and not necessarily unwanted babies or pregnancies, although some of them are. Some of those couples have gone as far as they can to ensure they do not have to make that decision or find themselves facing that decision, but some still will.

So Tasmanian women should not be faced with severe financial hardship to access a legal, safe and integral health service as a result of having to leave the state. Some of travel costs are reimbursed, but the costs do not just extend to the airfares and accommodation. I have heard directly from some women who have faced this reality, a reality we must address. This personal communication to me highlights the real issues -

I'm a confident, educated and able woman. Yet, I'm sitting here feeling beyond vulnerable, I'm feeling less of a person. I'm feeling invisible. I'm feeling alone. I'm feeling ashamed.

I just turned 39, I have 3 beautiful kids, I've been a mum since I was 21. My kids are 17, 10 & 7. I'm divorced. I'm into the second year of a beautiful relationship with someone I love unconditionally. We have a beautiful life.

My story represents one part of the unspoken face of terminations - I'm the mother in my late 30s that has a family, that works hard in my career, that doesn't always pay attention to my car ... and my body ...

I'm not reckless, as some often assign to those that end up in this situation.

I'm also the Tasmanian female who had to fly to Melbourne because I couldn't access affordable and available services in Tasmania.

Even though the media releases tell me I'm not disadvantaged because I live in Tasmania, that the services have been restored, that I have just seen my GP, I've flown to Melbourne.

Her email was quite long describing the process and I will not quote it all. This woman is not alone. We have an obligation to address this. This woman provided me with a breakdown of the costs, from the diagnosis to the surgical procedure over a period of 16 days. The cost was \$2750. Many women cannot afford to pay this, even with some costs able to be recovered. Many in my electorate find that really tough.

**Mr Gaffney** - In your experience, do some women like to take somebody with them for when they come out of the procedure? A best friend or sometimes a mother? That in itself is a hindrance if the procedure is in Melbourne - it prevents a lot of that emotional support.

**Ms FORREST** - I was also informed by a health service provider of one of their clients, a young woman who decided she needed to have a termination. She was required to go to Melbourne. She had never been on an aeroplane, never been to Melbourne; she had no one who could travel with her. She had to go on her own, navigate Melbourne airport on her own, find her way to the clinic and then find her way home.

**Ms Lovell** - Some clinics actually require a support person to go with them when they leave.

**Ms FORREST** - Particularly if you are planning to come home afterwards. This is something we need to address. Women should not have to go to Melbourne, unless that is their choice. Usually, if that is their choice, they will have someone with them or will have family there.

**Mr Gaffney** - Or they can afford to do it.

**Ms FORREST** - That is right. Some women find it difficult to arrange care for their older children. All women need support at this time because it is never an easy or lightly made decision. Some people in the community will say they should not have got themselves in that position in the first place, and that termination is a quick and easy solution. It never is. They never think that termination is their contraception.

Evidence shows that many women will consider unsafe measures to end their pregnancy, some with devastating effects. This is not acceptable in a civilised society such as our state and our country. Financial costs come on top of the emotional costs and trauma associated with the ongoing stigma perpetuated by policy settings such as in Tasmania. Leaving family, friends and often other children should not be necessary at the time this support is needed.

I have received countless messages of thanks, support, encouragement and deep gratitude for raising this matter publicly. These messages have come from men and women from around the state by email, phone, direct personal communication and social media. I had one just a little while ago from a woman, which I can use in the reply. She found herself unexpectedly pregnant and decided to continue with the pregnancy, but she wanted to thank me for standing up for her right, if she had made a different decision, to have a termination in Tasmania. She made the choice to continue her pregnancy, and all power to her for doing so with her partner.

Some of these messages have come from women who have had to face this most difficult of decisions whether to have a termination, just like the woman I mentioned. Some were from medical practitioners and other health professionals frustrated by the lack of clarity and access for women in their care. Some were from family members who have seen their loved ones face totally unnecessary hardship as a result of this policy position.

I have received, I think, five messages from constituents, with one constituent wishing to engage on the matter, who have been critical of my stand. That pales into insignificance with all those I have had from the opposite side, who said thank you and supported my stance. It is not easy in a conservative electorate to stand up and talk about these things, rest assured, but it is so important that I do.

**Mr Gaffney** - You made it very clear this is not about the issue, it is about equity of access -

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. It is about equity of access.

**Mr Gaffney** - That is where some of the cases have been confused.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. Some of them get a little bit wayward, but I bring them back to that point. Women should not be treated differently because they live in my electorate rather than in the member for Hobart's.

I will read a small number of de-identified excerpts of these messages I have received to highlight the general theme of the messages because I think it is very important to listen to the voices of our fellow Tasmanians in this debate, and to stand up and speak out for those who may be less able to do so for themselves, be it for fear of attack or shame.

First one is from an older male Tasmanian. I only know he is older and he is male because he put his name on it and I know who he is -

Hi Ruth

May I offer my support and congratulations for your stance on access for Tasmanian women to abortion services in the public hospital system? It is disgraceful that such services are not available in a timely, safe and compassionate manner. Having had family experience of the need for surgical abortion, I am painfully aware of the failings of the system. Well done.

Another is from a health professional who previously worked in a sexual health service in Victoria that provided termination pregnancy services -

Dear Ruth

I just want to wish you all the best as you attempt to pass a motion for Tasmanian women to have access to safe abortion services. It is, as you say, a real issue about access.

I remember when there were patients who flew in from Tasmania to access the services. They were rather advanced in their pregnancy due to the delay on many fronts when they were seeking medical help. This really should not be the case.

I think it is a massive joke that there is no public services for this. It is a hush-hush problem that everyone seems to sweep under the carpet. Even if you had the money to pay for the service, it seems the private sector have closed off their services.

I feel for the women in all walks of life who for some reason have ended up with an unwanted pregnancy, and in my experience, it is not always the young. We have middle-aged mothers too, who have had three children and really cannot afford another.

All the best in your good work and thank you for raising such an important issue.

There were some from other Tasmanian women -



Abortion is safe, legal, affordable and accessible. While it's legal here in Tassie, it certainly isn't affordable or accessible, which in turn makes it less safe.

And another -

Thanks for being a strong Tassie voice on the rights of women.

There were many other, similar messages. Restrictive sexual and reproductive health laws and/or policies do not prevent women seeking terminations. What they do is endanger women's health and lives because some of these women will seek unsafe procedures.

We must also remember there is a correlation between restrictive sexual and reproductive health laws and policies, and higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity. There is a direct link.

This motion has nothing to do with a woman's right to choose. That was agreed by this parliament and all of us in 2013. This motion has nothing to do with whether women should be able to access termination of pregnancy legally in Tasmania because the law makes it clear they should be able to.

This motion is all about a current policy setting that sees Tasmanian women being unable to access a legal procedure that should be part of our comprehensive sexual and reproductive health service in our public health system. Women should not be forced into financial hardship or forced to leave family and other support to access a service that can and should be provided in Tasmania in our public hospitals and public health system.

This is a matter of caring for all Tasmanian women regardless of their background, regardless of where they live and regardless of their personal circumstances.

This motion is about equity of access to a legally supported health service that can and should be provided by public policy to avoid disadvantaging and discriminating against Tasmanian women. I urge members to support the motion to ensure equity of access to an important sexual and reproductive health service in our public hospitals for all Tasmanian women.

[4.20 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Mr President, I would not like to be in the position where I had to choose in regard to this service. No-one takes it lightly.

There is not a lot people could pick out of clause (1) of the motion or say it is not the way it should be. Most people feel that good services should be available. There will be people at both ends of that spectrum. One will see this as a given. Others will say that it should be limited, according to their faith or social position on termination. Those arguments, as the member for Murchison has already pointed out, have been debated in this House. I thought it was November 2014 by the time it went through the Committee stage, but I might be wrong.

**Ms Forrest** - You could be right; I was looking at the date of the legislation.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Nevertheless it was well and truly argued and debated in this House. I think it was November 2014 when the current act was passed. I stand to be corrected. The legislation provided for terminations, with certain strictures to make sure people have the

opportunity for conscientious objection - two doctors being involved in certain cases. It is now a legal position. I support clause (1) of the motion.

Clause (2) will be contentious for some, but it is supported by the law. We are not debating whether it should be legal - it is legal, although as far as I am aware affordability is not mentioned in the act. It is sensible that it should be affordable. The Government agrees it needs to be affordable. I believe it will fund travel to Victoria for women to access services there. Can the Leader confirm the nature or conditions under which the Government will fund travel? Is it for any termination or only those with serious anomalies or clinical emergencies?

**Ms Forrest** - They are done in our hospitals.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Obviously emergencies would be done here. I presume the others would be as well. Could the Leader clarify exactly what the Government funds and what conditions need to be met for that funding to be released? While I support such funding to assist a woman, if the services are not available locally, it seems odd to place such a burden on the public purse if the outcome is the same in terms of the procedure occurring. Why would you fund people to go to the mainland if it was cheaper for them to have the service here? The outcome is the same. The member for Murchison said it was one to two per month and that it has gone up to 10 per month since January.

**Ms Forrest** - That is just one clinic.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Of those who did go to Victoria, how many were funded by the Government to travel for that service? If that information is available, I would be interested in it.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - You want to know how many people have access to the funding?

**Mr VALENTINE** - Of those who went to Victoria to access the service. If there is data, how many of those were funded by the Government to undertake that travel?

**Ms Lovell** - It is hard to tell because a lot of women will not apply.

**Mr VALENTINE** - No, but there was a statistic given and I wondered whether it came from the Government.

**Ms Forrest** - That was a report from the Marie Stopes clinic in Melbourne as reported in the *Mercury*.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Okay. The act provides for conscientious objection for anyone involved - obviously doctors and nurses. I am not sure how far down the line it goes, whether it covers orderlies.

**Ms Forrest** - Orderlies should not know what procedure a patient is having; there is a problem with confidentiality if they do.

**Mr VALENTINE** - That probably answers that question. In clause (4) of this motion you reiterate that protection for medical staff with a conscientious objection is there. That is the law. They have the opportunity to conscientiously object under the act at present. I suppose it is a given in a way, but you are stating it to make it very clear, and I can understand that.

I support clause (2). I go to clause (3). I guess any woman going through an experience like this would prefer to have her support networks. The member for Mersey, through questioning and interjection, brought that out. I imagine that a woman going through something like this would want her support network to be available to her. That would include counselling avenues she might choose to take.

**Mr Gaffney** - As a minor point, if a couple has three children and decided to terminate, the husband would want to be there with his wife while she has the procedure.

**Mr VALENTINE** - You are saying it is not only the cost for the woman to go to the mainland, but if she wants her significant other there, they have to be able to afford that.

**Ms Forrest** - Plus the cost of child care for the other children.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Yes. Anyway, it is important that counselling is made available. I wholeheartedly agree with that. I do not think it should be mandatory, but I think counselling services should be available for women who are going through these sorts of things. They need to be made aware of all aspects of it, but it should be at their request. It should be the woman who determines with her doctors what the situation should be. It is really not for me in parliament, as I said during the debate, to say that this is the way it should be when it is the woman who makes the decision in conjunction with the medical advice she is receiving. That is very important. I do not see a problem with clause (3).

Some may say clause (4) is fiddling with government policy in some way, but I do not really know of a circumstance where a government has a policy that works against something that is legal. That is what it comes down to. It is legal and therefore one expects the Government would want to work within the law to provide the safest means possible to deliver services under that law. I am pretty sure this Government agreed with the act at the end of the day. That was the significant point about when that bill was passed. I will stand corrected if I am wrong about that. If the law allows a procedure, it should not be withheld for reasons other than a lack of clinical capacity, which I doubt exists here. I support the motion. I have received various emails from people who want to go over old ground and express their views on abortion. They find it difficult to accept what the law says. I have also received emails from people saying it is good the Government has made a sensible decision by paying for services to be provided in another state.

Again, it is the same outcome, and there is a risk for women who find themselves in this situation and are distraught at the thought of going away without their support network. It might be too much for them - not to dramatise matters - because it is not just dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, it is dealing with the life of the mother and their mental health. We have to be cognisant that if it is available under the law, it should be something this Government works to provide.

It might be that the Government is going down this path. The Leader might enlighten me on what the Government is doing with those services in this state. I will listen carefully to her contribution.

[4.32 p.m.]

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Huon) - Madam Acting President, I have concerns regarding this notice of motion. I have received numerous emails regarding it, not one of which is in support of it. I am more concerned that there has been no consultation on this motion. Any other time we have something come to us, we hear in this place, 'Why have we not had consultation?' We were not

consulted on this. The motion was on the Notice Paper for approximately a month, but every other time this happens, people want consultation to talk to this or that person, but nothing whatsoever in this case.

**Mr Finch** - That is not the procedure that normally occurs with a notice of motion.

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - On such an issue, consultation should have occurred. It might not, but I cannot support this motion because we have no consultation with anybody. The only emails I have received have been against it; there has not been one for it. I imagine it will impact on the Health budget too - and the budget has been set for this year - so I will not support the motion.

[4.33 p.m.]

**Ms LOVELL** (Rumney) - Madam Acting President, I speak on this motion with a sense of frustration that we are here debating this now. It feels like women and those who campaign in support of women are constantly needing to have this debate over and over again. Every time we think we have gained some ground, another obstacle is put in our way.

I am very aware and acknowledge that I am speaking with no understanding of what it is like to be faced with making a decision about an unplanned or unwanted, for many different reasons, pregnancy. I may never know what that is like. I believe it is important to acknowledge the fact. I want to thank the member for Murchison for tabling this motion and bringing it to us for debate. I wholeheartedly support the motion, and I will explain why.

Before I do so, I commend the work of four organisations and the people who work within those organisations - namely, Women's Health Tasmania and its recently retired CEO Glynis Flower, Family Planning Tasmania, the Pulse Youth Health Centre and the Link Youth Health Service. These four organisations have gone absolutely above and beyond to support women in Tasmania in this period of uncertainty where women have been unable to access this procedure in Tasmania.

As other members mentioned, I also want to be very clear that this is not a debate about choice. This is about access. This is not about whether any of us here or anyone in the community believes abortion is right or wrong. It is not about whether any of us here or in the community have an ideological opposition to abortion or a personal or a faith-based belief. This is about access and whether we believe the Government has an obligation to make available a legal medical procedure in Tasmania through our public health system.

The member for Huon commented about the lack of consultation. He has left the Chamber, but he may be listening elsewhere. I can only speak for myself: I have undertaken significant consultation in preparing to speak to this motion, but having said that, I cannot think of another instance where we have needed to be consulted on a legal medical procedure provided for in the public system.

Many emails are being circulated. I know other members have touched on this. It is pretty clear some sort of online petition is being circulated and promoted by some persons or organisations that oppose abortion, but that matter has been dealt with. It is disappointing but it is very clear from the emails I have received that there is significant misinformation about what we are debating today in this place.

I have received only a small number of emails opposed to this bill - sorry, people have assumed it is a bill as opposed to debate on a motion - but, as with the experience of the member for Murchison, that pales into insignificance compared with the number of personal conversations, phone calls, emails and other forms of contact I have had with people - men and women - who are strongly seeking support, including the parliament's support, and advocacy in being able to access this procedure.

On the member for Hobart's comment about when the bill was introduced, I can confirm it was in 2013 because it was due to the work of the Health minister at the time, Michelle O'Byrne. I want to acknowledge her hard work.

This is not about choice. This is a women's health issue. It is not just about access to the procedure itself, but about the wraparound care before and after the procedure. Currently in Tasmania the right to terminate a pregnancy is protected in the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013.

Section (4) of the act refers to terminations by medical procedure at not more than 16 weeks and states that -

the pregnancy of a woman who is not more than 16 weeks pregnant may be terminated by a medical practitioner with the woman's consent.

Section (5) refers to terminations by medical practitioner after 16 weeks -

- (1) The pregnancy of a woman who is more than 16 weeks pregnant may be terminated by a medical practitioner with the woman's consent if the medical practitioner -
  - (a) reasonably believes that the continuation of the pregnancy would involve greater risk or injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman than if the pregnancy was terminated; and
  - (b) has consulted with another medical practitioner who reasonably believes that the continuation of the pregnancy would involve greater risk or injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant women than if the pregnancy was terminated.
- (2) In assessing the risk referred to in subsection (1), the medical practitioners must have regard to the woman's physical, psychological, economic and social circumstances.
- (3) At least one of the medical practitioners referred to in subsection (1) is to be a medical practitioner who specialises in obstetrics or gynaecology.

However, since the closure of the last low-cost private clinic in December last year in Hobart, women in Tasmania have had severely limited access to terminations. To access a termination in Tasmania right now the choices a woman has are these -

- First choice - access the procedure through a private clinic at significant cost of \$2500 to \$3000 for the procedure alone, which does not include GP visits for referrals, time taken

off work, travel costs - which can be significant considering the limited number of clinics performing this procedure in the state - and child care for other children.

- Second choice - travel to Melbourne to have the procedure at a low-cost private clinic. As we have heard, there is the option of the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme. But what does that mean? It means another person to tell your story to, with no guarantee of anonymity. You may or may not meet the criteria. It means taking time off work, again arranging child care. You might have pets that need to be cared for. You might need to take time off school, and how do you explain that to your parents? It means not only time off school but a trip to Melbourne. These costs are incurred not just for yourself but, as we have heard, also for a support person. If you want to have a support person there with you, those costs would be incurred by you or that person.
- Third choice - explain your situation to your GP - or a GP; it may or may not be a doctor you know well - and then be referred to an obstetrics or gynaecology specialist and explain your situation to them. Then convince two doctors you are vulnerable, and there is a greater risk of injury to your physical or mental health than if the pregnancy were terminated. Those two doctors discuss your situation between themselves, taking into regard your physical, psychological, economic and social circumstances, and agree with or for you that a termination is in your best interests.

Women have fought for many decades, and are still fighting, for full agency over our bodies - full control over our health and wellbeing. The legislation we have in Tasmania is some of the best in the country. It meets community expectations. It supports women making decisions about their own health with the support of their medical practitioner, but right now we have some of the worst rights in the country in regard to access.

I, too, want to share with members the story of a woman who faced this choice earlier this year. We have heard part of her story already from the member for Murchison. This woman needed to make a decision about a pregnancy. Her reasons are irrelevant; indeed they are nobody's business but hers, and, in this case, her partner. The traumatic journey she then faced - not just in the physical sense - deserves to be heard by those who will be making this decision on behalf of women in this situation. She shared her story with me and has given me permission to share parts of that story here today. Some of this will be repeated, but there is more to the story that I would like to share. In her words -

I started to type this sitting in a waiting room in Melbourne while waiting for the first part of my second trimester termination to take place.

This is the first time I've thought about who I am, and I've not started with my work CV. I'm a confident, educated and able woman. Yet, I'm sitting here feeling beyond vulnerable, I'm feeling less of a person. I'm feeling invisible. I'm feeling alone. I'm feeling ashamed.

My story represents one part of the unspoken face of terminations - I'm the mother in my late 30s that has a family, that works hard in my career, that doesn't always pay attention to my car ... and my body, that thinks about everyone else, that forgets about what I need.

I'm not reckless, as some often assign to those that end up in this situation.

I'm also a Tasmanian female who had to fly to Melbourne because I couldn't access affordable and available services in Tasmania.

Even though the media releases tell me I'm not disadvantaged because I live in Tasmania, that the services have been restored, that I just have to see my GP, I've flown to Melbourne.

She goes on to describe the process of trying to work out what her options are -

I'm talking to the GP. She's so great. But like me, she's not clear about what's available. She needs to find out. We agree that I'll get a blood test and an ultrasound as I'm not sure what stage I'm at. I'm talking about the differences in my last period and I can see she's not confident, and now I'm not confident. We need facts. She's going to talk to her colleagues and get details. She gives me a medical certificate to focus on the tests and getting me in asap. We will get back together next week.

After determining what stage the pregnancy was at - it was 15 weeks and five days - this woman describes talking to a clinician after an ultrasound -

We're talking about the options available in Tas. Public hospitals don't do this. There's one provider. It's clear to me that nobody really knows what to do, what to say. Everyone wants to help, but the system isn't there. It ends with a commitment to talk to others in the public system so they know I'm on the radar, but also a conversation that it might be easier to do this in Melbourne.

I'm back at the GPS. She's got me all the details. We're excited we both have info. It's like a show and tell. We talk about medical terminations and look awkward because I'm past that. So it's surgical. I explain that we should refer to the public system, just to see if I can be one of those looked after there. Hopeful. And I also get referred to the local provider. I can confirm there are options. I'm excited. Progress.

I call the local provider. Explain that my referral was faxed earlier that day. She reads the referral and I hear it in her voice. This isn't going to be easy.

I'm in a waiting room at a gyno/obste. There are pregnant women, new babies. I can't make eye contact. I'm filling out the personal form. I just want him to do this. I don't want to go to Melbourne. I want this done now. I want my life to be normal.

He's really nice. We talk and laugh. I tear up, but then make more bad jokes ... I refuse to admit it, but these are the darkest days for me. I've never felt as low as I did at this point. Trapped. Not sure what to do. What to believe. I didn't want to burden people. I felt like I'd stuffed up. I felt so stupid. I felt invisible. He can't do it. I'm 16 weeks on the day. They only do a certain number of procedures and only on one day of the week. That day. Under legislation, it's illegal if we proceed after that day. Unless 2 drs sign off. I explain all my reasons as to why 2 drs should sign off. But it's not strong enough. He commits to talk to someone. He will call me once that's done. But he fills out the referral to

Melbourne. It's going to be best, quickest and cheapest to do it in Melbourne. I resist a little. I don't want to go to Melbourne. He tells me how he'd do a 16+ week termination ... I walk out and call Melbourne.

Her thoughts while in Melbourne -

I get into the gown, and hat and booties. After looking at the tv for a while, the other girls and I start talking in the waiting room. We all have such different and same stories. Some are local, some are from regional areas, some are from overseas. We are all here because this is the only place we could go to have this procedure.

This is the story of a woman in Tasmania, an educated woman, a professional woman, a woman in her 30s. Not a teenager, not a survivor of rape or violence, not a woman living with physical or mental ill health. Not a woman living with a disability. Her first language is English, she has access to the internet, to doctors, to medical professionals, and she was in a better position than many women to find and pay for solutions, and yet it was so hard.

The time that passed from when she first discovered she was pregnant through to assessing her options, travelling to Melbourne and undergoing the procedure was in excess of three weeks. The costs, including two GP visits, a required ultrasound, a specialist appointment, flights, accommodation and the procedure itself, minus any rebates she was entitled to, came to just over \$4000. That is not including incidental expenses such as taxi fares, SkyBus fare, food or train fares. How is this acceptable?

The Patient Travel Assistance Scheme has been offered as a solution, albeit temporary, although it has been six months. The scheme covers some, not all, travel costs. Patients are required to make a contribution towards the cost of travel. Accommodation expenses covered by the scheme are capped at \$87 per night. Parking, meals and phone calls home are not covered. A support person may be covered, but for anyone over the age of 18, it is unlikely for this procedure.

Unless you have a health care or concession card, you are required to pay for the first two nights of accommodation yourself. In most cases you are also required to pay up front and then be reimbursed for any expenses that are eligible. This is hardly a solution. I would be interested in an answer to the member for Hobart's question on the number of women who have applied for cover under the travel assistance scheme. I have heard from women who say they are not applying because of the stress it adds to the stress they are already facing.

It is important to acknowledge the timing of this debate. This unacceptable situation has been in place since December last year. It is now almost the middle of June. There were public statements made throughout the election campaign and since designed to shut down this debate. No real solution is on the horizon. On 13 January, when news broke that the private clinic had closed, Mr Ferguson was reported by the ABC as saying his department was aware of the closure and was investigating options. Fair enough. Two days later, on 15 January, the *Mercury* reported the extension of the travel assistance scheme and quoted the Health minister as saying that this was a temporary measure being put in place by DHHS while they explored service options. Again, that was not unreasonable, but not sustainable as a long-term solution.



Fast forward to early April, when it started to be reported that clinicians at the Royal Hobart Hospital were performing terminations for women in circumstances that fell outside the previous policy, after 16 weeks, only in instances of vulnerability, signed off by two doctors.

The Health minister was very quick to jump on this. Again, I quote from the *Mercury* dated 13 April 2018 -

Health Minister Michael Ferguson said today that 'abortion on demand' would remain a matter for the private system.

'The Government's policy hasn't changed, the Royal's policy hasn't changed,' he said.

'The services of abortion on demand are provided through the private system, that's always been the case and that has not changed.

'We appreciate that there are occasions where doctors make clinical decisions to support women, particularly in circumstances where it's medically required.'

In the same article, the President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Dr Bastian Seidel, also commented -

Royal Australian College of GPs president Bastian Seidel said vulnerable women were being put through unnecessary stress at the hands of the Government's unclear policy.

'A surgical termination really should be available in Tasmania for Tasmanian women and it's something the Royal Hobart hospital can easily provide', he said.

'If the service is available it needs to be made clear, it's a disaster to send a woman interstate while she's in a vulnerable position to undergo a surgical termination.

'Tasmanian women and their GPs deserve better than what they're experiencing now.'

I was then personally informed by medical practitioners that an email was sent by the Tasmanian Health Service General Practice Liaison Officer, South on 17 April, and this has been since reported in the media. The email stated that there had been an error in a previous communication, and that the Royal Hobart Hospital -

... offers priority access to Surgical Termination of Pregnancy to women who are less than 14 weeks' gestation and assessed as vulnerable.

The email also advised that women could access the clinic with a 'GP referral, clearly stating why the woman is vulnerable', and that -

... vulnerability may include, but is not limited to, socioeconomic hardship, sexual or domestic violence, physical or intellectual disability, or acute stress or mental illness.

So there we were, four months after the private clinic had closed, three months after the Health minister had advised his department was exploring options, and not only was there no solution, but the public hospitals were tightening up their policies when it appeared that those may have relaxed somewhat.

On 27 April it was reported that the Marie Stopes clinic in Victoria had seen an increase in the number of women travelling there from Tasmania, from one to two a month prior to December, to 10 to 12 women a month since January this year. Here we are, in mid-June, six months down the track from when this became an issue, and there is still no solution on the horizon for Tasmanian women.

In recent weeks we have seen abortion again enter public discourse with Ireland's overwhelming result in favour of repealing the Eighth Amendment to its constitution. The Eighth Amendment effectively criminalised abortion in Ireland and was passed by referendum in 1983. It was well known that women since in Ireland were not able to legally access abortion in their own country, they had to travel - usually to the United Kingdom - to undergo the procedure. There have been a number of high-profile examples of where this policy led to dramatically detrimental outcomes for women - tragically, including fatalities.

On 25 May this year, Ireland voted to repeal the Eighth Amendment. I was incredibly moved to see the support this referendum gained. Thousands upon thousands of men and women living or holidaying abroad, travelled back to Ireland just to cast their vote. Thousands of dollars were donated to pay for flights home for people who could not afford it. Social media was flooded with stories from Ireland of welcoming committees at airports, groups of strangers meeting on planes and in departure lounges and working out they were all travelling for the same reason. I even saw a thread on Twitter that resulted in a ferry service holding back a scheduled departure so people travelling by bus from a delayed flight to get home to vote were able to get there. It was incredibly moving. As I mentioned before, I read the *Hansard* from both Chambers of the 2013 debate on the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Bill. While he voted against the bill at the time, I was particularly interested in comments made by the member for Braddon, Mr Brooks, who said and I quote-

Opposing safe, legal access to pregnancy termination at any stage for any reason is as impractical as it is dangerous. I have no wish to see backyard abortions performed in this state ... Nor do I wish to see, as we have seen overseas, examples where women who have been raped are forced to travel abroad for a termination.

I hope Mr Brooks is paying attention because this is exactly the situation we have here. The issue of pregnancy as a result of rape, including in relationships where women are subjected to violence and manipulation, is of very real concern. I cannot imagine what that would be like - to be faced with a pregnancy you know you cannot continue; to know your options are either paying thousands of dollars, or flying to another state and paying thousands of dollars, or having to explain to a doctor, who you may or may not know well or at all, what has happened, including why you are there and why you cannot or do not want to continue with that pregnancy; and to know this doctor has to discuss it with another doctor and that you cannot make this decision for yourself without them agreeing. Is this really the best we can do for vulnerable women in our own state?

I would like to touch on one aspect of the motion, something which was raised with me in correspondence from constituents. Other members have spoken on this. It is clear certain

organisations are encouraging members of the public to write to their elected members. I am all for that but it is disappointing that clearly some misinformation is being circulated about what the current laws are and what is being debated in parliament this week. There seems to be confusion over the issue of conscientious objection and the right of clinicians to refuse to perform terminations. The current legislation in the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act provides protections for those who have a conscientious objection -

Section 6 of the act deals with conscientious objection and duty to treat. It reads -

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), no individual has a duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in treatment authorised by section 4 or 5 of this Act if the individual has a conscientious objection to terminations.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to an individual who has a duty set out in subsection (3) or (4).

Despite any conscientious objection to terminations, under section 6(3) -

A medical practitioner has a duty to perform a termination in an emergency if a termination is necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman or to prevent her serious physical injury.

Despite any conscientious objection to terminations, under section 6(4) -

A nurse ... has a duty to assist a medical practitioner in performing a termination in an emergency if a termination is necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman or to prevent her serious physical injury.

Section 7 deals with obligations on medical practitioners and counsellors. Under section 7(1), 'counsellor' means -

a person who holds himself or herself out as a provider of a counselling service or conducts himself or herself in a manner consistent with a provider of a counselling service, whether or not that service or conduct is engaged in or provided for fee or reward.

In the same subsection 'Health service' means 'a health service which provides advice, information or counselling on the full range of pregnancy options'.

- (2) Subject to subsection (3), if a woman seeks a termination or advice regarding the full range of pregnancy options advice from a medical practitioner and the practitioner has a conscientious objection to terminations, the practitioner must on becoming aware that the woman is seeking a termination or advice regarding the full range of pregnancy options provide the woman with a list of prescribed health services from which the woman may seek advice, information or counselling on the full range of pregnancy options.

- (3) Subsection (2) does not apply to a medical practitioner who has a duty set out in section 6(3).

Section 7(4) reads -

Nothing in this section prevents a medical practitioner from continuing to provide treatment, advice or counselling in respect of matters other than a termination or advice regarding the full range of pregnancy options to a woman who the medical practitioner has provided a list of prescribed health services from which the woman may seek advice, information or counselling on the full range of pregnancy options.

I wanted to read that into the *Hansard* today because it is important that members of the public and all members here understand those protections are currently provided for in the legislation. Members can rest assured that this is still the case and there is no intention of changing this. I acknowledge the member for Murchison's desire to make this absolutely clear in her motion.

Make no mistake, this is a health issue and a woman's rights issue. This is not a debate about choice. This is not about rights or wrongs. This is about whether we believe a legal medical procedure, as emotive and as polarising as it may be, that can be performed in our public health system - and indeed is performed in our public health system - should be available to all Tasmanian women. I believe it should. I absolutely support this motion. Again, I thank the member for Murchison for bringing it before us for debate. I urge members to support it.

[5.01 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Madam Acting President, I thank the member for Murchison for bringing this motion to the Chamber. This debate is to help people to understand the situation and the motion makes it very clear that this is about equitable access by ladies to termination procedures. I thank the members for Hobart and Rumney for their input, which clarified many of the issues I had.

I have only one point to raise. We heard about the Royal Hobart Hospital saying it could do more procedures, so that is possible. We are very careful in Tasmania to say we are a community. That is what we are here for - although we have our own patches, we all like to think of Tasmania as one place. When a lady of any age makes a decision on whether to terminate their pregnancy or keep their baby, there are many issues to consider. If they decide to keep their baby, there is a lot of prenatal and postnatal care we provide as a state. We do as much as we can and should to ensure the safety of the mother and the child. Importantly, it becomes a big part of our health service. On the other hand, if the lady decides she wants to terminate, we say, 'There is no or very little access in our public system, so you have to go away. You have to go somewhere else to do that.' This is the conundrum. If we are saying that we are providing a safe service for the women in Tasmania to live and be part of this community, regardless of the decision they make, whether to keep or to terminate, they should still have access to good quality care within the state.

We understand the Health budget is probably one of the more difficult ones to manipulate and to put the money in the right places for the right procedures, but this obviously is really important. I encourage the Government and the minister to think, 'Yes, this is a good debate, a good point, we need to address this, we need to fix it.'

**Ms Forrest** - We are spending taxpayers' money. We are sending them to the mainland, so we are already spending the money.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I am going to wait to hear from the Government. If it were as simple as that, there has to be something. They may have to go back and think, 'Okay, let me look at this again.' Is this the best way? Outsourcing, whether we like to do it or not, seems to be the way of governments all over the place. But this is the wrong thing to do if we want to say to people, 'Come to Tasmania and raise a family. If you get in a situation where you cannot have a family and decide to terminate, we are not going to expect you to go away to have that procedure by yourself, somewhere where you do not know the people and cannot get support or access.'

I would like the Government to reconsider its position after this debate. I thank the member for Murchison for bringing it on. I would like to see the Government's response to some of the reasons it has chosen this path, so that we can then go, 'Hang on, let us see if we can fix this because it is not right.' I support the motions, all four of them.

[5.04 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Madam Acting President, I will outline some of the background to surgical terminations in Tasmania and provide an update on the current situation. I am sure I speak for all here when I say that it is a deeply difficult decision for a woman to terminate her pregnancy. It is a time of vulnerability when she requires support, love and assistance from trusted counsel. I encourage any women wishing to discuss their pregnancy options to speak to a general practitioner or an obstetrician.

It is important to clarify the two termination methods available for women. First, there is the medical termination. This is a non-surgical tablet form abortifacient that can be administered up to nine weeks' gestation at home or in a clinic, but must be prescribed by a licensed doctor who meets certain qualifications. Services such as Marie Stopes Australia and the Tabbot Foundation provide over-the-phone consultations, prescriptions for mifepristone and clinical follow-up.

A surgical termination, the subject of this debate, is performed under general anaesthetic by a medical practitioner in a day surgery or hospital theatre. Demand for surgical terminations across Australia has been declining due to take up of medical terminations and long-term reversible contraceptive options. There are an estimated 300 surgical terminations per annum in Tasmania; however, reporting data and information is not collected. There is very little information available on the annual incidences of medical terminations in Tasmania.

Terminations of pregnancy, both surgical and medical, are regulated through a standalone act, the Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013. This legislation was introduced by Labor in 2013 to regulate access to pregnancy terminations and remove abortions from the Criminal Code. The law came into effect on 12 February 2014. Prior to this law a woman required the approval of two doctors to terminate her pregnancy at any stage. Since 2014 terminations can occur without the need for approval from a doctor for pregnancy up to 16 weeks' gestation with no requirement for pre- or post-termination counselling nor referral to another doctor before termination.

For pregnancies of more than 16 weeks' gestation and up to any stage, a doctor can provide a termination with the woman's consent if the doctor reasonably believes that continuing the pregnancy would involve greater risk or injury to the physical or mental health of the woman than

if the pregnancy were terminated. Factors to be considered, as pointed out by the member for Rumney, include the woman's physical, psychological, economic and social circumstances. It had previously only been lawful to terminate pregnancies where the mother's life was in danger. A second doctor must agree, and at least one doctor must specialise in gynaecology or obstetrics.

A doctor who holds a conscientious objection, which includes general practitioners, must provide the woman with a list of prescribed health services that offer the full range of pregnancy options. These services currently include Family Planning Tasmania, Women's Health Centre, the Link Youth Health Service and Pulse Youth Health South.

The private sector remains an important partner in the delivery of health services in Tasmania. There is no difference in this area. Our public hospitals only provide surgical terminations in cases of high need, such as to save the life of the mother or where there is severe foetal illness or damage. All other surgical terminations are provided in the private sector.

This has been a longstanding policy of successive governments; there has been no change in this policy. This is the current situation in most other states where surgical terminations are largely provided in the private sector, with limited availability in the public hospitals, which is prioritised or only available in cases of high need.

In 2014 there were three low-cost private, standalone surgical termination clinics in the state, based in Hobart CBD, Moonah and Launceston.

Since 2015, each service has progressively closed for business reasons, each generally citing reduced demand and/or increasing operating costs. The last remaining low-cost, standalone private provider ceased operations in December 2017. This provider flew in from Sydney once a fortnight and charged a fee of approximately \$500 ex GST. At the time it was cited the closure was a business decision due to low and declining surgical termination demand in Tasmania.

Following the closure of this clinic, private abortion services are now only available with established obstetricians and gynaecological practitioners who offer this procedure. At this stage, only two private doctors have chosen to be identified as providing surgical terminations. These services are considered unaffordable for some, with an estimated out-of-pocket cost of between \$2000 and \$2500.

As an interim measure, on 15 January 2018 the Government extended the Patient Transport Assistance Scheme for women who chose to fly interstate to access surgical termination services. It is understood these women travel to Victoria to attend a private clinic in Melbourne. This clinic provides low-cost surgical terminations with a medical rebate. At this stage there have been four applications for travel assistance and they have all been granted.

I wish to restate for the purpose of this debate, that it is important we are absolutely clear that surgical terminations are still available in the private sector in Tasmania.

The closure of a local provider did not remove all surgical termination services from the state; instead, it saw the cessation of low-cost surgical terminations of pregnancy in the private sector in Tasmania.

An interstate provider has since expressed interest in establishing a local service, and DHHS is working with that provider through the licensing and regulatory process, as it would with any other potential private health service provider.

I understand the confirmation of this service is currently subject to commercial negotiations and that these discussions are progressing. The provider will likely make an announcement on this proposed service in the near future.

This is a continuation of a longstanding policy of successive state governments. Apart from the ethical considerations that have obviously been previously considered by governments and members, there are difficulties in bringing all surgical terminations into the public hospital system.

It is also important to point out that there are also competing priorities for theatre time in the public system, including both elective and emergency surgery, and decisions must be based on clinical need. The delivery of pregnancy terminations in the public system would displace other obstetric and gynaecological procedures from the allocated time in theatre, necessitating the prioritisation of cases of high need.

My final point is that it has been a longstanding approach of this place to be a House of review, to scrutinise legislation and question government policy. It is a point that many members pride themselves on and take much effort in carrying out, and the Government remains available to provide briefings and information to members upon request. I point out that the mover of this motion, to my knowledge, has not sought a recent briefing on this matter from the Government for an update.

Our House is not the place to make government policy and determine which services are or are not provided in the public hospital system. On that basis, on the longstanding policy that surgical terminations are largely provided in the private sector other than for vital life-saving reasons, the Government will not be supporting this motion. I call on other members to do the same for the reasons I have stated.

For members with concerns on this matter, an additional reason to not support the motion is, as I previously outlined, that a prospective private provider is looking to establish a service and would, of course, be turned away by the policy shift called for in this motion.

**Mr Dean** - Before you sit down, you said it is still available in the private sector: whereabouts in the private sector in this state?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - There are two doctors who provide it. I will seek some information. The two providers are southern-based -

**Ms Lovell** - Is the practitioner in conversation with the Government at the moment also intending to be southern-based?

**Mrs HISCUTT** - They are in the middle of commercial negotiations.

**Mr Gaffney** - You mentioned that one of the issues was the amount of space available in surgery. On the other hand, you said only four people had access to PTAS, the transport system.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - They have all been granted.

**Mr Gaffney** - They have all been granted. There are a lot of people going away, otherwise it would not be a -

**Mrs HISCUTT** - There are commercial negotiations in place.

**Mr Gaffney** - There are a lot of people going away. We have heard that it was 10 per month, and that the number has gone up. There is an issue about people not wanting other people to know they may be having a termination. Only four of them have actually applied for funding.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - It would be good to not vote for this motion so that we can still get into negotiations with the private provider.

[5.17 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Madam Acting President, what a terrible decision for someone to have to make. Although abortion was decriminalised in Tasmania in 2013, elective surgical and medical abortions are again unavailable through the state's public health system. This is because Tasmania's only public surgical abortion clinic closed late in 2017, due, we were told, to increasing costs and significant decrease in demand. I am advised the decrease in demand was because of the medical abortions.

In 2000 there were 25 to 30 surgical terminations a week in the Tasmanian clinic, with two to three people a month travelling to Melbourne for the procedure. There are now 10 to 12 in the same period. I note the Leader mentioned that there are two private clinics, or doctors, in the south, but in Launceston there are two Catholic private hospitals. I am a Catholic and I have issues with this - but it is up to individuals. It is a terribly hard situation for those people to have to make. Obviously there is nothing available in the north.

The Government is offering financial assistance to women to travel to the mainland to have a surgical abortion. I have to ask: Why? Is it about capacity in our hospitals? They are providing a public service. If they are providing a public service to go to the mainland, I cannot understand why they are not providing a public service in a public hospital.

As has been said, this is not about the rights or wrongs of an abortion. It does not matter what I think people should have or what anyone else thinks people should have. This debate is about everyone having access to safe health services in our state public health system. I am concerned that people are travelling to the mainland on their own. I cannot imagine how these people feel. If they have to go alone and have such an awful thing happen, such a difficult decision, and to be alone and then to have to come back. To me, that is not a safe health service for them. If they are in their own state, at least they could have someone supporting them. I do not know the reasons for their decision to have this procedure. I am sure many of them suffer beforehand and I know a lot of them suffer afterwards. It is a terrible thing; I cannot imagine how dreadful it would be.

**Mr Finch** - When somebody goes over there for that procedure, did someone say there is a requirement for them to stay in -

**Ms Forrest** - No, not stay in the clinic. It is only a day procedure; it is quite a quick procedure in many respects. Some may choose to travel home or some may choose to stay in Melbourne overnight. It depends on the clinic and it depends on the individual patient.



**Ms ARMITAGE** - I am not going to go on for a long time because much has been said. To me, it is not about the right or wrong of abortion - we are not debating that at all today. It is about equity of access to our public hospital system to support women. I cannot imagine how terrible it must be for someone to be in that situation. I hate the thought of them having to travel to the mainland, maybe on their own, to make what must be the worst decision of their lives.

[5.22 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Madam Deputy President, initially I was not going to make a contribution to this motion, but after hearing the Leader speak and saying that if this motion is passed, it may end up causing a private provider to not come to this state, I am just a little concerned I do not want to support something that may cause that to happen. Not having that private provider in the state, given the public system is under pressure all the time, I am concerned about that. I am feeling a little bit conflicted in regard to that.

**Mr Finch** - They will not be required to come because the procedures will be catered for.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But will they be catered for in a timely manner in the public system? That is the concern.

**Ms Forrest** - That is how it works.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It does not appear, from what the Leader said, that is the Government's intention. I am concerned about the statement the Leader made on behalf of her Government.

**Mr Gaffney** - The private providers pulled out and we heard they pulled out because there was not the work. If we go back to a private provider, in 18 months' time, they could say there is not enough work so they will pull out again. However, if it goes into the public system, it is there, it is ingrained, so there is some certainty of service.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have read very clearly what the motion's intent is, but again, you need a government that is going to act on that.

**Ms Forrest** - The demand is not high and that is why some of the clinics have closed. We heard about four being funded and they probably -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Now we are hearing 10 a month.

**Ms Forrest** - Yes, but some of those will choose to go there because they have family support over there. It is not like there is going to be a huge number. Some women will still choose to go to private providers because they have private cover.

**Ms RATTRAY** - If there is no private provider though -

**Ms Forrest** - There are two in Hobart.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I want to put on the record my concern about the statement made by the Leader that if we support this, it may compromise the negotiations taking place at the moment around a private provider coming into the state. I feel I am between a rock and a hard place here.

**Ms Forrest** - The Leader might like to indicate where that private provider would operate. In the south?

**Ms RATTRAY** - That may well need to be taken in a private briefing. I do not know that those sort of things -

**Ms Forrest** - If it is in the south, there will still not be any access for people in your electorate or mine.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I suggest, with all due respect, that coming from the north of the state to the south of the state to access quality services is not a serious issue. If people want a top service, they will come from the north to the south of the state for those particular reasons.

**Mr Dean** - There would be many on the mainland who would travel the distance and longer.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am interested in understanding the repercussions of supporting the motion. The first three parts are certainly no issue for supporting, but it is the fourth one where we are asking the Minister for Health to ensure all Tasmanian women have equitable access to termination of pregnancy services.

**Ms Forrest** - Is it not reasonable women have equitable access?

**Ms RATTRAY** - As long as it does not cause any issues with the negotiations taking place. I am feeling conflicted from the Leader's contribution, so I wanted to put that on the record.

**Mr Finch** - If this operator we are only now hearing about does due diligence and sees public operators have pulled out because it is not profitable, they would be crazy to try to advance it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There was the question posed by the Leader in regard to there had not been a request for briefing, and then by interjection the member for Rosevears said we do not normally have a briefing for a notice of motion.

I also take that on board, but it is not my motion. I am raising my concerns after hearing the Leader's contribution to the motion. It is up to the member who put forward the motion to decide whether a briefing to provide more information would be appropriate, or some other member who has not spoken may like to do that.

[5.27 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, I am going to speak briefly in relation to this. It concerns me the last clinic closed in this state in December 2017, we have been told, on the basis of lack of demand for the service. Did I read that right?

**Ms Forrest** - That was one of the reasons stated.

**Mr DEAN** - I read that right. I understand it is still available through the private sector where it is needed, and where an approach is made. Am I hearing that right?

**Ms Rattray** - In the south of the state.

**Mr DEAN** - In the south of the state. I think the member for McIntyre is absolutely right. If you want this type of service, and you are in a difficult and bad state to want an abortion, it is not easy. I understand. I am aware of a couple who went through this with a child. The mother at the time was about 10 weeks' pregnant when they went through with an abortion. They have regretted it ever since.

This couple have never been able to talk about it. If the subject is raised in front of them, they get very emotional and upset because it is something they went through. What they said then was that it was relatively easy for them to access the service and had it been a bit more difficult, they might have taken another course of action.

How many people wanting to undertake an abortion have been supported by the Government in going to mainland?

**Mrs Hiscutt** - There has been four applications, and they have all been supported.

**Mr DEAN** - In what time period?

**Mrs Hiscutt** - Pardon?

**Mr DEAN** - I am sorry. I know we are a bit out of order. There has been talking from the sidelines all the way through this process.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - There have been interjections, but the interjections to me are endeavouring to assist the speaker to come to some conclusion as to whether to agree or disagree. I have no opposition to those interjections, but we can only have interjections really to -

**Mr DEAN** - If I am allowed to ask the question: over what period of time have those four applications been made?

**Mrs Hiscutt** - From January, there have been four applications.

**Mr DEAN** - Since January this year, four applications?

**Mrs Hiscutt** - This year. Four applications - and all application have been granted.

**Mr DEAN** - Right, and the service has been taken up?

**Ms Forrest** - You apply retrospectively. You make application to get it after.

**Mr DEAN** - This is after the act is it?

**Ms Forrest** - You have to have a form filled out by your referring doctor and then one by the treating doctor. So you cannot actually have that done until you are treated. Then you are refunded some of those costs. Four women have done this since January.

**Mr DEAN** - Okay. I am getting some clarity around some of those issues. The fourth part of the motion says this House calls on the Minister for Health to ensure all Tasmanian women have equitable access to termination of pregnancy services to a legal procedure through the delivery of this health service in the public hospital system. Does that mean the service must be made available

in all of the public hospitals in this state? That is, in the north-west, in the north, the south and perhaps the smaller hospitals at Rosebery.

**Ms Forrest** - No, it is only the major hospitals provide this sort of surgical procedure.

**Mr DEAN** - Right. I am trying to get some clarity around some of the issues and because it says equitable access to termination of pregnancy. That is what it says.

**Mr Gaffney** - It says in the public hospital system so it is not pinpointing a hospital to say the system.

**Mr DEAN** - I would like to have known a lot more about this and think the member for McIntyre and member for Huon raised it in a way, that I would like to know more about this. I would have liked a briefing from the service to see exactly what there is there and what the impost of this would be on the state. I would like to know all about that.

**Mr Finch** - I have never had a briefing on a notice of motion. I stand to be corrected, but it is always the case on notices of motion that members do their own research and talk to the person who put the motion forward before they come into the House.

**Mr DEAN** - You may well be right. Just because it has never happened in the past does not mean it should not happen now.

**Ms Forrest** - You could have contacted the Leader's office and asked for a briefing from the commissioner.

**Mr DEAN** - Things change. It is up to the mover of the motion to convince me to support the motion; that is their responsibility and they have not convinced me. I should support it, but -

**Mr Gaffney** - It is a bloc.

**Mr DEAN** - No, it is not a bloc. We talk about bloc -

**Mr PRESIDENT** - This is starting to get -

**Mr DEAN** - It is. I am not quite sure how far I can go, but I can mention some of the voting patterns of some of the other people if you want me to.

**Mr PRESIDENT** - We will keep on the motion set before us. It was an interjection that should not be dealt with.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you. I have the percentages I can refer to now.

I would have liked to know more about some of the issues that have been raised. I only received two emails on this. I am not quite sure how widely it was publicised, but I will just read one of the emails from a very well known couple in the north of the state; they have not given me the right to use their name, but they start off -

Dear Ivan

The government has made a wise response to the closure of abortion clinics in Tasmania due to a lack of demand for surgical abortion in this state. Providing

for interstate travel costs and for cases involving serious risk to the mother's mental or physical health in public hospitals in Tasmania, have been reasonable and workable decisions. Therefore I urge you to vote against the motion to be proposed by Ruth Forrest.

Abortion is not just another medical procedure because during an abortion a new life is killed and the experience can leave the woman with a gnawing pain in the heart that may never go away. It is for these reasons that many women do not decide on abortion. What is needed is well funded pregnancy support services to provide for those in difficult situations who need help, whether they raise the child themselves, or find suitable parents to adopt the child as their own.

Sincerely

I will not mention the name.

That is one statement I have received. I have received only two. I am not sure how much publicity this has been given. I cannot be convinced that I should support the motion as it is and without the further information I would like to get.

[5.41 pm]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I thank members for their contributions. I will address a number of points that have been raised. This motion is not news; it has been around for some time. There has been an extraordinary amount of media coverage and attention paid to it. Termination of pregnancy is supported by our laws, and there has been adequate time for members to contact women's health services, family planning clinics, local GPs and the Leader's office to ask for a briefing from the Health department. Some members have done that.

I discussed this with people involved in the service delivery area of the Health service and now understand that in some jurisdictions this fight has been had. The service plan that forms part of the THS service plan and the legislation we dealt with last time we sat needs to include this as one of the comprehensive, sexual and reproductive health services in our state. So it is provided as part of the service delivery.

The previous private clinic closed due to reduced demand. The Leader said there was reduced demand throughout Australia, particularly for surgical termination, which is great. That is because of better contraception and better access to contraception, better sex education in schools and the provision of medical terminations with RU486 and similar medications. Medical termination is done either in a clinic or, ideally, in a woman's home.

There is no demand on public hospitals with the procedure. We are not talking about a huge impost on the public health system. We are not here to moralise. I note the member for Launceston's comments. She acknowledges that she has a religious opposition to termination, but that is her personal religious belief and I respect that -

**Ms Armitage** - That is nothing to do with this.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes and I respect that. Only half the people in this Chamber would have ever had to face that decision. The member for Rumney stated that she has never had to face that difficult decision. I have not either, but I have assisted a lot of women who have had to face this harrowing

decision. I do not wish to know the circumstance of the other female members, it is not relevant. It does mean that they are the people who understand what it can be like to face an unwanted pregnancy, which is different from an unplanned pregnancy. Many pregnancies are unplanned but not unwanted. Not everyone who finds themselves with an unwanted pregnancy decides to terminate. Some seek adoption, which is great because that child gets taken care of by a family who will love it and care for it. Our open adoption laws mean that child can still have access to the biological parent or parents. There is a lot of work being done in that. Some women will decide to continue the pregnancy, as in the email I referred to earlier. That was an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy, but the couple decided to continue with it. Everyone has their own reasons. If a woman is raped or a victim of incest, which we see far too much of, having a termination does not take away the trauma of that, but having real challenges in accessing a termination when you are facing that circumstance can definitely add to the trauma of the event itself. We should not stand in judgment.

Other members have commented on the fact that we are funding termination through the public purse, through the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme. It is not a huge amount because only four women have accessed it. That may have been because they were going to Melbourne anyway, they had family support there; it may have been because they had private cover, or the ones who chose it were from the north-west or the north of the state and did not want to come south to access one of the private providers that may or may not see them in a timely manner because they have busy lists down here, too. Perhaps they went that way because, for me, living in Wynyard, I can leave my home at 5.45 a.m. and be in the CBD in Melbourne by 8.30 a.m. It takes much longer to get to Hobart. That is from Wynyard, not from Circular Head or from Strahan, or the far reaches of McIntyre.

This is what we are talking about here: equity of access so that women who have made this decision - not choice - are not forced to travel away from family. Even a five-hour drive is difficult in our circumstances. We should not be forcing women into that where the financial implications are significant. They and possibly their partner may need to take time off work, they may have to pay for child care for other children, and there may be other costs associated with it. It is about making it accessible at a major public hospital, not the regional hospitals as they do not do this surgery anyway.

It requires the THS service plans to include it as an option, as similar systems do in some other jurisdictions in Australia. If we remove some of the mystery about this - whether it is available, where it is available and how do you access it - that delays women seeking health and advice because they do not know where to go, we will see greater demand.

I referred to Canada and South Africa, where termination is available as part of the basic health system, and women seek advice earlier and are more likely to be able to use a medical termination so there is no demand on the public hospital system. We are not talking about huge demand. The procedure itself is quite quick, 15 minutes in an operating theatre, so to say you are going to delay a whole gynaecological list because you need to put one in is nonsense.

When I was a student nurse, which was many moons ago, and in my early years as a registered nurse, surgical terminations were done as part of the gynaecological list. They were popped in among the other gynaecological procedures, as they should be. It is not earth-shattering; it has been done.

It is important to provide women with early advice so their full range of options are available, which include continuing the pregnancy, adoption of the baby or a medical termination provided it is before nine weeks or a surgical termination if it is not. That is what we agreed to in 2013, and that is what we need to ensure equity of access to now for Tasmanian women.

I see the member for Huon is back in the Chamber. He said there had been no consultation on this. As other members have commented, we have had time and the opportunity to undertake consultation during the intervening period between when this motion was put on the Notice Paper and today, and many members have done that. They have talked to a range of people to get the information they need. The Leader has provided some further advice on a private operator potentially coming to the south of the state, and four women accessing the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme, so we have a bit of an idea what we are talking about in the quantum of women who may need this.

There is no guarantee a private provider will come. There is no guarantee they will continue. It really is part of our comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services that our public hospital system should and does provide. We should provide it to all women who may need it, not just some, which is what is happening now. Only some women can access the public system, not all of them. It is only a small number who actually want it or need it. If you want a solution, it is to have it in the service plan. I will look at it with great interest when it is tabled in the new financial year.

As we have heard, the private providers that provide termination services are both based in the south of the state currently. I do not know whether any of you have had gynaecological problems and needed to see a gynaecologist. No, of course some of you have not - I understand gender may be the issue there - but many of these doctors have two month-long waiting lists.

**Ms Rattray** - At least.

**Ms FORREST** - That is not okay when you are six weeks pregnant and then to find time to get down to Hobart if you are on the far north-east, the far north-west or the west coast, or wherever. Time ticks away.

**Ms Rattray** - Two months' wait is in the north of the state; when you ring to ask for an appointment, they let you know if they consider your issue is where it is on the priority list, and they ring you back and make you an appointment.

**Ms FORREST** - That is right, you just do not know. The uncertainty is terrible. If there is a more streamlined pathway that enables more medical terminations, where a woman chooses that, it does not put any extra burden on the public hospitals as such.

**Ms Rattray** - But you have to have the gynaecologist's -

**Ms FORREST** - You do not need them to prescribe it. You can see a GP for that.

**Ms Rattray** - You can do it on the phone too, can you not?

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, you can go to Marie Stopes and that sort of thing. It is much more straightforward. If you do need a surgical termination, then you do. It is better to enable women to access this information earlier, then a lot of it can be avoided.

As far as the member for Windermere saying women can travel and that it is not that far, I have explained that it is quite far, particularly when they have a number of other personal circumstances that might make that even more challenging.

**Ms Rattray** - If you need to, it is by road, not necessarily by plane.

**Ms FORREST** - If you only need to go to the Launceston General Hospital from the north-east or to the North West Regional Hospital from Circular Head, then a lot of them still have to travel a couple of hours to get there.

If we are going to be fair and equitable, it is a statewide service we are talking about that should be provided in a way that enables access for women in all parts, with all geographical backgrounds, all socio-economic backgrounds and all financial wherewithals - and some women just do not have fuel for the car. They may not have a licence; they may not have a registered vehicle. All sorts of challenges can present. They can often access public transport or a friend might take them from Smithton to Burnie, but if someone has to take them to Hobart, it is a different kettle of fish. That is the point.

If everyone had to travel to Hobart from the far north-west for their prostatectomy, would that be okay? Or everyone wanted a male only, because I do not have a prostate gland - I am pretty safe in that regard. I also will not need a vasectomy anytime soon either, but men can access vasectomies pretty much anywhere they live. That is part of our sexual and reproductive health services. Some of them do not have them of course.

This is a straightforward, simple procedure. We are not talking about neurosurgery. Neurosurgery should be done at the Royal Hobart Hospital, not at the Burnie hospital or the Launceston General Hospital. We are not talking about that; we are talking about a procedure that is very simple to do, that is already done in our public hospitals in Burnie and Launceston - for some women, but not all women. Only some, and the ones that are most disadvantaged are the poor women, the women from low socio-economic backgrounds, and those with other social challenges. That is not fair; it is not right or equitable. I urge members to support the motion. It is up to the Government to fully consider the options. That is why I asked a number of questions in the debate on the bill on the THS. To reflect briefly on this because it is relevant to the debate, I asked a number of questions particularly in the briefing and had a private briefing on that bill about how the service will be planned, formulated and the interplay between the secretary and the minister, and particularly if the minister disagrees with the secretary and how that could work.

The minister needs to make a commitment to the women of Tasmania, particularly those from rural and regional areas and from low socio-economic backgrounds, that he will agree to a service plan that has access to surgical termination - even though it is not a common occurrence, in many respects because medical termination has seen that reduction. No form of contraception, if you are sexually active, is 100 per cent effective. I urge members to support the motion: it will not put a huge drain on the public health system because of the numbers and it should be part of a comprehensive public health service.

**The Council divided -**

AYES 10

NOES 4

Ms Armitage

Mr Armstrong



Mr Farrell  
Mr Finch  
Ms Forrest  
Mr Gaffney  
Ms Lovell  
Ms Rattray  
Ms Siejka (Teller)  
Mr Valentine  
Mr Willie

Mr Dean (Teller)  
Mrs Hiscutt  
Ms Howlett

**Motion agreed to.**

**MOTION**  
**Consideration and Noting - Tourism Industry Council Tasmania Community Survey  
2018 Research Report**

[5.26 p.m.]

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

That the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania Community Survey 2018 Research Report dated May 2018 be considered and noted.

It is no surprise this latest survey on the attitude of Tasmanians to our tourism industry again placed it at the top of the list of importance. More, 59 per cent, placed it at the top than in the 2016 survey, which was at 55 per cent. It is apparent Tasmanians are becoming more aware of the importance of tourism to our economy. They are also aware of its future potential, with 56 per cent of those surveyed believing tourism had the potential to make the greatest contribution to the Tasmanian economy in the next five years. By the way, respondents named agriculture and fisheries as numbers two and three. I have expressed before my frustration at trying to express how important tourism was to Tasmania and being told no, in importance it is around about number four or five.

I suggest it is ahead of the other areas people were promoting and that at last people are realising it really is an economic driver now and will be into the future.

**Mr Valentine** - Do we have the survey content?

**Mr FINCH** - Yes, did I not send you a copy of the survey? I asked for it to be sent to everyone. Did you want a briefing?

In light of the latest figures on international visitor numbers showing an astonishing increase for Tasmania by more than 30 per cent, it was no surprise to see that a majority of those surveyed believed an increase in visitor numbers was good for the economy and it created jobs. When asked whether they thought the current growth in business to their region was too high, about right or too low, 66 per cent of respondents said it was about right. However, 21 per cent wanted to see more visitors. It is interesting because in the reply to the Governor's Speech, I urged some caution in respect of not damaging the goose that lays the golden tourism egg. It is good to see people are wanting to see more visitors.

The survey was carried out for the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, our independent not-for-profit organisation. It involved 1000 respondents aged older than 18. The council provides a strategic direction and a united voice for the stable development and growth of the tourism industry. It is important it has a good grasp of community attitudes towards tourism. No doubt that was their driver for this particular survey. I might highlight too the Tourism Industry Council and the work it does. Recently in Launceston we had the Tasmanian Tourism Conference, which the council organised. It brought around 400 delegates together to explore what it means to be better together. If Tasmania's tourism industry is to be the best in the world, we need to work with local communities to deliver tourism products and experiences. It was a very good conference with a range of speakers from interstate, overseas and Tasmania. They converged for a two-day event at the Country Club in Launceston, for a range of workshops and keynote addresses.

It was important for 400 delegates from around Tasmania to get together, to network, to meet people and exchange ideas, to learn new ways and what is going on in the tourism industry.

I salute the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania and the work they do. That tourism industry conference was so important for the development of our tourism.

The CEO of Tourism Northern Tasmania, Chris Griffin, has written to me to say it is crucial for the tourism industry to be aware of community attitudes to increasing our visitor numbers so it can develop socially and environmentally sustainable practices. This survey is important in providing guidance.

Chris Griffin says it is important the industry understands local attitudes to the seasonality of tourism numbers, especially between the months of October and March. It is essential that there is a plan for the future which could see the present rate of growth to Tasmania continue to increase. He says that peak tourism ebbs and flows in different places in Tasmania and at different times of the year and the industry needs to understand how the community views this.

My wife is in Queensland for a couple of months of dog-sitting duties for our son, who is on his honeymoon.

Carole is talking to a lot of Queensland people about Tasmania, and almost everybody is saying, 'We want to come to Tasmania.' Carole and I were saying that before we encourage too many to come here, we need to make sure our infrastructure is in place and we have the facilities to cater for the increase. This survey, and people like Chris Griffin and Sam Denmead, whom I am going to refer to, believe it is good to work on that increase.

Chris Griffin says that as mitigation approaches we need built infrastructure in key locations like Cradle Mountain and Freycinet to accommodate volume visitation in sustainable ways, promoting all seasons of the year aligned with their visitor appeals and introducing methods to disperse visitors across a broader range of regional communities who wish to welcome more visitors. It is not as dire as it was some time ago when the regions were getting very little of what was occurring in the major centres of Launceston and Hobart. That, fortunately, has changed.

Chris also said that by comparing this latest data to baseline research conducted in 2009, it is clear more Tasmanians are aware of the importance of the industry and more of them support it.

It is a very positive result for tourism, but there were some negatives. Some respondents thought there was a negative effect on road infrastructure and congestion, on prices for locals,

including housing and on the environment. However, these were small percentages. They obviously did not travel along the Brooker Highway when I came in this morning. At 8 a.m. there was congestion. After all the work that has been done and the money spent at Goodwood to remove the roundabout and bring the traffic through more efficiently, I was gobsmacked at the road congestion right back to Berriedale. I can imagine a tourist getting caught up in that and saying, 'I came from Melbourne and Sydney to get away from this sort of thing'. It really is a problem for Hobart.

A significant group of respondents believe public infrastructure needs improving. I would not argue with that. In her submission, Sam Denmead of Green Hat Tourism says -

Clearly the impact of increasing tourism numbers is more prevalent in the south than in the north of the state.

The north and north east are not experiencing dramatic changes to the numbers of tourists in their area affecting their way of life.

Many of the respondents have noted tourism in the north is not of significant size to bother them, yet.

Only a very small number of Tasmanian residents expressed concern about the rate of growth (8%), a clear majority were either ok with the rate of growth or thought it was not high enough.

In the north, there are even fewer concerns, and it appears residents welcome and encourage the thought of increased visitor numbers.

It certainly seems evident tourism as an industry in the north is regarded highly among residents as a growth industry with a lot of potential to provide employment, and positive spinoffs for locals in the form of more money in the economy, a brighter economic future, and improvements in infrastructure.

Increased spending on infrastructure serves to not only satisfy locals, it serves the needs of visitors to the area too.

From Sam's experience as president of the Launceston Tamar Valley Tourism Association, our members are happy to see investment in the local area on infrastructure projects including new hotels. Witness the opening of the new Silo Hotel, developed by Errol Stewart - it is quite superb and really up there in respect of product - and the improvement of public spaces and amenities highlighting the North Bank development. Those amenities are fantastic.

It is a strongly held belief this investment will benefit both residents, and visitors alike and should be continued to be pursued. Yes, there is some expression of concern about the ability of our roads to cater for increased traffic; however, the north is not feeling this yet, unlike Hobart in the south.

Just underlining the point I was making before -

The potential of 'overtourism' is most definitely on the radar of the TICT, and operator alike, who are well aware of the impacts overtourism has had on other

places like Barcelona for example, where the rapid rise in tourist numbers has been detrimental to the health of the city.

Sam says -

I personally can't see that ever happening in Tasmania as long as we have a government that is involved in tourism at all levels of government and isn't reactive to opportunities without serious thought and contemplation of the impacts, but are instead proactive about developments that could attract vast numbers of visitors.

While tourism numbers are increasing faster than was anticipated 10 years ago, they are still not anywhere near a level that should elicit concern, as long as things progress the way they currently are, with consideration to all major developments, and planning around access and infrastructure all occurring in synergy with each other.

Launceston can and will learn from the way Hobart has changed and developed over the past 10-20 years, as this is the path Launceston will likely take as Hobart becomes full and dispersal is required around the state to house the overflow of visitors.

As Launceston builds more and more hotels and increases supply, demand will keep up and the city and surrounds will benefit from the increase in both leisure and business traffic, but as the numbers at this point are still quite low and very manageable, the growth would have to be incredibly fast for it not to be managed well.

I thank Sam Denmead for those thoughts. She has been very close to the tourism industry over many years now and hers were strong observations. A significant group of respondents believe public infrastructure needs improving. I certainly would not argue with that, but will that be the case forever? This latest Tourism Industry Council Tasmania survey reinforces the perception that tourism is becoming more important to Tasmania every year, and that most Tasmanians regard it in a favourable light. I see no reason why this will not continue. I thank the TICT and congratulate it on this survey, not just resting on its laurels, but having the survey provide evidence that shows tourism is on the right track and people are responding the way we want in the numbers we want.

[6.10 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, I thank the member for Rosevears for bringing this forward. The latest report from the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania has no real surprises in it and confirms what most of us here know about the importance of tourism to our state. In the year ending December 2017, 1.26 million visitors were welcomed to Tasmania with a goal of 1.5 million visitors for the year ending 2020. We had a record \$2.3 billion visitor spend in 2016-17, with a 2020 goal of \$2.47 billion. Like the member for Rosevears, I found the conference earlier in the year very interesting and also later on the evening at the Velo vineyard where a lot of people came together and certainly told stories about Launceston, Tasmania and the whole tourism gambit, and why people were there and the attractions Tasmania offered.

Of the 1000 people surveyed, it was reassuring to see the percentage of people seeing tourism as the state's most important industry as increasing once again to 59 per cent. Hopefully this enthusiasm for tourism will be shared by people worldwide to help promote this beautiful state we

are fortunate enough to live in. According to recent government figures, the number of people visiting Launceston has risen by 12 per cent over the last year, resulting in approximately 570 000 visitors to the city at September 2017. With the re-establishment of the Penny Royal complex and with the planned new light show event at the Cataract Gorge, as well as the development of the north tourist drive and the new hotels we have already - we have, as the member for Rosevears mentioned, the wonderful Silo Hotel and the fabulous new restaurant with it and other proposed hotels.

**Mr Finch** - I was impressed with Errol Stewart on the night, saying what he wanted to do with the new restaurant was to match the standards of Stillwater and the Mud Bar, which is terrific. He was not saying he wanted to better them, but to match the bar at the height they have, which was terrific.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - It was, and he also spoke about how he has gone around to a variety of different farms in the region making sure the produce is local - the meat is local. That is really great. He is not bringing food in from the mainland, he is looking at local producers and showcasing what they can offer.

**Ms Rattray** - He acknowledged most of them being there on that evening.

**Ms ARMITAGE** - Yes, they were invited - 1100 people. Hopefully this number will keep on growing so we can show the world how much Launceston and surrounds has to offer. It is interesting to see the perceived prominent negative impact people identified is road infrastructure and increased congestion. Road congestion is already an issue in parts of Launceston and obviously Hobart, and if the number of vehicles on the road continues to increase, it will only become more of an issue unless something is done in the meantime. However, it is minor compared to other states and we need to appreciate that we are very fortunate in Tasmania.

Another negative effect of the increase in visitor numbers cited in the report was the perceived increased prices for locals, including housing. One would have thought the flip side of this issue is a positive for those who wish to sell their houses. I see lack of rental accommodation due to Airbnb was also mentioned as a negative. Obviously this aspect will be explored during our select committee inquiry on short-stay accommodation. Another negative mentioned was that if people see the state and like it, they will move here and stay. That was mentioned by the member for Rosevears. Surely this would benefit the local industry and economy? Of course we are all aware the state Government with its 'You In A Year' social media and online campaign for Sydneysiders, spruiking the advantages of relocating to Tasmania, the campaign showcasing Tasmania's lifestyle and employment opportunities as well as lower house prices, part of the Government's drive to get the state's population up to 650 000 by 2050. As with any discussion about tourism, there will be those who are against it as they are happy with the current status quo and are not supportive of change. There are others who are all for it as they can see the bigger picture for the economy and the state. This is reflected in the 3 per cent of people in the south who saw the cruise ships as a negative thing for the state.

Tourism should be all about balance - promoting the state to bring in more tourists but making sure the reasons tourists are visiting the state are protected and maintained. This aspect was loosely reflected in the survey results, where 3 per cent of those surveyed believed there was a threat of overcommercialising Tasmania and negatively affecting the state's character.

More Tasmanians per capita are employed in tourism than any other state or territory, with 18 900 direct and 19 000-plus indirect jobs in 2015-16.

In closing, I congratulate the TICT on compiling this report and once again giving us a snapshot into the tourism industry and how it is perceived in this state.

[6.16 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to growing Tasmania's visitor economy for the benefit of all Tasmanians. Tourism is one of Tasmania's greatest competitive strengths and results of the TICT's latest community sentiment survey demonstrate strong support for the Government's commitment to grow the sector. The survey shows that tourism was overwhelmingly identified by Tasmanians as being the greatest contributor to the state's economy, compared to other industries. Looking ahead, 56 per cent of Tasmanians believe the tourism industry has the greatest potential to make the biggest contribution to our economy over the next five years.

Tourism far outranks traditional economic heavyweights like agriculture and construction. Importantly, when asked about the negative impacts caused by an increase in visitor numbers to Tasmania, the most common response was that tourism has no negative impacts. The results also show the vast majority of Tasmanians believe the level of tourism activity in this state is either about right or too low. These results are a strong endorsement of the Government's vision for the Tasmanian industry.

Tourism employs more than 36 000 Tasmanians and contributes \$2.79 billion a year to our economy. In saying this, the Government is committed to getting the balance right between having a thriving visitor economy and protecting the very experiences and places that bring people to Tasmania in the first place. While some would like to completely lock up Tasmania and throw away the key, there are options for sensible and appropriate developments that showcase our unique wilderness to even more visitors.

We are committed to taking tourism to the next level with a \$4 million commitment for the events attraction fund that will draw tens of thousands more visitors to Tasmania by actively targeting and securing mass participation events. We know these events deliver the greatest returns for investment because people who travel to Tasmania for events tend to stay longer and spend more.

We are also spending another \$12 million to market Tasmania to the world, promoting established and emerging unique experiences to key markets. We have committed \$1.4 million to new drive journeys, a \$72 million road package to support the visitor economy and an additional \$6.8 million to take our hospitality industry to the next level.

I thank the member for bringing this motion forward. The Government notes the report.

[6.19 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, I congratulate, along with others, the member for Rosevears for bringing this to the attention of members and putting it on the Notice Paper of the Legislative Council. Any of these surveys are always of interest, particularly when you are asking the locals what they think about what is happening in their community.

I will make a couple of points. I know members have already touched on the percentages and the like. It is imperative we get the infrastructure right, particularly for the driving visitors to our state.

I do not want to bang on about it again and again but I will. That Great Eastern Drive is still an impediment to a safe and enjoyable experience when you drive from Launceston down on the east coast to the south of the state. I know we are spending a load of money through the centre, but that is where you get the spectacular views. The member for Prosser indicated this morning that she had the most spectacular part of the state. I beg to differ. We all have a good patch. It is lucky I could not interject this morning or this afternoon. It was great to see the passion of the new member when she said that.

It is really important that we have that infrastructure upgrade. We have talked about it for far too long, and we need some action on that \$72 million. Those lay-by areas and realigning some of those bad corners would make a big difference to that motoring experience. That infrastructure is key.

The congestion on the road is not as big an issue on that particular drive as what it might be in and around some of the more heavily populated areas. It is not the volume of traffic. It is the road conditions that are leading to people not having what I would suggest is the best possible experience when they come to Tasmania. It still means that when they see that small distance on the map and think they are going to be able to get from Launceston to Bicheno in an hour-and-a-half, you just cannot do it. It is not possible.

**Ms Forrest** - Imagine how grumpy they are when they turn up from Hobart Airport to Strahan. They think they are going to get a taxi.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is right. There are still those issues we need to deal with when we are talking about growing the tourism aspect for our state. I know how important it is.

Another issue that I want to raise is that we are starting to spread the eggs in the basket across Tasmania. We have had some significant investments, not only in quality accommodation in the north of the state but some of the mountain bike tracks and the things that are happening there. Sadly, I can tell you that The Hub, one of the integral parts of the Blue Derby mountain bike track, has shut down. There simply is not the business to sustain a business like that, particularly over the winter months. We are not sure where the future lies for that. It is up for sale if anyone has about half a million and wants to have a lifestyle change.

**Mr Valentine** - What services do they provide?

**Ms RATTRAY** - We have lost pizza and pasta at The Hub, which was great for people at the end of the day, and even locals were using that. It was a great place to take people. One of the two local pubs, the Dorset at the bottom, has some new people in it who have revamped it. They are starting small, which is great. You are better off to start small and build yourself up rather than trying to go in with a huge investment and then wonder where your customers are going to come from.

There is just that word of caution about what is happening around Tasmania and what the expectation is, particularly from people on the mainland, about how much money they are going to

make in a very short space of time. We know that in Tasmania things are sometimes a bit slower in the winter, and they need to be able to spread out their expectations for their business.

I support the motion. I support what is happening in Tasmania with the tourism sector but also think that we need to maybe put the brakes on a bit and stop to think about the infrastructure to support some of these more outlying adventure experiences that are taking place.

I support the motion.

[6.25 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I wish to make a brief contribution. Many members have touched on the points that are relevant in this survey. I will talk in a moment on how many people think that tourism is too high, about right, too low or unsure.

The report does not say who was surveyed. It talks about the people but it would be interesting to know whether these people are engaged in the tourism industry, are tourists, or are local people who are not involved in the tourism industry. I would say a fair number of people who are involved in the tourism industry were part of the survey. I say that because in the breakdown on page 20 the north and north-west, which I will focus on, only 3 per cent said it was too high, 60 per cent said it was about right, but 32 per cent - the most in the state - said it was too low. For many tourism operators in my electorate it is too low. The benefit is not being shared equally across the state.

MONA is fantastic and draws many people to the state. Unfortunately, some of the benefit does not flow much further than the Bridgewater Bridge. That does not mean that we give up. As the member for McIntyre said, we need to make the best of the opportunities, particularly over the winter. It is no good if tourists turn up in the winter and everything is closed.

I commend the Government for their initiatives in increasing events funding. Many of our festivals and events are held in winter. Dark Mofo is a classic example, Junction Arts Festival is held in September in Launceston, and Unconformity is in Queenstown and it is not in the peak season. It is great to be able to fund more of these events that bring many people to different parts of the state, not just Hobart. Even for the businesses in those areas, if it is a one-off festival that lasts two or three days, there is a full-on assault on the town and then everyone has gone. So that is only one part of the solution. We really need the balance that has been talked about.

The Leader had a veiled swipe at the Greens for wanting to lock up everything, but I remember when we were debating forestry legislation - dare I raise that matter - that we needed to try to coexist. You have forestry, mining and tourism coexisting. The Greens at the time, well before anyone else was talking about it, said that tourism would be the next big economic driver. Whether you like it or not that is the fact. There was some discussion about how we could turn all the forestry workers into baristas, which got stupid. We need to give credit where credit is due. It was raised by the Greens and pooh-poohed at the time.

**Ms Rattray** - I do not think they were necessarily pooh-poohed, it is just that people believed there needed to be a range of industries.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, if you look at some of the media at the time they were told, 'No, you're wrong. We have the forestry, mining and agriculture industries, they are the future'. Anyway we have moved on from there and we have all realised that most of our industries are cyclical. Mining has witnessed a downturn in the mineral prices. That is cyclical and it will probably change.



**Ms Rattray** - All commodities are.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes. The dairy industry has its ups and downs, all of them do. Growth in forestry is definitely in plantations. We are not seeing any growth in the native forest. What we really need is a long-term plan that includes infrastructure planning. The complaints are about infrastructure. The member for McIntyre talked about the - what is it called?

**Ms Rattray** - The Great Eastern Drive, really the East Coast Drive.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, the Tasman Highway up the east coast.

**Ms Rattray** - From Launceston through to the Hobart-side of Orford.

**Ms FORREST** - The Tasman highway up the east coast. You should drive it in the summer just for the experience. Many cyclists want to use that road. It is dangerous because there are no white lines on the side and no sealed shoulders on much of it. I have seen footage on social media of a cyclist being hit by the mirror of a campervan. There is a need to plan, when doing road upgrades, to put in a cycle track or pathway. Eventually you will get a continuous pathway, but it takes a long-term infrastructure vision to do this. We know where the problem areas are. We need to cater for campervans during summer. The west coast is the same.

Much money has been spent on the Murchison Highway and it is fabulous. There are now some places to pass. Most people are willing to wait until you get to the next one, which is still some distance apart.

**Ms Rattray** - As long as people know where they are.

**Ms FORREST** - Yes, but they are few and far between still. There are a couple of straights now that give you a chance to pass. It is much better than what it was. We should instruct our campervan travellers not to travel in packs, but to leave space between each other, so that people going about their business can get past. Some drivers pull over, but many of them do not.

I was also interested to note that on page 16 of the report there has been a significant increase of 13 per cent of people saying there are negative impacts. The key movement at the top of the list says no negative impacts, but there is negative 13 per cent. That is negative, that is bad. More people are saying there are negative impacts from the growth of tourism.

That comes back to the importance of long-term planning and making sure we have the infrastructure right, we have the other settings right, and we do it in a way that avoids the problems that the member for Rosevears talked about like in Barcelona and parts of Thailand. You do not have to go very far around the world to see where places are being trashed. Iceland is the same. The Government must be willing to look at this in a critical way and not just say the more the merrier without the proper planning.

It is a valuable survey of the thoughts of people around Tasmania, but we need to take note of that negative comment about more negative impacts. Double negatives always make a positive for those who may need a maths lesson here.

**Mr FINCH** (Rosevears) - Mr President, it is interesting the member for Murchison mentioned that it is all right for MONA, it is all right for Hobart. People come to see MONA, Port Arthur or

Cradle Mountain. Then they realise when they get here all that Tasmania has to offer. About 60 per cent of visitors to Tasmania are repeat visitors. I have just checked with Luke Martin, the CEO of TICT, and he said he cannot find a comparable destination anywhere with such a high rate of repeat visitation. This is where our regions benefit. They come to see the big attractions, but then they look around and see all that Tasmania has to offer. They often come back for a longer visit when they realise that you cannot just zap around in three or four days. There are so many attractions and so much to see and that is why people keep coming back to enjoy more of what we have.

In closing, I will reiterate something I highlighted in my reply to the Governor's Speech. I talked about the fact the Premier is the minister for Tourism and at the tourism conference in Launceston, about the connection, the pride, the feeling that those operators have a connection through to the Government to the head. The Premier is their minister for Tourism, so they have their way through and communicate well backwards and forwards to the Premier. I am sure he is proud to be the minister for Tourism and the opportunities that presents for the Government, for the economy of Tasmania. Thank you to those who have spoken. I move the motion be noted.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -  
Mr President, I move that -

The sitting be suspended until the ringing of the division bells.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Sitting suspended from 6.37 p.m. to 7.50 p.m.**

## **MOTION**

### **Government Administration Committee B - Regulation and Impact of Marine Farming Industry**

[7.51 p.m.]

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

That the House refers the following matters to Government Administration Committee B for inquiry and report -

The regulation and impact of the marine farming industry on the Tasmanian wild fishery and natural environment with particular regard to -

(1) The adequacy and efficacy of the current legislative and regulatory framework to -

(a) enable the functions and powers of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel to be fulfilled;

- (b) support the sustainability of the fin-fish farming industry;
  - (c) apply rigorous scientific evidence to decision making;
  - (d) determine appropriate stocking levels;
  - (e) protect the natural environment;
  - (f) develop past and future Salmon Farming Management Plans; and
  - (g) establish salmon 'grow' and 'no grow' zones;
- (2) Any current or future impacts of the expansion of the Salmon (Fin Fish) open net sea cage farming industry on the existing wild fisheries and wild fishing industries including crayfish, abalone, shark and scalefish in Tasmanian coastal waters.
  - (3) The effectiveness and appropriateness of the management systems within shared harbour and coastal waters environments for -
    - (a) wild caught fish; and
    - (b) farmed aquaculture.
  - (4) Any other matter incidental thereto.

The marine farming industry employs many Tasmanians and contributes significantly to the Tasmanian economy. Robust, independent, scientific, evidence-based regulation of the industry is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the industry and the jobs created through this industry. I believe such an inquiry is necessary and important to ensure the protection and sustainability of a marine farming industry, the wild fishery and the natural environment. I am sure all members who have marine farming in the waters of their electorate would know and appreciate the value of marine farming to these areas in terms of employment and contribution to the local economy. The employment provided by marine farming is significant, as many of these marine farmers are in rural and remote areas where employment opportunities are often limited.

The direct and indirect employment created is important to protect, maintain and grow, provided we can do so in a manner sustainable into the long term for marine farming, the wild fishery and the environment. If there is one lesson rural and regional Tasmania has learnt, it is the cry of jobs, jobs, jobs is of little long-term value unless they are in a long-term sustainable industry and part of an industry that does not harm other industries or our natural environment at the same time.

I will not list the failures of some of our great industries that have not fully considered the protection of the long-term interests of their industry, coexisting industries and environment. They are all too well known to Tasmanians.

It is also important to note many of these areas where marine farms exist are also very important to tourism and the employment this industry creates and the state brand. It is also important to balance the benefits in one area, such as employment, with the social and environmental benefits any particular industry brings. We also need to ensure the negative impacts that can and in many

industries do occur, need to, and can be mitigated against. It simply cannot be a 'proceed at all costs' approach, without consideration of the social and environmental impacts, as well as the economic impacts of an activity. Marine farming can coexist with the wild fishery, but effective regulation of both is necessary.

Other industries, particularly tourism, also need to coexist as tourism is one of Tasmania's key economic drivers as discussed at a previous motion. Tourism has experienced significant recent growth and we need to plan for and manage this growth and ensure it is not harmed through the lack of effective and appropriate legislation in another activity that brings economic activity and employment to Tasmania and Tasmanians. Our brand is integral to our prosperity and way of life. Our brand reputation must always be considered and protected.

Members would also be aware of the significant interest in the regulation of marine farming, as shown by public interest in recent applications by marine farming companies to expand their operations. All stakeholders need certainty that the regulatory framework in which the industry operates is robust, scientific, evidence-based and transparent. I have no doubt both industry and community representatives would welcome the opportunity to express their views and present relevant information to inform the regulatory process and dispel some of the misinformation that unfortunately surrounds this industry. Members of the public, particularly those who live in areas where marine farming is or could occur, want to have their voices heard. Many of these voices support the industry as I do and want to ensure the approach taken ensures the long-term sustainability of the industry and both the economic return, employment and protection of our natural environment.

Committee inquiries, an important aspect of our role in this place, provide this opportunity as we have seen on very many occasions, particularly in areas with often disparate and differing views from forestry to mining and from tourism to the delivery of health care. Furthermore, I understand the federal government is planning to delegate some of its monitoring approval powers to the states in this area where modelling of potential sites is close to or may be considered in Commonwealth waters. I understand this will require legislative change at a federal and state level so amendment will be needed to our current regulatory framework.

This inquiry would enable any other changes to be recommended and incorporated if necessary to ensure a thorough, rigorous and transparent approach, using independent scientific evidence that is utilised into the future. The future of the industry and the employment provided and a natural environment depend on this. It is important to all with an interest in our state's future, as much as to the industry and opponents of the industry. The opportunity for public engagement interest is welcome as we all have a stake in the brand and reputation of our state. One adverse outcome in a Tasmanian product can and will impact negatively and broadly in our local national and international market places.

Some time ago I had some discussions with industry representatives of the companies engaged in marine farming and there has been general support for an inquiry. In more recent days some industry representatives have changed their position and somewhat indicated they are not opposed to such an inquiry, but rather they have questioned the timing. In saying this they also indicated they respect the role of the Legislative Council and the parliament. I encouraged these companies in my consultation with them to contact members with their views. I am not sure if they have but I did encourage them.

Some have suggested such an inquiry be delayed as they are in the midst of change associated with the new Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry. We must remember the industry representatives are not the only stakeholders in this matter. We all have an interest as we all share in the benefits of a natural environment, the economic benefit, and the brand reputation of our state.

It is also interesting to note the actions taken since the implementation of the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry. The plan has been underway and has resulted in reductions in stocking levels rather than growth with over 20 per cent reduction in stocking levels in Macquarie Harbour by the EPA to ensure the health and wellbeing of the harbour and the fish being farmed there. I have also had discussions with community members who generally see a more urgent need as no one wants to see the industry collapse or be harmed with a risk of loss of jobs that could occur. I note and recognise there are some who would like to see no marine farming offshore and suggest all marine farming in Tasmania should be on shore. These people are not in the majority, they are in the minority.

I had a call from the minister, Ms Courtney, the day the media reported this inquiry about a week ago. She raised concerns about the timing and offered a full briefing from the department and EPA which I accepted, as it is always welcome and I frequently avail myself of such opportunities and briefings, particularly if I am preparing for a debate on a motion. Some of those who just arrived and are new in the Chamber might not have got that. I did this and offered other members this opportunity by way of an email last week, which no-one took up and two members indicated they did not need a briefing. It was made available and there was an opportunity I took up on Friday last week that any member could have phoned into had they required it or requested it.

Regarding the time of this inquiry, I am sure there will be some members who will promote the Government's position on this and seek a delay or oppose the inquiry. I suggest now is the right time as much has and should have been done to reflect the new plan and the Senate committee report recommendations. If the change is having a positive impact, the findings of the committee will reflect this. If we need to make a further change it is much better to act sooner rather than later especially as we have seen a number of significant adverse events.

Since the rollout and the implementation of the new plan, it is surely preferable to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach and not be here in three years time saying, 'I wish we had acted sooner'.

A concern raised with me in many parts of my electorate is the perception of secrecy around the regulation and events that occur within the industry. As we know, perception is reality for many and it is erosion of trust and credibility that results. This is an opportunity for the Government, the department and the industry to put the facts on the table and allow them to be tested, and for community concerns or commendations to be put forward and responded to in an open and transparent manner. The majority of people I speak to around the state support marine farming, provided it is regulated in such a way that the natural environment is not adversely impacted and the wild fishery, which we all rely on, is not harmed. I support this view.

The proposed terms of reference were provided some time ago to industry representatives and other key stakeholders, including recreational and commercial fishers who operate in our wild fisheries. Feedback was provided and the terms of reference I proposed were broadly supported at that time, with some suggested changes to the proposed terms of reference made by the industry and incorporated into the motion before us.

I also acknowledge and note the 2015 Senate select committee inquiry and report. This report strongly supported the Tasmanian salmon industry and made only three recommendations for minor improvements.

However, I share the concern with the majority of Tasmanians that the current regulatory framework needs review and possibly change. With such rapid growth in the industry over the last few years, including since the 2015 inquiry, the recent fish mortalities and the proposed expansion in other areas, we need to be on the front foot here. We cannot afford to sit back and say in two or three years' time, gosh, we really should have looked at that sooner.

There has been a lot happening in the last three years. There has been a rapid expansion in the industry, and more research and knowledge about the waterways where marine farming is occurring, which must be taken into consideration. We simply cannot take an approach of 'wait and see' regarding the proposed changes to management and the regulatory framework. We must take a much more proactive approach as serious harm that could be occurring in Macquarie Harbour, for example, is likely to take many years to remediate and recover from, if it ever does.

I commend the Government for taking some action following the Senate report. However, in light of recent events, including the Macquarie Harbour mortalities, the storm damage in Storm Bay, new marine farming leases, and proposed expansion of current marine farms, we must be sure these actions and the planned actions are in the long-term interests of the industry, the environment and the other economic drivers, such as tourism and the wild fishery that need to coexist. We need to be sure the regulatory framework is robust, transparent and enforceable. We need to understand the challenges and solutions to ensure the long-term future of this industry. If we wait another two or three years, harm may be irreversible and job losses across industry beyond the marine farming could result.

We must not let down the employees of the marine farming industry, the commercial wild fishers, tourism operators and their employees by not ensuring this important industry can be operated in a sustainable manner that coexists with these other industries. Other industries also contribute significantly to our economy. If change is needed, it should be backed by rigorous, independent, scientific evidence and research based on facts, and supported both in intent and application by all stakeholders.

The Senate inquiry was over three years ago and there have been many challenges and changes since then - changes in stocking levels, changes in the number of pens, and changes in fish health and welfare. We have recently seen mass mortalities in Macquarie Harbour predominantly caused by a viral infection contracted by the farmed fish from exposure to wild fish from the wild fishery. When fish are distressed due to other factors, the risk of contraction of this type of infection is more likely. Circumstances such as overstocking or low oxygen levels can cause farmed fish significant stress and make them more vulnerable to these types of infection.

The recent decisions of the Environment Protection Authority following these deaths would suggest that we have been slow to act and we need to know more about the rigour of current processes in light of this. The reality of this decision in Macquarie Harbour, and perhaps the tragedy of it, is that it was the environment that rang the bell well before the decision was made - not the regulator or the industry that has prime responsibility for this beautiful area.

I am well aware that the Government is currently implementing a range of changes that were proposed and developed under the previous minister. We would all agree this is important and very

necessary. The call for me to delay this inquiry to enable all aspects to be fully implemented is not necessarily the best approach, in my view. As we know, there are serious issues facing the industry. If this motion is supported, the work of the committee will take some time to commence due to the nature of the process, and to take evidence and to prepare a report. I believe it is timely to review and check on the actions that have been taken, as well as those proposed, to ensure we protect the industry as well as the environment. It may well be the case that such an inquiry finds many positive aspects to the current framework. This would be a very positive outcome and hopefully will instil public confidence.

However, if further change is needed, this must be identified before the industry, coexisting industries and our natural environment suffer more harm. I am sure all members would be aware of the level of public interest in this issue. It has not been assisted by the secrecy surrounding the reporting of fish mortalities and other important indicators of the health and welfare of the fish, the industry and the environment.

The time is now to undertake such an important body of work. This inquiry would establish whether change is needed and if so, what change. I believe marine farming can coexist with wild fisheries; however, effective regulation of both is necessary. The majority of people recognise the employment opportunities and support marine farming provided it is regulated in such a way that the natural environment is not adversely impacted and the wild fisheries that we all rely upon is not harmed. As I said, this is a view I support.

I share the concern of the majority of Tasmanians who are concerned with the current regulatory framework and suggest it needs review. It may need to change to ensure the future of both the marine farming industry and the wild fishery. Both marine farming and the wild fishery contribute significantly to the Tasmanian economy and employment in this state. We must ensure a regulatory framework that is robust and backed by independent scientific research, and transparent, if both can continue to survive and thrive.

The need for quality protein increases as our population increases, the world population increases and more people are lifted out of poverty in developing nations. We see that happening all around the world. We need to do our part to provide fish as an important protein food to Australians, as well as to international customers. If we import fish from other countries, we risk literally taking this protein-rich food out of their mouths. We need to have an industry that is sustainable in Tasmania and that can support the need for protein in our world.

As far as the approach taken to refer this to Government Administration Committee B, I am well aware I am not on Government Administration Committee B, but this inquiry would fit entirely - both environment-wise and with the department of Primary Industries and Water - with committee B. Not being a member, I thought this would be the most effective way to refer this matter to that committee. Should the motion be supported, I would seek substitute membership as marine farming occurs in many parts of my very large electorate which has significant coastline and Macquarie Harbour, the coast of which is mostly contained in the harbour. I know the members for Huon, Rosevears and Prosser will also have significant interest; however, that is a matter for another time.

An inquiry as proposed will ensure a thorough, rigorous and transparent approach using independent scientific evidence in current and future marine farming. The future of the industry and the economic benefit associated with the employment and the future of our nature environment

rely on, and depend on, a robust, scientifically based, transparent regulatory process. I urge all honourable members to support the motion.

[8.09 p.m.]

**Mr GAFFNEY** (Mersey) - Mr President, I have risen early because Petuna's factory outlet is in my electorate, and Huon Aquaculture is in the Latrobe municipality. I am familiar with that because it is quite unusual to have a fish factory on Rural Resource Zone land. The reason for that was to enable the fish raised in the south and in Queenstown to be close to where the *Spirit* was, to processed there and then put fresh onto the boat, which was a good move.

I will read the letter we received from Ruben Alvarez, CEO of Petuna. It is important, because I have some concerns with the nature of this inquiry. I am assuming every member would have received this but for this discussion it is worthwhile for one of us to read it in and it may as well be me.

Dear Mr Gaffney,

I am writing to provide some background and critical context to the notice of motion proposed by Independent Member of the Legislative Council, Ruth Forrest, calling for an inquiry and report into:

*The regulation and impact of the marine farming industry on the Tasmanian wild fishery and natural environment (full Notice of Motion enclosed).*

Petuna recognises that fin-fish farming plays an important role in Tasmania, in both economic and employment terms, but acknowledges that the industry has been criticised for a perceived lack of transparency and environmental performance.

This criticism has been subject to -

- National and statewide reporting in all forms of media, including a major report on Four Corners;
- A Senate Inquiry into the *Regulation of the Fin-Fish Aquaculture Industry in Tasmania*; and
- Legal action brought by Huon Aquaculture, which started off examining the decisions of the Regulator and morphed to question the validity of the industry's expansion in Macquarie Harbour.

These elements have been both costly and time consuming for Petuna, not only through addressing and responding to each of the items above, but also in significantly raising our efforts in stakeholder and community engagement.

The Tasmanian Government has also responded through the development of the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan and by implementing changes to the regulatory framework, moving responsibility of industry regulation from DPIPWE to the Environment Protection Authority.



The Regulatory reform announced by the Government is progressively being rolled out, but it has not yet been given the chance to be fully enacted and operational and thus a review at this stage would be premature and counter-productive. In our view, time spent in a further inquiry will distract from implementing the actions that are required - with the agenda for industry clearly stated in the Sustainable Industry Growth plan.

From Petuna's perspective a further inquiry at a time when the industry is striving to rebuild public confidence will undermine these efforts. We have demonstrated our commitment to addressing community concerns and improving biosecurity and environment outcomes in Macquarie Harbour through:

- Our announcement of a Joint Venture with Tassal that will see improved separation of Year Classes and longer fallowing times;
- Our support for the trialling of Tassal's waste capture system;
- Our call for an individual lease-by-lease management system; and
- Our ongoing consultation and strong partnership with the Strahan community.

While Petuna does not believe a formal inquiry is required at this time, we do concur that better information regarding the current legislative and regulatory framework would assist in building trust in the industry.

To this end we would support the Legislative Council:

- Being fully briefed on the existing and proposed processes companies must go through to establish a fin-fish lease. This includes;
  - The water environmental conditions required to make fin-fish farming viable in terms of water temperatures, currents and depth;
  - The natural filters that already apply to ensure protection of sea-grass beds, fish nurseries, rocky reefs, sponge gardens and other sensitive habitats.
  - The elements considered in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, including supportive scientific research to make an informed risk assessment and extensive consultation required to meet minimum stakeholder and community and expectations;
  - The planning approval processes under the new regulatory framework; and
  - The environment management process under the new regulatory framework.

- Receiving a briefing from IMAS to gain a comprehensive understanding of the science that supports the aquaculture industry in Tasmania.
- Consider and make recommendations on the adequacy of communicating the process to the broader community so key stakeholders not only know how to get involved, but also how the process works.

It is worth highlighting that the industry's peak body - the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association (TSGA) - is working hard on behalf of industry to generate a contemporary fisheries management research project in 2018/2019, which would specifically look at the interaction between the fin-fish aquaculture industry in Tasmania's key wild catch and recreational fisheries.

This project would address a major element of Ms Forrest's motion below (refer item 2) and would further reinforce the ongoing efforts of the TSGA to provide independent monitoring and regulation of the industry through its existing Broadscale Environmental Monitoring Program (BEMP).

Petuna remains committed to engaging with the Tasmanian community and believes that previous inquiries, legislative reform and the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan have identified what needs to be done.

We contend a further inquiry will undermine momentum at a very early stage, diverting resources within our business that would be better engaged in enacting current initiatives.

I would welcome any opportunity to further discuss your concerns and answer any questions you may have about Petuna or the aquaculture industry in Tasmania.

Please do not hesitate ...

Kind regards, Ruben Alvarez

In light of this letter we all received, I think they have a point. The fact is that in 2018-19 they will actually be doing the research to generate a contemporary fisheries management research project. I think it is too early to undertake the inquiry the member has mentioned, and yet she articulates it very well. Does it need to be done? Yes, it probably does. I am concerned from the industry's point of view, and it has taken a lot of flak in the last 18 months, and not just flak within this state, but nationally and internationally, and especially the relationship between those companies.

I am not certain if the advantages of having an inquiry now would be, 'Oh my God, this is another inquiry, and after this there will be another one. We have not finished that study.' It could be a bit detrimental but I am reserving my judgment because I would like to hear from other members.

I have taken on the report and read into *Hansard* a letter from Petuna, a business that operates in my municipality. The bottom line is that it is not where the fish are grown and it is not where the farms are so it has a different impact on those communities. I would like to hear from other

members before I make a decision. It is important to read into *Hansard* the letter we received from Petuna, in my area.

**Ms Forrest** - Did you contact Mr Alvarez for a discussion?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, I have not been able to get him, but I had no concerns about what he wrote.

[8.17 p.m.]

**Mr VALENTINE** (Hobart) - Mr President, as most people know by now, I grew up in the fishing industry, not finfish farming, but pretty close to the fishing industry and I worked in canneries my father used to run. Nevertheless, I do know something of it. That was a long time ago and I appreciate that we are dealing with quite a different set of circumstances today with respect to this particular issue of fin fish farming.

When I read this motion and then read the letter from Petuna, I thought, 'Is it the right thing to do at this moment?' I considered a number of things, and the flak that it has been receiving, and it has been receiving a lot of flak. Most people in the industry would say probably rightly so in the sense of the way there has been significant fish losses et cetera, and environmental degradation because of the practices they were using at the time. Yes, they have learned much from that flak from the community, and they are moving to do their best to clean up their act.

What this motion is obviously trying to do and it says it all in (1) -

The adequacy and efficacy of the current legislative and regulatory framework ...

There can be all these things at the moment to improve the way the salmon industry operates but do we understand the full situation when it comes to the legislative and regulatory framework? I suggest that at this point in time maybe we do not.

If the Government is changing things, and we have been told that it is changing things, it may be best to have this inquiry now to provide further information when making those changes. What is the detriment to providing more information? The industry feels it has been thrashed from pillar to post. The way things have happened on our coasts and in our harbours, when it comes to finfish farming something was bound to happen.

Some time ago I stayed at Strahan Wilderness Lodge and the person running the lodge told me about the impact finfish farming was having on his tourism business. He used to provide recreational fishing on the bay as an option. When aquaculture came to the harbour, nearly every bay was clogged up with aquaculture gear. Seals were coming in to feed on the fish coming in to feed on the fish farm food. That was impacting on the local wild fisheries, which impacted on him.

I received a newsletter from the West Coast Recreation Association Incorporated in the past few days which mentions the aquaculture industry. I will read it into *Hansard* -

Loss of jobs and decrease in production quota within the industry is regrettable, but sadly scientifically proven to be necessary.

This is of no consolation to those who now have to seek employment elsewhere and who, unfortunately, will no longer be part of our community.

We have long known industry decisions based on science would lead to changes and now we need to investigate ways to minimise the impact whilst maximising the potential.

Our recreational usage, tourism and fishing industries are the envy of many other areas and I believe Macquarie Harbour Aquaculture, as it further develops in harmony with our unique environment and harbour species (such as the Maugean skate) will one day be recognized as the best in the world.

Future packaging might say 'Product of Tasmania. Nurtured in pristine waters flowing from Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area, sharing habitat with the prehistoric endemic Maugean skate, the pinnacle in global sustainability. Macquarie Harbour Aquaculture, we are the best in the world'.

That is the vision of the West Coast Recreation Association. How do we get there? The important thing is that we take the least time possible to get there. This motion is not saying finfish farming should not occur. It is talking about managing it and whether the legislation that is in place is sufficient to manage it properly.

There was a story in the *Mercury* either today or yesterday about a clean-up there. The member for Murchison may be able to tell me, but tonnes of plastic were picked up from the harbour. Finfish farming was not the main culprit, but it was something like 15 per cent or 18 per cent of it. Everybody has a job to do when it comes to keeping plastic out of our waters. It needs global attention, not just in Macquarie Harbour. There needs to be strictures around the operation to prevent that happening. That is for everybody's benefit. Tourists are travelling on Macquarie Harbour and around the shores and they are the ones who will see the plastic floating around. They will be impacted. They will go away and say, 'I would not go back there, it is dump for plastic'. Everybody is concerned about it, including the industry itself. If we are going to promote first-class aquaculture product, we must make sure we do it properly.

The Petuna letter says the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association is working hard on behalf of the industry to generate a contemporary fisheries management research project in 2018-19. If they are going to do that, would it not be valuable to them to have the output from this inquiry? I understand how nervous they might feel, given they have had a Commonwealth inquiry and given they have been belted around the head. If we are going to be seen as a state that produces first-class product then we cannot be tardy. We must work as hard as we can to make sure the impacts are as low as they can be and the product is of as high a quality as it can be and our tourism does not suffer.

I am inclined to support the motion. I will listen to other arguments as they come forward as a result of things I might have said. That is my position at this time.

[8.27 p.m.]

**Mr DEAN** (Windermere) - Mr President, in my opinion this is not the right time for this inquiry with everything that is happening. I will go into that in a moment. It would be a distraction, in my view, to all the good things that are happening in this area.

This is the first time, to my knowledge, that a sessional committee will have been told what it is going to do. That is what will happen if this House supports this motion.

**Ms Forrest** - Bills have been referred to committees from this House. That has happened a number of times before.

**Mr DEAN** - This House has the right to do that, to forward it through to the committee.

What concerns me with these processes and under the terms of reference and the conditions applying to sessional committees, this can happen at any time. Any member from another sessional committee can bring a motion into this place to debate it here and for it then to be forwarded onto that other committee if the support is given to it in this place. It would have the ability to set the direction of that other committee. I do not see that as being a good thing. If you look at Committee B, at present it has the blueberry rust inquiry. Hopefully we are meeting on that tomorrow or the next day to get it moving. There is another inquiry I am going to put forward to Sessional Committee B as well in relation to the taxi industry. There are three other select committee inquiries currently underway, and a number of the members of Sessional Committee B are on those committees as well. The workload of the committee is extreme at the present time. We know that one of those select committees will have a very large inquiry - the firearms inquiry.

The point I make also is, what priority would Sessional Committee B set for this matter? In my view, it could set a priority of looking at it three years hence if they wanted to. There is nothing in the motion to say it will be given some priority, that it will be done within 12 months or two years. If that was in there, it would be an even stronger reason not to support it.

The committee can set its own agenda in relation to this matter if it is successful and gets through. Then there has to be a sufficient number of members within the committee who would want to be a part of the committee or subcommittee. It would be interesting to see whether that would occur. Then comes the question of what extent would the inquiry have to go to. I disagree with what the member for Murchison said in the first place. It would not be necessary, in my view, for the committee to go to the stage of calling for witnesses and holding hearings, et cetera. The way I interpret it, and I am happy to seek advice on this but I would have thought that a committee at this stage, provided it can satisfy the terms of reference, could seek a briefing from the department or perhaps others. It could then be satisfied with the information it has, and be satisfied when it is weighed against the terms of reference, and they could then submit a one-page report and that would be the end of the inquiry.

I want to refer to the Senate inquiry into the regulation of the finfish aquaculture industry in Tasmania in August 2015, which is quite recent, three years ago. If you look at the terms of reference there, there are similarities in some of the areas of that inquiry to what we are being asked to do here today if the matter gets through. What is not picked up in the terms of reference is, in most cases, covered in the large number of recommendations in the document. For example, recommendation 2 covers grow and no-grow zones. Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 cover term of reference 3 to some extent. There are 24 recommendations in that Senate inquiry report. How many of these have been picked up and what is happening with the rest? I do not know, but I understand that some of those recommendations have been picked up. I am of the opinion that any work to be undertaken by the sessional committees is a matter for the sessional committees. They should not be told or instructed to take on inquiries. We each have our portfolio areas, and I have covered this.

Do we need another inquiry in relation to the salmon industry at this time? We would hear predominately from the same witnesses the Senate inquiry heard from. I suggest that we would have many of the same witnesses coming back before us again, and I suspect they would be giving

similar evidence. We know that Tassal and the union do not want an inquiry at this stage of aggressiveness in this area, which I will allude to a little later. I will quote from the letters they have provided.

I suspect that the Senate inquiry has had an impact on both federal and state authorities and that some recommendations have been picked up and others are being considered and worked on. I am advised that some of the recommendations have been adopted and that others are still being worked on and considered. I have no advice on whether they will all be picked up. I suspect probably not, but they, the Government and the department should be given the opportunity to finish their work before we embark on an inquiry and go down a similar path.

If you look at this document titled 'Sustainable industry growth plan for the salmon industry', on page 3, you will see 'What the Government has already done to support a sustainable salmon industry', which reads -

2014 We provided additional funding to the new Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Centre of Excellence at Mount Pleasant, and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies for additional research on amoebic gill disease

2015 Significant additional funding for frontline biosecurity (ongoing funding now \$1 million pa [per annum])

Seafood Pledge signed, with funding for Seafood Training Tasmania over three years

2016 Important reforms to penalty/infringement notice legislation in the *Marine Farming Planning Amendment Act 2016*, with demerit points consequently reformed by 2017 Regulations

Transfer of responsibility for environmental regulation to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) under delegation

2017 Additional ongoing funding to Aquatic Animal Health and Vaccines Centre of Excellence

Decision to ban finfish farming in all of Mercury Passage outside existing Okehampton Bay zone

Passage of *Finfish Farming Environmental Regulations Act 2017* to formalise EPA's role and other reforms, including process for creating finfish marine farming exclusion zones

Giving Marine and Safety Tasmania a formal role in marine safety enforcement around marine farms

Development of major new *Biosecurity Bill 2017*, including provision to approve industry biosecurity programs

Renewal of Seafood Pledge for up to a further three years, with increased funding available for training

Requirement to end long-distance seal relocation by Christmas 2017, and to review and amend the Seal Management Framework

This document was released in December 2017 and is currently being worked through. It has had a huge impact on this industry. The industry is talking about the huge cost of this to them, and it is happy to do that because its members want a good industry. Why would it not want to do it? If you look at page 5 of that same document, the top priority actions are set out to concentrate on. It is probably worth looking at it. It reads in part -

Clearly identifying the areas of Tasmania's coastal waters where salmon will continue to be farmed, areas where further growth might be possible (subject always to careful and open planning and approval processes), and areas where salmon farming will be excluded.

They are looking at quite a large area as to where and how it will take place. It is a big job that is currently being done. The document continues -

Analysis of existing marine farming development plan areas used for salmon farming, particularly with a view to strengthening biosecurity -

I am not quoting each point here; I am just picking one or two out -

A formal agreement, jointly developed by all current finfish licence holders and the Government, for sustainable future farming in Macquarie Harbour -

The director of the EPA has recently released a number of permits in relation to the numbers of fish that can be in each area. I might briefly touch on that in a moment as well -

Improving the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the industry's environmental regulation, and the effectiveness of its biosecurity systems

- Establishment of an industry funded Finfish Farming (Compliance and Monitoring) Unit in the Environment Protection Authority
- Development of an industry-wide Biosecurity Program that can be given effect through the proposed new Biosecurity Act
- Collection of a wider range of environmental information, including additional real time data, and increased public access to relevant environmental information through an independent portal hosted by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies
- Continuing strong support for the State's advanced fish health and biosecurity facilities
- Encouraging relevant research and development, and the subsequent adoption of new technologies that reduce environmental impacts -

and it goes on.

The last thing the Government, department or anyone would want is a distraction from the work being undertaken. That is exactly what this inquiry would do if supported. I am not sure how the committee would handle it because all these changes would be being done at the same time a committee is expected to carry out an inquiry into it. It would be an absolute moveable feast. I am not sure how we would keep up with it all, because so much is happening in the area. Not just one or two minor things, but huge changes. If you are going to have an inquiry, have it in three, four or five years' time. Look at the changes and see whether it is working. The Senate recommendations that have been picked up are working, and in this sustainable industry growth document they are working and getting the results they want. Have it then - it would probably be supported in that time.

These reports cover areas raised in this motion. The sessional committee must accept a referral of this inquiry, as I mentioned. My position clearly has regard to the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry, which was only released in December and is currently being worked through. Coupled with the Senate inquiry and with those recommendations also being worked through, this motion should not proceed at this time; it should be withdrawn. If not withdrawn, I urge members not to support it at this time. It can come back at some other time, as the member for Mersey mentioned.

I will go through what has happened in this area since 2016 and articulate it. In June 2016, the Tasmanian Government announced changes to the regulatory framework reflecting significant growth in the finfish farming industry. It handed responsibility for the environmental management of the industry to the EPA under delegation while new legislation was drafted. The Government increased penalties for breaches and reintroduced demerit points in the Marine Farming Planning Amendment Act 2016.

In July 2017, consultation was undertaken on draft legislation to transfer the environmental regulatory responsibility for finfish farming to the EPA as changes to a number of pieces of legislation were required. The Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Bill 2017 was prepared and introduced into parliament on 17 August 2017. In December 2017, the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Bill received royal assent on 4 December 2017, and the act is now being implemented.

In May 2018, consultation was underway on regulations on environmental licences under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994. The regulations support various amendments made to the 2017 act on finfish farming regulation by the EPA and the establishment of an environmental licence as a requirement for all marine and inland farms. The environmental licence will consolidate all environmental conditions into one regulatory instrument enabling greater scrutiny and compliance, which should give the community, industry and markets greater confidence regarding ongoing environmental accountability in this sector.

Then there is *The statement of reasons for determinations made pursuant to management controls 3.3.1 and 3.3.5 of the Macquarie Harbour Marine Farming Development Plan October 2005*. A number of determinations have now been issued, six all up, relating to stocking density within leases. I referred to this briefly earlier - they have only just been released. They are dated 28 May 2018, so it has just happened. That is the movement made in this area.



Then there is a Senate inquiry and the industry plan released in December. Having said all of that, I urge members to consider this matter seriously. I am not saying they should take any other position on it, but it is an inquiry that should not take place.

I briefly mentioned the union and Tassal and the releases to the media. I will briefly refer to some of the comments made by the union. The union says that an inquiry would create anxiety. It would among the people working in the industry. We know what forestry industry went through when all the changes occurred to it, and the trauma and everything else that happened in that area - it was a terrible situation. They do not want this to happen again.

I quote from this media release - there have been no retractions in the newspaper, so I take it this media release is accurate -

A new inquiry into the salmon industry would create stress for workers, a key union says. Australian Workers Union assistant secretary, Robert Flanagan, said an inquiry was not in the public interest and work was already being done on the impact of the industry. 'An inquiry would create unnecessary anxiety and uncertainty for workers', he said. 'It is not in the public interest because the reality is that the industry has taken proactive steps to ensure world's best practice and to address environmental issues.'

As a union that represented forest workers who no longer have jobs in that industry, we know better than most the anxiety and uncertainty that workers experience from inquiries.'

I am missing a piece out here; I quote now from another section at the end of that media statement -

A further workshop is being held in June in Norway and it will be bench-marking the Tasmanian standards against those in other countries. We are up there with the best.'

Mr Flanagan said community concerns about fish deaths were being addressed. 'Farmers are not going to put livestock in the water to die, they want to be able to harvest the fish, so it is not in any company's interest to have fish die,' he said. 'We don't need a Legislative Council inquiry to tell us how to care for the environment and the Senate inquiry was comprehensive.'

That is what the union said. I will make a couple of quotes from the Tassal media release, and I also take it these are correct. To my knowledge, it has not been amended in the newspaper -

Tassal has rejected another inquiry into the salmon industry. Tassal head of environment, Sean Riley, said the 2015 Senate select committee took a 'deep look' at the environmental monitoring and regulation of the industry. 'We feel that another inquiry risks duplicating a body of work already undertaken which would potentially drain public resources better used in delivering on improvements to transparency and reporting initiatives for the industry', Mr Riley said.

That is all I am going to quote from that letter.

I reiterate: there is a lot of talk and people are interested in what is happening in the industry and in fish farming. It is a big industry for Tasmania, one that will continue to grow, and we want to see it go in the right direction. We want to see Tasmania have the best industry in the world. It seems, from some of those comments, that we are well on track for that to be the case, if we are not there already.

I urge members not to support this motion at this time. It can come back at a later time, in several years' time, and we might have a different approach. It is not the time right now.

[8.49 p.m.]

**Ms ARMITAGE** (Launceston) - Mr President, last September the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Bill 2017 passed through both the lower and upper Houses of this parliament and received royal assent in December 2017.

That bill transferred the power of environmental regulation of the finfish farming industry from the department of Primary Industries and Water to the Environment Protection Agency.

The passing of the bill enabled additional legislation and regulatory instruments to be created to better protect both the environment and the resource itself, the fish.

It is my understanding the new Environmental Management and Pollution Control. (Environmental Licences) Regulations 2018 are now published and are open for public comment, which will close on 29 June 2018.

This regulation sets out the statutory rules and penalties for owning and managing a marine or inland fishery and the requirement for future operators to obtain an environmental licence.

As so much regulatory work is already currently happening in this space and is not in effect as yet, it is unnecessary for the Government Administration Committee B to inquire into the marine farming industry at the current time. At present, that would be a waste of time and public money.

Once the new regulations have taken effect and operators have had sufficient time to change any management practices and to adhere to the new regulations, there may be a time to review the practices and logistics of the regulations.

Further to this, a Senate committee completed a comprehensive report on the regulation of the finfish aquaculture industry in Tasmania. The committee was chaired by Senator Anne Urquhart; its members included other Tasmanians - Peter Whish-Wilson, Lisa Singh and former senator Jacquie Lambie.

My understanding is that several of the recommendations from this report have been implemented and/or are in the process of implementation with more being considered. It is my concern that an inquiry at this time could undermine the industry and the work that has been achieved.

It is also worth noting the unease reported by the Australian Workers' Union Assistant Secretary Robert Flanagan who fears a new inquiry into the salmon industry would create stress for workers, that an inquiry was not in the public interest and that work was already being done on the impact of the industry.

Mr Flanagan said -

An inquiry would create unnecessary anxiety and uncertainty for workers.

Given the current circumstances, I will not be supporting the motion at this time.

[8.51 p.m.]

**Mr ARMSTRONG** (Huon) - Mr President, the member for Mersey has read the email from Petuna Seafoods. I will read one line from that which says it all -

... a further inquiry at a time when the industry is striving to rebuild public confidence will undermine these efforts.

The salmon industry has been through tough times over the past 12 months. It now needs to consolidate and be given time for the new regulations to be implemented.

I went to New Zealand earlier this year and looked at the salmon industry over there. Compared to their industry, our industry has gone ahead in leaps and bounds as far as the environment is concerned.

In Marlborough Sounds, between the North Island and the South Island, fish farms are static. They are anchored to the bottom. Our fish farms are moved to different areas. We are a long way in front of New Zealand's fish farming industry.

At Mount Cook, where the hydro schemes are, they have fish farms in the channels where the water runs down to the power stations.

My first thought was that the fish would not put on weight because they would be swimming against the stream of water all the time, but it works well. The fish are in the channels, but the channels are a lot wider than ours at Tarraleah. Our salmon industry needs time to settle down -

**Mr Dean** - How many salmon go through the power station?

**Mr ARMSTRONG** - I do not know. It is too premature to have an inquiry at the moment. I will not be supporting the motion.

[8.54 p.m.]

**Mr FARRELL** (Derwent) - Mr President, I understand the member for Murchison's concerns for the industry. A lot of Tasmanians share this concern. It is understandable that people want to know what is going on in this industry which is vital for Tasmania's economic future. I thought I heard the member for Windermere waving the union flag and I thought I was asleep and dreaming. The Labor Party has been approached by the unions as well as by the businesses expressing their concerns about an inquiry being held at a time when they feel things are starting to bed down and move forward. It is going to be a long road for the industry with many bumps in the road.

There is a risk that when party members in this place become involved in inquiries, it may be seen as having a go at the government. The last thing the Labor Party wants to do while the industry is particularly fragile is politicise it. We saw the unrest caused during the Senate hearing into the salmon industry on *Four Corners*. While it is important for people to know what is going on, that created a lot of unrest in the industry. Things are only just starting to settle down. The Labor Party

believes it could be detrimental to become involved. The member for Murchison covered timing. Had this had been put forward some months ago, it might have gotten up.

**Ms Forrest** - I would have, but we were not sitting.

**Mr FARRELL** - That is always difficult when parliament is prorogued. All the evidence and feedback we have has indicated that now would not be time. This is one of those issues that for the future of Tasmania, the Government and Opposition have to work together.

We will not be supporting the motion for an inquiry.

[8.57 p.m.]

**Ms RATTRAY** (McIntyre) - Mr President, every email we have received has been read into *Hansard*. That is a useful process when we are debating something as important as this.

The salmon industry, the finfish industry, is an important industry for the state and has caused a great deal of public debate in recent years. The way the department is currently handling this industry shows it has lifted its game. On the Library list, there was a document called *The statement of reasons for determinations made pursuant to management controls 3.3.1 and 3.3.5 of Macquarie Harbour Marine Farming Development Plan October 2005*. The member for Windermere also referred to this document.

The extensive requirements in this document for the Macquarie Harbour industry have set the benchmark for the industry to comply with. The document is dated 28 May 2018, so it would be difficult to hold an inquiry and assess whether these management controls are working. I expect there is one of these management plans for all the other areas around the state. I am not convinced this is the right time for this inquiry for the reasons other members have put forward. The areas for the required scrutiny, should this go to the committee, are extensive. The committee must report back on the adequacy and efficiency of the current legislative and regulatory framework. There is a list of (a) to (g), but it also talks about (f), 'develop past and future Salmon Farming Management Plans', and (g), 'establish salmon grow and no-grow zones'.

That is just in the first reference; it would be an extensive inquiry where you would need a multitude of expertise in that field to be able to assess what information the committee would be able to gather and whether it would be relevant. We would probably spend more time at the university trying to sort out what we have just heard.

At this point I am not inclined to support the motion, but I thank the member for Murchison for bringing it forward for debate.

[9.01 p.m.]

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I thank the member for Murchison for bringing forward this important issue for debate. I thank other members for their contributions today.

The Hodgman Liberal Government is a strong supporter of our seafood industry, whether it be wild catch or farmed, and supports the ongoing review and improvement of its regulations in this state. This state's salmonoid industry is world-class. Its products are recognised nationally and internationally, and they promote Tasmania's reputation as a producer of fine food products.

The salmon industry is vertically integrated with investments in hatcheries, grow-out and processing infrastructure. The industry estimates its contribution includes over 5000 direct and indirect jobs, many of which are in rural and regional areas of Tasmania. The demand for Tasmanian salmon products is reflected in the growth of the industry, which now generates more than \$750 million annually. This growth is expected to continue and reach \$1 billion before 2030. Fundamental to this growth is ensuring that the expansion of the industry is sustainable over a long term and is compatible with community and environmental objectives.

The industry operates within a rigorous planning, environmental monitoring and management regime, and I dare say the ink is not yet dry on some of the planning regimes being implemented.

As the industry continues to evolve, the Liberal Government has taken decisive action to ensure that the regulation and management of the industry evolves as well. We changed responsibility for environmental regulation and oversight to the independent Environment Protection Authority and increased penalties, among other initiatives.

Last December we released the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry, which has been held up before, setting the blueprint for future development, environmental regulation and increased community confidence. Through the plan, we support the efforts of the salmon farming companies that are working more together on environmental management and biosecurity. We support initiatives to improve transparency and information to the community and regulators. We support community engagement and engagement with other seafood, fishing and ancillary sectors.

The Government is still rolling out further regulatory reforms and initiatives in the salmon growth plan. The Government is also still in the process of implementing the legislation passed by this place only late last year to strengthen the regulation of the industry. Combined, this is a significant body of work and it will take time. We need to give it the chance to first be fully enacted and tested before it is reviewed. We believe it is appropriate for industry regulation and reforms to be reviewed, but at the right time. Our resources will be better directed at this time to getting on with implementing the range of reforms and strengthening the oversight, regulation, transparency and engagement with the industry and the community. An inquiry at this time would divert our efforts from achieving real improvements and outcomes.

It is for these reasons that I can indicate that the Government will not be supporting the motion. It is not the right time for the inquiry proposed by the member for Murchison.

The Government believes it is important to place on the record a response to a number of issues raised in relation to today's motion. The adequacy of the regulation of the finfish marine farming industry in Tasmania has already been tested through a Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications inquiry conducted in 2015, as mentioned before. The major findings of the inquiry were that the Tasmanian salmonoid marine farming industry is inextricably linked to the future economic prosperity of Tasmania, and that the existing management and regulatory framework for the industry is appropriate. The committee endorsed an adaptive management framework which underpins the management of the industry, and considered the monitoring regime not only to be comprehensive and robust, but comparable to world's best practice.

Since the Senate inquiry, the legislative framework and regulatory controls underpinning the management of the finfish marine farming industry have been further enhanced. Members will recall that in September of last year, the parliament passed the Finfish Farming Environmental

Regulation Act. That act, which is now being implemented, did five main things. It amended the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994, the Marine Farming Planning Act 1995, the Living Marine Resources Management Act 1995, the Inland Fisheries Act 1995 and the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal Act 1993 to modernise relevant planning, regulatory and management processes associated with finfish farming that occur across a number of associated frameworks without duplication or inefficiencies.

It also established an environmental licence as a new regulatory instrument that applies to the environmental regulation of both marine and freshwater finfish farming activities, including hatcheries. It made the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act the primary legislation for managing the environmental regulation of the finfish industry. It provided for the declaration and revocation of finfish marine farming exclusion zones or 'no-grow zones', and a prohibition on the preparation of marine farming development plans for finfish farming in areas where there is a finfish marine farming exclusion zone, or no-grow zone. It has also strengthened the role of the director of the EPA in relation to the planning and development processes associated with finfish farming.

This legislation built upon the Marine Farming Planning Amendment Bill 2016, which modernised the penalty and enforcement provisions. This included strengthening the penalties relating to breaches of apportioned nitrogen limits to leaseholders or sublessees growing finfish in marine farming lease areas and is calculated proportionate to the financial advantage obtained, and the re-introduction of demerit points.

The Government is currently undertaking consultation on the regulations to support provisions of the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act. This consultation is open for the next month.

The EPA is also in the process of implementing its new statutory functions and has commenced issuing the environmental licences for both freshwater and marine operations and is developing its compliance and auditing functions to provide for the future management framework under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act.

I will now turn to the work of the Government in relation to each aspect of the proposed inquiry, and why this work should be allowed to be completed before any inquiry is conducted. In relation to the adequacy and efficacy of the current legislation and regulatory framework to enable the functions and powers of the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel to be fulfilled, I first note the panel is an expertise-based panel, established under the Marine Farming Planning Act that provides expert and independent advice to the minister. The key statutory role of the panel is to make recommendations to the minister on draft marine farming development plans and draft amendments to those plans. The Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act of 2017 made important changes to the panel, including reconfiguration of the panel structure to remove the director of the EPA from the panel, replacement of the director of the EPA's role on the panel with that of a person having ability and expertise in environmental management, and increasing the panel membership to nine members, with the establishment of a position requiring ability and expertise in fish health and biosecurity.

Section 21(1) of the Marine Farming Planning Act requires the panel in making a recommendation on a draft plan or draft amendment to, among other things -

- (d) have regard for the use and development of the region as an entity in environmental, economic, recreational and social terms.

- (f) and have regard to the biological and physical requirements of fish species to be farmed in that area.

Panel considerations are then provided as a recommendation to the minister to either accept, modify or reject the proposed draft plan or amendments. The panel is currently deliberating on the first recommendations it will make under its new structure - a structure that was considered and endorsed by this Council and it is appropriate for the structure to be tested before any examination through an inquiry such as this is proposed.

I will now turn to the adequacy and efficacy of the current legislative and regulatory framework. The objectives of the Marine Farming Planning Act are to sustainably develop marine farming with regard to the need to integrate marine farming activities with other marine users; minimise any adverse impacts; take account of adjoining land uses; and take account of the community's right to have an interest in marine farming activities. The current legislative and regulatory framework provides a rigorous, structured approach for the development and amendment of any marine farming development plans. This includes statutory provisions that prescribe all steps in the planning process, including provisions for the public to have input through a consultative process.

As already outlined, the Government has acted to strengthen regulation and ensure community confidence in the industry's future sustainable growth. This includes increasing independence of regulation through handing responsibility for environment management to the independent Environment Protection Authority; and increasing penalties for breaches and reintroducing demerit points in the Marine Farming Planning Amendment Act 2016. Consultation is currently being undertaken on regulation to support provisions of the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act 2017. The EPA is in the process of implementing its new statutory responsibilities and has commenced issuing the environmental licences for both freshwater and marine operations and it is in the process of developing its compliance and auditing functions to provide for the future management framework under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act.

There are many things happening. The Government will be developing an environmental standard to provide a transparent framework for the EPA director to regulate the industry against, which I am advised is expected to be implemented in 2019. Mechanisms are also in place under the Marine Farming Planning Act and the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act of 1994 to manage and regulate finfish stocking levels through a range of input and output controls that can limit the total permissible dissolved nitrogen output from farmed stock. It is a proxy for feed input, cage stocking densities, the number of smolt entering the farm site or sites and the biomass of fish in a lease or marine farming development plan area.

The Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry proposes grow and no-grow zones for finfish farming around the state with a large proportion of the inshore coastal zone identified as potential no-grow areas. The implementation of the Finfish Farming Environmental Regulation Act has formalised the process for the establishment of finfish farming exclusion zones within the Marine Farming Planning Act. An exclusion zone has been established in Mercury Passage. This exclusion zone is identified in schedule 6 to the act if anyone wanted to have a look. There can be little doubt about the adequacy of the legislative framework that now supports the creation of finfish farming exclusion zones.

Significant scientific studies have been completed or are currently underway relating to impacts of finfish marine farming on the marine environment and wild fisheries. The results of these studies are, or will be, in the public domain and are available to inform planning and regulatory processes. Previous studies that informed planning and environmental management have included the Macquarie Harbour Environmental and Fish Health Monitoring Review conducted by the New Zealand based Cawthron Institute; *Review of the Tasmanian Abalone Council report on risk to the abalone fishery from further expansion of the salmonoid industry*; and a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation project studying the benthic condition on a local and regional scale to improve understanding of sediment processes and interactions between reef systems and marine farming.

Current work includes the FRDC project titled 'Managing ecosystem interactions across different environments, building flexibility and risk assurance into environmental management strategies', which is specifically considering the potential for interactions between salmon farming and local fringing reefs which are a critical habitat for wild fisheries such as rock lobster and abalone. This work will identify risk-appropriate monitoring strategies and potential indicators of adverse impacts and is due for completion at the end of 2018. Publications associated with the research as well as the final reports will be made publicly available.

In closing, the salmon industry operates within a robust planning and regulatory environment. If the Legislative Council was to pass the member for Murchison's motion it would have the effect of delaying some of the significant reforms the Government is still only in the process of implementing. As I said, half the ink is not quite dry and still yet to be implemented and see how it goes. This would have an adverse outcome for the industry and for the community as evidenced by the recent announcement of a joint venture agreement between Petuna and Tassal in Macquarie Harbour. We are seeing more industry-led engagement on issues like environmental performance and biosecurity planning. As much as government's role is to get the regulatory and policy settings right, we recognise and respect the industry's own efforts to maintain community and consumer confidence and to be more accountable and environmentally sustainable.

We welcome scrutiny of the salmon industry, one of Tasmania's largest industries. We support increased community engagement, transparency and a review of the regulatory framework and related matters, but at the right time. Now is not the time. We will not be supporting the motion because it is not the right time for the inquiry proposed by the member for Murchison.

The member for Windermere talked about the Senate report having recommendations. I will run through them. There were three recommendations from the majority report. There were 24 recommendations made in the Greens' dissenting report.

Recommendation 1 was improved data availability. This has been partially implemented already and is being progressed through the new data portal to be operated by IMAS, supported by the score card and environmental standards.

Recommendation (2) was the requirement to hold a public hearing. This must happen under the legislation if only one person requests the hearing.

Recommendation (3) deals with increased resourcing for regulation and planning. Through industry levies, the Government has increased resourcing by approximately \$850 000 per annum. Honourable members can see there is a bulk amount of work that has been done or is in the process



of being done. I recommend we do not support this motion at this stage and that we wait and see how it goes. If some deem a review is required after this has happened, so be it.

The member for Hobart painted a bad picture of Macquarie Harbour when he said it was full of rubbish and no fish.

**Mr Valentine** - I did not say there were no fish.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - I was down there fishing from a boat about 18 months ago and went out between the fish farm nets. I was not looking for rubbish, but there was nothing -

**Mr Valentine** - I was referring to a report in the *Mercury* today about the tons of rubbish that were there.

**Mrs HISCUTT** - Yes, I heard what you said, but I wanted to report to you what I actually saw. I did not see a lot of rubbish, and we did catch some fish.

[9.21 p.m.]

**Ms FORREST** (Murchison) - Mr President, I thank members for their contributions and will address some of the points raised.

About the timing, if we are heading down the wrong path, is it not better to identify that sooner rather than later? A number of things have been done. The member for Windermere read out some of the plan which, in my view, does not have a lot of detail. Things were done between 2014 and 2017. Now is the time to have a look at that.

I do not want to be standing here in 18 months' or two or three years' time, saying, 'I wish we had a look at this sooner because we are heading down the right path'.

**Mrs Hiscutt** - You might say it is a wonderful job and a review is not needed.

**Ms FORREST** - That is what I am going to say. There seems to be this perception, and I spoke to the minister about this, that the committee will come up with negative findings. It might not. It could say we are heading down the right track. Is it not better to know that and give the public some confidence in it?

Members who spoke against the motion referred to the industry's view. That is an important view, but other views have not been canvassed.

We have seen a whole new level here from the member for Windermere who quotes and supports the unions. He also talks about the 24 recommendations. They are the Greens' recommendations, not the committee's recommendations. They are the 24 recommendations made by the Greens. Not only is he standing by the unions, the member for Windermere is also standing by the Greens. We will see in the *Mercury* tomorrow that the member for Windermere has suddenly joined the Greens and the union movement.

**Mr Dean** - I was a president of a union at one stage.

**Ms FORREST** - Concern from the industry's point of view is valid, and I do not dispute that, but it is important to remember there are other stakeholders. Every Tasmanian is a stakeholder in

this. Every Tasmanian cares about our brand and cares about employment in the marine farming industry, but the wild fishery employment for the tourism industry and the flow on from all of that is important.

It is important we do give everyone the opportunity to have some input into this. I acknowledge that the Government is doing some good work.

The member for Hobart pointed out that the industry has received a lot of flak over time, but that it was not unwarranted.

The member for Huon talked about how he went to New Zealand and looked at the industry there. He said we are streets ahead, going in leaps and bounds. It must be from a pretty low base if you base Macquarie Harbour on that because some of us have been down to Macquarie Harbour and had a look. Have you talked to the locals down there? Have you seen that the EPA has had to make a significant reduction in stocking levels? Has the member seen the impact of those 1.35 million fish who died just recently? Small fish, not big ones, but they died, all of them - 1.35 million fish. It is not insignificant stuff. If you look under some of the pens, and, yes they are going to be fallowed now as they need to be, but sometimes harm to our beautiful Macquarie Harbour will take centuries to correct. Not 18 months or a couple of years, but centuries.

We look at the mining legacy of the past from Mt Lyell and the King and Queen rivers. You look at that and see how damage can be done. To say we will wait a few more years and look at it then - if we are heading down the wrong path that could be too late for Macquarie Harbour.

I do not know for sure, but there is genuine concern among some of the old timers around Strahan who are not raving greenies. They do not even call themselves environmentalists. They call themselves shooters, fishers and hunters. That is where they come from. They are concerned and have raised concerns.

The harbour itself has raised concerns. The environment in the harbour is what rang the bell on this. The EPA has responded and some would argue better late than never. How much late is it?

The member for Hobart said the industry has been moving to clean up the industry. Yes, they have, but they needed to. When you look at Macquarie Harbour, they needed to. I am not disputing with you; I am agreeing with you.

The whole thing about the secrecy has been an issue. The secrecy about the mortalities, secrecy about what has gone on. The public want better than that. The portal that has been talked about, and the Leader mentioned that, is to be operated by the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies as an independent middle organisation to provide that portal of access to information, but that was agreed to ages ago. We still have not seen it implemented fully.

I understand it is going to be fairly soon and that is good. That is not part of the regulation. That is about some of the transparency about releasing information.

Is the legislative framework adequate? This harm can last a long time. We need to be sure we are on the front foot. A lot of change has happened in the last three years since the Senate inquiry. The Senate inquiry made only three recommendations and the Leader referred to those in her closing comments.

They do not go very far to the terms of reference I have proposed. I will read them for the benefit of the member for Windermere so he knows which ones we are talking about -

#### Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Tasmanian Government support the greater provision of environmental information and data relating to the fin-fish industry by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

That is the portal that is being developed. This is three years and we still do not have it -

#### Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Tasmanian Government give consideration to amending the Marine Farming Planning Act 1995 to provide a statutory obligation for the Marine Farming Planning and Review Panel to hold public hearings.

They have done that. Is it working? Are people feeling satisfied that is okay? That is only one aspect. The Marine Farming Planning Review is to give people an opportunity to have a say. It is not very broad in terms of regulatory framework -

#### Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the Tasmania Government ensure that the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment is provided with sufficient resources to undertake planning, monitoring and compliance of the primary industry sector.

We can ask all those questions in Estimates to see what is happening there. This is not about that. It is about the regulation of the industry into the future.

I am not going to read the 24 recommendations from the Greens because that was a dissenting report. The chair, Senator Anne Urquhart, also made additional comments in the report.

There have been many changes. I said earlier that there has been a rapid increase in the amount of marine farming, proposals from marine farming and the mortalities we saw, which we have trouble getting information on.

I am sure members may recall me asking a question last sitting about the number of mortalities. I was asking for the information about the total mortalities in Macquarie Harbour. Not individual businesses. I was told it was commercially sensitive. Within a few days, on ABC Radio, the director of the EPA told Leon Compton it was 1.35 million fish.

It was not commercially sensitive. It was not going to break down each individual business because that could create some issues for publicly listed companies. I was not asking for that.

That is what many of my constituents have told me they believe to be the number or thereabouts. Let us be honest and open, and let us not treat the people of Tasmania and my

constituents with contempt. That is what the Government has been doing in my view, because I legitimately asked the question and I was given some furphy of an answer.

Hopefully the portal might help provide that. I am not sure we will receive more tallies reporting through the portal. We will see.

The union's comments about creating stress: if we do not get this right, there will be more stress because jobs will be lost, not just in the marine farming industry - it could be in the wild fishery or in tourism. Macquarie Harbour relies very much on tourism. The RACT just invested in a big new boat to travel the harbour and up the Gordon River, with electric motors to prevent noise and reduce the wake, which is fabulous. These businesses have made very significant financial commitments. We do not want to see their industry damaged either. We need to be sure we are on the right track.

The member for Derwent talked about the representations from industry and unions and they have their own interests. I expect you talk about the unions - that is what the Labor Party does. This is not a threat to the unions. It is not a threat to the industry. It is an opportunity to put all the good work on the record if there has been significant progress, in a timely manner, and make sure we are on the right track. If we are not, the sooner we know, the sooner we can make other recommendations and change the direction.

This is on the record now. If it happens, I will be able to come back and say that I told you so. Hopefully I will not have to. I absolutely do not want it to be the case. I do not want to look back and wish we had taken a closer look.

The member for McIntyre talked about the industry lifting its game. The EPA and the harbour forced them to do so, as did the people down there who had really genuine concerns.

The Leader talked about the expected growth in the industry continuing. We are seeing stock levels reduced in Macquarie Harbour, so it is not growing too quickly at the current time. There are other proposals for expansion but that is a few years off. We can say, 'Let us see what happens in the far north-west.' Petuna is monitoring that at the moment. It has a map with hatched areas on it indicating areas it will not consider because it is a shark nursery fishery, or a squid fishery, or where there is abalone, or where there are other issues with water temperature and currents. Even when they identify areas that may be suitable, they are going to have to have a full-on, much more expensive monitoring process. That is going to be some time away. You cannot do that monitoring in a month because conditions change, the seasons change. It is an interesting body of water.

In terms of saying we need time to implement all these changes, there has been some time. According to the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the Salmon Industry - the member for Windermere quoted the whole section on page 3 - all these things were done some three or four years ago. I believe it is time. We have our own opinion on that and I respect the will of the House, but I encourage members to support the inquiry. It will not start next week. The committee still has to meet and decide what they will do. I would like the opportunity to sub onto the inquiry. It is not going to happen overnight and we have the budget session and all other work stops. It is not saying it is going to happen next week, even if it is supported. I urge members to support the motion so we do not find ourselves back here wishing we had.

**The Council divided -**

AYES 2

Ms Forrest  
Mr Valentine (Teller)

NOES 12

Ms Armitage  
Mr Armstrong  
Mr Dean  
Mr Farrell  
Mr Finch (Teller)  
Mr Gaffney  
Mrs Hiscutt  
Ms Howlett  
Ms Lovell  
Ms Rattray  
Ms Siejka  
Mr Willie

**Motion negatived.**

**METRO TASMANIA AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 14)**  
**THREATENED SPECIES PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2018 (No. 8)**

**First Reading**

Bills received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -  
Mr President, I move -

That at its rising the Council do adjourn until 11 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 June  
2018.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mrs HISCUTT** (Montgomery - Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) -  
Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

**The Council adjourned at 9.41 p.m.**