



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 16 August 2022

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 16 August 2022

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT

The House met at 11 a.m. pursuant to the proclamation of Her Excellency the Governor.

The Clerk read the proclamation.

The Speaker, **Mr Shelton**, acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Attendance of Members - Opening of Parliament

[11.03 a.m.]

The Usher of the Black Rod was admitted and delivered a message from Her Excellency the Governor requesting attendance of members at the Legislative Council Chamber. Members accordingly proceeded to that Chamber.

Sitting resumed at 11.09 a.m.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Resignation of Mrs Jacquie Petrusma

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I wish to advise the House that I have received the following correspondence from her Excellency the Governor:

Government House,
Hobart, Tasmania

25 July 2022

The Honourable Mark Shelton MP,
Speaker of the House of Assembly,
Parliament House,
Hobart 7000:

Dear Mr Speaker,

I have received a letter dated 25 July 2022 from the Honourable Jacquie Petrusma MP tendering her resignation as a member for Franklin in the House of Assembly.

I have instructed the Electoral Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the provisions of Part 9 of the Electoral Act 2004.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Baker
Governor

Division of Franklin - Mr Dean Young

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I also advise the House of the following communication I have received from Her Excellency the Governor:

Government House,
Hobart, Tasmania.

15 August 2022

The Honourable Mark Shelton MP,
Speaker of the House of Assembly,
Parliament House,
Hobart 7000:

Dear Mr Speaker,

I send herewithin a certificate of the Electoral Commission stating that a recount has been held under the provisions of Part 9 of the Electoral Act 2004 to fill the vacancy in the Division of Franklin caused by the resignation of the Honourable Jacquie Petrusma, MP. Following the recount of the resigned member's ballot papers, Dean Young has been elected to fill the vacancy, the election taking effect from today.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Baker
Governor.

MEMBER SWORN

Division of Franklin - Mr Dean Geoffrey Young

Mr Speaker informed the House that Her Excellency the Governor had advised the House of the election upon a recount of the following member for the House of Assembly.

Dean Geoffrey Young

Mr Young was sworn and declared that he had read and subscribed to the Code of Conduct.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Ministerial Appointments

[11.12 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, resulting from the resignation of Jacqui Petrusma, it is my privilege to make the following appointments of Ministers of the Crown:

First, a welcome to the newest Liberal member for Franklin, Dean Young, who I am sure will continue some of the great work left by the former Liberal member for Franklin, Mrs Petrusma. I thank Mrs Petrusma for her service in this place and I am very much looking forward to working with our new member.

In addition to Premier, I am appointed Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Tourism and Minister for Trade.

Mr Michael Ferguson has been appointed as Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and Minister for Planning.

Ms Elise Archer as Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, and Minister for the Arts.

Mr Guy Barnett as Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing, Minister for Energy and Renewables, and Minister for Veterans Affairs.

Mr Felix Ellis as Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth, and Minister for Resources.

Mr Roger Jaensch as Minister for Education, Children and Youth, Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Parks.

Ms Madeleine Ogilvie as Minister for Small Business, Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries, Minister for Science and Technology, Minister for Racing, and Minister for Heritage.

Mr Nic Street as Minister for Community Services and Development, Minister for Hospitality and Events, Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Local Government, and Leader of the House.

The honourable Jo Palmer MLC as Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. With regard to Ms Palmer being a member of the other place, as has been recent practice, it is our intention shortly to seek the agreement of the House to seek leave of the other place to allow the minister, Ms Palmer, to attend question time here for a sitting.

The honourable Leonie Hiscutt MLC will continue as Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

Mrs Lara Alexander has been appointed as Government Whip and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing; and Mr Nick Duigan as Parliamentary Secretary for the Tamar Estuary.

I have great confidence that our team is the right mix of experience, compassion and energy to continue strengthening this great state's future and delivering for all Tasmanians.

Government members - Hear, hear.

MOTION

Attendance of Legislative Council Ministers at Question Time

Mr STREET (Leader of the House) (by leave) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That pursuant to the provisions of House of Assembly Standing Order No.50, a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting that the Legislative Council give leave for any member of the Legislative Council who is a minister of the Crown to attend the House of Assembly so as to respond specifically to questions without notice, seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

PETITION

Masks in Health and Care Settings - Reinstatement

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I have the honour to be the bearer of an e-petition signed by approximately 961 citizens of Tasmania praying for the reinstating of masking requirements in medical settings and services for vulnerable people.

Petition received.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Greyhound Industry - End Taxpayer Subsidy

Ms Ogilvie tabled the response to a petition by **Ms O'Connor** on 14 June 2022:

- Petition No. 98 - See Appendix 1 on page 116.

TABLED PAPERS

Subordinate Legislation Committee

Mr Wood tabled the report of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation's scrutiny of notices issued under the COVID-19 Disease Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, report no. 20.

Report received.

Estimates Committee B - Additional Information

Mr Wood tabled additional information provided to Estimates Committee B by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation, Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Racing.

SPEAKER'S WARRANT

Deputy Chairs of Committees - Appointment

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, pursuant to standing order 14, I hereby nominate Mrs Lara Alexander and Mr Simon Wood to act as Deputy Chairs of Committees in the absence of, or when requested so to do, by the Chair of Committees.

ACTS ENUMERATION BILL 2022 (No. 21) (pro forma)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Rockliff and read the first time.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Opening of the Third Session of the Fiftieth Parliament

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I have to report that the House has this day been to the Legislative Council Chamber where Her Excellency's Commissioners declared the Third Session of the Fiftieth Parliament open.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Public Accounts Committee - Resignation of Mr Felix Ellis

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I have received the following communications from Her Excellency the Governor:

Government House,
Hobart, Tasmania

29 July 2022

The Honourable Mark Shelton MP
Speaker of the House of Assembly,
Parliament House,
Hobart TAS 7000.

Dear Mr Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that on 29 July 2022, the Honourable Felix Ellis MP tendered his resignation as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts, effective from 25 July 2022. I have enclosed a copy of Mr Ellis' letter of resignation.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Baker,
Governor.

Public Works Committee - Resignation of Mr Felix Ellis

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable members, I have received the following communications from Her Excellency the Governor:

Government House,
Hobart, Tasmania

29 July 2022

The Honourable Mark Shelton MP
Speaker of the House of Assembly,
Parliament House,
Hobart TAS 7000.

Dear Mr Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that on 5 August 2022, the Honourable Felix Ellis MP tendered his resignation as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, effective from 25 July 2022. I have enclosed a copy of Mr Ellis' letter of resignation.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Baker,
Governor.

Subordinate Legislation Committee - Resignation of Mrs Lara Alexander

Mr SPEAKER - Further, I have received the following communication from Her Excellency the Governor:

Government House,
Hobart, Tasmania.

15 August 2022

Honourable Mark Shelton MP
Speaker of the House of Assembly,
Parliament House, Hobart,
Tasmania, 7000.

Dear Mr Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 August 2022, Mrs Lara Alexander MP tendered her resignation as a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation. I have enclosed a copy of Mrs Alexander's letter of resignation.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Baker,
Governor.

MOTION

Question Time

[11.27 a.m.]

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

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent -

- (a) the debate of any question before the Chair at 1 p.m. from standing adjourned until the conclusion of question time as provided hereunder; and
- (b) question time from occurring at 2.30 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Resumption of Proceedings on Bills

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

That the following motion for the resumption of proceedings on bills be agreed to:

Resumption of Proceedings on Bills

- (1) That in accordance with Standing Order 248, the proceedings of the:
Safe Climate (Bill No. 16 of 2021);

Cable Car (kunanyi/Mount Wellington) Facilitation Repeal (Bill No. 17 of 2021);

Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Wellington Park Management Trust Veto) (Bill No. 18 of 2021);

Criminal Code Amendment (Misconduct in Public Office) (Bill No. 19 of 2021);

House of Assembly Restoration (Bill No. 20 of 2021);

Public Interest Disclosures (Members of Parliament) (Bill No. 22 of 2021);

Wildlife (Protection of Native Duck Species) (Bill No. 23 of 2021);

Cat Management Amendment (Mandatory Confinement) (Bill No. 24 of 2021);

Environmental Management and Pollution Control Amendment (EPA Independence) (Bill No. 25 of 2021);

Right to Information Amendment (Bill No. 29 of 2021);

Residential Tenancy (Rental Market Reform) Amendment (Bill No. 30 of 2021);

Right to Information Amendment (Public Protected Areas) (Bill No. 31 of 2021);

Nature Conservation Amendment (Brushy Creek Conservation Area) (Bill No. 41 of 2021);

Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment (Exhibition of Amended Applications) (Bill No. 62 of 2021);

Climate Change (State Action) Amendment (Bill No. 63 of 2021);

Traffic Amendment (Electronic Billboards) (Bill No. 5);

Family Violence Reforms (Bill No. 10);

Electricity Safety (Bill No. 11); Roads and Jetties Amendment (Bill No. 12);

Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Bill No. 19);

Vehicle and Traffic Amendment (Driver Distraction and Speed Enforcement) (Bill No. 20);

Electoral Disclosure and Funding (Bill No. 25);

Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Bill No. 26);

Occupational Licensing (Automatic Mutual Recognition
Consequential Amendments) (Bill No.27);

Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Bill No. 29);

Retail Leases (Bill No.30);

Waste and Resource Recovery Amendment (Single-Use Plastics)
(Bill No. 31);

Sentencing Amendment (Mandatory Sentencing) (Bill No. 32);

Carer Recognition (Bill No. 33); and

Electricity Supply Industry (Price Cap) (Bill No. 34)

which were interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament on 1 August 2022, be resumed at the stage at which they were so interrupted

- (2) A Message be transmitted to the Legislative Council requesting that the proceedings of the -

Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill (No. 15)

which were interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament on 1 August 2022, be resumed at the stage at which they were so interrupted.

Very briefly, this will reinstate all of the bills that were laid upon the Table - government business, Opposition, Greens and private members' business. I have noticed there has already been tabling of motions so I take it that everybody understands we were not able to reinstate the notice paper and any debate on motions that members want to take forward, they need to retable, which I see is already happening.

[11.28 a.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the Leader of the House for keeping us up to date and informed with his approach to the resumption of parliament's opening session.

I welcome Mr Young to the parliament and I am looking forward to working with him. I had an enjoyable experience working with him when he was a candidate for the federal election a few years ago. I know he has a lot of respect within the community and I look forward to working with him as a new member.

Likewise, I know that some of my colleagues will want to speak about former member Jacqui Petrusma as well. I pass on our high regard for her and her hard work in the electorate,

particularly in some of those portfolios that we all know and heard how passionate she was about. Unfortunately, however, her resignation meant that we had to be prorogued and we are here on this motion as put by the Leader in regard to the way the parliament will work today.

We are pleased the Government has decided to hold question time, as it had not in the past. If the Government is planning to prorogue the parliament regularly, as it has been, it would be good that we could continue to hold question time on the first day back because in previous iterations of proroguing parliament we had not been able to properly scrutinise the Government in the first couple of days.

This is the first time since 1981 - over 40 years - that the parliament has had to be prorogued twice for non-procedural reasons, such as an election or the end of the calendar year, as parliament used to do it. It is quite a significant issue and a big deal that the Premier has had to do that, and it was interesting that he decided to blame that on Labor for wanting to keep down the cost of living for Tasmanians. What an extraordinary statement from the Premier, that it was not due to the chaos and dysfunction of his Government, the fact that he lost another member of his caucus. More than a quarter of his caucus has now resigned since the election last year.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, order.

Mr WINTER - He has a 'fresh team', Mr Speaker. The last time we prorogued he said that this was 'the best team ever'; he said this was the best team he had ever seen in the parliament. I do not know what he thinks about this one. Is it even better than the last one?

We have lost Adam Brooks, Sarah Courtney, Peter Gutwein, and Jacquie Petrusma. We still have questions remaining about former minister Jane Howlett and her resignation. It was interesting that he did not announce her returning to the portfolio that she so covets - the racing portfolio - that she has been campaigning on. It makes you wonder why she still has not been reinstated to that portfolio even though she has been out campaigning for it. She clearly wants it. She is ready to go, Premier. Why was she not reinstated? I am sure we will find out. She is doing work in the electorate, the Attorney-General says.

Mr Speaker, what the Premier - if he was being honest - would have said is that he was worried about Labor successfully capping the prices for Tasmanian electricity bills. He was worried that if we had been here last week, we would have done our job. We would have done what his party took to the last election, and the election before. He was concerned about Labor doing our job. Our Leader offered confidence and supply, but we will not commit to not doing our job.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order.

Mr WINTER - We were asked to provide a pair for someone who was not here. We were not sure who the member was supposed to be pairing with, but the Premier -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order. Treasurer, order.

To all members, this is a debate about proroguing, and so on. I expect as we are dealing with politics that you have made your point and we move on now and talk about the issue of the proroguing and get back to the subject. It is not a free-for-all debate. We need to limit that and be mindful of it. I am sure there will be plenty of points made in the future.

Mr WINTER - Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are talking about the reasons for the proroguing of parliament. It was the Premier himself who said he did not want to deal with Labor's price cap bill and that is why the parliament had to be prorogued. That is what the Government said. It said to Tasmanians that doing this parliament's job of dealing with the cost of living and easing the burden on Tasmanian households was too much for them to bear, and they would rather not turn up to work.

We were ready to work. We were here again last week, but the Premier was too weak to arrive at parliament and debate the issue. All we wanted to do - the only thing we are proposing - is a bill that they themselves tabled, debated and supported four years ago. That is all we asked them to do. All the reasons for supporting Tasmanian households during a cost of living crisis are as apparent, as important - in fact, more important today than they were in 2018. CPI is at 6.5 per cent. That is a situation where, instead of being here and doing our job debating the issues, the Premier was too weak to turn up. That is where we got to.

Tasmanians are choosing between heating and eating at the moment. This is a very serious crisis. We have falling real wages and bills going up and up because of this Government's refusal to act in the best interests of households. They are not delivering, they are not getting the basics right and the basics of the cost of living crisis that is engulfing Tasmania at the moment and this Government does not appear to be aware or acknowledge that it is really happening. Tasmanians deserve better than a Premier and a Government that do not turn up to work, that do not get the basics right. Their weakness is continuing to allow this parliament to not do its job.

[11.35 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, it is genuinely good to see everyone again. Certainly, from the Greens' point of view, we were disappointed that parliament was prorogued. We very much enjoy being parliamentary members.

I listened with interest to Mr Winter's contribution and it sounded to me like you have taken our vote on your energy bill for granted. You assumed that we would help you vote it through, which I thought was interesting because we have not had that discussion.

We welcome Mr Young to the parliament. We look forward to hearing his inaugural speech and seeing what contribution he can make to this place.

On behalf of Dr Woodruff and myself, I express real regret that minister Petrusma resigned. I regard Jacquie as one of the hardest-working and most decent members of government or former members of government. Her resignation is a real loss to this place and I am sure the Premier feels that quite keenly.

I acknowledge Mr Ellis has been elevated to the ministry and we have some questions that we would like to have answered about that, but this is not a 'fresh' Government or a fresh

Cabinet. It is about as fresh as week-old white bread, Mr Speaker. It is not fresh. It is stale and what Tasmanians want to know is that this Premier will lead from the front and do the right thing. We acknowledge, in the Greens, Mr Rockliff's decency and his desire to be seen as a good, progressive Premier. We also acknowledge he has some baggage in his Cabinet that may hold him back from being able to do that. We encourage minister Rockliff, the Premier, to exercise his power and make sure that his agenda, which is likely to be more fair-minded, prevails because he is the Premier, after all.

Over the break, it was only reinforced to us how important it is that the House of Assembly's numbers are restored. As Mr Winter said, we have lost Adam Brooks, Sarah Courtney, Peter Gutwein and Jane Howlett from the ministry and now, Jacquie Petrusma, and it is very regrettable. Some of those resignations have come about because of the workload strain. I was listening to the Premier read out the portfolios again and it was Mr Jaensch's that struck me: a minister who carries education, schools, children and youth, environment, parks, Aboriginal affairs; each of those portfolios on their own is a full-time job.

When the House of Assembly restoration bill is tabled by the Premier - noting that we have one on the table that is being reinstated - we encourage all our colleagues in this place not to play silly buggers with it and just to get on with making sure that at the next state election Tasmanians are electing seven members in each of the five electorates, that they are electing a deeper talent pool, and that they are voting for better representation and stronger governance. That is what restoration of the numbers in the House of Assembly will bring. Hopefully, we will never have another term of the Tasmanian Parliament like this one, where you have ministers dropping like flies and inexperienced people like Mr Ellis being given very weighty and important portfolios.

I note that we are today, in this particular part of the Opening of Parliament Order of Business, reinstating the bills. I am so proud to say that by my count, 14 of the bills that have been reinstated are Greens' bills, as we take our job in here as legislators and activists for reform extremely seriously.

I have just flagged with Mr Street - because I have not had a chance to do so yet - that as you would expect, when we move on to the sessional orders we will be seeking to have Dorothy Dixers eliminated from question time and to have time limits on questions and answers. It is the same amendment we had on the last debate of parliament's proroguing. We think it would have the strong support of the people of Tasmania who see Dorothy Dixers as self-promoting rubbish. Those who watch some of the answers that come from ministers that go to six, seven and eight minutes in length, know it is a waste of parliament's time.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Sessional Orders

[11.41 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move the motion for the sessional orders as circulated:

That for the remainder of this Session the following Sessional Orders be adopted:

- (1) After Standing Order 18, insert the following Sessional Order:

"18A Extension of Day's Sitting

- (1) A Minister may, at any time, but not so as to interrupt another Member while speaking, move without leave and without notice - 'That for this day's sitting, the House shall not stand adjourned at Six o'clock p.m. and that the House continue to sit past Six o'clock p.m.'
 - (2) Such motion supersedes the Main Question, if any, before the Chair.
 - (3) The Question of the extension of the day's sitting may not be amended and debate thereon shall not be allowed for more than twenty minutes, and in speaking thereon, no Member may exceed five minutes.
 - (4) Upon the resolution of the Question of the extension of the day's sitting, Debate on the Main Question, if any, shall resume as if uninterrupted.'
- (2) In Standing Order 22, leave out "past and present", and insert instead, "past, present and emerging".
- (3) In Standing Order 40, leave out paragraph (a), and insert the following new paragraphs:
- "(a) Acknowledgement of Traditional People;
- (aa) Prayers and Reflection;"
- (4) In Standing Order 42, leave out all the words after "Unless otherwise ordered", and insert instead:
- "(a) Private Members Business will have priority from 2.30 p.m. till 6.00 p.m. on Wednesdays.
- (b) Private Members Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following weekly rotations -

WEEK ONE

2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Government Private Members
3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Opposition Members
5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	Greens Members

WEEK TWO

2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Greens Members
3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.	Opposition Members
5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.	Government Private Members

- (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) and the weekly rotations prescribed in paragraph (b) -

- (i) the Independent Member for Clark, may, once in every second rotation of 'Week One'; and
- (ii) the Independent Member for Franklin, may, once in every second rotation of 'Week Two',

call on an item of Private Members' Business at Noon to 1.00 p.m.

- (d) the Member calling on an item in Private Members' Business may, in doing so, state that at the conclusion of that time for the debate on that day, the matter be voted upon.
- (e) at the commencement of the time allocated for a group's Private Members' Business, the Whip or any other Member of that group, may indicate to the Speaker that its time be waived, in which case, the House shall immediately proceed with Government Business for that allocation of time."

- (5) Standing Order 46 be suspended.

- (6) After Standing Order 48, the following Sessional Order is inserted:

"48A Minimum number of Questions

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that a minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be seven by the Opposition, four by the Government Private Members, two by Members of the Greens, and one by each Independent Member, if such Members seek the call."

- (7) In Standing Order 76, after paragraph (3), by adding the following new paragraph:

- "(4) On Tuesdays and Wednesdays priority shall be given to the Opposition to raise a Matter of Public Importance and on Thursdays priority shall be given to Members other than the

Opposition. Government Private Members shall only be given priority on every third sitting week."

(8) In Standing Order 129, by adding the following new paragraph:

"(2) A Member who has moved a substantive motion, or has moved an Order of the Day, may move the adjournment of the debate pursuant to paragraph (1), but such motion shall not be taken to be the 'reply' prescribed by Standing Order 128."

(9) In Standing Order 139:

(a) by leaving out "of the House or"; and

(b) by leaving out "a quarter of an hour", and insert instead, "fifteen minutes".

Just very briefly, the sessional orders as distributed are identical to those agreed in the last session of parliament aside from one item, which is the order in which the independent members can call their private members' time. Prior to proroguing, Ms Johnston and Mr O'Byrne would have had their private members' time this week and next, so we have adjusted the sessional orders to maintain that, so Ms Johnston will have private members' time from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. tomorrow and Mr O'Byrne will have from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. next Wednesday.

My office also took a couple of questions I think from the Greens - I do not want to verbal them but I am pretty sure it was from the Greens' office - about what effect the independent members' private members' time would have on everybody else's time. Ms Johnston and Mr O'Byrne's private members' time comes out of government business so has no effect on Labor, the Greens or the Government's private members' time.

[11.42 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, like most Tasmanians, we would like to see an end to Dorothy Dix questions. Therefore, I move -

That clause 6 of the motion be amended by omitting everything after the words 'the following' and substituting -

'Sessional Orders be inserted -

48A - Minimum number of Questions

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 47, the Speaker shall ensure that the minimum of questions without notice to be asked shall be eight by the Opposition, three by Members of the Greens, and two by each Independent Member if such Members seek the call.

48B - Maximum time for Questions and answers

Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 48, the Speaker shall ensure the time taken to ask a Question does not exceed one minute, and the time taken to answer a Question does not exceed four minutes.'

Members will recall that Mr Street's predecessor as Leader of Government Business actively entertained placing time limits on questions and answers, but it became a trade-off that ultimately the House did not want. When you look at Dorothy Dix questions, we know that the very few members of the government backbench there are get two questions each, which is more than other members in this place have, whether they be the official Opposition or the Greens or the crossbench. It is an insult to democracy and an insult to the people who voted us into this place. It serves no purpose other than for the Government to have some padding in question time to take the heat off the Premier and ministers from actual questions, and give the government of the day an opportunity to self-promote. This Government has all the machinery of a communications unit, multiple advisers, social media channels and an advertising budget, and uses this place in question time to try to persuade people it is absolutely terrific.

We want to see Dorothy Dix questions gone. We know that Labor struggles to support this because Labor will be in government again one day and they want Dorothy Dix questions, but this is an attempt again to do the right thing by the people of Tasmania.

I commend the amendments to the House. I think it would help the House to have an explanation from the Leader of the House as to why the microscopic backbench in government is given two questions, while the Greens and the crossbench members are lucky to get a question each. In particular, time limits on questions and answers are good for this whole place, because now we have extra questions in question time because we have independents or a Labor independent in here.

Question time now regularly blows out, Mr Speaker - I am sure you have noticed this - to 11.20, or so and sometimes close to 11.30, so if we had some time limits on questions as they do in the Australian Parliament it would serve the people who put us here very well. If you cannot get a message out in four minutes you need to go back to communication school.

Mr Ellis - I worry about your one-minute questions.

Ms O'CONNOR - I worry about you having portfolios that matter.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I commend our amendments to the House.

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, Ms O'Connor made the point that this is the same amendment that she moved last time. Our response is exactly the same as it was last time as well, which I am sure it will come as no surprise to Ms O'Connor. We will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms O'Connor - Why not? I asked you to explain why not.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'Connor - You call that debate?

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I do not know why the Leader of the Greens said we would struggle to support it; we supported it last time. We are happy to support you but would not want to say someone might support a motion or a bill.

Question time in this place could be much better. Our chief concern is trying to find ministers who will actually answer questions. Now Mr Ellis is on the front bench we look forward to seeing how he answers questions. Will he be a minister who answers questions or is he going to be someone who dutifully reads the brief in front of him and does not answer questions? That is a question for him that we will identify sooner rather than later, I suspect.

We will support this. Yes, Dorothy Dixers are an absolute waste of our time when used the way that this Government has been using them. We will support your amendment but as I said last time, we could do question time a lot better and it probably would involve yourself, the Leader of the House, me and potentially others sitting down and discussing how we might be able to do that.

Mr SPEAKER - I will make the point so that clarification is there that to raise the issue again within a 12-month period is against the Standing Orders - although we have been prorogued. I could have ruled it out of order but we have had this debate before, so in essence, which goes to your point of saving time, we need to get to the vote and get this behind us.

The House divided -

AYES 12

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

NOES 12

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

Mr SPEAKER - The result of the division is Ayes 12 and Noes 12. Therefore in accordance with standing order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Committee Appointments

[11.53 a.m.]

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House). - Mr Speaker, I move the motion, as circulated, to appoint members to committees.

Sessional Committees:

- (1) That the following members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses to manage the Library:

The Speaker; The Chair of Committees; Mrs Alexander; Dr Broad; Ms Dow; and Mr Young. (S.O. No. 323)

- (2) That the following members of this House be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee of both Houses (known as the House Committee) to control Parliament House and grounds, including catering for Parliament:

The Speaker; The Chair of Committees; and Mr Winter. (S.O. No. 323)

Public Accounts Committee:

That Mrs Alexander be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts in accordance with the provisions of section 2 subsection (2) of the Public Accounts Committee Act 1970 (No. 54).

Public Works Committee:

That Mr Wood be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works in accordance with section 3, subsection (2) of the Public Works Committee Act 1914 (No. 32).

Subordinate Legislation Committee:

That Mr Young be appointed to serve on the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation in accordance with section 3 of the Subordinate Legislation Committee Act 1969 (No. 44).

I welcome Mr Young to the House, to the Franklin electorate and to the Library and Subordinate Legislation committees.

Motion agreed to.

HOMES TASMANIA BILL 2022 (No. 35)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.

HOMES TASMANIA (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2022 (No. 36)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.

Motion agreed to.

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Restoring the Size of the Membership of the House of Assembly

Mr Rockliff tabled a response to a petition presented by **Ms O'Connor** on 25 May 2022:

- Petition No. 7 - See Appendix 2 on page 118.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Commission of Inquiry - Update on Interim Response

[11.56 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, the safety of children and young people should not be an expectation but a fundamental human right. Today, I wish to update the House regarding the actions the Tasmanian Government is taking to ensure this right, and keep children and young people safe.

Our Government established the Commission of Inquiry to bring to light the mistakes and failings that have occurred across multiple governments of all colours and persuasions to ensure that we hear, learn and act so that we never repeat the mistakes of the past.

In May this year, I announced some immediate actions our Government would take in response to the first two weeks of the Commission of Inquiry hearings. While the commission will hand its findings down in May next year, the mandate for change is clear and we are not wasting any time in bringing about change to keep Tasmanian children and young people safe, and to better support victims/survivors of abuse.

I apologise to all victims and survivors of abuse that occurred in government institutions. I am deeply sorry for the past failings of our government institutions and I want to acknowledge the lasting, ongoing negative impact these failings have had on victims/survivors. As I have

previously said, there will be a formal apology made on behalf of parliament once the commission concludes its proceedings.

I wholeheartedly express my gratitude to all victims/survivors who have come forward to the commission, as well as those in the State Service who have come forward to share their views on how things can still improve. I know that it has not been easy and I want to recognise your courage. Please be assured, we are listening, the Government is listening, I am listening. We believe you and, most importantly, we are acting.

There is no doubt that a culture of safety and wellbeing starts with leadership and accountability. The National Principles of Child Safe Organisations identify the importance of leadership from the top as necessary to build a culture where children and young people are valued, and every person is committed to child safety and wellbeing. Our keeping children safe priority, which I have previously announced, will guide government activity via a coordinated whole-of-government approach and will provide clear responsibilities for agencies in delivering results.

It is important that we have systems and processes in place to drive progress on these actions and maintain accountability while delivering these changes. A framework will be developed for regular reporting to keep Tasmanians informed about the Government's progress towards targets.

For now, under the keeping children safe priority, a new performance instrument has been developed and will be included in Heads of Agency performance agreements to improve accountability and make sure child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture across our government departments. This performance instrument will be used to monitor our overarching performance against the keeping children safe priorities, including our progress against the interim response actions I referred to today. I have been meeting with secretaries to outline my expectations for shared responsibilities and accountability.

To ensure we have a strong oversight and co-ordination on these actions and deliver on much needed reform, we have established the Keeping Children Safe Working Group, which reports to our Secretaries Board. The working group comprises deputy secretary representation from across Government and plays an important role in not just overseeing this work but also providing authoritative advice to Government.

Today, together with the Attorney-General, I am proud to release the project plan for developing and implementing a Child and Youth Safe Organisations framework in Tasmania. A key recommendation of the royal commission was the establishment of a legislative framework for complying with the child safety standards and a reportable conduct scheme. This project plan accelerates the development of a comprehensive and integrated framework to support child safety for Tasmanian children and young people.

A Child and Youth Safe Organisations framework will be overseen by a dedicated and independent oversight and regulation body, and will strengthen the existing systemic response to all forms of child abuse in Tasmania. A framework such as this is large and complex. The range of organisations, services, businesses, clubs and associations required to comply with the framework will be wide-ranging, and many organisations will not have been regulated in this way before.

Therefore, a comprehensive consultation strategy has been developed to ensure that all stakeholders and affected sectors have a voice in the development of the framework, including Tasmanian Aboriginal community organisations, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, groups and organisations that represent the vulnerable cohorts in our communities, children and young people themselves, and people with lived-experience of child sexual abuse in institutional settings and their advocates. It is important we hear and listen to all voices, and that all parts of the community understand our commitment.

A Child and Youth Safe Organisations Bill which outlines a framework for compliance with the Child and Youth Safe standards is due for public consultation in September ahead of tabling. A project to develop and implement the framework is expected to go for three years. The indicative commencement date of the framework is 1 January 2024, and it is expected there will be phased implementation across the range of organisations required to comply.

I commend and thank the Attorney-General and the project team for their hard work on developing this plan for significant regulatory reform for Tasmania that will ensure Tasmanian organisations are safe for children and young people.

Mr Speaker, young Tasmanians in and out of home care must be safe, secure, and supported. Today, together with the Minister for Education, Children and Youth, Roger Jaensch, I am releasing the Tasmanian Out of Home Care Standards. In addition, I am pleased to provide an update on our government's commitment to development of a Tasmanian Out of Home Care Accreditation Framework and Carers Register. The standards establish clear benchmarks and indicators of compliance to a standard of care expected to ensure children and young people are nurtured, feel loved, are safe, and have a strong sense of wellbeing.

The standards will apply to all government and non-government providers that deliver out-of-home care services. The release of these standards is an important first step towards developing a Tasmanian Out of Home Care Accreditation Framework. There are eight standards in total, with six standards relating to children and young people's wellbeing that reflect the domains of our Tasmanian child and youth wellbeing framework. The final two standards relate to both out-of-home care providers, organisations, and the Child Safety Service, being Child and Youth Safety Organisations.

Each standard includes indicators of compliance designed to describe measures that support quality service provision against the standard. To begin with, the standards will be used as a guide for out-of-home care providers, enabling them to become familiar with the requirements of the Tasmanian Accreditation Framework, build capacity and readiness and assess their current service delivery to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. Once the accreditation framework is in place, all future contracts between providers and the Tasmanian Government will reference the standards.

This is just the first step our government is taking to improve out-of-home care in Tasmania. This is part of the Government's broader commitment to have staged roll-out of the Tasmanian Out of Home Care Accreditation Scheme and Carers Register.

Stage 1, taking place now over 2022 to 2023 includes today's release of the standards, along with determining the appropriate oversight body for this work and reviewing the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997. Stage 1 will include comprehensive

stakeholder consultation, including working closely with the sector to build readiness and capacity.

Stage 2 will include introduction of the Tasmanian Out of Home Care Accreditation Framework and establishment of the oversight and regulatory function for this framework. This approach will strengthen the culture of child safety across the Tasmanian Government. The establishment of the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People in the new Department for Education, Children and Young People provides further opportunity to drive long-term cultural change and continuous improvement across the department and streamline safeguarding functions relating to children and young people.

I can also share that the drafting of regulations and orders to expand the scope of regulated activities under the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Scheme is under way. This will mean that for certain occupations and services, registration to work with vulnerable people will become a mandatory requirement for employment: for example, for all health practitioners.

These changes will be progressed alongside an expansion of the scheme to cover further categories of vulnerable adults, including older people, people with a disability and people subject to certain mental health or guardianship orders. It is expected the draft regulations and orders to give effect to these changes will be released for community consultation by the last quarter of the year.

Progress is also being made on draft legislation to create a new crime of 'failing to protect a child or young person' for people not in authority within an organisation who fail to safeguard a child from substantial risk of sexual abuse by an adult associated with that organisation. We are also making amendments to the Criminal Code to introduce a presumption that children under the age of 17 cannot consent to sexual intercourse when a person is in a position of authority over them. The drafting of this legislation has commenced and both are on track to be introduced before the end of this year.

The State Service Management Office has commenced its review of employment directions administered under the State Service Act 2000, including Employment Direction No. 5, which relates to procedures for the investigation and determination whether an employee has breached the Code of Conduct referred to as an ED5. This includes the adequacy of ED5 to deal with matters involving child abuse and neglect perpetrated by State Service employees. To complement this review, we are also working on creating a shared capability for the investigation of serious Code of Conduct breaches across the State Service.

We have also committed to making trauma-informed practice and professional learning mandatory for investigators and other state servants involved in ED5 investigation processes, and recruitment has commenced to bring people in to lead this work. Furthermore, we have now established a central register of employees who have been terminated as a result of an ED5 investigation. Agencies will check the register prior to employing people in the State Service as part of their due diligence in recruitment processes.

We are also working to introduce a centralised, consistent training provision to up-skill Right to Information practitioners across Tasmanian State Service agencies. The recruitment of a suitably qualified person to lead this project is under way. This work will help to ensure that practices across our departments will uphold our Government's commitment to improving

the openness and accountability of Government decision-making. We recognise that people who have experienced trauma have unique needs, and understand that the way employees respond to someone who is disclosing current or historical child sexual abuse can have a significant impact on their experience. It is critical that our State Service employees can respond sensitively and appropriately to help victims/survivors feel safe and to ensure that their trauma is not compounded.

We have committed to making training on trauma-informed approaches and practice available across the State Service and I can share that the Tasmanian Training Consortium has commenced work in developing a detailed project scope which will determine the timelines associated with key milestones for rolling out this training.

Work is also under way to allocate the first tranche of funding to appoint a Safeguarding Officer in every Tasmanian Government school by the end of 2022. This has been delivered in consultation and partnership with the schools and principals to ensure the model can operate effectively within the complexities of providing holistic and multi-faceted support to children and young people across a range of school environments.

We also announced our intention to add an additional four full-time equivalent senior support staff - two psychologists and two social workers - to increase support for children and young people affected by child sexual abuse, including harmful sexual behaviours and an additional eight full-time-equivalent psychologists and eight full-time-equivalent social workers to further support student wellbeing and safety. Advertising for these positions is expected to commence before the end of the year.

To support the transition of Children, Youth and Families to the new Department of Education, Children and Young People, discussions commenced with Adjunct Professor Maria Harries in early July to consider the evidence provided during the out-of-home care hearings of the commission of inquiry against the current policies and practices of both the advice and referral line and Child Safety Service. Adjunct Professor Harries will provide advice on any immediate actions as well as any additional actions or adjustments to existing reform plans to improve the safety of children in out-of-home care.

Mr Speaker, the reform journey for the Youth Justice Services also continues, including ongoing implementation of reforming Tasmania's Youth Justice System Implementation Plan and the completion of the functional design brief for the facilities replacing Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Critical to progressing these high-priority tasks is the recent commencement of Chris Simcock as the executive director of Youth Justice Reform, who holds substantial credentials in driving evidence-based practice in therapeutic youth justice.

Of similar importance is the new independent chair of the Youth Justice Reform Steering Committee, Ms Shan Tennent whose credentials including her years as a Supreme Court judge and her passionate interest in youth justice will greatly inform and strengthen the governance of youth justice reform in Tasmania over this critical period.

To support the broader transition of this function to the new department, engagement has commenced with the Australian Childhood Foundation and the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care to provide an independent authority of view on the safety for young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre and some guidance on any actions we could take now and during transition to improve the safety of the service for young people and staff.

Mr Speaker, the evidence given to the commission of inquiry in relation to the Launceston General Hospital was very confronting and highlighted the urgent need for a culture of accountable leadership in our hospitals. We announced a Child Safe Governance Review of the Launceston General Hospital and its human resources department which has a priority focus on the handling of serious misconduct such as institutional child sexual abuse. The review will make recommendations on matters including the hospital's organisational structure, management and leadership, and mandatory training including mandatory notifications and how to recognise grooming behaviour, with training sessions already under way.

The review continues to progress with the appointment of additional highly credentialed experts and staff and union representatives through an advisory panel to inform the review. This means the panel is now complete and the co-chairs have commenced informal meetings, with the first official meeting to be held on the 23 August to formally commence the review. While the commission of inquiry is still in progress, the review has been introduced to drive immediate change. Experts in child trauma, governance and hospital administration have been appointed to the Governance Advisory Panel which will inform the review. I thank Professor Erwin Loh, Adjunct Professor Anne-Maree Keenan, Robyn Burley and Adjunct Professor Maria Harries AM, for taking on these very important roles.

Professor Loh is a national chief medical officer and group general manager of clinical governance for St Vincent's Health Australia - the country's largest not-for-profit health and aged care provider. Prior to that he was the chief medical officer of Monash Health - Victoria's largest health service - and is qualified in both medicine and law with general and specialist registration as a medical practitioner.

Adjunct Professor Keenan is a highly respected health leader who has led significant healthcare reforms, workforce development changes, quality and safety review and statewide improvement initiatives. She held the position of chief nurse and midwifery officer and deputy chief executive officer at Safer Care Victoria for six years until July 2022.

Robyn Burley has had an extensive professional career in health workforce policy, strategy and education, including leading significant changes and improvements for the workforce of NSW Health for more than 15 years. She has experience in delivering strategies to address workforce shortages and cultural change initiatives.

Adjunct Professor Harries is a nationally and internationally recognised social work practitioner, researcher and scholar and has worked in the areas of child and family wellbeing, child protection, family violence and mental health in a career spanning 50 years.

The experts will be joined by Tasmania's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Tony Lawler who has also been appointed to the panel.

It is critical that staff have meaningful input into this review, and I can announce eight current staff with wide-ranging and significant experience: Catherine Graham, a clinical nurse consultant; Dr Lucy Reed, Director of Emergency Medicine; Ashleigh Miller, Assistant Director of Nursing in the North and North West; Paul Eagar, chaplain of the Tasmanian Health Service, Launceston General Hospital; Dr Emma-Jane McCrum, Senior Psychologist; Amanda Duncan, Registered Nurse; Sam Beattie, Nurse Unit Manager; and William Gordon, Registered

Nurse, have been appointed to the panel and I thank them for coming forward to nominate to serve in these very important roles on the panel.

Union representatives on the panel have also been finalised with Dr Helen McArdle of the Australian Medical Association, Emily Shepperd of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Tim Jacobson of the Health and Community Services Union and Thirza White of the Community and Public Sector Union appointed, and I also thank them for their time and input into the review. This follows the recent appointment of Professor Deborah Picone AO and Adjunct Professor Karen Crawshaw PSM as independent co-chairs of the panel, both bringing a wealth of important experience to their role as co-chairs.

It is very important that the experiences of victims/survivors are a key part of this review to ensure that their voice is heard and to ensure they are given the opportunity to provide their valuable input. That is why we have created an expert reference group which victims/survivors will be provided to participate in and provide advice to the review. The Child Safe Governance Review will report its recommendations to the Secretary by November 2022, with a commitment they will be implemented across the entire Department of Health.

Additionally, I am pleased to share that staff are now able to report matters relating to child sexual abuse to a centralised Complaints management Unit that has been established within the office of the Secretary of the Department of Health. This unit will ensure concerns do not need to be raised with the immediate supervisors or local management in order to be progressed. Furthermore the department is finalising a child safety and wellbeing framework, which sets out the definition of child safeguarding and children's right and establishes the governance for ongoing management of the national principles. The framework has been through a consultation process and the department expects to finalise it in early September.

Mr Speaker, the updates that I have outlined today provide a snapshot of a small number of the actions we have committed to implementing ahead of the commission of inquiry recommendations. This is important work, and while the need for change is urgent, it is essential these matters are given due time for careful planning and consultation so that we get this right. Some of the actions we have committed to involve significant reform; however, we are staunchly committed to this work and we are progressing implementation as a priority.

It is my vision to see real structural change that heralds a new era for Tasmania where the community has complete confidence in our commitment and ability to keep children safe when in the care of our institutions. I look forward to providing further updates on our progress towards these actions in due course. In closing I want to once again thank victims and survivors for having the courage to share their experiences, along with the state servants who have come forward in an effort to make things better for children and young people in Tasmania.

I want to again reiterate today that all state servants have my full support to come forward and shine a light on these matters. There is no more important task than helping to ensure that our system protects our most vulnerable.

[12.20 p.m.]

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

That the statement be noted.

Given the seriousness of the matters raised by the Premier in his address, we will take some further time to consider the detail.

However, in the time that is allowed for me to make a remark, I agree that there is no more serious responsibility for any of us than to ensure our children are safe. It is vitally important that we support the work that is required across government to make sure this happens. Unfortunately there have been failures. The commission of inquiry is bringing some of that to light, but there are also other examples that demonstrate we are failing our young people.

I want to speak briefly about a leaked report that shows the state's child safety system is crumbling. The leaked report that was reported in the *Mercury* shows that the state's stretched child protection system is crumbling, with more than 220 at-risk children unable to access a child safety officer because of a critical lack of staff. This was a very damning leaked internal report that demonstrates there are a number of vacancies across child safety, which is not a new problem for this Government. It has been an ongoing problem, a number of children were not allocated a worker, which puts those children at risk, and that is happening right now. It makes the work of those workers incredibly challenging and fundamentally calls into question the ability of the Government to perform its core functions, which includes keeping children safe.

A number of the initiatives the Premier outlined in his ministerial statement are worthy of further scrutiny, but there are a couple I want to touch on briefly. The royal commission and the work that was done there, which is a significant body of work and those recommendations have been known to the Government for some time. The commission of inquiry in one of its first hearings noted that there was a delay in progressing those recommendations and they asked why. We again ask the question - why? If there is nothing more important than the safety and wellbeing of our children, why is it taking so long to progress those recommendations from the royal commission?

The Premier speaks in his ministerial statement about the child and youth safe organisations bill and the need now for further consultation. There was a draft bill that went out for consultation in 2020. In the last term of government, there was a bill that went out for consultation that this Government still has not brought to this parliament, and now the Premier has announced more consultation rather than action, with three more years before a framework is developed and implemented. That work could have been done over the last two years to be implemented this year or next year, but instead it will take a further three years. That is a failure by this Government to get the basics right when it comes to keeping our children safe and making sure our organisations are operating safely.

There were also statements made by the Premier about expanding the scope of regulated activities under the registration to work with vulnerable people scheme. This is a matter we have interrogated through this parliament. The Government has made some changes but why is it taking so long to implement all the changes that were identified, particularly around the alarming information that came to light regarding Mr Griffin and his ability to engage in activities with young children, even after the police became aware of that, yet he maintained his working with vulnerable people check? Those problems should have been rectified already.

I note that the Premier has stated he is committed to making training on trauma-informed approaches and practices available across the State Service. That is very welcome news. We will ask whether that will be made compulsory. We think that is a very important step and it

should be, and it should also be expanded to members of parliament, particularly after the groaning affair that happened which was very offensive to victims/survivors. I have not seen any action taken by this Government to demonstrate their willingness to learn from that and to implement trauma-informed training across this Government and their ministers as a very real signal to show they are sorry and are committed to learning from that. We again ask the Premier to make sure trauma-informed training is provided to his Cabinet ministers.

There has been the abolition of the Department of Communities Tasmania. The Premier spoke in his statement about support for the transition of Children, Youth and Families to the new Department of Education, Children and Young People. We reiterate our position that we do think this is not the right move, nor do we think it is the right time. Without the findings of the commission of inquiry being known, which will not hand down its final report until May next year, we again call on the Government to halt that amalgamation of departments because the evidence we have seen from South Australia illustrates to us that it is not the right move.

If the commission of inquiry makes a recommendation to move back to the model we currently have after you have merged it and put staff through all that disruption and disrupted all of those services, that will be a complete waste of time and money, not to mention the impact that could have on our young people and their ability to access the services they need which we already know are chronically underfunded. We should not be wasting money on merging departments. We should be putting that money into delivering services. I urge the Government to think about that and put that on hold.

Finally, in the time I have left, I want to go to the commitment the Premier has given to providing more therapeutic care to young people in Ashley Youth Detention Centre and seek guidance on any actions that could be taken now and during the transition to improve the safety of the service for the young people and staff. Why has it taken so long? This is work that should have already been in place. The Premier and his department and the Government should have already been providing this support to the staff and young people at Ashley in light of everything we already know. The week the commission of inquiry is about to hear evidence about the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, this support cannot come soon enough for the staff and the young people there.

Time expired.

[12.27 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, there is no reason that a connected island community like ours cannot be the safest place in Australia for children and young people. I am sure every member in this House wants it to be so.

This is a very significant statement from the Premier that wraps up a number of necessary and, in a number of cases, long overdue reforms. I note that some of the initiatives have very loose time frames around them and we will explore that more with the Premier in the days and weeks ahead.

Any person here who has paid attention to the evidence given to the commission of inquiry will understand there is an urgency about the measures that have been detailed in the Premier's ministerial statement today. There has been a whole range of evidence which has been confronting, but perhaps the most shocking was what we heard a little over a month ago come out of the inquiry about the culture in the Launceston General Hospital that enabled a

paedophile to keep working there and keep harming children for many long years. We saw through the commission of inquiry questioning and the response of witnesses, whether they currently work in government or previously worked at the LGH, that there was a culture of not taking responsibility, a culture of cover-up and secrecy. It was one of the most shameful episodes that has been revealed through the commission of inquiry.

I also acknowledge the strength and courage of victims/survivors and acknowledge that the commission of inquiry can be a retraumatising process and for some an empowering process because it is the first time in a formal setting that victims/survivors have been given an opportunity to tell their truth unvarnished for all of us to hear and to respond. I express the deepest gratitude to whistleblowers from within the State Service who have come forward knowing the potential consequences to them and their employment, but they have come forward because it is the right thing to do.

There are a number of initiatives in the ministerial statement that we will take some time to consider. What is needed now, which the Commission of Inquiry has made clear and which has not been in place, to the detriment of children and young people, is a whole-of-government response. The secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet should know, on a day-to-day basis, what is happening with the implementation of the Child Safe Standards framework, what is happening with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, has a clear eye on the ED5 process and how it is responding to whistleblowers and to the safety of children and young people.

I note that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made the recommendation for a child safe organisations framework and reportable conduct scheme in 2016. It is now six years since that recommendation was made and it is clear from the Premier's ministerial statement that that framework and Reportable Conduct Scheme will not be finalised for another three years. This is exactly the evidence that Communities Tasmania secretary Ginna Webster gave to the Commission of Inquiry. Not good enough. We encourage the Premier to take a direct and managerial interest in the implementation of this particular recommendation and make sure it happens sooner.

We are pleased to see that there is progress being made on draft legislation to create a new crime for people in authority failing to protect a child or young person. Perhaps a Commission of Inquiry would not have been needed if that crime had already been in place. It is clear from the evidence to the inquiry that there were members of the State Service who knew exactly what was going on at the LGH and who were complicit in cover-up and enablement of a paedophile.

We are very pleased to see that there is going to be some improvements to the right to information process. I am currently in correspondence with the Premier about a right to information application we made to obtain public health advice on COVID-19 prevention strategies in health settings, education and other care settings. We were fobbed off by the RTI officer. I wrote back to the Premier: got a fob-off letter. We asked for that information to be disclosed and it still has not been disclosed. The Department of Health is the worst offender on right to information.

We remember Safe Pathways. We remember that journalist Camille Bianchi, whose podcast, *The Nurse*, perhaps did more than any other journalism to make sure we had a Commission of Inquiry. Her right to information application to the Department of Health took 22 months, and was only revealed after a Channel 7 news story. Not good enough.

We know that this Premier wants to be seen to lead a government of integrity and transparency. If you have right to information officers in your largest government agency who see it as their job to obstruct, it is going to be very difficult to achieve that necessary ambition.

We are very glad to see that victims/survivors will be part of an expert reference group as we move through a reform process. We are very impressed by the quality of the experts who will help to drive reform, and the quality of the people who have been appointed to make sure that the Launceston General Hospital is never again allowed to be a place that harbours those who harm children.

Time expired.

[12.34 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Attorney-General) - Mr Speaker, I reiterate the Premier's words. I know it has not been easy for victims/survivors, and indeed all of those involved in the Commission of Inquiry. I take this opportunity to thank my team from Justice, particularly the Child Abuse Royal Commission Response Unit, headed by Amber Mignot, for their incredible work.

In relation to victims/survivors, we believe you. Most importantly, this ministerial statement by the Premier shows that we are acting. That is why I am very proud today to be releasing our Government's plan for the development of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework for Tasmania. The plan outlines the current three-year project to design and implement the framework in close consultation with key partners and stakeholders.

Members have talked about three years being a long time but when they see the detail required and the number of people involved, I am hoping that they will understand this work has to be done thoroughly and extensively.

This project will deliver a comprehensive and integrated legislative framework for complying with the Child and Youth Safe Standards and a reportable conduct scheme in Tasmania. The framework will be overseen by a dedicated and independent oversight and regulation body which will be identified during the project and needs to be created. The development and implementation of the framework reflects our commitment to protecting our children and young people so that they can learn and develop, and grow up safely in Tasmania.

The project also shows significant progress towards implementation of key recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in relation to child-safe organisations, child-safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme. Of the 409 recommendations made by that royal commission, 306 related to the Tasmanian Government. Of these 306 recommendations, 206 have been completed, 92 have commenced, four are under consideration, and four have not been progressed. That shows the extensive work being done in relation to the royal commission and the support that has been provided by this House with the legislation I have taken through, both in terms of civil and criminal litigation, in response to that royal commission.

A comprehensive consultation and engagement strategy is being developed to ensure that all stakeholders and affected sectors have a voice in the development of the framework. This includes Tasmanian Aboriginal community organisations, peak bodies, industry associations, and community-based organisations and clubs, the Commissioner for Children and Young

People, children and young people themselves and, even more importantly, people with lived experience of child sexual abuse in institutional settings and their advocates.

We must never forget that the royal commission and this project have emerged from what are the result of decades of advocacy by people with lived experience and the professionals, families and friends who support them. I am grateful to victims/survivors of child sexual abuse for their selfless sharing of their experiences in the pursuit of a world where child safety and wellbeing is protected in all settings. I am confident that the early and ongoing engagement with stakeholders already underway will contribute to the readiness of various sectors for implementation of the framework. This implementation will also be supported by the development of necessary materials and resources to help organisations and others required to comply with the framework.

A draft bill remains on track to be tabled in November this year following a period of public consultation, to start next month. I encourage all Tasmanians with an interest in this legislation to take that opportunity to provide their feedback to ensure that the intent and desired scope of the legislation is appropriately captured within the bill.

Consultation on the bill in September will mark an important milestone in the progress towards the expected commencement of the framework from January 2024. I thank the staff of my department again for their diligent work on what will be a significant step towards strengthening the safety of children in Tasmania. This work is complex and detailed, and compliance will require significant work by the dedicated and independent oversight and regulation body.

As members will know, the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People scheme screens and monitors individuals who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children. Since 2014 our Government has taken a number of actions to expand and strengthen that scheme. This includes:

- the progressive implementation of a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People mandate to child-related services between 2014 and 2017.
- the agreement and adoption of the national standards for Working with Children Checks between 2018 and 2020.
- implementation of a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People mandate for NDIS-funded services between 2019 and 2021.

These steps have made children and vulnerable people safer by precluding those individuals who, by virtue of their past conduct pose an unacceptable risk, from engaging with children and vulnerable people in certain settings. Since the establishment of the registration to work with vulnerable people in 2014, 2204 people have had their application for registration rejected or have withdrawn their application following engagement with the RWVP unit regarding their past conduct. A further 397 have had their registration suspended, cancelled, or have surrendered their registration following engagement with the unit regarding conduct reported to the registrar.

As I have stated previously, we will be exploring options to expand the scope of regulated activities under this legislation to ensure our worker screening program for people who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children, is the best it can be. This will include

additional categories of vulnerable people, including older people, people with disability, and people subject to guardianship and mental health orders. My department is also reviewing the activities for which registration is required.

I am going to skip a bit to get to another part I would like to mention. I would like to update the House on the continuing work to review the structure and processes with respect to civil litigation and management of child sexual abuse claims. We are working with the Office of the Solicitor-General to identify any gaps in policy and training by undertaking a jurisdictional scan. Trauma-informed training has been undertaken by staff and training for the team, with additional sessions available for staff on an ongoing basis.

Mr Speaker, I do not have any time remaining, so I might finish what I wanted to add to my contribution on the adjournment.

Time expired.

[12.42 p.m.]

Mrs ALEXANDER (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the bravery and determination shown by victims/survivors who have participated in the commission of inquiry. As the Launceston General Hospital is located in Bass, I took a very close and deep interest in what happened. It is essential that we keep Tasmanian children and young people safe, and our Government is committed to learning from past mistakes and failures to implement real and lasting change. I acknowledge that it has been a very difficult period for the Tasmanian community, particularly with the confronting evidence heard during the commission of inquiry.

Personally, having listened many times to people who had to recount their trauma in other circumstances in relation to homelessness and other personal difficulties that have thrown them in horrible situations, I understand how difficult it is, because every single time you have a victim/survivor or a person impacted by a drama in their personal life, when they have to recount and bring back up all those memories and explain what they have been through, it is a harrowing experience. I totally understand that.

Our Government has made it clear that we are committed to accepting and implementing the recommendations of the commission of inquiry. Our Government is working with the Department of Health to consider how to respond sensitively and effectively to ensure that child safety is embedded within workplace culture in all our hospitals and health facilities.

I have wondered - and probably other people have shared the same puzzlement - how these situations have occurred and the culture around it. Surely, we ask ourselves sometimes, somewhere, somehow things may have transpired and been noticed. This is why it is important to create that culture where people will be talking and coming forward when situations such as these arise - and hopefully they never occur again.

The secretary and the Premier announced the Child Safe Governance Review of the Launceston General Hospital and human resources in early July to demonstrate that we will not wait to take action where it is clearly needed. The Child Safe Governance Review has been established to drive immediate change with the priority focus on the handling of serious misconduct such as institutional child sexual abuse. The review will make recommendations on matters, including the hospital's organisational structure, management and leadership, and mandatory training.

Adjunct Professor Debora Picone AO and Adjunct Professor Karen Crawshaw PSM have been appointed as independent co-chairs and will lead this critical work. As identified by the Premier, they both have outstanding reputations and experience.

The Governance Advisory Panel has recently been established in accordance with section 13 of the Tasmanian Health Services Act 2018. Members of the Governance Advisory Panel include a range of experts, staff and union representatives and the panel will soon begin formal meetings to discuss recommendations. I want to stress how important it is to have such a mix in the Governance Advisory Panel because each participant in that panel will bring their own set of experiences and views and it is very important to have that broad representation and bring everybody to that same table so the outcome is healthy for everybody.

It is very important that the experiences of victims/survivors are a key part of this review to ensure their view is heard and they have an opportunity to provide their valuable input. This is why the Government has created an expert reference group which victims/survivors will be invited to participate in and provide advice to the review.

To support the reform work, the Department of Health has established a dedicated child safe organisation project team to progress a number of key actions. Consultation has commenced on the department's Child Safety and Wellbeing Framework and staff training has begun which includes mandatory reporting responsibilities, responding to disclosures and identifying grooming behaviours. Specifically, grooming behaviours are very difficult to identify and they must be observed and acted upon straight away. This work is well underway to strengthen our systems, processes and training to safeguard children and young people in our care.

Department-wide communications are being circulated to all staff on a regular basis, with messages to encourage staff to report any concerns of child sexual abuse, either current or historical, of which they are aware. To further support people in coming forward, an online reporting form for the public and staff to raise concerns of inappropriate behaviour was implemented in July 2022. Support mechanisms are also in place for staff who may have been impacted by child sexual abuse or matters relating to the commission of inquiry.

We are confident that the outcomes of the commission of inquiry will ensure that we learn from the past and that we have the right practices and processes in place to protect our children and young people.

I acknowledge and thank staff, particularly those at the Launceston General Hospital, for their commitment to responding and contributing positively to cultural change. As I said earlier, cultural change is paramount to ensure that these things never take place again and that we set the right framework for people to fear to engage in such behaviour and think about it twice, as well as for other staff and people in that particular workplace, or any workplace, to signal if they come across and not be afraid of signalling if they observe such behaviours. Culture is very important.

Statement noted.

MESSAGES FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

[12.49 p.m.]

Mr SPEAKER - I am in receipt of the following messages from the Legislative Council which I will ask the Clerk of the House to read.

Joint House Committee - Membership

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council has made the following appointments to the joint committees of both Houses to control Parliament House and grounds and other matters:

the President, Ms Forrest and Ms Hiscutt.

Craig Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
16 August 2022.

Joint Committee to Manage the Parliamentary Library - Membership

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council has made the following appointments to the joint committees of both Houses to manage the Parliamentary Library:

the President, Ms Armitage, Ms Forrest, Ms Howlett, Ms Rattray and Mr Valentine.

Craig Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
16 August 2022.

Attendance of Legislative Council Ministers for Question Time

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council desires to inform the House of Assembly that it agrees to the request of the Assembly in its message dated 16 August 2022 and has granted leave to members of the Legislative Council who are ministers of the Crown to attend the House of Assembly if they think fit so as to respond specifically to questions without notice seeking information of the kind covered by the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly.

Craig Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
16 August 2022.

**Resumption of Legislation -
Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022 (No. 15)**

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council, having taken into consideration the message of the House of Assembly requesting the resumption of proceedings on the following bill of the last session, has agreed to resume proceedings on the said bill at the stage at which they were interrupted by the prorogation of parliament on 1 August 2022:

Police Offences Amendment (Workplace Protection) Bill 2022 (No. 15).

Craig Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
16 August 2022.

Joint Gender and Equality Committee

Mr Speaker,

The Legislative Council having this day agreed to the following resolution now transmits the same to the House of Assembly and to request its concurrence therein:

Resolved -

That a joint sessional gender and equality committee be appointed with power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House, and leave to adjourn from place to place to inquire into and report upon

- (1)(a) Any Bill referred to it by either House in order to examine gender and equality impacts and any such Bill so referred shall be reported upon within 10 sitting days of its referral;
- (b) Any matter related to gender and equality referred to it by either House; and
- (c) Any matter related to gender and equality, initiated by its own motion; and

- (2) That Notice of any own Motion Inquiry shall be reported to both Houses within two (2) sitting days of the Committee's Resolution; and
- (3) That the number of Members to serve on the said Committee on the part of the Legislative Council be four.

Craig Farrell,
President,
Legislative Council
16 August 2022.

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I move that the last mention message be taken into consideration tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORMS BILL 2022 (No. 10)

Second Reading

Resumed from 16 June 2022 (page 99).

[12.52 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I stand today to talk on the Family Violence Reform Bill 2022 and the importance to amend the bill. Violence of any nature is not acceptable and this legislation will tighten and strengthen the laws, sending a strong message that these offences will not be tolerated in Tasmania.

I acknowledge and honour the courage of all victims and survivors of family and sexual violence, as every Tasmanian has the right to live without any form of violence and abuse. This bill is also for those who assist victims and survivors of family sexual violence, a strong dedicated support team, helping our most vulnerable who are impacted by family and sexual violence.

This Government has a commitment to the community, and this bill will recognise that non-fatal strangulation, choking or suffocation is a significant form of violence. This said, I would also like to pay respect to those who have lived through non-fatal strangulation, choking, suffocation and stealthing. These family and sexual violence reforms will continue to ensure our laws are strong, robust and protect victims/survivors of family and sexual violence, especially holding perpetrators to account for severity of their crimes.

This bill makes amendments to the following acts: the Family Violence Act 2004, Community Protection Offending Reporting Act 2005, the Corrections Act 1997, Criminal Code Act 1924, Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021, Evidence Act 2001, Evidence (Children and Special Witnesses) Act 2001, the Firearms Act 1996, the Justices Act 1959 and finally the Sentencing Act 1997.

The bill removes section 54 from the Criminal Code Act 1924. This is a positive step towards making this legislation more consistent with other Tasmanian laws and meeting

expectations expected from the community. This bill implements Government commitments and includes additional miscellaneous amendments to improve the operation of the Family and Sexual Violence Legislation Framework.

The Liberal Government is committed to strengthening family violence laws by creating a new declaration for repeat family violence offenders. In the Safe Homes Families Communities Action Plan, we committed to introducing an ability for courts to mandate participation and behaviour change programs as part of a family violence order. The bill amends the Family Violence Act 2004 to establish a Serial Family Violence Perpetrator Declaration Framework. Dangerous Criminals and the High Risk Offenders Act 2021 and the Firearms Act 1996 are also amended to implement the framework.

This Tasmanian Government is committed to reducing family violence, acknowledging the significant impact family violence has on individuals and communities in Tasmania. The Serial Family Violence Perpetrator Declaration in this bill is intended to identify perpetrators who repeatedly commit family violence offences against a single partner or multiple and successive partners. It has been recognised that serial family violence presents a high risk of repeat and escalating offending. To address this, the bill aims to provide for a heightened justice response, proportionate to severity of the perpetrator's family violence offending, and assess risk of future family violence offending through the imposition of certain restrictions facilitating rehabilitation or providing for enhanced supervision.

Adding to this further, the bill provides that either the Supreme Court of Tasmania or the Magistrates Court may have a Serial Family Violence Perpetrator Declaration if:

- (1) the perpetrator is at least 18 years of age at the time the application is made.
- (2) has been convicted of at least two indictable family violence offences committed on separate days.
- (3) family violence offences committed on separate days if they are summary offences or a combination of summary and indictable.
- (4) being convicted of the crime of persistent family violence at section 170a of the Criminal Code.

With regard to making the declaration, the bill outlines the factors a court may have. This includes an ability to require a pre-sentence report to evaluate among other matters that may arise and the risk of offending, committing further family violence offences. It will come down to the discretion of the court as the duration of declaration, which could potentially be up to a maximum of five years, which will include an ability to review the declaration such as for its early discharge or extension by application.

Once the court makes a Serial Family Violence Perpetrator Declaration, it will be recorded on the perpetrator's criminal record. This, in turn, will remove their ability to:

- (1) possess a firearm.
- (2) be considered as an aggravated factor as sentencing for a subsequent family violence offence committed while the declaration is in force.
- (3) be considered in a parole application.

- (4) be considered if a high risk offender order is applied for.

Also, the court is directed to take further steps at sentencing to improve supervision and facilitate rehabilitation. There is an option of making a family violence order with electronic monitoring or behavioural change program participation conditions, or even both.

The bill amends the Family Violence Act to provide this option for the court to order rehabilitation program participation as a family violence order condition for a participation of a mandated behavioural change program. This amendment delivers on Action 25 of the Government's Safe Home Families Communities Action Plan for Family and Sexual Violence 2019-2022.

Mr Speaker, I shall quickly provide what the reform entails and the responsibilities of the court:

- (1) the reform will enable family violence perpetrators to participate in behavioural change programs. This will assist in addressing -

Sitting suspended from 1. p.m. to 2. 30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Cost of Living Pressures - Electricity Prices

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.30 p.m.]

In the middle of a cost of living crisis, with energy bills soaring, why are Tasmanians not paying Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The Liberal Government will always be the government that puts downward pressure on the cost of living. Power prices went up by 65 per cent under you, and Tasmanians have not forgotten it, Dr Broad. That is a fact.

We recognise the cost of living challenges for all Tasmanians, particularly for people on low and fixed incomes. That is why we are investing some \$17 million into a winter bill buster of \$180 to support Tasmanians in need.

I was at the Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre with our new member for Franklin, Mr Dean Young, and Mr Street. Mr Gregory Brown was there as well - a great candidate, fantastic for Pembroke. We announced a \$5 million investment to support cost of living pressures and support the organisations that help vulnerable Tasmanians doing it tough. That included some \$1.75 million investment into our neighbourhood houses - \$50 000 for each neighbourhood house to support their communities, and extension of the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) loan.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order no. 45 - relevance. It was a very simple question. I ask you to draw the minister's attention to the question, which was about why Tasmanians are not paying Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power, not diatribe about other matters.

Mr SPEAKER - I am sure the Premier will cast his mind to the essence of the question. He has already been talking about power prices. I will allow the Premier to continue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I will absolutely talk about power prices. I understand the challenges that Tasmanians are having, as well as the challenges with fuel prices. They are having an enormous impact on the cost of living. I would expect the member to pick up the phone, if Mr Cameron and Mr Sherry allow her to do so, to talk with the Prime Minister, and talk about extending the fuel subsidy. I have had a conversation with the Prime Minister about extending the fuel subsidy, because that is a major hit when it comes to Tasmanians' hip pockets and is having a huge impact on cost of living pressures.

What I will not be doing is bringing it into the parliament in some stunt like Mr Winter has done; a stunt which will not work and will cost \$50 million a year, which you cannot afford. When it comes to money and budgeting, we have false promises by those opposite. They promised some \$3.4 billion of election expenditure at the last election. Do you know how much he submitted to treasury for costings? \$7 million.

When it comes to budgeting, stunts like those opposite are clearly dealing with, their power cap stunt, they cannot be treated seriously. Tasmanians do not take you seriously at all.

We will always be the party that puts downward pressure on cost of living. You will always be the party that creates 65 per cent power increases when you were last in power. That is what Tasmanians remember, Mr Winter, and we will not let them forget it either.

Cost of Living Pressures - Electricity Prices

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.36 p.m.]

Will you admit that Tasmanians are not paying Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power because you broke your promise and abandoned your Tasmania First energy policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. What the Labor Party is not informing Tasmanians of is that our \$180 winter bill buster payment provides better outcomes for most concession customers than a supposed 2.5 per cent price cap.

We understand, as a government, the cost of living pressures Tasmanians are under. That is why we are being agile in our policy responses, such as the \$5 million we announced today for supporting community organisations that support vulnerable Tasmanians. That is why we are spending \$17 million on the winter bill buster, putting \$180 into the pockets of Tasmanians, supporting Tasmanians on low and fixed incomes. That is exactly what we are about.

What you are about, as your party has clearly said, has no substance whatsoever - so appalling when it comes to policy development and substance, in fact, that you have to be taken over by the federal executive, the federal party.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 45. It is a one-line question about power prices. The Premier strayed completely off the topic. I ask him to draw his attention to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - Again, I refer to the fact that the Premier is allowed some latitude when answering it. If we are talking about power prices and what the Government is doing, I need to allow the Premier to continue to answer his question. I take it that it is a very serious question because the Opposition has asked the second question. If it is that serious, I expect the Opposition to listen to the answer in silence and not continually interject.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Since 2014, in nominal terms, prices have increased some 5.8 per cent for residential customers and decreased some 5.8 per cent for small business customers. In real terms, electricity prices have decreased by 15.4 per cent for residential customers and decreased by 25 per cent for small business customers.

Last year households received a 7.11 per cent reduction in regulated electricity prices and small businesses received an 11 per cent drop. Since we formed government, regulated energy prices have decreased in real terms by 15.4 per cent for residential customers and decreased by 25 per cent for small business customers.

Ms White - Tasmanians are paying more than ever.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, you asked the question. I expect you to listen to the answer.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Tasmanians have not forgotten that when they were last in government, prices increased by a massive 65 per cent. We will always be the party that puts downward pressure on power prices.

Public Service Wage Rises

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.39 p.m.]

You must be aware of the enormous unsustainable pressure public sector workers across agencies such as health, education and child safety face each day. You know positions go unfilled for months, stress leave claims are increasing, and we are losing some of our most talented and dedicated workers to better jobs on better pay in mainland states and overseas. With cost of living and housing costs soaring, Tasmania is also losing its competitive advantage in attracting public servants from interstate.

At lunchtime today, the Community and Public Sector Union put forward a sensible cohesive plan to better support, attract and retain the public sector workers Tasmanians need now and in the future.

Premier, we heard that the CPSU and its members meet only brick walls when they offer solutions and ask to talk. Why will you not sit down with union representatives of public sector workers to better support and strengthen the State Service?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. I will begin by thanking all our very hard-working public service across all departments for the work they have undertaken on behalf of all Tasmanians, particularly in the challenging times as we have had in recent years with the pandemic. I acknowledge and admire the enormous effort they have put in to keep Tasmanians safe.

We are very mindful, as a government, that we are supporting our public service, particularly at the front line, to continue to support Tasmanians. We have employed more teachers in our schools than any previous government; when it comes to the health front line, more nurses, more frontline health staff than ever before. We are supporting our public service by investing in our public service and more people.

As I have said on many occasions, we are committed to negotiating with all unions in the upcoming bargaining round in good faith to deliver real wage increases for our workforce. We acknowledge the need for wage increases and we acknowledge the cost of living pressures, as I have spoken about already today. We acknowledge recruitment and retention issues faced by some sectors of our workforce. There will be wage increases resulting from this bargaining period. Of course, wage increases must be reasonable, affordable and sustainable for our state, as I am sure you would appreciate, so we can continue to invest in essential frontline services, so we can continue supporting Tasmanians into an affordable home.

These are all areas our Government is focused on. One of those is negotiating in good faith with our hardworking public sector.

Health - Return-to-Work Bonus

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.43 p.m.]

Our frontline health workers are beyond breaking point due to the ongoing pressures on the ailing health system. Every single day our nurses, midwives, doctors, paramedics, allied health professionals and the broader health workforce provide the best care they possibly can in a health system stretched beyond its means. Tasmania's hardworking nurses have had to take industrial action as a last resort just so they can be heard by you and your Government.

Rather than follow the lead of Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia and provide a one-off bonus payment to frontline health staff to recognise the difficult conditions they work in and encourage staff to remain in the workforce, you have instead adopted a \$2000 return-to-work bonus. This return-to-work bonus does nothing for the hundreds of current health staff who stuck it out, who are overworked, stressed and fed-up with how they have been treated.

Why have you and your Government deliberately chosen to ignore current staff and the difficulties they face every single day, which is the reason why health workers are leaving the workplace in the first place?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Franklin for his question. First I will reflect on the challenges in the health system he alluded to. As Health minister for the last two years, I have regularly visited our public hospitals, spoken directly to our frontline health staff, and understand the challenges and pressures that our hardworking frontline staff are under - our nurses, our doctors, our allied health professionals and those within our statewide mental health services as well.

However, every state is the same. Every state is facing significant pressures when it comes to the health system and increase in demand, which has been accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Every health system is facing and experiencing the same pressures.

We have worked enormously hard, Mr O'Byrne, since we were elected in 2014 to rebuild our health workforce. We continue to rebuild our workforce, including significant increase in paid FTEs since the beginning of COVID-19. As an example of that, between July 2020 and August 2022, we funded an increase of over 1500 paid FTEs across the department. That works out to two additional people being recruited every day in our health system for the last two years. We are putting \$7.25 million into our health system every single day. I value enormously the work that our health staff -

Mr O'Byrne - But that's the bonus payment.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have put an offer on the table. We want a way forward. You mentioned a return-to-work bonus payment of \$2000 pro rata for any AHPRA-registered health professional who returns to the front line or resigned in the last 12 months prior to 31 July 2022. There are other measures. There is the statewide nurse transition-to-practice model; a fast track pathway to a job for all UTAS nursing graduates, making a permanent job available to all of them; and accelerated probationary periods and streamlining selection processes, significantly saving the time of our senior nursing staff. They will be supported by a trial of clinical coaches on public hospital wards, which has been a long-time request, as I understand it, of the ANMF. We are listening and we are continuing to listen to our workforce.

Following discussions with the ANMF and acknowledging nurses are not in a formal negotiating period at this time, we have recognised their concerns about workload, recruitment and retention. I cannot walk into a hospital and not recognise the challenges, as indeed you would as well. I recognise and understand that and thank all our staff for the work they do.

We put in place a COVID-19 escalation allowance, which was registered by the TIC on 25 July this year. More recently, we have put a strong proposal to the ANMF to address recruit and workload issues, and I have addressed some of those matters. We have remained in discussions and I can advise today that I have written to unions to propose a one-off \$2000 frontline health allowance to relevant THS and Ambulance Tasmania staff and hospitals, inpatient units and ancillary health care units to replace the existing COVID-19 escalation allowance - a demonstration of a government that continues to listen to our workforce.

Strengthening Tasmania's Future - Government Initiatives

Mrs ALEXANDER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.49 p.m.]

The Tasmanian Liberals have been very active and worked hard throughout the winter break. Can you update the House on the initiatives that were delivered and the contribution to strengthening Tasmania's future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question and her interest in this matter. The Tasmanian Liberal Government has a very strong plan to strengthen our state's future. We have worked hard since coming to government to build our economy, create jobs and opportunities, while investing in the essential services that matter to Tasmania - health, education and housing, as examples.

The plan is working. There are 29 000 more Tasmanian jobs now than when we came to government in 2014. Tasmanians still remember that dark period between 2010 and 2014 -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know you do not like hearing it. You are embarrassed about it, and so you should be, just as your national administration body is embarrassed about you as well, so embarrassed they had to take you over.

Our strong employment conditions have seen Tasmania's unemployment rate fall to historically low levels. ABS wages data show that Tasmanian wages grew the fastest in the country over 2021 at 3 per cent and our economy is expected to continue to grow over this financial year.

We have said we will be a government that works hard and delivers on our commitments, and we are, every day. Since parliament sat in June we have delivered on over 60 initiatives to strengthen our economy, create jobs, reduce pressure in our hospitals, keep Tasmanians safe and roofs over their heads and ease cost of living pressures.

Ms White - You're delusional if you think you have reduced the pressure on the hospitals.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Since we were last in parliament, the ABS has confirmed there are now 29 000 more Tasmanians in work than when we were elected in 2014. We have opened the new Northern Employment and Business hub based in Launceston to help jobseekers find work. In the health space we have released a third round of our successful GP after-hours support initiative, helping vulnerable Tasmanians as well as reimbursing petrol for Central Highlands residents to get to a GP. We have detailed our plan to recruit and retain nurses and midwives and deployed nine new community paramedics. We have expanded access to antiviral medications for Tasmanians -

Ms Butler - Why is everyone striking if it's going so well?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, member for Lyons.

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have expanded access to antiviral medications for Tasmanians at high risk of severe COVID-19 and reached an agreement with the Australian Government to reinstate the pandemic leave disaster payment until the end of September.

When it comes to keeping Tasmanians safe, since the parliament last sat we have boosted police numbers with another 24 new constables sworn in and another 40 recruits starting. We have announced the appointment of the first female Commissioner of Police, Donna Adams, launched the new road policing service, and dedicated new police officers, patrol vehicles and advanced drone technology.

We have also officially opened the new 156-bed Southern Remand Centre at the Risdon Prison site, fulfilling a significant election commitment. We have announced 41 new projects and programs as part of our \$100 million Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and a further five-year partnership between the Government and Our Watch to help prevent family and sexual violence.

We are investing more than any government before to build more homes for Tasmanians. Building activity data released confirms there were 1070 building completions in the March 2022 quarter. Since parliament last sat, we have held the first meeting of the new housing ministerial reference group, launched the Housing Choices Tasmania 16 dwelling developments in Oakdowns, and announced the release of another 161 lots for home ownership.

When it comes to education and training, we have delivered what we promised at the last election and reached an important milestone, with all government high schools now extending to years 11 and 12, and have successfully transitioned TasTAFE to the new government business model which those opposite opposed.

We have also begun work on the West Ulverstone child and family learning centre.

Since we were last in the House we have taken action to bolster our border protections against the threat of foot and mouth disease, with eight additional Biosecurity staff and new x-ray machines.

Mr SPEAKER - Could you wind up, please, Premier?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We have rolled out new sanitisation mats at all domestic airports and seaports to stop foot and mouth disease from entering the state. Additionally, when it comes to agriculture we have opened a new dairy research facility at Elliot, which will help cement the north-west as a region of excellence for applied agricultural research.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Mr Speaker. You did ask the Premier to wind up about a minute ago and I am just wondering when he will.

Mr SPEAKER - I am sure the Premier is about to wind up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am struggling to fit so much in, I must admit. There is a lot we have done since parliament last sat. You have not done much but we have been working, there is a lot to talk about, and I will.

We will always back our businesses and help them cement a foothold in global markets, which is why since we were last in parliament we have also held a successful tourism and trade mission to New Zealand, led by the minister, Ms Palmer.

When it comes to our renewable future we are getting on with the job, declaring the north-east wind project to be a major project. We continue to have important discussions with our federal counterparts on the projects of strategic significance, including the Marinus Link.

Mr Speaker, the hallmark of this Government has been good budget management. As a result we have been able to buffer Tasmanians against external global pressures. Since we last met in parliament, we have secured the safety of Tasmania's fuel supply with \$8.35 million investment into Selfs Point fuel transit facility. I can confirm, as I said today, that I have spoken to the Prime Minister about extending the fuel subsidy.

I am wondering if the Leader of the Opposition has permission from Sherry and Cameron. I know they have to go to Nick and Dougie every single time they want to make a decision. I am wondering if they have to go to Nick and Dougie for that as well, in advocating on behalf of all Tasmanians.

There are many areas - cost of living. I have mentioned our \$180 -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I know you do not like hearing about it.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order. There is a point of order, please.

Ms DOW - Standing order 45, Mr Speaker. You have asked the Premier to wind up. He has ignored you a couple of times.

Mr SPEAKER - That is not standing order 45. I have asked the Premier to wind up. Premier, you have 10 seconds. I take the point of order. I have asked the Premier and he has 10 seconds to wind up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I respect your ruling, Mr Speaker. There is an enormous amount that we have achieved in a very short time. I am very proud of our team for delivering for all Tasmanians.

Cost of Living Pressures - Energy Prices

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[2.57 p.m.]

It has been 40 years since parliament was last prorogued twice in a year. Your decision to do so shows just how far you are from being the strong, stable government that Peter Gutwein

promised Tasmanians just over a year ago. You just said it: you are struggling. While you are spending your time trying to manage the chaos, Tasmanians are being smashed by the rising costs-of-living. Right now, Tasmanians in their thousands are receiving massive power bills they were not prepared for and they cannot afford. The huge increases they are seeing are the direct result of your decision to break your promise and abandon your Tasmania-first energy policy. They are literally paying the price for your broken promises on stable government and on energy. When are you going to start focusing on Tasmanians and getting the basics right?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I find the premise of the question breathtaking. The fact that you could accuse anyone of dysfunction outside your own party is extraordinary. It is plain for everyone to see. There has had to be an intervention -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Do you not understand that? There has had to be a national intervention into your party. They have taken you over. Do you not get that? Is it not sinking in? It is still not sinking in, Mr Speaker.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order. Please, Premier. Leader of the Opposition, I have said this many times in the parliament, once you have asked the question it does not give you a right to constantly interject on the minister you have asked the question of. It is a serious question. There was some politics involved in the question and I expect some politics will be involved in the answer. Please, appreciate that the answer is coming and I will wait for the next question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I cannot refer to faceless men taking you over because I actually know the faces of Nick and Dougie, of course. Do not start throwing around accusations about instability because, frankly, that is the most hypocritical thing I have heard for a very long time.

What Tasmanians know and understand is that we are a party and a government that has backed them all the way.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. Order. Premier - I cannot hear the Premier because of the constant interjections coming from this side. I do not wish to throw anybody out, particularly today, but I am going to start if these interjections continue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Tim Jacobson said, 'The party is at an all-time-low. No one can deny there are massive problems.' Need I say more about your dysfunction and the toxic environment you work in? What our team is fixed on -

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. The question is on energy. The Premier is currently commencing some point about the Labor Party. I ask you to draw him back to the question.

Mr SPEAKER - I take the point of order on relevance but also say that not every second word has to mention the answer. The Premier is allowed to set the scene of his answer. Please allow him to continue.

Mr ROCKLIFF - If you do not want to talk about how much of a dysfunctional rabble you are, do not lead with your chin.

We are always the party that has supported and, in fact, rebuilt whole industries. When it comes to the fact of you closing down the forest industry, we have rebuilt it. We are investing in it to create 29 000 more jobs. We understand how the economy works. We understand you need to invest in infrastructure to create jobs. We understand the need to reform our education system and boost our frontline health system. We understand the pressures on Tasmanians when it comes to cost of living, including energy prices and including fuel prices, which is a big impost. That is why we are being agile and responsive to the Tasmanian community's needs. The \$180 winter bill buster is an example of that - a \$17 million investment; and today, announcing a \$5 million package, including extension of the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), supporting people who are finding it difficult to pay their power bills as two examples, and supporting those highly valued community organisations such as Neighbourhood Houses that support the vulnerable people in our community which we all expect to look after.

Macquarie Point Development Corporation - Management and Governance

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[3.02 p.m.]

I understand that staff at Macquarie Point Development Corporation wrote to you in the week preceding the resignation of the chief executive officer, Ms Massina, outlining their concerns at the performance and conduct of the CEO. Will you release that letter together with the details of any ex-gratia or severance payout to Ms Massina?

Also, there are at least two inquiries into management and governance of Macquarie Point. You are yet to release a report into the management and workplace practices. However, a KPMG report was released this morning into Macquarie Point's procurement and contracting compliance. This report reveals systemic non-compliance with Treasurer's Instructions, with the investigators unable to locate basic documentation such as signed contracts and signed variations to contracts across multiple procurements.

What confidence can the long-suffering taxpayer have that your Government has any control over this valuable public asset?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I understand the KPMG report was released today. I understand the minister has spoken to you?

Mr Barnett - Yes, last night, a heads-up.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Mr Barnett has made a statement to the effect of the release of the report. Clearly it points to the need for continuous improvement in some of the findings, which of course will be done.

Macquarie Point still represents an exciting opportunity for Tasmania. It is one of the last remaining vacant urban infill locations in any of Australia's capital cities. It is over 9.3 hectares. It is a huge parcel of land which needed extensive, very complex remediation from its history as a former industrial site. Preparing it for future developments, including removing contaminated soils does not look exciting. Without this work the site was not safe to build on and would cause a public hazard endangering people's health and safety. It really has been a large task.

Since its establishment, the corporation has remediated and removed more than 65 000 tonnes of contaminated soil, removed more than 2.3 million litres of contaminated groundwater and removed nearly 1 kilometre of deteriorated and redundant oil and diesel pipeline across the site: archaeological works to ensure we respect the work of the site's history; working with TasWater to remove the wastewater treatment plant - a design tender is now in the market - planning the northern transit corridor with key stakeholders from the Department of State Growth and Tasports, and continuing to engage with our stakeholders. I am advised that we are attracting interest from developers all over the country who are keen to work with us on the next release showing our master plan is working.

We are progressing the redevelopment of Macquarie Point and I would have to disagree with any suggestions to the contrary.

I recall the first part of your question was about some correspondence; I am happy to look at that for you and provide an answer to you at some point in time. I thank the member for her question.

Electricity Prices - Capping

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[3.06 p.m.]

From 2018, you and members of your government voted to cap electricity prices. Today, when customers need a price cap more than ever, you are claiming that prices would take Tasmania back to the dark ages, if you could believe it. What has changed? Is the cost of living no longer a priority under the Rockliff Government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. The Premier has made it very clear: cost of living is front and centre for our government, and always has been, since 2014 after the shameless display of governing under the Labor-Greens government and a 65 per cent increase in power prices under Labor.

The Premier and Nic Street today announced further support in terms of cost of living. There is nothing more important than addressing those important issues, not just with a

\$5 million package, but including \$1 million support for those vulnerable Tasmanians doing it tough. This will supplement the Aurora Energy \$1.7 million of support.

Over the winter break we have seen political stunt after political stunt by the Opposition. It is headline grabbing, it is scaremongering, and you know it. You have a bill which is flawed.

Mr Winter - It is your bill.

Mr BARNETT - It is unbudgeted and uncoded. Tasmanians are wondering where will the money be to cover the cost for nurses, for teachers, for the police. We know Labor's record when they sacked a nurse a day and they sacked our police. They do not have a good record when it comes to governing the state. We now know, with federal intervention, the state Labor leadership has been removed altogether and they have stepped in. Their leadership is impotent; not a shred of credibility. If you cannot govern yourselves, you cannot govern the state. What we know is that your bill is flawed -

Ms White - You should cut power prices, do something decent.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Leader.

Mr BARNETT - You are taking us backward. The Labor Party would have us go backwards, in effect, to destroy jobs, put at risk the Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation, and green hydrogen. Exiting the National Electricity Market is bad policy. You have got it wrong. You have no plans.

As the Premier and I have outlined in the public space, we have a targeted approach: the winter bill buster program to support vulnerable Tasmanians. Most concession card holders - 94 000 Tasmanians - will actually be better off under our winter bill buster relief package than both Labor's 2.5 per cent price cap - the flawed price cap - and with respect to any price increase, most concession cardholders will be better off. Let us look at the record. What does the record say?

Ms White - It says you will cap power prices, that is what it says.

Mr BARNETT - The record says that since we came to government in 2014, a 5.8 per cent increase in nominal terms and in real terms a 15.4 per cent reduction. That goes to your record of a 65 per cent increase. Up, up, up under Labor.

We know, let the facts speak for themselves. I am wondering whether the Leader of the Opposition or indeed, Mr Winter, has made a phone call to Canberra to ask how is it going with respect to the federal government's plans to reduce our electricity prices across Australia by \$275. Have you made the call? I am not sure because that plan by federal Labor is consistent with our plans for Marinus Link, Battery of the Nation and green hydrogen. We have plans to put downward pressure on electricity, improve energy security, create more jobs -

Ms White - Prices are going up.

Mr BARNETT - See, who is on our side? Who is on our side with the state government?

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. If you could wind up now, minister.

Mr BARNETT - I am winding up. You have the federal government, the state government, the independent Australian Energy Market Operator and the Tasmanian people: we want downward pressure on electricity prices. We want to grow jobs, grow our economy and create a cleaner world. Where is state Labor? They are in Opposition and that is where they will stay if you continue with this diatribe.

Preliminary Outcomes Report 2021-22

Mr WOOD question to TREASURER, Mr FERGUSON

[3.12 p.m.]

Can you update the House on the Preliminary Outcomes Report 2021-22? Are you aware of any alternative plan to manage Tasmania's budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague in Bass for this question and his genuine interest in this important matter which I hope will be of interest to all members.

Yesterday, I was very pleased to announce the Preliminary Outcomes Report for the 2021-22 financial year. I am pleased to let the House know that the report shows a significant improvement in the state's budget position out of last financial year and a fantastic year for infrastructure delivery. Compared to the forecasts that were prepared the year earlier, the net operating balance has improved by \$430.2 million to a final deficit position of \$259.6 million.

In addition, our net debt position has also improved compared to the budget forecast with net debt estimated to be \$1.041 billion as at 30 June, which is \$663 million lower than forecast. I hope that is welcomed by Dr Broad who said more in his introduction than the last seven weeks away from this House, Mr Speaker.

I am also very pleased to advise the House that in 2021-22, we delivered 99 per cent of our budgeted forecast infrastructure investment. With the help of our civil and construction industry partners, we have achieved a massive \$817 million of investment into new, better, productive infrastructure in every corner of our beautiful state. I am pleased to tell the House that this was the most successful year of infrastructure delivery since our Government was elected. It represents a whopping 28 per cent uplift on the previous year's investment. This is good for Tasmania.

As we entered the pandemic we took a deliberate decision to invest more into infrastructure, to stimulate jobs, to get our construction and civil contracting sectors moving again. That decision has really paid off. Our strong position financially and the strength of our economy has enabled us to deal with the challenges of that pandemic while still delivering for our Tasmanian community. These results really are welcome and they show what can be achieved through prudent fiscal management, something those opposite are entirely unfamiliar with. They have gone into administration so how could they understand prudent fiscal management?

I am also pleased to note -

Ms White - You really are a liar.

Mr FERGUSON - I would ask for that to be withdrawn, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER - There is no point of order.

Mr FERGUSON - I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw her unparliamentary remark, Mr Speaker.

Ms White - What did I say?

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition referred to me as a liar, and I ask that that be withdrawn. I should not have to tell her what she said.

Ms White - I withdraw, Mr Speaker, but I was just quoting what the UFU was saying.

Mr SPEAKER - Without qualification, thank you very much.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, I am also really pleased to inform the House and to note that Moody's has reported on our credit rating. Moody's has recognised a strength -

Ms Finlay - He's not being honest about the position. Perhaps he does not understand how he arrived at his position.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Ms Finlay - You do not want to know what I am saying.

Member Suspended

Member for Bass - Ms Finlay

Mr SPEAKER - Member for Bass, you can leave the Chamber until after question time.

Ms Finlay withdrew.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, it is important to note that Moody's has reported on our credit rating. I am very pleased that Moody's has recognised the strength of our financial position. In its recent credit opinion Moody's has confirmed Tasmania's AA2 stable credit rating, has noted our strong financial management and has highlighted that our strong position is providing a buffer against funding and revenue shocks. These outcomes are no accident. They are a result of our disciplined management and our careful dedication to delivering on our plan, which is being backed in by the Tasmanian people.

While last financial year was a fantastic result, we are not focused on personal insults, rudeness, in-fighting and civil war. We are focused on getting on with the job of delivering the projects and programs we have been funding through our budget program.

I was asked if there are any alternatives. Sadly, there are no alternatives from the alternative government, which is now in administration and being run by Canberra, by Nick and Dougie. One would think that if those members opposite had a credible alternative government, they would have put forward a credible alternative plan, or perhaps an alternative budget, but they have not produced a single one in eight years. They have been too busy fighting each other. It is very clear that the Tasmanian branch of the ALP is in a complete mess. The federal party has had to step in and take control for the next three years, despite Ms White saying one year ago, after the David O'Byrne civil war, that she would reunite the party and get them back into fighting condition again.

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr WINTER - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I am sure that the member who asked the question wants to know the answer. The question is about the preliminary outcomes report. He is completely off-topic and I ask you to draw him back -

Mr SPEAKER - Order, you will resume your seat. Thank you. Please wind up, minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I will wind up, Mr Speaker. It is certainly the case that Nick and Dougie have had to take over from Rebecca White. Her own colleague left the other House, the Legislative Council, this year saying her party is toxic.

It is important that the Government focuses on what is important to Tasmanians, and that is what we are doing through our economic management.

Ambulance Ramping

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr ROCKLIFF

[3.18 p.m.]

News that a woman died at the Launceston General Hospital after being ramped for nine hours was tragic but, sadly, not surprising. Thanks to your Government's underfunding and mismanagement of health care and, more recently, your negligent approach to COVID-19, ramping keeps getting worse. It is so bad that this week paramedics will walk off the job.

Data from Victoria shows patients ramped for longer than 17 minutes are at greater risk of death and reattendance to hospital. At the LGH and the RHH, one-third of patients arriving by ambulance are ramped for more than 30 minutes. In this environment, harm and tragedy are unavoidable. Victorian estimates are that the preventable death toll from ambulance ramping there is over 70 people a year. What is the number of Tasmanians who are suffering this same preventable fate each year? When are you going to put the money that is needed into our health system to stop the causes of ramping instead of tinkering at the edges?

Mr Tucker - One minute.

Members interjecting.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask you to rein in government backbenchers who make a joke out of ramping and deaths in the health system.

Mr SPEAKER - It is not a point of order, Ms O'Connor. It is unparliamentary to comment about the time that has been allotted to either asking a question or, in fact, answering a question. I will manage that. The question has been put to the Premier so I will allow him to answer.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for her question. I commence my answer by thanking very much our hardworking paramedics and all the staff at Ambulance Tasmania who provide critical medical care to Tasmanians night and day.

To your point, we have a strong record of investing in Ambulance Tasmania. In fact, as at June 2022, we have employed an additional 270 full-time equivalents within Ambulance Tasmania since we came to government. Investment is really important - investment in resources, investment in new vehicles, of which we have all our new vehicles online - I stand to be corrected around our commitment.

Investment in people, equipment, infrastructure and vehicles is important, but also system improvement is important. You point to an access and flow issue and I will come to that in just a moment, but I want to point to the significant reforms and system improvements around secondary triage, extended care paramedics, and the recent deployment of nine community paramedics across the state and the PACER team as well, which I have spoken about many times and appears to be working very well.

They are all good system improvements that are working along with our 270 full-time equivalent extra that we have put in to our health system in terms of paramedics since we came to government. We are also providing \$3 million for our health and wellbeing program for all frontline emergency service workers, which is crucially important.

In addition to that, we have also invested in several hospital-based strategies to facilitate emergency department throughput, patient admission and discharge processes and pre-hospital care strategies as well, including the introduction of the patient flow manager, electronic information system and the creation of integrated operation centres in our major hospitals.

I have mentioned statewide access and flow - I will come to that now. We have established the statewide access and patient flow program to develop a system-wide framework for integrating, delivering and monitoring programs of work aimed at improving patient access and flow across the state. The federal government has a role to play here as well. I urge those opposite, if they are allowed to do so, to advocate for Tasmania in the 50/50 funding split that all states and state premiers -

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order. You were doing so well up to that point, too.

Ms White - He incited it, Mr Speaker.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All state premiers and health ministers are advocating for that 50/50 funding split between the Commonwealth and state governments. We are in that advocacy

space. I urge you, if you are allowed to do so, to advocate as well for improving and supporting a fairer funding model going into our health system in Tasmania.

Dr Woodruff - Premier, do you even know how many people are dying on the ramps?

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I say, the federal government has a role to play here. The large numbers of patients who are medically fit for discharge, however -

Dr Woodruff - You have not said anything about the federal government for eight years.

Mr SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr ROCKLIFF - are awaiting NDIS supports or residential aged care placements before they can leave hospital. I have raised this with the federal minister and look forward to working with the federal government to find a solution. When it comes to access and flow, we have far too many people within our hospital system who are aged and should be in a more appropriate setting such as in an aged care facility; NDIS participants in sub-acute care; it is causing bed block. This is a federal government responsibility. We will play our role, but the federal government also needs to step up and play their role. I can point to significant system improvement and innovative reforms in Ambulance Tasmania and paramedics. I can also point to, Dr Woodruff, significant investment - including the 270 FTE across Ambulance Tasmania.

Electricity Prices - Capping

Mr WINTER question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr BARNETT

[3.25 p.m.]

In 2018 during the debate on your Government's bill to cap energy prices, you said, and I quote:

I am very pleased to be supporting this bill 100 per cent. I am proud the Tasmania-First Energy Policy puts Tasmanians first.

You went on to say:

This power cap legislation is working. It has been working for the last two years and it will continue to work. ... We have a plan that includes delinking from the wholesale pricing mechanisms of the mainland in Victoria, in mid-2021. That is the plan. It was announced during the election ... and the Tasmanian people said yes, we want what the Liberals are offering - a majority Liberal Government offering low-cost energy for Tasmanians.

Have you betrayed Tasmanians who, in your own words, voted for the Liberal Party because of your previous policy to cap electricity prices?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is part of a party that has just been intervened by his federal colleagues, because of their impotency and lack of effect and credibility in Tasmania and due to their toxic culture. You have had an effort over the winter period with headline-grabbing political stunts. We know that your policy is flawed, unbudgeted and uncosted.

Let us go back and be very clear: in 2018, we had a policy to deliver either the lowest, or amongst the lowest, regulated electricity prices in all the nation by 2022. What happened? We delivered -

Ms White - What happened? It is 2022 now.

Mr SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, order.

Mr BARNETT - and the Tasmanian people responded. In 2021, again, we went to the election with energy policies that would do a range of things including Battery of the Nation, Marinus Link and green hydrogen. All our policies would put downward pressure on electricity prices, improve energy security, create more jobs and create a cleaner world. Guess what? It is starting to happen with our efforts and our policies. It will take time but we are getting there.

That policy was based on very important advice and based on the fact that we know there is a fast-moving, renewable energy transition in place. The Opposition has not quite got there, but we know that our colleagues in Canberra are very focused on supporting Marinus Link. Do you, Mr Winter? There is a big sigh, and a big, open question. Your policy is to exit the national electricity market. That is not our policy. We are part of the national electricity market, to deliver jobs growth, development opportunities, downward pressure on prices and a cleaner world.

What is state Labor's position? We know federal Labor supports it. What is state Labor's position on Marinus Link? You are putting forward your policy of the cap but it is unbudgeted and uncosted. Who is going to be paying the nurses and the teachers under the Labor policy? They have no idea. You are in a world of your own.

We will continue to act in the best interests of Tasmanians, and we will continue to deliver for Tasmanians, election in, election out -

Opposition members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - even though your leadership in Tasmania is impotent and you have been removed in terms of your leadership here in Tasmania. Nicky and Dougie, they have control.

There you go, Mr Speaker.

Ms BUTLER - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 144. It is unparliamentary to refer to former members of parliament as Dougie. It is completely inappropriate. It has

happened three times today. I would like you to remind the Chamber of the respect that we should show for former members of parliament.

Mr SPEAKER - I will ask the whole Chamber to not only pay respect to former members, but the current members as well, by not interjecting when a minister is on their feet. Respect is certainly part of what we should be showing our community, and so, could you please show some respect here in this Chamber, to past and present members?

New Zealand Trade Mission

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

[3.31 p.m.]

We are all aware that Tasmania relies on interstate and overseas markets to sell our products and services. We know one of the key ways Government can support businesses to secure trade deals and partnerships is through in-market trade missions. Can you please update the House on the Government's trade mission to New Zealand last month, which you led on behalf of the Premier?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

This mission was the largest known contingent of Tasmanian businesses participating in a trade mission, which engaged with over 400 New Zealand stakeholders across agribusiness, food and beverage production, forestry resources, defence and maritime, tourism, science and technology sectors.

New Zealand is already an important trading partner, with annual exports of well over \$100 million. Given the discussions that took place across a whirlwind four days, spanning both the North and South Island, there is significant opportunity for future growth. Everywhere we went we were greeted with such warmth and anticipation. In particular, we were welcomed by the Iwi leaders who greeted us at almost every single meeting or event we attended. The Maori welcomes were a highlight, and it set the scene for friendship and connection.

We wanted to expose our New Zealand neighbours to the exceptional opportunities Tasmania has to offer, but also to learn how we could better collaborate with them to achieve a mutual benefit. Our whisky and gin distillers were a huge hit at our Meet the Maker events, and how proud I was to stand along-side young Tasmanian women, like Kristy Booth-Lark, Jane Sawford, and Ruby Daly, a new generation of female distillers promoting their product to the world.

We saw openings in mountain biking connections and had exposure to major tourism media outlets. We met with the New Zealand space agency and explored many and varied opportunities for of potential trade deals worth millions of dollars.

There were many highlights, but I will touch on a few.

The Air New Zealand direct flight between Auckland and Hobart provides a one-stop opportunity for inward bound tourists from the USA, Asia and Pacific, and the reciprocal outbound opportunities for our premium fresh freight.

The launch of a new trans-Tasman shipping link by BioMar, between Nelson and Tasmania, will ensure a more reliable, faster and cheaper service. When it is fully established, it is expected there will be opportunities for other businesses to use excess capacity on the service for other freight.

I had a very constructive meeting with BioSecurity New Zealand and Damien O'Connor, the Minister for Agriculture, Biosecurity, Trade and Export Growth. Obviously, foot and mouth was front and centre of those discussions, including current monitoring and surveillance operations. With direct air and sea links, it is vitally important that we have a strong collaboration with Biosecurity New Zealand.

Some of the feedback we received from the New Zealand Trade Mission, includes from Michael Bailey of the TCCI:

Every delegate that I have spoken to has raved about the business opportunities, often including signed contracts that have been achieved throughout the week.

From Sheralee Davies, Wine Tasmania:

I appreciated the flexibility of being able to participate in both the trade and tourism activities last week, which really helped me to promote wine and wine tourism for the benefit of our Tasmanian wine businesses.

From Jeff Hawkins, Pivot Maritime:

Spanning across four days the trade mission to New Zealand was an incredible showcase of Tasmanian capabilities and exploring emerging opportunities for growth in a number of key sectors.

Evidence shows that trade missions like these are one of the most effective ways of boosting export sales, with small to medium enterprise typically seeing about 60 per cent export growth and 8 per cent employment growth after participating in missions. Export trade has been a driving force of Tasmania's economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 and we know that our increased focus on growing existing markets and opening up new opportunities is working. Again, it was a privilege and an honour to represent our Premier and to work on behalf of the businesses, the industries and the people of Tasmania.

Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill - Government Commitment

Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[3.36 p.m.]

Why have you not brought on the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill for debate? Do you remain committed to legislating donation reform this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Yes, we are committed and our expectation is that it will be brought on this year.

Ms White - Expectation or commitment that you will?

Mr ROCKLIFF - We are committed to the reform. We have a parliamentary schedule and our expectation is we will be debating it this year. Before the end of the year we will be debating the restoration of the House of Assembly to 35 members as well. We are committed to the reform. My expectation is that it will be this year and I look forward to the debate.

Electoral Disclosure and Funding Bill - Donation Disclosure Threshold

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[3.37 p.m.]

Are you aware of any attempts from within the Liberal Party organisation to pressure the Attorney-General to water down the Government's donation reforms by increasing the proposed donation disclosure threshold in the bill?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for the question. The bill has been tabled. The bill was re-tabled today, effectively due to the proroguing of the parliament. That is the bill that we will be debating.

Cost of Living Pressures - Government Response

Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for COMMUNITY SERVICES and DEVELOPMENT, Mr STREET

[3.38 p.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Tasmanian Liberal Government is delivering on our significant plan to support Tasmanians with cost of living pressures, including the recently announced package of measures to provide extra support to Tasmanians who really need it? Are you aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her genuine interest in this area, and her work in this area before coming into parliament.

Our Government understands that the increasing cost of living is stretching the budgets of many Tasmanians. We are supporting Tasmanians on low and fixed incomes through more than 90 government concessions and discounts available to assist individuals and families. For example, eligible cardholders can receive a significant concession on their council rates of up

to 30 per cent, up to a capped amount. The Government will keep looking at ways in which we can provide additional support.

We have recently made patient travel more affordable for concession cardholders and provided an additional 2022 winter bill buster discount on electricity bills for all eligible concession customers.

Over recent months, I have consistently heard from our community sector partners that cost of living pressures on individuals and families are driving up demand for services. We have listened and taken action today.

I was proud to join with the Premier in the lunchbreak to announce a \$5 million package of further targeted measures for immediate financial and other practical help; one-off funding increases to a range of programs as well, to support our key community sector partners. This package includes an additional \$50 000 this year for each of the 35 Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania, an extra \$1.75 million into the Houses across the network to ensure their critical service continuity and to support many through emergency food relief as well through the Neighbourhood Houses.

We are providing \$1 million in additional support for the Family Assistance Program Tasmania, allowing valued community sector partners the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and the Launceston and Hobart City Missions to provide more help with fuel costs and utility bills, rent and other cost of living essentials to vulnerable Tasmanians.

We are providing \$1 million to expand Aurora's bill hardship services in Mr Barnett's portfolio.

We are providing an extra \$500 000 in funding for emergency food relief providers, Foodbank Tasmania and Loaves and Fishes Tasmania. This \$500 000 is on top of the support that we have recently given Loaves and Fishes Tasmania to purchase new vehicles to increase their deliveries across the state and we are currently in negotiations with Foodbank Tasmania to do the same thing for that organisation as well.

There is \$250 000 of additional fuel support funding for grants of up to \$1000 to help community organisations with rising fuel costs; \$350 000 over the next 12 months to help the School Food Matters Inc to keep delivering the School Meals Program, and we are also providing another \$150 000 in extra support to the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) program to allow NILS to provide more no interest small loans to help Tasmanians with essential purchases like fridges, freezers, medical and dental, car registration and repairs. We have now expanded that program to bond and rent in advance.

We are also providing additional funding to increase indexation to community sector organisations to 3 per cent for the 2022-23 financial year during which time there will be a formal review of the indexation ahead of the 2023-24 budget.

This package will enable our valued community sector partners and services to maintain continuity and provide more support for Tasmanians who need it most. Like I said, it was an absolute pleasure to be with the Premier to announce that package. We look forward to engaging with the community sector further and we understand that as cost of living goes up

so too does the need for support. We work with community sector organisations every day and we will continue to do so.

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Mr Speaker, standing order 127. I seek the indulgence of the House to explain matters of a personal nature. I would rather do it now than stewing on it until the adjournment.

Mr SPEAKER - You should have raised the issue when it happened but on indulgence and there is no long explanation, as short as you can, please, from a personal point of view.

Dr BROAD - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to raise an issue with comments from the Treasurer in his response to a question where he queried where I had been for the last seven weeks. He should have known and not been surprised that I took some leave in the wake of the death of my mother, and I ask him to apologise.

Mr FERGUSON - Mr Speaker, I would like to apologise to the member opposite. I will do it to him privately or publicly. If that is the way that that was interpreted I am genuinely sorry.

Dr Broad - Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER - That is Question Time concluded.

Time expired.

FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORMS BILL 2022 (No. 10)

Second Reading

Resumed from above (page 37).

[3.43 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, miscellaneous family and sexual violence reforms under the Family Violence Act 2004, the bill expands the definition of family violence.

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER - If members could be quiet, please. The only person speaking should be the member for Lyons.

Mr TUCKER - This expansion is so it can include additional specific offences providing for alternative convictions for certain offences in the Criminal Code. It also expands the definition of harassing to reflect that making unwelcome contact is a form of family violence. In addition, the bill also expands the list of conditions available under the Police Family Violence Orders to enhance the Safe at Home response and circumstances where a person has committed or is likely to commit family violence.

As mentioned earlier, it is also important that the bill removes section 54 liability of husband and wife for offences committed by either without respect to the other's property under the Criminal Code.

Time and time again we see or hear of circumstances where family violence occurs, there is injury or spouse property is destroyed. This type of conduct will not be tolerated and is a form of family violence. This type of conduct will be recognised and captured by the existing definition of family violence contained in the section 7C(1)(3) of the Family Violence Act (TBC). We need to keep up with changes in modern-day society and section 54 of the Criminal Code is outdated and does not accord with the perception of what amounts to unlawful conduct.

May I remind everyone that broad public and targeted consultation processes were undertaken on a draft version of this bill to help inform the development of this important family violence reform. This Liberal Government is committed to ensuring our laws protect victims/survivors of family violence and ensuring perpetrators face the consequences of their actions. The provisions in this bill shall improve our justice system's response and provide more opportunities for the court to intervene and engage rehabilitation of perpetrators.

Mr Speaker, this bill is to protect Tasmanians and I commend the bill to the House.

[3.46 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, the Greens strongly support this bill that is before us today. We are proud to have a long history of tripartite support in this area of legislation and in all reforms that can be undertaken by the Government to improve the situation for victims/survivors of family violence.

This bill makes some important contributions with the declaration for repeat family violence offenders and the requirement to participate in behaviour-change programs as part of family violence orders. We are very supportive of one of the aspects of the declaration of a serial family violence perpetrator, and that in particular is the requirement for a person who holds a firearms licence to not be allowed to hold that licence for the duration of the declaration and to forfeit their right to possess a firearm for the duration of the declaration.

On a personal level, as somebody who sat on the joint firearms committee, it was something that many doctors and people who work in the health sector spoke very passionately about. Of the two loose conditions for the proposed weakening of the firearms laws which was proposed by the Liberals before the 2018 election, part of which would have meant there was not the robust conditions around the ownership of a firearm, there was a very strong view - understandably - that the possession of a firearm in circumstances of family violence is extremely dangerous - dangerous to women, children and potentially more widely in the community. There are still rump views in the community that people have a right to hold a firearm. That is a view that has no place in Australia, it never has, and the National Firearms Agreement makes that very clear. We are very supportive of this.

I have a range of other comments to make, and questions. We have an amendment that we have drafted to talk about this matter more deeply in Committee. We do not plan to hold a long discussion about it, but we want to go into that matter in detail.

First of all, I will speak about some of the comments made by stakeholders. The Women's Legal Service, in their comments about the expanded definition of family violence

in clause 5, which amends section 7, felt very strongly that the cultural change needs to be led from the top. They talked about extending the definition of family violence beyond intimate partners; in particular that children need to be seen and viewed by the law as victims/survivors in their own right. Currently, young people have to rely on restraint orders for protection. I would like the Attorney-General to comment about that concern raised by the Women's Legal Service and whether she has any response to that or whether there is any further legislation under discussion with the Women's Legal Service in relation to that matter.

Clause 9, which amends section 16, which requires a perpetrator to attend and participate in a rehabilitation program, is very important. I have questions about the number of rehabilitation programs available in Tasmania and whether they are located across the state in different regions. If there is a mandated requirement to attend and participate, they need to be of a quality and number that make it possible for people to do so in a way that is not unreasonably onerous.

The Women's Legal Service also had some questions about this. They said that 'our understanding is that one of the main benefits of men's behaviour change programs is that they provide an opportunity for victims/survivors to safely leave while the perpetrator remains under observation'. They said, 'We are not aware of any conclusive evidence base that establishes behavioural change programs reduce the likelihood of a person committing family violence or that they effectively and permanently result in an attitudinal change in the perpetrator'. The Women's Legal Service supports further investment by the Government in longitudinal studies to measure this as an outcome.

Could the Attorney-General please provide a response to that: whether the Government has any intention to make an investment in this area, or if she is aware of information about the effectiveness of the programs being mandated that the Women's Legal Service does not know about?

I also have a question on section 16, where it is a requirement that the court satisfy itself that the person is able to participate in the rehabilitation program and that the rehabilitation program is available for the purpose for the person to participate in at a suitable place and time. This raises the question, which I referred to previously: how many programs are available and what would happen if a court would like to make an order that a perpetrator must participate but finds that there are not, in the court's view, sufficient for that person to be able to participate at times that are suitable or places that are suitable? What are the Government's plans to provide a suitable breadth and availability of these programs across the state so that there would be no possibility that a court may not make such an order?

In relation to clause 10, inserting Part 4A, the Women's Legal Service is very supportive of the declaration of serial family violence perpetrators. They ask the question about where the predominant perpetrator has been misidentified. They said:

We would want the court to take into account the cycle of abuse as described by both parties and an active acknowledgement that the law will not simply focus on incident-based offences. Patterns of behavior, and power and control, must be taken into account. Significant investment into police training and accountability around who is, in fact, a predominant perpetrator needs to be supported to ensure that this provision is applied against a working knowledge of the gendered drivers of family violence.

Could the Attorney-General say whether there have been any conversations with the minister for Police about an investment in police training and measures for accountability around the matters the Women's Legal Service has raised, whether they need to be supported to ensure that the provision is applied?

They also point to the approach adopted in the United Kingdom where training occurred for the entire justice system to make sure that the serial family violence offence is understood throughout the whole justice system. That was adopted in the UK when the offence of coercive control was operationalised and it has increased the safety of women and children in the UK. I would appreciate if the Attorney-General could talk about the approach for training across the whole justice system.

Proposed section 29C relates to the making of orders if there is a declaration. It provides that when determining whether to make any other order, a court or judge may order the Commissioner of Police or any other person to provide the court or judge with an assessment of the suitability of a person for electronic monitoring.

We have been alerted to an anomaly where an electronic monitoring device remains on an individual even though we understand that the person's previous partner no longer resides in Tasmania. It has raised the question about the length of time electronic monitoring devices remain on people. I do not know whether there are regular periods of reassessment or whether something would trigger the reassessment. However, it seems concerning, as we understand in this case, for a person to continue for an indefinite period, being bounded to a certain radius or away from other areas when the person -

Ms Archer - I do not think it is ever indefinite.

Dr WOODRUFF - This may not be true but we understand there is a situation where the other party has left the state. If you are able to make any comment on that, that would be appreciated.

In relation to our amendment, I can flag that we have an amendment to clause 4 to amend section 4(b) and the definition of harassing. We will discuss that when we are in the Committee stage.

I give particular thanks to all the people who have made submissions. Their work is incredibly valuable. We thank Engender Equality, Yemaya, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, and the Women's Legal Service. A number of other parties made submissions. Anne-Marie Wallace and a range of people together made submissions, including Dr Caroline Spiranovic, Dr Rebecca Bradfield, Professor Kimberley Norris, Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron, Dr Romy Winter, Dr Kate Cashman and Associate Professor Sonya Stanford; as well as Community Legal Services, TasCOSS, the RSPCA and the Australian Lawyers Alliance.

I want to assure the people who made those submissions that they were carefully read. I thank the Attorney-General for preparing the bill before us because it makes some very significant steps towards creating safer conditions in Tasmania for women and children who may be, or are, victims and survivors of family violence.

[4.01 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Speaker, I thank members for their contribution. I know there have been contributions across the House, across all parties. I thought there would have been more contributions on a bill of this topic, actually, and it is a little disappointing that sometimes people express concern about such a serious topic and then do not come in and make a contribution on bills. To those who did, thank you. Clearly, members have availed themselves of the discussion points and submissions of some key stakeholders as well in doing so.

I know that there are a number of questions to address from last time. It always seems so long ago when we have what we call our winter break. It is very difficult for me to see my shadow through the perspex, so perhaps I will step to one side when I am addressing Ms Haddad's questions. I will address them in order by stating what the question was so that we all refresh our memories.

Once a serial family violence perpetrator declaration has been made, it will be recorded on the person's criminal record and will remove their ability to possess a firearm, as we know. The question was: will that be a permanent removal of their ability to own a firearm or for the period of the declaration? A person will be unable to possess a firearm for the period of the declaration. Once the declaration ceases to be in force, whether a person can possess a firearm will depend on the assessment made in accordance with the Firearms Act, which I believe is still very stringent. The fact that there has been a declaration of this nature would have significant impact, but it is obviously assessed in the usual manner.

Ms Haddad said there is the EQUIPS domestic abuse program inside TPS already and Community Corrections, of course, outside of that prison service. Ms Haddad said she knew that the sex offender program is mandated - that is correct - and she asked if there is any policy intent to increase the availability of those programs for people who end up with a custodial sentence and the declaration?

While a person is serving a period of imprisonment, engaging in a family violence rehabilitation program is optional. At this time, it is not intended that program participation be compulsory. Under the bill, it would be open to the court to order that a person declared a serial family violence perpetrator participate in a rehabilitation program upon their release, as a family violence order condition.

To the statement that there is not statewide access to rehabilitation programs - and I think this touches on what Dr Woodruff raised - family violence programs are available statewide. This relevantly includes the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program for high-risk offenders and the lower-risk program run by Relationships Australia. Our Government committed funding through action 25 of the Safe Homes, Families Communities Action Plan for \$471 000 over three years. This action relates to the reform in this bill to introduce rehabilitation program participation as a family violence order condition. The need for further funding will be assessed as this action is implemented.

Ms Haddad also stated that the court is required to consider the presence of a child, a pregnancy and/or the fact that the perpetrator is a serial family violence perpetrator for sentencing purposes. I note Ms Haddad's comments in relation to the feedback provided by Women's Legal Service Tasmania that they would like to see the courts required to consider as aggravating factors at sentencing that an offender was reckless as to whether a child was

present, the fact an affected person was pregnant, and/or the fact that the perpetrator is a serial family violence perpetrator. I will take this opportunity to make it clear that this amendment is indeed in the bill at clause 6, which will amend the wording of section 13A of the Family Violence Act to remove that a court or a judge 'may' consider as an aggravating factor, and replace this with 'is to' consider as an aggravating factor, so it provides that element of complete certainty.

There was also a statement about there being a lack of transitional housing access. With respect to that comment, there is limited access to transitional housing for victims of family violence and I want to note that our Government is already acting to address this issue. In April we announced funding upgrades and expansions of our women's shelters under Tasmania's Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-23. This included \$4 million to Launceston Women's Shelter, which is adding 15 self-contained one-, two-, and three-bedroom units and associated facilities, including a multipurpose centre, laundries and a children's playground, more than doubling the shelter's capacity to help women and their children. Construction is expected to be completed by November. This expansion is co-funded with the Australian Government, which contributed \$1.9 million through the Safe Places grant program. Our Government continues to work with the Australian Government to develop responses to address this housing issue.

Also under our Government, more than \$33 million per year is invested in specialist homelessness services across the state, including shelters, which is the first step towards stable accommodation, living independently and improving health and wellbeing. We make no secret of the fact that housing is a key priority of ours, and our 10-year, \$1.5 billion affordable and social housing package is the single largest housing investment in our state's history.

There were various comments and observations Ms Haddad made about coercive control, and I will take this opportunity to say that we discussed this at the meeting of Attorneys-General in Melbourne on Friday just gone. It is an issue on which I am very proud to say Tasmania has led the way, and the discussion at MAG - although we are about to change our name again to be recognised formally again - I cannot remember what we agreed on. I think we agreed to go back to SCAG or STAG or something. Anyway, I digress.

The national principles in relation to this are a really important move, but I am very proud of what we have done in Tasmania in relation to coercive control and recognising that as a crime. In relation to coercive control in family violence situations, I want to add to some of the comments Ms Haddad made about coercive control in those situations in respect of building community awareness about our laws. As I said, on Friday I attended a meeting of Attorneys-General, who all agreed to the commencement of public consultation on draft national principles on coercive control in September. This is an important project to drive awareness that we were just talking about, and consistent understanding of coercive control across Australia. Coercive control is a pattern of abusive behaviour that is often a significant part of a perpetrator's use of family and domestic violence. It involves perpetrators using abusive behaviours in a pattern over time in a way that creates and keeps power and dominance over another person or persons. As part of this pattern, perpetrators may use physical and/or non-physical abusive behaviours and these behaviours can look different in each relationship and their effects can build up over time.

In respect of non-physical violence, we possess nation-leading specific offences of emotional abuse and intimidation, and economic abuse under the Family Violence Act,

to capture non-physical forms of abuse. As I have said, they are not the only offences available. Under the Criminal Code the crimes of persistent family violence at section 170A and stalking or bullying at section 192 can also apply.

What is 'charging rates'? To comment on charging rates, where non-physical and physical family violence is occurring the non-physical coercive behaviours are not always charged as a separate offence. Sorry, I misunderstood what charging rates meant. I understood that this is intended to reduce the likelihood of repeat trauma to a victim/survivor in court proceedings. This does not mean the perpetrator's actions as a course of conduct are not brought to the court's attention, rather evidence of coercive or controlling behaviours on a part of an accused is often adduced by prosecution services as relationship or context evidence.

This type of evidence can support prosecutions for different charges, including crimes of physical and sexual violence. This approach avoids a victim/survivor being required to give evidence on multiple occasions and I certainly look forward to the release of draft national principles for consultation in September which will identify the common features and the impacts of coercive control and the importance of co-ordinated approaches to respond to coercive control including identifying gaps in community understanding.

Just to digress and talk about a very normal situation on television, I do not know if anyone is watching the series *The Twelve*, which has Marta Dusseldorf and Sam Neill in it. It is a courtroom drama. The 'twelve' stands for the 12 members of the jury and it follows the lives of the 12 members of the jury and indeed, counsel. It is being run on Foxtel at the moment. There is a coercive control relationship in there. It is very easy to identify when you are educated to understand what coercive control is. You see that in the television show. It is quite educative in seeing it. It is a standout awareness-raising of that type of relationship. It is non-physical, it is more verbal-abusive and controlling behaviour to do with children. It is a really interesting insight into how even a drama series can use that as a real life scenario.

I will check if I have some responses for Dr Woodruff. Some of what I have said in response to Ms Haddad addresses some issues, but I want to go through behavioural-change programs in relation to the comment by Women's Legal Service.

Dr Woodruff - I am sorry if I have asked the same questions. It has been a while.

Ms ARCHER - That is okay. With respect to the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program, I am advised that individuals who complete the program in any format record significantly lower levels of family violence offending post-program than offenders who do not. I note that Community Corrections actively work to improve the program to amalgamate more evidence-based practice into program content, including the use of the 'risk, need, responsivity' principles which are shown in research to have positive impacts. On these matters, Community Corrections has worked in collaboration with the experts at Hall McMaster and Associates to develop the program, which also meets the national operating standards for perpetrator interventions, to which Tasmania is a signatory.

With respect to the EQUIPS Program, I am also advised that the program has been reviewed and found to be effective with about 74 per cent of participants having no follow-up reconvictions.

In relation to what standards apply to the Behavioural Change Programs, again, another Women's Legal Service comment, Tasmania is a party, as I said, to the National Operating Standards Perpetrator Intervention. Community Corrections advise that the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program has been reviewed back in 2018, which found that it meets the National Operating Standards for perpetrator interventions, and concluded that it was a valid and reliable program.

The report was conducted independently by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies. For the Perpetrator Programs, Community Corrections also run the EQUIPS Domestic Abuse Program. This program was developed by New South Wales and they continue to maintain and update the program. It meets their established practice standards as well. The Men Engaging New Strategies (MENS) program is run through Relationships Australia, and similarly meets applicable accreditation requirements.

I note that information-sharing and operations and service delivery occurs under Safe at Home on an ongoing basis through regular integrated case co-ordination and inter departmental meetings.

Addressing the issue of why the bill does not include reforms to extend the definition of family violence beyond intimate partners, Tasmania's Family Violence Act performs part of the Government's integrated response to family violence under the Safe at Home framework. The services provided under this framework align with the relationship definitions provided under the Family Violence Act. Any amendment to the relationship definitions under the Family Violence Act will require comprehensive analysis to avoid significant implications of the Safe at Home services, and to ensure victims/survivors remain appropriately supported.

I note that the family and domestic violence frameworks vary across the states and territories. Tasmania's framework, Safe at Home, is widely seen as a leading design. For instance, it won gold in the 2019 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards which recognise and reward good practice in the prevention or reduction of violence and other types of crime in Australia.

Other forms of violence occurring within family environments, such as elder abuse, are being responded to under separate frameworks, and the government is committed, under Action 30 of the Safe Homes Families Communities Action Plan, to legislative reform to strengthen legal responses to family and sexual violence. Ongoing reform to the Family Violence Act is being considered by the Department of Justice in consultation with Safe at Home partners.

In relation to the issue of training, I would like to address police training in particular. Police officers receive training in two UTAS-taught modules in victimology and family violence policing. Police officers also undertake other family violence training. In 2017, Tasmania Police engaged UTAS to improve investigative interview training led by expert input at recruit and specialist interviewing levels. Police have a training day every five weeks on new areas of law and initiative. In addition, every family violence incident response is reviewed by a supervisor for quality purposes.

In relation to the issue of children and the Women's Legal Service referring to the application to children, we are currently considering steps in other jurisdictions to expand their definitions of people affected by family violence. Family violence against children is currently

addressed through existing criminal offences and the Safe at Home integrated service and, of course, we are always open to future improvements in this area. Indeed, that is something for me to monitor and to ask my department to monitor.

That has captured what we can provide the House at this stage regarding those issues that were raised by stakeholders and ongoing discussions that we are having. Mr Speaker, I again thank my department for the significant work and time it takes to put together law reform of this nature, particularly when there is a criminal aspect to it. There is always comparative work that needs to occur across jurisdictions, but also across all of our legislation so that there is not some unintended consequence in any new law that we introduce.

We consulted widely in these matters, including with the Chief Justice and the Chief Magistrate; the DPP is essential to this; and other legal service providers; and of course the Women's Legal Service was essential to these issues as well as Sexual Assault Support Services and other important stakeholders in this area. I thank everyone for their input in the provision of this bill, including the incredible work that our Office of Parliamentary Counsel does. We have a very tight agenda this year and a very big agenda to get through on occasion, and I thank them for their dedicated and hard work.

I thank my SLP people accompanying me. SLP does all of the legislative policy work for us in the Department of Justice.

I again thank members for their contributions and I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read the second time.

FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORMS BILL 2022 (No. 10)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4 -

Section 4 amended (Interpretation)

Dr WOODRUFF - This is a question to the Attorney-General. We would like to understand the conditions that clause 4(b) would unfold within. This part changes the definition of harassing, and includes a new sub-part about making unwelcome contact so that harassing means doing any one or more of the following actions in respect of a particular person. This would add making unwelcome contact, directly or indirectly, with the person.

Our amendment, which I will read to the House is, page 6, clause 4(b), proposed new paragraph (j), after 'person', insert:

"; unless such contact is reasonable having regard to the circumstances".

We are concerned to understand the reasons for using the language. 'Unwelcome' is unusual language. It is quite an open term - a very wide term - and there are other parts under

the definition of harassing, for example subsection 4(h) of the Family Violence Act 2004 that says:

using the internet or any other form of electronic communication in a way that could reasonably be expected to cause the person to be apprehensive or fearful.

There are other parts of the definition which invoke the important principle of reasonableness. This is broad. It is not only direct unwelcome contact, but it is indirect unwelcome contact. We wonder whether, in addition to including a multitude of forms of telecommunication, which are already mentioned under the definition of harassment, it would presumably include third-party contact?

There is a range of circumstances, and this definition of harassing is only used in the act under the making of a Police Family Violence Order. It is not referred to under the making of a Court Family Violence Order. I would like to understand the circumstances where the police might be called to an incident and that would lead to the making of a Police Family Violence Order. It may well be that the alleged perpetrator and the victim/survivor are living together. They might be required not to live together. They may have joint assets. They may have shared children or pets. There may be a lot of things that are happening that may reasonably require some communication between the perpetrator and the victim/survivor. It might also be that they are not living together, but they are in a stage of trying to separate their finances and in that situation, it might also be that there is a reasonable requirement for contact and through a third party.

All of those things could be in a Court Family Violence Order. They could be quite clearly delineated. It could be quite clear who is allowed to talk to whom, in what situations, on what matter and which, if any, other parties are allowed to be involved. In a police family violence order, it is quite a stretch to imagine that all those situations would have been mapped out, potentially, in the beginning. This amendment seeks to put the prohibition on unwelcome contact: it remains as is, so it keeps the status quo that the definition of harassing also includes making unwelcome contact directly or indirectly with the person, but it adds an extra condition which is that unless the contact is reasonable, having regard to the circumstances. It puts the onus of making that case not on the victim/survivor but on the perpetrator or the defence for the perpetrator.

It seems as though it gives the prospect for the reality of the situation we are talking about without giving any wriggle room, I suppose, for the sorts of things we need to caution for, such as coercive control. We obviously want to rule that out, but a case would have to be made that the contact was reasonable or was warranted.

Ms ARCHER - In relation to that amendment I can provide some commentary around that. The inclusion of 'unwelcome contact' was drafted in response to Safe at Home interdepartmental committee feedback and in consultation with our prosecution services. It arose in response to what is seen as a gap in the way 'harassing' is commonly understood in the community and its definition in the act. I note that the Magistrates Court has considered the common and statutory meaning of the word 'harassing' and whether harassment could be committed by a single act. It determined that it could and found that a condition to not threaten, harass, abuse or assault could be understood as providing a protection to a person from contact with the respondent which is unwelcome. That was in the case of *Howe S, 2013, TasMC33*.

The amendment to the definition of 'harassing' will incorporate the concept of unwelcome contact so that there is a distinction between ordinary contact not intended to amount to family violence, harassment and stalking. Such an amendment is intended to better capture harassing conduct as a form of family violence and support prosecution proceedings so as to hold family violence offenders accountable for their behaviour. We would be very reluctant to support the amendment to, as you say, keep the status quo based on the work done by our Safe at Home interdepartmental committee feedback and feedback from prosecution services as to how these definitions operate in court, in practice. For that reason alone, the Government will not be supporting the amendment.

Ms HADDAD - Thank you to the member for Franklin for explaining the reasoning behind the amendment. I have had a chance to look at it now and the arguments the member for Franklin put forward were eminently logical. I can imagine that there would be times where contact might be inevitable and might not be intended to be used in a way that is harassing or perpetrating family violence.

As to the wording of the amendment, if it were to be accepted it would need to make clear that the contact might be reasonable in regard to the circumstances but the conduct is still not acceptable, because the intention of the Family Violence Act and the amendment that led to that amended definition of 'harassing' is definitely clear that the intent is that the parliament does not condone or want to see harassing conduct perpetrated in family violence situations, but as the member for Franklin said, the definition is very broad so, for example, contacting a person by post, telephone, electronic or other means could definitely be used in a harassing way that might also be inevitably necessary for things like divorce proceedings and that kind of thing.

The minister has made it clear that the Government cannot support the amendment but I would like to seek some clarification. She spoke about how the factors in the definition of 'harassing' might be considered by a court but that did not cover how it might be considered in the development of a police family violence order rather than a court-mandated family violence order. I cannot remember what the rules are about speaking on amendments in Committee but if there is time perhaps the minister could address that question about how a police family violence order might take into account the fact that it could be inevitable that some contact is required but that harassing conduct is of course always unacceptable.

I know that this is probably not allowable in Committee but because I had already made my contribution on the bill and could not speak again on the second reading debate and we have had a long winter recess, I want to very quickly put on the record my respect for former minister Jacqui Petrusma and the work she was doing in the space of family violence reform. I know it was a particular passion of hers and she was implementing some significant change when it came to police family violence training, and that came to mind when the Attorney-General was speaking about that in her summing-up comments.

We have all talked about police family violence training in here. I spoke about it in my second reading contribution and was very encouraged. I think I spoke about it on the second reading on this bill. I was very encouraged by some comments that the former minister and the now former police commissioner made at Estimates regarding some significant changes the former minister, Mrs Petrusma, was making around police family violence training, recognising that many of us in this place, including me, Ms O'Byrne and others, have spoken about the need for mandated, consistent and regular updates to police family violence training.

Sometimes there is an excellent response from police when people visit police stations with family violence cases. At other times it can leave a bit to be desired. It has been described as a bit of Russian roulette so I was really pleased and encouraged that the former minister was embarking on that work in a very cross-party way. She really wanted to take the politics out of it, I think we all do, and the Attorney-General has shown her record in updating our family violence laws that this is something that is very much a whole-of-parliament job and something we can usually all agree about.

I know it is a bit unorthodox but I wanted to take the first opportunity I had to pay my respect to former minister Petrusma's work and her passion, particularly regarding police family violence training. The new minister, Mr Ellis, is in the Chamber and I look forward to him hopefully continuing the work that Mrs Petrusma began and hopefully in that same bipartisan/tripartisan way that she was pursuing the specific work that was going on in her department around updating and increasing training available to police.

Thank you for your indulgence, Chair.

Ms ARCHER - I can talk again. I think I have unlimited time.

I will take the opportunity as well, because it has just reminded me and it saves on the adjournment time. I hate it when people leave because it sounds like something has happened to them when you are talking in the past tense. Jacquie was from the class of 2010 with me; there are only a few of us left. She is a very dear friend and will still be, of course. Her contribution to this place is quite significant. We have also heard comments today about her significant contribution to her electorate.

Jacquie is one of the few of us who seemed to manage to juggle local member work at the same time as holding many portfolios. She did that very effectively but sometimes at the expense of spending time with her family. I know what that is like. We all know what that is like. Ultimately, that is what led to Jacquie's retirement.

She had an incredible love for the job and her electorate, and was very passionate about this issue. Holding the Police, Fire and Emergency Management portfolio and also the portfolio of Prevention of Family Violence gave her that insight that she could provide to the portfolios, having had personal experience.

As I said in response to one of Dr Woodruff's questions about training, police now have regular opportunities for training in relation to new areas of laws and initiatives. They have a training day every five weeks. That is quite significant and quite regular in relation to that particular issue.

On the amendment, to provide more explanation, it is about unwelcome contact in a physical sense, so in their presence. The magistrates court said that the common meaning of harassing could be committed by a single act and that a police family violence order or a family violence order says 'to harass', which is commonly understood as providing protection from contact that is unwelcome. This definition makes this clearer to reflect what the magistrates court said was the common situation occurring.

Dr Woodruff - Sorry, could you please repeat the magistrates' definition?

Ms ARCHER - The definition we are providing in this bill, in that clause, makes it clearer to reflect what the magistrates court feedback was. This is a direct result of circumstances that are occurring. That is why I said I cannot support the amendment being put because it is about unwelcome contact in a physical sense, that is, in their presence. That was the common meaning of harassing, and that it could be committed by a single act.

The police family violence order and the family violence order says 'to harass', which is commonly understood as providing protection from contact that is unwelcome. Adding 'unwelcome contact' is consistent with existing limbs in the definition of harassing, such as contacting in any way a person by phone, email, et cetera. These existing limbs have not required explicit allowance for reasonable contact. Any breach of existing elements of harassing or this new element is a matter for the court, ultimately, as to whether the conduct, on facts, amounts to harassment. The Anti-Discrimination Act also uses 'unwelcome' in the prohibition of sexual harassment, adding further explanation to that. I do not think I can take it any further at this stage.

Dr WOODRUFF - I would still like some clarification because of what I was talking about before. You talked about how the court reads these things but, as I said earlier, this is fundamentally about how the police read these things, because this is prior to a court test. This is about police interpreting the act. Can you clarify from what you have read, does that mean that any contact that is subjectively considered unwelcome by the victim/survivor is unwelcome contact?

In asking these questions, I want to make it very clear that I am in no way undermining the reality of the sort of harassment used by many family violence perpetrators against victims/survivors, the ongoing stalking and coercive control involved or the importance of having strong mechanisms to protect victims/survivors. I am trying to understand whether a person could be considered to be violating their family violence order if they informed the victim/survivor of important matters that affect both parties on the basis that the victim/survivor decided it was unwelcome?

I go back to the earlier examples I had about electricity supply, things that are happening to children, things that are happening to pets. I recognise when saying that, that that sort of contact can be used as a form of coercive control and may not be justifiable. It might be repeated and unwelcome. That is obviously a matter of the circumstances and it goes to our amendment, which is about trying to provide the possibility that the circumstances might make that contact not fall in the definition of harassment but be a reasonable form of contact.

Ms ARCHER - I am having trouble trying to understand the amendment because unwelcome contact is unwelcome and to add the words, 'unless such contact is reasonable having regard to the circumstances', waters down the fact that someone says it is unwelcome. What the magistrates court is trying to do is say that harassment is unwelcome contact. That is what we are trying to achieve here. The magistrates court is trying to get a provision in here that says, 'harassment is unwelcome contact'.

Dr Woodruff - It is a subjective test.

Ms ARCHER - It has to be.

Dr Woodruff - There is no contact that could be made, then, under any circumstances that would be considered to be reasonable -

Ms ARCHER - If it is considered harassing and it is unwelcome. But remember, I said it is in the physical sense, so in the presence of someone. We are talking about those situations where that harassment is -

Dr Woodruff - So, a physical presence?

Ms ARCHER - That was the circumstance that they were talking about in the definition.

Dr Woodruff - This is where I am confused because it talks about 'indirect'. How can you have a physical presence when it is indirect?

Ms ARCHER - It is both. It is physical and non-physical. I think what we are saying is that the circumstances that more commonly arise are physical, in terms of the magistrates court feedback provided as the basis for the provision. As it says in the clause, it is either direct or indirect. It is capturing all unwelcome contact. I do not know why you would want to water that down.

Dr Woodruff - It is not about watering down -

Ms ARCHER - Your amendment does because it provides this unusual, 'unless such contact is reasonable, having regard to the circumstances'. I do not understand why you would want to do that when what we are doing is trying to heighten the definition of harassing, that it includes unwelcome contact.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8 agreed to.

Clause 9 -

Section 16 amended (Family violence orders)

Dr WOODRUFF - I take the opportunity to ask a question about the participation and rehabilitation programs. Attorney-General, I heard what you said about the EQUIPS Program and the review that was done in 2018. You said that the review found that the EQUIPS Program meets practice standards and that the outcomes were valid and reliable. I do not think either of those things get to the point that a number of the submitters made, which was their questions about the evidence base that we have of the effectiveness of these programs. The fact that they are valid and reliable and that they meet practice standards just means that they are well undertaken and they can be repeated multiple times and get the same outcome. However, is the outcome strongly effective?

In gender equality and rape and domestic violence, their submissions note the lack of research regarding the effectiveness of these programs in actually generating behavioural change. They also note that the evidence base is developing, but it seems that the jury is out - to use possibly an apt term in this situation - that the programs are very effective. We have to

do what we can in this space, there is no doubt about that, so we are not suggesting that we should not be putting effort into these programs.

However, from the literature, there seems to be a big difference in the quality of programs and the type of outcome regarding behaviour change from offenders. The question that was raised by the Rape and Domestic Violence Services submission is that they have to be adequately supported and resourced, that any mandated program has to be trauma-informed and culturally accessible.

Could the Attorney-General please talk to whether the programs that EQUIPS are running in Tasmania are based on a trauma-informed practice and whether they are culturally accessible? In other words, do they provide their training in other languages, if required, or in a simplified form of training if needed? Has extra money been put in the budget towards running these programs in Tasmania?

Ms ARCHER - I answered those questions.

Dr Woodruff - Maybe you did talk about the budget. I apologise if I did not hear.

Ms ARCHER - I think you were out.

Dr Woodruff - I do not remember you talking about whether they were trauma-informed and culturally accessible.

Ms ARCHER - Dr Woodruff, as I said in response to some of your earlier questions and indeed the follow-up questions, with respect to EQUIPS, I am advised the program has been reviewed and found to be effective with about 74 per cent of participants having no follow up reconvictions. These things are reviewed and I did actually talk about how Community Corrections had reviewed the FVOIP program. I get sick of repeating what it is. That was back in 2018, which found that it met the national operating standards for perpetrator interventions and concluded that it was a valid and reliable program. The report was conducted independently by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies.

Community Corrections also run the EQUIPS domestic abuse program and that program was developed by New South Wales and they continue to maintain and update the program. It meets their established practice standards as well. I referred to the men's program and explained what that stood for and that it is run through Relationships Australia and similarly meets applicable accreditation requirements. I noted also that information sharing on operations and service delivery occurs under the Safe at Home program on an ongoing basis through regular integrated case coordination and interdepartmental committee meetings.

With funding through Safe at Home as well: I referred to the funding. I am also advised the EQUIPS program has been reviewed, as I have said, and found to have similar therapeutic outcomes for both indigenous and non-indigenous offenders with 73 per cent of indigenous and 74 per cent of non-indigenous participants having no follow-up reconvictions and so I suggest that the service is culturally sensitive.

Dr Woodruff - And English as the second language?

Ms ARCHER - That I would need to check but I am pretty sure that because we have indigenous participants that we would equally have culturally and linguistically diverse participants as well. I need to check what is provided in that respect.

In relation to trauma informed, I do not have the information as to whether there is direct trauma-informed training but I know that all of these courses are conducted sensitively in terms of the trauma that people experience by the very nature of it being to do with family violence.

Formal trauma-informed training: I need to check that and I do not have the right officials with me to be able to pluck that information directly. I am aware of this at the moment because of the work to do with the commission of inquiry that any services related to children that is becoming far more commonplace and I do not want to say, 'Yes, it is', when I do not have that information in front of me. I know that it is obviously sensitive to the circumstances because the very nature of the programs are in response to family violence situations.

Sitting Times

Mr STREET (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Madam Deputy Chair, I move -

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

I indicated earlier that we planned to sit past 7 o'clock to make up for the time lost with the delayed start today. It is not our intention to sit very late but we will sit past 6 o'clock, so I need to lift the adjournment.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10 agreed to.

Clause 11 -
Section 39A repealed

Dr WOODRUFF - I know that the submissions were written some time ago, so it may be that some aspects of the comments that were made by the Rape and Domestic Violence Service and Women's Legal Service might be slightly out of date. However, both those submissions made statements about their concern at the repealing of this part of the principal act. It is considered, I understand, by the Government to be an administrative formality because the report has been finalised, but I am not sure whether the report has been made public. At the time of the submissions it had not been made public. The only report that had been provided and tabled at the time was an interim report.

More to the point, as the Rape and Domestic Violence Service made clear, it is about a message that the Government does not intend to continue conducting reviews in future into the effectiveness of electronic monitoring. Perhaps this is not the case. If the Attorney-General wants to correct that view we would be grateful. They are strongly urging the Government to

consider legislative requirements to regularly review the effectiveness of electronic monitoring at least every two years and to make the results of those reviews public. It is relatively new in this technology and it has been very effective from the evidence that was available and has been presented so far.

Is it the Government's intention to continue without a legislated requirement to provide ongoing data and to draw it together in some reporting format and make that information publicly available? It sounds as though it would be very useful for the domestic and family violence abuse sector and potentially for courts to understand the effectiveness of that technology.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Dr Woodruff. Clause 11 of the bill intends to repeal section 39A of the Family Violence Act. This provision is being repealed because its requirements have been satisfied. Since its inception as a nation-leading measure, there have been two reviews of Project Vigilance, which is the electronic monitoring of offenders, tabled in parliament.

I note that on 10 November 2021 an interim review prepared by the Department of Justice was tabled in parliament and an external longitudinal review by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies was tabled on 9 November 2021. This met and exceeded the requirements of section 39A.

The success of the program has now led to its nationwide expansion through a \$20 million Commonwealth-funded rollout - I think that was this year - while it was announced last year the Tasmanian Government has committed \$2.4 million to continue and expand the scope of Tasmania's successful Project Vigilance program. That program is now being fully run. It has always been run by the Department of Justice through our Monitoring and Compliance Unit but it was funded by the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Now that money is going directly to the Department of Justice to continue with the monitoring and compliance of family violence offenders.

We will continue to engage with the stakeholders on the operation of Project Vigilance and provide updates as part of our usual reporting practices. I note that on 10 November 2021 I tabled in parliament the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES) evaluation of Project Vigilance. In its report, TILES has recommended that Project Vigilance be continued and the Government committed that \$2.4 million to continue the electronic monitoring of the Family Violence Orders program which was allocated to the Department of Justice. Part of this funding will be used to increase staffing at the Safe Families Coordination Unit to deliver the program until June 2023 and extend its scope. Community Corrections will also continue to be involved in monitoring processes so our Monitoring and Compliance Unit is run through Community Corrections within our Department of Justice.

Project Vigilance is a program that is integrated into the Safe at Home whole-of-government service system. It works hand-in-hand with our service providers, coordinated under the Safe at Home governance framework to meet its objectives of increased safety to women and their children subjected to family violence; increased perpetrator accountability; an increase in convictions for family violence and associated offences; and reduced social and justice-related costs.

TILES determined that the project has been successful in achieving these objectives. I note feedback in the report indicating that electronic monitoring has allowed perpetrators to focus on rehabilitation while victims/survivors experienced agency and freedom, allowing them to feel more confident about making decisions that would keep them safe. That was certainly the aim of that electronic monitoring and it has indeed provided that safety and security based on our statistics, so that is incredibly pleasing.

In the Safe Homes, Families, Communities action plan, the Government has committed to ongoing evaluation and reform. Through implementation of action 25, the project will be extended to a broader range of offender risk profiles, beyond high risk, that exhibit indicators of persistent perpetration of intimate partner violence. I understand that Tasmania Police has been upgrading electronic monitoring equipment to improve battery life and cellular coverage as well.

I hope that addresses Dr Woodruff's query about that section, in that it indeed has served its purpose, because its requirements have been satisfied.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, it was excellent to hear that overview. I asked about reporting in future. It is obvious there is a strong commitment in Tasmania, and across the country, so there will be reporting as part of that?

Ms Archer - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - And publicly available? You mentioned two stakeholders.

Ms Archer - Sorry, it is a different section of our department.

Dr WOODRUFF - You mentioned it would go to stakeholders, but I wondered whether it would be publicly available.

Ms Archer - I will see if I can get an answer now, on whether the reporting is published.

Dr WOODRUFF - Other states are rolling out electronic monitoring now?

Ms ARCHER - Yes, I can talk to that. As a result of, I think it was the federal campaign recently, Anne Ruston, who was the minister at the time, had visited and I showed her our Monitoring and Compliance Unit. She was very impressed by it and certainly by Project Vigilance. Money was committed, possibly even earlier than that, to other states accessing funding to set up something similar. Some states already had electronic monitoring, but it was about how we had done Project Vigilance with the Family Violence Order monitoring. There is funding that states and territories can access to either further improve or establish those services.

I cannot provide you with an answer about whether Safe at Home reports publicly, but as I said in my answer, there will be ongoing evaluation and reform. It is through implementation of action 25 that the project will be extended to a broader range of offender risk profiles beyond high risk, so there will be that monitoring and marking.

Dr Woodruff - Yes, sounds like there will be information about it.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 34 agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

Report adopted.

Bill read the third time.

HEALTH LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2022 (No. 19)

Second Reading

[5.17 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - The purpose of this bill is to make minor amendments to several health-related acts. The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring that Tasmania's legislation remains up to date and fit for purpose. Accordingly, this bill proposes minor amendments to update, clarify and improve the operation of several pieces of legislation. I will now outline the reasons behind each of the main proposed changes.

Amendments to the definition of 'paramedic': Under the Ambulance Service Act 1982 and Ambulance (Service) Paramedic Regulations 2014, a paramedic is a person who is registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) in the paramedic profession. Paramedicine became a regulated profession under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) on 1 December 2018. Since then, it has been a requirement for all paramedics to be registered with the Paramedicine Board of Australia and to meet the board's registration requirements before being able to lawfully practise in Australia. Sections of the Ambulance Service Act that are concerned with defining paramedics and the Ambulance Service (Paramedic) Regulations predate this requirement.

This bill proposes removing the definition of paramedic from the Ambulance Service Act and instead inserting a new, contemporary definition for the term in the Acts Interpretation Act 1931. Under the proposed new definition, the term 'paramedic' is defined to mean a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) in the paramedicine profession. This is consistent with the definition provided for the term through section 3AB of the Ambulance Service Act and the Ambulance Service (Paramedic) Regulations and is consistent with the requirements of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania).

The term 'paramedic' is also used in the Poisons Act 1971 and in the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021. In both cases, the term is defined with reference to the meaning of paramedic that is set out in the Ambulance Service Act.

As members will know, except where otherwise expressly provided, the provisions of the Acts Interpretation Act have application in the interpretation and construction of all Tasmanian

acts, expect in clearly defined instances. The bill proposes amending the Poisons Act and the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act to remove the definitions of 'paramedic' contained in those acts in favour of the Acts Interpretation Act's definition in this context.

The bill also proposes rescinding the Ambulance Service (Paramedic) Regulations on the basis that they will no longer be required.

Amendments to the definition of 'pharmacist': the term 'pharmacist' is used in various Tasmanian acts. Some acts both use and define the term while others simply use it. The bill proposes inserting a new definition for the term 'pharmacist' in the Acts Interpretation Act 1931. The definition reflects the definition set out in the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1995, the Asbestos-Related Diseases (Occupational Exposure) Compensation Act 2011, the Public Trustee Act 1930, and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988. It will apply in the interpretation and construction of these acts and in the interpretation and construction of other acts that use the term but do not define it.

There are two acts that use the term 'pharmacist' in unique ways. The first of these is the Poisons Act 1971. The Poisons Act uses the term 'pharmaceutical chemist'. Under section 3 of that act, the term 'pharmaceutical chemist' is defined to mean a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) in the pharmacy profession that does not include a person who holds provisional, student or non-practising registration on that profession.

The Poisons Act also uses the term 'pharmacy trainee'. That term is defined under section 3 of the act to mean a person who holds provisional registration in the pharmacy profession. This differentiation reflects the registration scheme that exists for pharmacists under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Australia) and the requirement for a pharmacist to undertake a period of training and to be provisionally registered for this purpose before progressing to general registration.

The bill proposes retaining this differentiation, but replacing the terms 'pharmaceutical chemist' and 'pharmacy trainee' with a new, more contemporary terms that better align with the language used in the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania).

The second act to use the term 'pharmacist' in a unique way is the Pharmacy Control Act 2001. That act defines the term 'pharmacist' to mean a person who holds general registration under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Tasmania) in the pharmacy profession. The Pharmacy Control Act is concerned with pharmacy ownership, and requires a pharmacist owner to hold general registration in the pharmacy profession. Retaining the definition as drafted is consistent with this requirement.

The definition of 'pharmacist' proposed to be included in the Acts Interpretation Act will not apply to the Poisons Act and Pharmacy Control Act. Instead, the definitions for the terms that are provided in the acts themselves will apply.

The bill proposes amending the Health Act and Health (Fees) Regulations to, in effect, relocate the definition of 'hospital services' from the regulations to the act. This is needed as the definition is used in the acts as well as in the regulations. Other than a minor change to the definition of 'health service establishment', the definitions are themselves not changing.

Amendments to the Poisons Act and Poisons Regulations: as I have already noted, this bill proposes minor amendments to update, clarify and improve the operation of several pieces of legislation. In relation to the Poisons Act and Poisons Regulations, the bill proposes several amendments to update references to pharmacists and to correct the spelling of the word 'authorize' and its derivatives. These are minor technical changes that do not change the legislation's use or application.

The bill also proposes more substantial amendments to sections of the act relating to the monitored medicines database and to provisions regulating to drugs of dependence.

The bill proposes amending provisions that require prescribers and dispensers to check the monitored medicine database to provide for the drafting of regulations which effectively exempt certain prescribers and dispensers from those requirements.

The bill also proposes amending provisions that make it an offence to make a drug of dependence available to a person in certain relevant circumstances to provide for the drafting of regulations which, again, effectively exempt certain prescribers from those offences.

The circumstances in which regulations may be considered include circumstances involving patients who are in receipt of pain medication as part of their end-of-life care. The amendments also propose minor changes to section 59E of the Poisons Act. Those proposed changes are needed to allow the secretary to authorise a medical practitioner, dentist or other prescriber to make more than one narcotic substance for specified substance available to a patient and to specify an amount that is up to a maximum amount through a single authority. The amendments will streamline section 59E's operation and provide greater flexibility for prescribers without compromising any of the protections and oversight mechanisms that the section affords vulnerable patients.

Lastly, the bill proposes amendments to sections 10 and 151 of the Public Health Act. Section 10 of the Public Health Act provides for the appointment of persons as environmental health officers and medical officers of health. Environmental health officers and medical officers of health have various powers and functions under the Public Health Act including the power to enter and inspect premises and vehicles and the power to issue infringement notices.

The bill proposes amending section 10 of the Public Health Act to clarify the Director of Public Health's power to appoint a person with approved qualifications as an environmental health officer or medical officer of health for the purposes of the act. The proposed amendments will align the appointment process under section 10 of the Public Health Act to appointment processes in place under similar legislation such as the Food Act 2003 and the Radiation Protection Act 1995.

Given the nature of their powers and functions, the bill also proposes inserting provisions clarifying and removing any doubt about the validity of past appointments and of powers and functions exercised by environmental health officers or medical officers of health prior to the making of the amendments.

The bill proposes amending section 151 of the Public Health Act to clarify the enforceable nature of a requirement, imposed by the Director of Public Health, for a person, public authority or Agency or remove or destroy an article, item, goods or substances that, in

the Director's opinion, may cause a threat to public health. This amendment is of a technical nature and addresses a drafting anomaly.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[5.29 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to put our position on this Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill with regard to a number of pieces of health legislation. I can say from the outset that we will be supporting the bill. It has been a long time coming. I had to think back to when we received the briefing, and it was quite a while ago, and refresh my mind to the information that was exchanged between the minister's staff and the government department at the time. Thank you very much for the opportunity for that briefing.

As I said, we will be supporting this bill. It is largely administrative technicalities regarding names. I note that one of the changes came through the debate on the end-of-life choices bill and the changes to terminology raised during that debate and the passage of that bill through this place. I want to talk about the importance of that piece of legislation, and the importance of both the community and the parliament being updated on its progress.

Further to that, I was speaking to a number of our dedicated practitioners working in palliative care across Tasmania at Government House last week, at the Tasmanian Palliative Care Awards. I note all those who were nominated for awards this year and those who received awards. They make an outstanding contribution to providing holistic palliative care services across Tasmania, across our communities.

Some of the discussion I had with them last Tuesday evening was about the importance of ongoing funding for palliative care in Tasmania, the commitments made at the last state election and to understand better from this Government how those commitments will continue into the future. The minister may provide some further information on his summing-up today. I will also be writing to him to highlight some of those issues raised with me about that funding and the importance of good funding for palliative care services across Tasmania.

I do not have a lot to contribute on this bill because it is largely administrative but I want to take the opportunity this afternoon to talk about the health system. As many would know, I take every opportunity I can to talk about the state of Tasmania's health system and many of the issues we are seeing across the health system. What I want to talk about also relates to a number of the practitioners outlined in this legislation today.

It has been some time since we have had the opportunity to speak about the health system and the crisis in our health system in the parliament. We have not met here now for a considerable amount of time. Parliament was delayed by one week. We were meant to be here last week talking about the issues that are important to Tasmanians and resolving those issues. It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to look back over the course of the last couple of months and what has unravelled across our health system - in particular, the impact that has had on our healthcare workforce.

There is no doubt that during the winter break COVID-19 cases increased significantly across Tasmania. That put significant pressure on our health system and we saw each of our major hospitals reaching high escalation levels. We saw cancellations of elective surgery

across the state and we saw significant staff shortages - significant numbers of staff furloughed in quarantine or absent caring for their loved ones who had COVID-19. It was a pressure cooker, even more so than it is right now.

It is important to reflect on that and the way it was handled by the Government at the time. There did not appear to be a clear plan around the winter response during that period of heightened cases across Tasmania and how we were to manage how Tasmanians accessed emergency care particularly. There were instances of people being turned away from emergency departments or encouraged to access their local GP or other services in their community, which we know are heavily compromised. No matter where you live in Tasmania, it takes a long while to get in to see your GP.

We saw the Premier and Health minister send a delegation for his trade mission that did not include him. Over the course of those months, when we were seeing those increasing cases and all of the different things that happened across our health system during that time, we have raised concerns about the fact that right now in Tasmania we have a part-time health minister. That is no reflection on the Premier. It is simply a matter of fact. Being the Premier deserves your 100 per cent focus and dedication. Goodness knows, there are so many challenges facing Tasmanians and our state right now. That deserves a dedicated focus. So does the health system.

It is unheard of for there to be a premier of Tasmania retaining the health portfolio. It is a very unusual situation and it makes me question the reason for that. I understand that the Premier wants to continue in the role and wants to play that dedicated role but is it really the fact that as he looks across his backbench, across this Chamber on his side of the House, about who would be the likely candidate to step up and support the Premier and be the health minister of the day, because that is lacking right now, if you look across the other side of the Chamber.

We have concerns about it. We are not convinced that being the Premier and the Health minister can bring positive outcomes for the health system. You cannot possibly give both your 100 per cent focus all the time. That is one of the concerns we have been raising and it remains a concern because it has not been addressed.

The other concerning matter right now, no matter where you look across the health system, is the distress of our staff, whether it be our paramedics, nurses, midwives - all our healthcare workforce. They are under incredible pressure. They have been under that pressure for a long while but it has been heightened during the two-and-a-half years of the pandemic. They have been crying out for assistance, for a better pay deal and conditions from this Government. The Government says they are coming to the table and they are listening but they are not listening hard enough.

You only had to be at the event held here in parliament today for the CPSU to see that there were no Government members there listening to public sector workers about what they see as the key pillars for providing a better public service across Tasmania, about the pressures they face every day in their workplace. As parliamentarians, we do not ever know what it is like to be on the front line unless we listen to those working there under that pressure each and every day. It is a bit glib to say that you are listening, that you are coming to the table, if there were not any representations there.

I note that during the break I attended the ANMF conference in Launceston. Another anomaly at that event was there was no representation from the Tasmanian Government. That was disappointing because that was the perfect opportunity to hear from nurses and midwives, to hear the pressure they are working under day after day, about the issues that are important to them and some of the solutions they put forward about how to address those issues in Tasmania. To be listening, to be acting, you have to be actively engaging. That is not happening right now in Tasmania.

We have had strikes by nurses and midwives. We are up to the fourth one, which will be held tomorrow in Burnie. Unfortunately, I will not be able to be there, and I was not able to be in Devonport. I was in Hobart and Launceston, standing side by side with our nurses and midwives for better pay and conditions.

It was only last week we saw, only at the Royal Hobart Hospital, mind you, the Government giving nurses chocolates and coffee to say thanks. It was the same day it was announced that they were not eligible for the COVID-19 allowance, which this Government committed to paying to nurses and midwives. It was Forrest Gump who said life's a bit like a box of chocolates. He is quite right when it comes to this Government - you never quite know what you are going to get.

Even today, as these issues were raised in the parliament, the Premier made the announcement of the \$2000 payment to healthcare workers currently working in the health system. Why could that not have been done as part of the original package you put to the nurses, midwives and healthcare workers before their last strike action? I do not understand why it is always after the fact. Surely there should be some level of understanding about what they have been through for the last two-and-a-half years. To simply offer an incentive for people to return to the workplace is not enough. We have to give our healthcare workers, nurses, midwives, our paramedics who are going to strike on Thursday, something to stay for. They are not coping, they are choosing to leave Tasmania, they are choosing to leave their profession. That is because they cannot provide the care that they want to provide to their patients.

We learnt during Estimates that \$33 million in overtime was spent across the health system up to May of this financial year. How could that be money be better spent around retaining staff, attracting staff?

We also learnt about the impact of ambulance ramping and the cost of that being \$3 million last financial year. It just goes on and on. Over the last couple of weeks we have heard devastating stories about ambulance response times and ambulance ramping, where a Tasmanian lost their life after waiting for nine hours. That is simply unacceptable.

A whole-of-system approach is required and, to date, this Government has talked a lot about access solutions across our hospitals, right back to when Michael Ferguson was the Health minister but nothing has changed for Tasmanians.

I will move on now to talk a bit more about the importance of retention. The mental health and wellbeing of our paramedics, nurses, midwives and healthcare workers is at breaking point and even the resilience scan that was undertaken last year demonstrated some terrible experiences for our first responders and they cannot keep going the way they are. They need the support of this Government. They need better conditions, better wages. They need a reason

to stay. The Government says time and again that this is a problem right across the country and across the world. In Tasmania that is exacerbated because we have a highly dispersed population, an ageing population and the worst chronic health conditions in the country, so that makes it even more difficult for Tasmania and difficult for Tasmanians to access good health services.

Mr Speaker, the other point I will make about that is this Government's mantra about being able to access services when and where they need them. Right now, that is not happening in Tasmania. People cannot get access to services in rural and regional areas. They are having to travel out of those areas to the major centres. By centralising health services around Tasmania it means that those who are living in rural and regional communities quite often miss out and we do not have the level of support services funded to be going into those rural and regional communities to provide the level of service that is required.

That is emblematic also of our healthcare workforce when we look at recruitment to our rural and regional areas and the difficulty in that around wages and conditions but also incentivising people to come and work in rural and regional areas. We really need to focus on that. I know that the ANMF, the AMA, and others, have some great ideas about that and want to work with the Government to address many of these issues.

I am quite often miffed more recently by the fact that whenever it comes to an issue across access to services, this Government and the Premier deflect to the new federal Labor Government. It is deplorable.

Dr Woodruff - It is pretty shameful. There has been silence for eight years.

Ms DOW - That is exactly right, Dr Woodruff.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has been in office for nearly a decade and you had a similar situation with the federal Liberal Government and we never heard you talk about that. We never heard you talk about the federal Liberal Government and seeking assistance from them. This says more about the federal Labor Government than it does about your willingness to work or solve the problems across Tasmania, in that they actually are a government that will work co-operatively with the states and are focused on improving things, unlike the Morrison government.

Mr Jaensch - We were advocating for a 50/50 funding split with the previous government as well.

Dr Woodruff - You were not out in the media every day banging on about the failures of the federal government, never.

Ms DOW - Every day you deflect to the new Labor Government which has only been in government for three months. It is disgraceful. As a Tasmanian Government, one of your primary responsibilities is to provide services to our community. It is a fundamental roll of government. You need to be responsible and accountable and not deflect to the new federal Labor Government.

Mr Speaker, the last couple of points that I want to make follow on from when I spoke before about who would step up on the other side of the House to take on the Health portfolio.

These questions come to pass again as we see another minister leave this place. I put on the record my respect for minister Jacquie Petrusma. I wish her all the very best and thank her for her work in this place and across the Tasmanian community. She will be missed. She certainly made her mark here and I wish her all the very best.

In summing up, the last few months have been pretty atrocious when it comes to the health system across Tasmania and it is a continuation. It is atrocious at all levels. It is atrocious that our hard-working healthcare professionals are now taking industrial action and continue to do so despite offers being put on the table by the Government that obviously do not hit the mark. We saw nurses offered coffee and chocolate, but only if you work at the Royal. That in itself is insulting. They do not want coffee and chocolate. They want better pay. They want pay parity, better conditions, and they want the ear of this government and for their concerns to be addressed.

Of course, we saw what happened with the COVID-19 allowance, which must have been so bitterly disappointing for those healthcare workers who thought 'finally, there is going to be some financial recognition, even if it is not entirely what we wanted from the outset, but there will at least be some glimmer of recognition and compensation from this government,' but that was not to be. That all changed with the changes in the escalations at the hospital. I am pleased to see that the Premier and Health minister today has made an announcement, albeit in a strange sort of way, about a payment to our healthcare workers of \$2000. I will be interested to learn more about that, but it has taken too long to this point. That should have been included in the original negotiations and discussions with the relevant health unions.

The last point I want to make is that we need to get better at growing our own workforce in Tasmania. You only have to look at each of the professions outlined in this bill today to see where we have significant shortages of staff across the health service. We need to be looking at different career pathways, different scopes of practice. We have 30 per cent of our nursing workforce as graduate nurses across Tasmania. That means a very sharp change in the dynamic within the healthcare setting in that you do not have the older nurses there to support and develop these young professionals and support them to stay on when things are pretty tough.

There needs to be the introduction of the clinical coaches. I know the ANMF has also mentioned the need for more clinical nurse educators to support graduates across Tasmania. We are looking for more from the Government around that level of support as well, and obviously to be working with the University of Tasmania around career pathways across all aspects of the health system. We are not keeping pace, we have not done that well in the past, and it is something that is going to reach an even more critical point within the next five years with many of our workforce across the health setting retiring due to the ageing demographic of our workforce.

We need to be focusing on that now or we are going to struggle, as this Government is struggling, to get the basics right for Tasmanians, to make sure they have access to services, and more importantly that we have a healthcare workforce that feels valued, wants to stay, wants to be part of Tasmania's health system and helping the Tasmanian community, or we are not going to have them to provide those services. That is going to be dire for Tasmania.

[5.48 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, we are pleased to support this Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendments Bill. I also thank all the staff who provided us with

advice in the briefings that we had on this bill about three months ago now. We do not have any concerns with the minor amendments that are being made to a number of bills to provide consistency with the updated definitions and language, modernising and bringing them into national regulations and standards of language that is being used in these bills that are referred to in the acts that are referred to here.

I want to mention a little bit about section 38H, which is amended by clause 32, which relates to the dispensing of monitored medicines and the whole monitoring of medicines, and to say that this is a critical issue because we have registered drugs in the community and available upon prescription that can do great good; they save people's lives and they reduce suffering. They can also be very harmful if they are taken at the wrong times and at the wrong quantities. I commend the people involved in the work, the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, the Chief Psychiatrist, and other people who worked in Tasmania to introduce the real-time prescription monitoring system which we have had in place since 2009.

We were the first state in Australia and we led the charge on the real-time monitoring of prescription medicines. In particular, we were ahead of the curve in Australia in controlling the misuse of opioids and doing what we can to reduce levels of overdose and accidental deaths that come from the use of some pain medications in the wrong quantities or in the wrong combinations - things such as oxycodone, morphine and fentanyl. Fentanyl in particular was being heavily prescribed and over-prescribed, and led to many deaths around Australia and in Tasmania until the real-time prescription monitoring system, and the DORA, which is the clinical facing component of that, came online and was available to prescribers and pharmacists in 2011. Until then, sadly people lost their lives, and that could have been avoided.

There is no doubt that - as I understand it - this amendment is to enable regulations to be prepared so that there can be circumstances where the requirement for a dispenser to dispense a monitored medicine and in accordance with a prescription of a person, the dispenser must take all reasonable steps to check the monitored database for information in relation to the person. That is what it is in the act at the moment, and this amendment adds a subsection which says that the regulations may prescribe circumstances in which the dispenser need not comply with that section, which becomes subsection (1). I understand that is specifically going to be prepared in relation to aged care homes and other places where there is the regular provision of those sorts of prescription medications.

Clearly, there will be a lot of interest in how those regulations are prepared and how it will be governed, and that there will be the appropriate checks and balances. There is no doubt that we need a lot of checks and balances when there are facilities that have these potentially dangerous and harmful drugs on their premises in quantity - and not only in aged care. Ambulance stations are another example and that was tragically raised in the coronial inquest into the death of a paramedic who had access and purposely misused the availability of drugs, and it led to the tragic loss of his life. The regulation of medications within Ambulance Tasmania has been very important in safeguarding the mental health and lives of people who are working as paramedics.

Like Ms Dow, I cannot talk on this bill in a week where nurses are striking in the North West Regional Hospital later this week. Paramedics are striking. The ANMF and members have been out on the streets, in hospitals and out at the front of hospitals for months now, doing what they can. They are doing everything to try to get through to this Premier and Minister for Health and make him understand that coffee and biscuits and incremental change is not going

to be good enough. The Premier talked this morning in response to the question we asked about the changes that are needed in the health system. Although he talked about a whole range of good things that are happening, they are just the everyday business of Government. They are tidying stuff that frankly ought to have been done ten years ago. These are the sorts of things that people have been talking about for ages. That is the small stuff.

We are talking about needing funding for hundreds more paramedics. The Premier, the Minister for Health and previous Ministers for Health have also trotted out this figure of 240-something full time equivalent paramedics who have been employed since 2014. Where are they, when, after Friday and Saturday night, there are empty stations around the state. Where are those people? Are they some of people who are leaving Tasmania? Maybe they did get a job and they left. We know from the National Health Service and the Facebook posts they are doing in the south-west of the UK that they are actively focusing on Australian paramedics to recruit them to the UK, to the NHS. They need paramedics. We are training them and we are not giving them a career. We are not giving them conditions and we are not paying them relative to what they ought to be able to get for the work that they do, for what they can get in another state or in another country.

We are literally training people in Tasmania, in good faith - people who want to live and work here and they have to leave the state. They cannot afford it. It is so stressful. They cannot stand going to a shift on a Friday night, knowing how many calls will be coming through the station and that they will be forced to sit all night, ramped in a corridor in the Royal Hobart Hospital or the LGH. That is their job. That is what they do when they go to work; they sit in a corridor instead of being out attending to the urgent calls and being there, for people like the elderly gentleman who died because he did not get an ambulance to his house and was left lying on his own all night unattended. They did not get there on time because they were sitting in a corridor, and it drives people to utter despair. They are so stressed that they are forced to leave the profession and to leave the state. I have personally spoken to two people, recently, who have left or who are leaving Tasmania for that reason.

On top of that, you have the housing crisis and you have a Government that is refusing to do the minimum things that we can do. These are solutions to what seems like an unsolvable problem. There are really important things that we can do about the housing crisis in Tasmania, and yet the Liberal Government keeps refusing to do them. We can change the situation where you have hundreds and hundreds of Airbnbs, night after night, sitting with enormous price tags for the owners to make money. Meanwhile, that house is not in the market and people cannot afford to rent a property or buy a property, and people like paramedics and nurses have to leave. They cannot afford to live in a state where the housing prices are the highest in the country but the salary package is the lowest in the country. Why would they stay here? Why wouldn't they reverse that trend on both sides and move to Melbourne or Sydney or another place and have cheaper housing and a better paid job that is more commensurate with the amount of work they put into it?

This is the critical issue and when you have New South Wales making a commitment to employ 2000 more paramedics, and Victoria made a commitment in their last budget to put \$760 million into paramedics, when scaled down to the size of Tasmania, we are talking about, yes, we need 200 paramedics. That is actually what we need. It is not a choice unless the Premier is continuing to trade-off putting people's lives at risk every single day, which is what happens when people do not get the care in the time that they need.

We will continue to work with the nurses and the paramedics and all the other staff who work in hospitals. It is because of the COVID-19 pandemic that these things have become even more critical than they were before. That is yet another thing that the Premier could choose to do to reduce the impact of COVID-19 infection on hospitals. The recent modelling that was just released shows if we did introduce a mask-wearing mandate indoors, we would be cutting the risk of COVID-19 cases between now and November by 20 per cent. This was Australian research that was done: a 20 per cent reduction in COVID-19 cases. Would we not like to do that in Tasmania: have 20 per cent fewer people between now and November who are infected and worse, reinfected or re-reinfected with the virus? Each time a person gets reinfected with COVID-19 that increases their risk of a serious health outcome.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics research released yesterday has shown that Australia has had in the period of COVID-19 a 14 per cent increase in people who have died of diabetes and a 20 per cent increase in people who have died of dementia. We can do something about this. We can cut those figures because it is avoidable if you do not get infected in the first place.

The United Kingdom, the United States and Australia are showing an identical trend. The UK data released this week shows a 4 per cent increase in all deaths because of COVID-19. These are huge numbers and they are people who are dying unnecessarily. They end up in ambulances; they end up in hospital; they take up a bed; they need to recover and it takes a very long time if they are able to recover.

This is something that the Premier, Minister for Health, can be doing to reduce the pressure on the health system. People can wear masks indoors. Mandate wearing masks indoors while this COVID-19 pandemic has the amount of virus circulating that it is. Reduce the risk of reinfection and reduce the risk from that of serious health outcomes.

We very much support the changes to do with the definition of paramedics. We wonder why it took so long because I understand this is a change that brings us into a similar line to other medical professions and other registered professions. I wonder why it has taken since 2018 for that change to be made law because it enables private paramedics, those working in communities, to not have a different or restrictive purpose, and I understand it increases the opportunity for a person to be employed in a range of paramedical services which is obviously desirable.

I will finish up here and again thank the staff who provided us with that briefing. I encourage the minister to put his energies into changing the things that can be changed. It has been too long for this Liberal Government to be under-funding every single year the health system for us to have to suffer through any carping for the newly elected Labor Government about why things are not being done at that level when we have had radio silence for the last eight years with the Morrison and previous prime ministers' Liberal Governments about exactly the same issues. Why is there a difference between one day and the next? It is shameful to start to point the finger to Canberra when you were not prepared to do that earlier.

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I rise this evening to make a contribution on this bill. As has already been indicated by previous speakers, Tasmanian Labor supports the miscellaneous amendments, noting that it has taken a little while to get here but it is important nonetheless when there is an opportunity to speak about the health system and any

improvements, as administrative as they may be, to take this opportunity to stand on the way through.

I want to add to the comments that have been made in regard to the current status of our Tasmanian health system that seeks to support, or tries its best to support, Tasmanians not only in our urban areas where our major hospitals are but also reach right across Tasmania. We have no doubt heard in all of our electorates, particularly over this break when we have been back in the electorate, of the massive load being felt, not only the professional load being felt by health professionals across Tasmania but the emotional and mental load as a result of that being carried by so many.

Taking the opportunity to read some statistics into *Hansard*, weekly updates have been provided to back-in our great health professionals and share with the community the pressure that they are under and the load they are carrying for Tasmanians. Sometimes when I am in this place, and whether it be health, education or any of the other areas that are under stress in Tasmania, sometimes it feels like the Government does not deeply feel the realities of what is going on across Tasmania. I thought I would share some of these updates to make sure the Government does understand the depth and weight of these responsibilities.

For 22 July 2022, there are some statistics recorded about double shifts. There were 339 double shifts in that period, shifts worked short were 170 but staffing impacted due to COVID-19 was 328. Now as we go through weekly updates, the double-shift statistic is growing. On 22 July it was 339, by 29 July it was 388, by 5 August it was 642, and by 16 August it was 683. I have friends and family working in the system. I know that we hear from people all around but initially you would hear about health professionals feeling fatigued, stressed and upset about the challenges they faced. Now people are quite rightly concerned for both themselves and their colleagues' welfare in terms of the expectation of these loads, these extra shifts and the implications of not making yourself available and not being up to being able to deliver.

People are falling away from the service: great people, great Tasmanians, are falling away from the service because they do not have the internal feeling that they can continue. That is such a tragedy for Tasmania.

Recently, there has been a really powerful campaign by the ANMF. I am not sure whether everyone in this place has been aware or taking note but there have been personal stories regularly shared. I have been engaging with the campaign through social media. I am sure these things have been shared directly with the Premier, the minister. I know that others will be having face-to-face conversations with people but I want to take this opportunity to put on record some of the personal stories of people in our health service. As we know personal stories are so impactful and that is often what drives action.

At lunchtime today we had the opportunity to hear personal stories from a different sector. Choosing not to engage, or feeling that you actually understand when you have not heard directly - I do not think this provides the foundation for great policy, legislation or understanding to drive action. I will read some of these stories in. This letter to the Premier:

We can't support our new grads under the pressure of the system. They're thrown in the deep. Staff are leaving in huge numbers to work interstate for higher rates and safer staffing levels.

That was from an enrolled nurse in southern Tasmania. All of these letters are addressed to the Premier who is carrying the almost unbelievable load of being the Premier of Tasmania and the Minister for Health.

This is a letter to the Premier from an assistant in a nursing student area of southern Tasmania:

I work as an AIN and I am also about to finish my nursing degree. To say that I am scared about practising as a graduate nurse is an understatement. My work as an AIN has been eye opening into just how cracked and broken our health system is. Constantly I am doing double shifts, 17 hours sometimes to ensure patients are safe, because if I am not there, no one can give them the one-to-one care they desperately need to keep them safe.

I work one on one with patients who are at significant risk of falling or injuring themselves due to dementia, delirium et cetera. I work closely with nurses all shift. The amount of nurses who stay on to do double shifts is ridiculous. Not only that, but I am a full-time nursing student. I get paid absolutely nothing to work my butt off for a total of 800 hours.

My last placement was a shock. Every shift we were struggling to get a safe amount of nurses on the floor. One day, we only had three nurses for 15 high needs patients and without me, these patients would not have received a wash until night time or have even eaten their food.

To get this sense that we have people who have been in a system, dedicated their lifetime to these careers that are under pressure. To know that students at the early level of deciding to enter this career, conversations that I have had with people who thought they might want to be a nurse or another health professional but have decided to go on another path. We are losing such great opportunity and capacity from Tasmania because of these horrendous circumstances.

Another letter to the Premier, a registered nurse from southern Tasmania:

We are often understaffed with demands of acute and unwell patients. They are often abused by patients for wait times that they have been barely seen for about the last five or more hours. We are sick and tired of bearing the brunt and chaos that is from an under supported and underfunded failing health care system. We are angry and we are tired. Please help us.

Premier, we are not coping. We are at breaking point and the only reason we stay is for our colleagues and the patients who deserve more. Working consistently short staffed every shift and being a senior nurse is exhausting. We are trying to support our junior colleagues in an acute setting while looking after the most unwell on the ward and short staffed.

I can't count the overtime and doubles I've done in this last year. I can't count the amount of times I have gone home and crawled into bed because I've got nothing left for my family. I can't count the times I have not had a break on an eight or a 16- or 18-hour double. We work in PPE, we don't get to hydrate

because we don't have time and staffing just does not allow it. We barely get time to even go to the bathroom. We are burnt out and broken.

Patients will start dying due to the unsafe conditions we are working in and we will not be responsible. You will.

Letter to the Premier:

Last week I resigned. I have had enough. I have been a midwife for 10 years and whilst there have been tough times, I can say I have loved my job, and been proud to say what I do. Until now. I am not proud to be a midwife. I am not proud to give sub-par care to vulnerable women, their babies and their families.

I am not proud to work in an environment where every single employee wants to find another job.

I am not proud of a workplace that can't allow their staff to have a meal break, toilet break or go home on time because there is no-one else to care for their patients. I am not proud to work somewhere that there are often 50 per cent less staff than what is benchmarked as the safe requirement. I am not proud to go to work every day and wonder if today will be the day that that catastrophic event occurs and leaves me destroyed, having that on my conscience for the rest of my life.

I am proud of my incredible colleagues who turn up every day, often for double shifts in horrendous conditions to continually give their all in a damaged and broken system. I want to be a proud midwife again one day, but for now, I'm out.

A registered nurse from the north-west of Tasmania:

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

Closer to home in northern Tasmania:

I'm a registered nurse with 10-plus years in emergency department experience. However, currently I'm not practising because of the stress of working in a chronically underfunded and understaffed system that took a toll on my mental health.

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

An account from a registered nurse on the north-west coast.

Also from the north-west coast:

The way COVID has impacted the nursing profession as a whole is encompassing. The job we signed up for and the landscape in which we are practising is forever changed, and so our conditions and pay need to also change. I thought I knew where I would work and how I would progress in my career. Now I'm questioning if nursing will even be my profession. The staffing pressures, the high acuity of patients, the administrative demands and the unrelenting demands to function in a system that is not set up to respond quickly is breeding unheard frustration within nursing peers.

We cannot go on like this. The people of Tasmania need a functional health system. That system needs nurses. We need to feel valued and supported. To alleviate the staffing pressures, we need to be able to competitively recruit with our mainland hospitals but we cannot offer the same rates of pay, so why would they come?

We are trapped in a cycle that feels unending and there is only so much resilience, grit and collegial goodwill to get us through. It's exhausting; physically and mentally. Two-and-a-half years into the pandemic and no end in sight. We're all running on empty.

Back in the south, in southern Tasmania, a comment from a registered nurse:

We're being pressured to keep unwell patients out of our emergency department, even though we know they cannot get into their GPs. I get calls from their distraught family members when they end up waiting in emergency for 30-plus hours for a bed. I take their stress home with me and dread going back to work.

In the north:

We currently have a COVID outbreak on our ward. Staff are tired, staff are calling in sick because they're tired of working short. I feel like we're just surviving in damage control, trying to keep the patients safe. We are always working short and begging people to do extra hours or double shifts.

On the north-west:

Sometimes, no-one turns up to receive handover, so we are asked to do a double shift, after already working in such a chaotic, almost unmanageable shift with minimal to no help. You receive messages to work extra or double shifts constantly while already at work and on days off. There is no escape.

Previously encouraged to take hydration breaks, despite barely being able to take a toilet break and then receive an email reminding us of our paid meal break and that we are to return to work if our workload does not allow us to

have an adequate break, which is a regular occurrence. Often minimal support from NIC, NUM, and OHC on shifts for breaks.

No-one is staffed to relieve breaks. We rarely get morning tea. You spend your breaks stressing about the accumulating jobs to complete when you return because no-one is relieving you.

From southern Tasmania:

Premier, I have never felt so disheartened to go to work. We see so many people suffer unnecessarily because of ramping and bed block and we are the ones that get yelled at and abused about not having beds available when we have no say in how the hospital is staffed or run.

We get consulted but no-one ever collaborates or listens to us. In any other profession our working conditions would be considered abuse.

In the north:

I am a newly-graduated nurse and constantly question whether I made the right decision to be a nurse. I am anxious before every shift and feel guilty every time to have to turn down a double shift to maintain any sort of mental wellbeing.

From the south:

I am a registered nurse in the Emergency Department at the RHH. I have used all of my sick leave on mental health days away from the department as it is spirit-crushing, every single shift walking through the doors, seeing the defeated faces of my colleagues who don't have the staff, resources or support we need to provide adequate and safe patient care.

I see otherwise avoidable incidents occurring on every single shift as a direct result of the lack of support from the Government.

We write copious amounts of SRLS's, safety reports, regarding incidents in the workplace that either cause direct harm to patients and staff or have the potential to cause harm to patients and staff, and we're simply not seeing any real tangible action occurring once we've reported them.

Our department is stretched so far beyond our limitations that it is quite frankly a dangerous and terrifying place to work.

We are the lowest paid nurses in the entire country. A nurse working in Queensland took an eight-hour pay cut to come and live back in her home state of Tassie to get some time away. We are, to put it bluntly, heartbroken.

These personal stories - there are so many to recount and these are the stories that have been collected and shared but they're not all the stories and they're not the only stories that we hear from time to time. There are so many with consistent themes and consistent challenges

that demand and require a response in a way that respects the efforts and the burden that is being carried by health professionals.

From northern Tasmania:

Premier, we are not working tirelessly; we are absolutely exhausted. We have been gaslighted for long enough and the thanks is not enough to compensate for the work and responsibility we have. We are constantly told by management never to show our patients the distress of being under-staffed but when we're running out of chairs or beds in our clinic and there are up to 10 patients waiting for an average of one to two hours for their treatment, what can we say?

I am not taking the blame for the lack of patient safety anymore. I have a lot of passion for my work but more often than not I'm wondering if I'd be better off packing boxes in a warehouse for the same pay than day in, day out risk people's lives due to the unsafe staffing and working conditions.

I'm not alone. Wearing full PPE during our shift, not able to have a sip of water until the measly 30-minute lunch break we get. We're dehydrated.

When I vent about my day to friends that have office jobs or other normal jobs, they get shocked at the working conditions we have in a country like Australia. Meanwhile, this has become the norm.

I'm tired and if it doesn't improve soon, I'll put my scrubs to rest for good.

I'm a midwife and our conditions are shocking. The majority of our shifts do not get breaks and the care we're able to give patients is average.

We have new midwives coming through, working and learning in these conditions. It's a huge concern because these junior midwives are required to try to learn in these conditions but are unable to and we are unable to give them the support and education they need and, therefore, this will be detrimental in the future of nursing and midwifery in Tasmania.

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

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

From an enrolled nurse in northern Tasmania:

We are so short-staffed we had to call elderly clients who live home alone and tell them we have no nurse to attend for their clinical and personal care needs.

Premier, I am a mum of three, two with special needs, and a passionate nurse that has chosen to dedicate my career and my life to caring for others. This gives me purpose and I'm damned good at what I do but, far out, we're stretched beyond our means. We're tired, exhausted. We're working so many hours, often without a break, or most of the time going without basic necessities like a drink of water because we can't take off our PPE unless in the staff room. And if you do go and have a second to grab a drink in the staff room and there's too many in there already, well too bad, go without. This is the reality for us. You have no idea.

I work my eight- to 10-hour shifts and often don't have time to do a wee. Is that too much information? Well, that's the hard truth. But you know what? I still give my absolute all, until the soles of my feet burn and my eyes sting with tiredness. We all keep going because we care, because we made an oath to the patients we care for. Show some compassion and start caring for us. The burnout is massive.

Premier, our job used to be fulfilling because we knew we were making a difference and now we're just hoping we'll be able to do the bare minimum our patients need to get better. I hate to say it but I would dread having a loved one or myself come into this hospital because, depending on the day and the staffing, they may not get the care they should be getting because there's not enough staff. It's not good enough and it's heartbreaking.

I personally had to start anti-depressants because this job made me so depressed. My psychologist, who I didn't have until a few months ago, has said that my mental illness is a direct relation to my work environment. How can I give my all and look after my patients when I'm breaking at the seams? We need help. I'm so worried about where we're heading and hope every single day that someone doesn't die as a result of the staffing shortages.

From southern Tasmania:

I've nursed for 15 years and I've moved away from direct-care nursing because my body literally can't handle the shiftwork any more, diagnosis after diagnosis, associated with burnout and fatigue. Those of us who can are called back to the floor in tough nursing shortages. I've never seen the hospital so bad. It's messy. The patients are not getting the care they deserve and the morale and ethical distress we face as staff is the highest it has ever been. I genuinely cannot work in the clinical space any more due to PTSD. Opening more beds in the hospital is not actually helping anyone any more, especially when the unit opens without education support, safe staffing levels or an appropriate model of care.

Yes, COVID-19 has been hard and, yes, we need to adapt, but how much more can we adapt before you recognise that we cannot give the care we need to?

From north-west Tasmania:

Double shifts are always on offer but due to the workload, we just physically cannot work another shift. I'm actively seeking work elsewhere because the thought of going to work gives me anxiety, lack of sleep and stress. This is just not sustainable. When I hear people, they want to go into nursing; I tell them not to, worse decision I ever made.

From Hobart:

Premier, the chronic shortage of midwives in Tasmania is having a massive impact on our staff and the women of southern Tasmania. We have not had a fully staffed roster for years and cannot retain interstate graduates due to the cost of living. We are desperate and burnt out. The lack of pay parity with the mainland and the cost of housing in Tasmania are issues that need addressing. You cannot continue to ignore us. Lives are being affected, women's birthing experiences and levels of care are being affected and we cannot go on like this. Please, please help us.

The morale injury nurses feel as we are unable to give patients the care they deserve is real and distressing. The number of new and younger nurses I find in tears due to overwhelming work conditions is just not fair. The number of days off I spend thinking about things that have happened at work interferes with the quality of life. The anger people direct at us at work due to their long wait times of LOS et cetera is not fair. I doubt there are many other jobs where you cop abuse so regularly.

From southern Tasmania:

A letter to the Premier,

Premier, during 2021, I was working at least one 18-hour shift a week on top of my usual hours. During an 18-hour double shift it is not uncommon to not have a break at all, not even to empty your bladder. The acuity and needs of patients cannot be met with current staffing levels. My heart breaks as these patients are not receiving the care that they require and are entitled to. I frequently go home from my shift in tears because I know I could do better for my patients but the dire staffing levels make it almost impossible to provide even the basic care.

In the north:

Working short-staffed is a serious safety issue for both patients and staff. Adverse health outcomes for patients increase and staff become stressed and fatigued, leading to increased sick leave, which further compounds the issue of short-staffing. The amount of overtime used to complete elective surgery lists is excessive, and we should not be relying upon the goodwill of nurses to reach elective surgery targets.

I love being a nurse. However, the state of our healthcare system has left me questioning my career choice. The knowledge that patients are not receiving the care they deserve due to under-resourcing and unsafe staffing conditions weighs heavily on my shoulders.

To complete these personal stories, from southern Tasmania:

Premier, I work in the emergency department in the largest public hospital in Tasmania. I very rarely turn up to a shift that is fully staffed. I have worked many 18-hour double shifts due to the lack of staff. I have seen so much pain and suffering from acutely unwell patients and patients left without a bed for eight-plus hours because staff and the department cannot cope with the pressures. I am anxious before I go to work, worried about what emotional or physical trauma I may face. I feel undervalued, I feel underpaid and I feel underappreciated.

To complete a degree dedicated to helping others where I feel I come home left not knowing if I made a difference is heartbreaking. For how physically and emotionally demanding to spend all the time studying, and being so underpaid, makes me feel like it's not worth it.

Premier we know the load for you as Premier and Health minister is monumental. There is no doubt, having listened to the personal accounts of health professionals from across Tasmania, that the task is enormous. Right now we know that our nurses, our midwives, our paramedics, everybody working in the health system need a government to hear the story, understand the load and take action to support.

Yes, we support the miscellaneous amendments bill. Yes, it is administrative and it will make a difference. However, what will really make a difference is responding to the stories and understanding the impact of those working in our health system, and make changes that support them to do what they are so passionate about, to give them the support to deliver the level of care they are committed to and to support their professional, emotional and physical wellbeing as they are out there supporting Tasmanians.

[6.33 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am going to take a little time to address some of the matters in the miscellaneous amendments bill. I have also in the past brought in one of those little omnibus health bills that tidies up a whole lot of problems that the agency has been trying to sort for a while. While it is a bill we support and deals with some procedural and interpretative issues, it is always an opportunity for members of parliament to raise broader concerns around the Health portfolio.

I apologise to the very large number of advisers who are sitting in the box that there are going to be no questions, necessarily, for you out of my contribution so you can just sit back for a little bit of time and not stress too much, other than I may have some questions on DORA but I think I understand that one enough.

The Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill deals with a number of minor amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act 1931, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act, the Ambulance Service Act, the Asbestos-Related Diseases (Occupational Exposure) Compensation Act, the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted

Dying) Act, the Health Act, the Poisons Act, the Public Health Act, the Public Trustee Act, the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1998 and other health-related legislation.

On any one of these issues I could talk for a very long time but I will save the parliament from that. Although we are sitting late, I know the Premier intends to bring another bill on - which seems a bit odd.

They are predominately technical in nature. They act to improve the operation of the legislation. I will talk about a few things regarding the terms 'paramedic' and 'pharmacist' that are identified in this bill and then go through some of the other points.

Paramedicine has been a regulated profession under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act, and I do understand the complexity of that. That work with AHPRA started when I was one of the ministers around the country. It is not an easy piece of work; a lot of work goes into it. I appreciate the efforts made, and also how important it is to get that right. It became a profession under that national law in December 2018 and therefore all paramedics are required to be registered with the Paramedicine Board of Australia and to meet their registration.

Clearly, the Ambulance Service has concerns that defining paramedics predate that requirement and that can create some complexities for how their regulations might work. Removing the definition of paramedic from the Ambulance Service Act and inserting a new, contemporary definition for the term in the Acts Interpretation Act makes some sense. It defines a person who is registered under that national health practitioner law in the profession of paramedicine. It is consistent, I believe, with the intent of the legislation. It is certainly consistent with the work of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

It is also used in the Poisons Act 1971, and the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act which also deals with and references the meaning of paramedic. I have had some conversations recently about paramedics and the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act, and also what happens when paramedics turn up when somebody is at end of life. I know that can be a very confusing time for people. Whilst this has no impact on that whatsoever, I did want to spend a few moments talking about what it is like to be a paramedic who fronts at someone's house when someone has died, and whether they have that clarity of information. It is something we have been talking about in a personal circumstance, just recently, to ensure that the right information and training supports are provided.

That leads me to the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021, which will become law in Tasmania on 23 October 2022. In fact, tonight, had I not been here, I would have been attending one of the first information sessions that is being run in the state. There are three, for people who are looking to access the service, but there are still a lot of things that are not resolved in that. In particular, the training for medical practitioners has still not been defined. I am concerned that we are so close to operation of the act and close to having individuals identifying that this might be a pathway they wish to explore or understand, and not knowing who they might be able to speak to. As far as I am aware, there is not anyone who is yet trained because the course has not been finalised yet. That is the very sensible course, which was supported by this parliament, to ensure medical practitioners have specific training about the access to the voluntary assisted dying act. That is not in place yet.

I do not know if the Minister for Health can give us an update about how that is going. It is not related to this spiel; he does not have to. I do know that he does have a genuine interest in that area and may be across what is happening with that particular piece of legislation. It will be very challenging in those first few months as people navigate that system and want to do it properly, safely and appropriately to ensure that we get the most available access. If we have, because the training has been provided so late in the day, very few practitioners are able to participate - bearing in mind that you need to speak to more than one practitioner in order to get the approvals - and it can unnecessarily and unintentionally delay access. If everything went smoothly, we are looking at a process that would easily take a minimum of a month and most likely in its early days, two or three months, for people to go through that process.

I do not know if the Minister for Health has any update on when that training might be available or if we know how many GPs might have expressed an interest to be on the list for that. The advisers there do not have to answer that question. I appreciate it is not necessarily in the realm of the work they are here for today. However, I would appreciate it if the Minister for Health could give some information to the House about that is progressing, because we are entering this new period and we want to do so with the best information and the best training and resources available.

That is my slight diversion from the issue of the definition of paramedic, but it does relate to the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act that is one of the acts that is amended with this legislation.

That also has an impact in terms of the definition of the amendment to the Poisons Act as it goes through that process.

There is an amendment to the definition of 'pharmacist' which is used in various Tasmanian acts. Some both use and define the term; others just use it. There is an assumption that everybody knows what we are talking about, but having clarity for the term pharmacist in the Acts Interpretation Act seems to be a reasonably sensible move forward. The definition reflects other definitions, including those in the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act; the Asbestos-Related Diseases (Occupational Exposure) Compensation Act; the Public Trustee Act and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. It will apply a new interpretation and construction of those acts and the interpretation and construction of other acts that use the term but do not define it. It is a bit of a catch-all then to make sure that we can understand how that term is used.

The Poisons Act uses the term 'pharmaceutical chemist', which is a person who is registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law in the pharmacy profession but does not include a person who holds provisional student, or non-practising, regulations on that profession. It also uses the term 'pharmacy trainee', which is defined to mean a person who holds provisional registration. The differentiation reflects that registration schemes exist for both pharmacists under both of those pieces of legislation and does retain the differentiation but replaces the term - 'pharmaceutical chemist' and 'pharmacy trainee' with more contemporary terms. That makes absolute sense. The second act uses it in a unique way for pharmacy control, and that defines 'pharmacist' to mean a person who holds the general registration.

The bill proposes amending the Health Act and Health (Fees) Regulations to relocate the definition of 'hospital services' from the regulations to the act, and that makes a lot of sense.

Most members would know that I have a concern about the way we often use regulations. Regulations are flexible and amenable and there are a lot of reasons that we use regulation rather than legislation to be able to do adaptive work. However, it also can be used in a way and in timing to ensure that changes are made that are law for quite some time before the parliament has a chance to change them. I believe that is a necessary change.

There are changes of definition of health service establishment. The definitions are not changing but it always makes me pay attention, because it was some of the changes around health service establishments that impacted on decisions of services that provide terminations to remain providing those terminations, because of the cost of upgrades and standards that are required in those health service establishment definitions. That is fine as well.

Regarding the Poisons Act and the Poisons Regulations, several amendments are proposed to update references to pharmacists and the spelling of 'authorization'. That is the Americanisation of our language. I had a lecturer at university who always used 'z' because he felt it was an unloved letter and we always got extra points if the 'unloved' letter was in our philosophy papers.

There are substantial amendments to the section relating to the monitored medicines database and the provisions relating to drugs of dependence. I was the minister when DORA (Drugs and Poisons Information Remote Access) came in. DORA, as I understand, has been very well regarded. Obviously, all the new programs need some amendment but the ability to have a database that ensures that particular people who are at risk of either deliberately or unintentionally accessing large amounts of certain types of medication for less than direct health purposes is certainly something that we might be able to manage. There is a lot of very good work in that.

It talks about the situation in which regulations may be considered to include circumstances involving patients who are in receipt of pain medication as part of their end of life care. I remind the Premier that access to CBD oil and cannabis, which is something that has played a significant role in management of end-of-life care pain is still incredibly difficult to access in this state. I know that there are doctors and distributors in other states who are providing to Tasmanians, and it would be so much easier if we had a streamlined process that allowed somebody of end-of-life care to not have to wait for the package to arrive from interstate, that they could actually work with their own pharmacist.

That would be something I hope the Premier, given your interest in this matter, that we might be able to see some resolution to, because that has been a significant barrier for a number of people. Even where it is not a significant barrier, it is just another job they have to do, and at end-of-life, every other little extra job that you have to do is actually a lot. Ease of access to those kinds of prescribed medications, such as CBD oil, would make a huge difference.

We all know that there are people who grow for own pain management use or own health use, we know that the commissioner has historically provided a very lenient approach to those, but we then had a case recently of someone's house being raided. That has created concerns for others who have had conversations with members of government, who have had conversations with police about how they grow their own produce for oil and who are very nervous about that too. The best thing to resolve all of that would be to have a clear process for how you might access those particular medications.

Those changes are fine as well, and I do not particularly have any problem with the appointment of persons for environmental health officers and medical officers of health and the powers and functions that they are able to utilise. Clarifying the Director of Public Health's power to appoint a person with approved qualifications is an appropriate fix. It has probably been an issue that people have worried about in the past.

The bill proposes inserting provisions, clarifying and removing doubt about that validity of past appointments and powers and functions. As a parliament, we are always very nervous when we have to go back and say, well all those things that we did are now quite legal, but I think in this sense, in these particular terms, it makes absolute sense.

That is probably all I wanted to talk to and some of the direct amendments in relation to the act, but I did want to talk, as many other members have talked about, the current health system. I know I have been health minister and I was not a perfect health minister by any stretch of the imagination. Going through health during the global financial crisis was an incredible challenge, one that I think I would approach differently now than I did then, with the knowledge that you have later down the track, but at the time we made some simple decisions in savings, and then some very tough ones.

The things that are impacting on our health services now is not because there is not enough money; it is because of the way and the choices that we are making about that money. Yes, COVID-19 is a big part of that, but the underlying structural problems within health are not just because of COVID-19. COVID exacerbates it. It provides some load onto those wounds, but there are structural issues in the way that we provide our health services and they have real consequences.

Premier, you would be aware of a constituent that I have raised with you, Justin, who is in incredible pain as he waits for his surgery. He has been given approval to have his surgery, but it keeps being delayed, over and over again. It is not just the physical pain that means he is effectively crippled; it is the despair, the depression, the fact he wakes up in pain every day. He wakes up during the night in pain, every other thing that he tries to manage is actually incredibly difficult for him now.

There are two things that I want to read into parliament before we move on, and one is, and I know that Ms Finlay, the other member for Bass, read in a number of those ANMF stories. I have one from a friend of mine who has also gone to the ANMF that I really want to read in. It was when I shared the story in particular about the conditions of the payment of the COVID-19 allowance that caused a huge amount of distress, that people would have to wait quite some time before a COVID-19 allowance will be paid. She said:

Thank you for sharing this. The conditions put on the payment of this allowance are an insult to those of us who have been working in designated COVID wards, ED, ambos et cetera since the start of the year.

Since the borders opened last year, I have spent every shift working with COVID positive patients in full PPE, with hardly a thanks from the upper management or the state Liberals. Your support meant a lot. I wanted to comment on your post, but of course my employment does not allow me to talk of such things on social media for fear of being reprimanded for breaking the Code of Conduct -

I will just touch on that because I have also been a minister who has had people in the department who have been upset with them but the way that the agency is now silencing anybody making general comments about health, about education is actually not the true intent of what the State Services Act means. The privacy rules as they were implemented were very much about ensuring that if I was a nurse I would not be telling a mate of mine anything that I had learnt in the course of my duty. It should not stop teachers, it should not stop health workers from talking about the state of the systems in which they operate because that is how we effect change. That is just my personal gripe on the way. This Government has decided to silence any of those concerns.

I have just submitted this letter to the ANMF:

Dear Mr Premier

I am a proud nurse who has worked as a nurse for over 11 years and has always loved going to work, however, today I am broken. I am mentally exhausted, I am physically exhausted, I am emotionally exhausted. The last eight months since the borders opened and my ward became close to becoming a dedicated COVID-19 ward has broken me.

I work my shift in full PPE, mask, glasses, eye shield, gown and gloves. Even in winter it can get damn hot and sweaty. My N95 mask causes my face to break out in pimples which clear up on my days off only to return again the next shift and the elastic is damaging my hair.

I am often dehydrated because if I drink I know I am going to need to go to the toilet so we go just in case which has now actually weakened my bladder. We are working extra shifts, extra hours, double shifts, working short staffed as there are hardly any casual staff who will work on our ward. The conditions placed on payment for the COVID-19 allowance which the unions have had to fight for are an insult to those of us that have been doing the hard yards regardless of what level of the pandemic response we are in.

Mr Premier, I challenge you to work just one shift in my shoes to see how it really is for a COVID-19 nurse and then decide if just words of thanks are enough.

We have seen people around the world applauding nurses, thanking nurses but I think we can do some things more demonstrable in our support of nurses than we have been doing because that is a pretty heartbreaking story.

I am about to start some representation for someone and this is - I want to be careful Premier because I do not want to identify this person but it is a case I am going to bring to you and ask you to work at. This was a case of a registered nurse who was injured at work whilst supporting a patient and had some quite significant damage to their arm. They wanted to keep working but they keep being told by the hospital that there is no work that they can give them. Their occupational doctor then decided that there needed to be a bit of a time line and decided, well, you could never do heavy work again, therefore we will have to find you something else.

This person was injured at work. This person has then been allocated to a different work environment, still in health care and the THS workers compensation has been propping up the rest of the pay, if you work a certain number of hours and that gets paid for directly and the rest of your salary is supplemented to get up to the point where workers compensation would have been appropriately paid. Due to the shortage of health staff, the job that they have been doing where they have only been doing a few shifts had massive shortages so they worked a lot of hours in this one particular fortnight.

That has ticked them over and now the department says that they are going to sack them. For the first time the health department did not have to pay the gap because that person earned enough money in that other role that they are only supposed to be doing part-time because of work shortages they worked more than a full-time load. The department did not have to prop up their salary. Then they got a letter from the Tasmanian Health Service with an exit of employment offer attached stating that because they no longer have a contract with them they need to sign it. This person said, if I sign it does that mean that my payment supplement in my hours will go away. They said, well, actually, yes because you earned more than your usual amount in that fortnight, the one fortnight to cover that kind of relief they are now having their payments terminated.

We are hearing stories about how we desperately want to have health staff working and then we have the department doing that to someone. I will come to you directly, Premier, with this instance. Whilst technically that may be something you can do, but ethically, morally, is that the way you would treat, not only someone who has worked for you, but someone who was injured in the workplace as a result of trying to do their job and is trying to maintain a role in the health services that we so desperately need? Why would we do that to them?

That person now cannot work full-time because of the incapacity and now cannot be supported by the organisation that employed them when that incapacity occurred because for one fortnight - they were covering people because everybody was so short-staffed - they worked more hours than they really should have done by doing the right thing. I ask that you also do the right thing and support this person.

I wish these were the only stories that we hear, but I regularly hear stories about poor management of return to work in Health. It is something that I will pull together and come to you with because I am very concerned about the way we manage workers compensation return to work within the Health department. It seems to be different to other departments.

You know that I have had some issues with people in Education but this seems to be quite a concerning thing. We want to make sure that where people can safely return to work they do so, but also that they are treated appropriately during that whole time. When you have, as we have now, so many staff working really heightened hours, in really high stress positions, under all of these conditions, we are going to see more workplace injuries. That is the nature of being perpetually short-staffed. That is the nature of being perpetually stressed. We need to make sure that processes are in place to support anyone who has not only done the right thing and worked but who needs to be supported if they become injured. That goes back to one other thing that I want to raise.

In Estimates in Education, we asked about those teaching staff who were paid full-time who were stood down for teaching because they could not work directly with kids. That pay was not extended to a lot of the support workers. I guess we will deal with that, but many of

them worked in the private sector, so they had their full-time pay as a teacher, and then they were paid in the private sector. There is an ethical issue here that I struggle with.

Lately, I have had calls about the return to work bonus. I know what it is like to work with health shortages. We were facing a health workforce shortage when I was minister. With the impending shortage coming down the line, you will look at anything to get people in. Imagine what it feels like to be a nurse or health worker who has done the hard yards through the pandemic, who has stayed there, who has had every vaccination, who has done everything right, who has worked their guts out. You heard the stories already today from some of these people about how hard it has been. Then they are now being told that people who refuse to be vaccinated, who chose to leave the service rather than be vaccinated, may be attracted back with these payments. It may not sound so bad, but if you put that in isolation, you put that next to chocolates, that you cannot have soy milk with the free coffee that you are being offered as your thank you, that we have had nurses and health staff walking off the job. Even during my hardest days as minister, they were not walking off the job. It takes a lot to get a health worker to walk off the job.

You put it to the sort of pressures that they are under and it is layer upon layer of seeming disrespect. Premier, I do not think that you disrespect them, I genuinely do not. You are not that kind of person. I do not think that is the case, but we cannot keep saying that we thank them. We cannot keep saying that we respect them, that we honour them, that they are great people and they have done a great job, and then every place they turn, that is not the experience that they have. That is not the message they are being given.

I am pleased that after the first walkout in Hobart that you have come to the table to work with our ANMF people. However, we need that kind of commitment for everyone who has been impacted by working these last years. Whilst COVID-19 has been a hell of a kicker for those staff, there are significant structural problems within our health department, within our lines of decision making, within our resourcing and the way we provide services. Even if you took COVID-19 away and we had not had it, we would still be in trouble now. That is something that has to be addressed.

I look forward to the Premier working through that. Whenever this Premier takes on a portfolio, everyone says he is a really nice guy and he can create great relationships. That is something you do really well. That buys governments time but I do not want you to think that you have got that time: the building the relationship and saying you will work with people and then there are huge, long leave times before things are resolved. They are at breaking point, and to those who have not already broken, and we really cannot allow this to continue. We need something really big if you are going to not only keep the staff that we have, but bring back those ones that we need, and attract people to a profession that is looking less and less attractive to our young people.

[7.00 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the members for their contributions and support of the bill this evening, and additional comments as well. I appreciate the comments.

Ms O'Byrne, working through some of your matters, you will read the *Hansard* and get some information across the issue you raised, in particular, that particular individual and you will reach out to me directly and we will work through a number of those matters. I thank you

for your reflections on your experience in the health system and your knowledge of various aspects of this bill, which I appreciate. I will come to a number of those in a moment.

Of course, I will take on board the other comments from other members outside of the bill regarding the challenges and the pressures we have within our health system. I have never denied these but we have only tried our very best to address and fix these. There are a number of areas that I can point to in other forums where we are doing exactly that.

This bill makes minor amendments to update, clarify and improve the operation of several health-related acts. I acknowledge the team of people that we have here in the Chamber across a range of areas of the health system - Public Health, Health more generally and Ambulance Tasmania. It touches on a number of areas.

Changes to the definition of a pharmacist is a response to a request made last year by the honourable Tania Rattray in the other place during debate around amendments to the Poisons Act required for implementation of the national real-time prescription monitoring system. In relation to the changes to the paramedic definition, this change reinforces the scope of practice of paramedics is not restricted to employment by Ambulance Tasmania. Australia's national scheme for health professions commenced in 2010 with the adoption of the national law by all participating jurisdictions.

The changes to the Poisons Act are to exempt certain practitioners from checking the monitored medicines database and from offences for supplying drugs of dependence to certain people such as medical practitioners, providing voluntary assisted dying services. The Poisons Act regulates the prescription and supply of drugs of a high abuse potential; however, the End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act regulates the safe provisions of this service.

So far this year, in preparation for the commencement of voluntary assisted dying, the Department of Health has established the Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission, navigation service and pharmacy service. Work to implement voluntary assisted dying legislation is well underway. The Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission met for the first time in May this year and has been meeting regularly since then to undertake necessary preparatory work.

A voluntary assisted dying navigation service was established in April this year. Engagement with facilities and other organisations and development of policies and procedures is underway. A voluntary assisted dying pharmacy service is also in the process of being operationalised. Additional key priorities are underway to ensure that voluntary assisted dying is accessible to those Tasmanians who wish to access it and include a training course, which you referred to, I believe, Ms O'Byrne, which practitioners must complete in order to play a formal role in a voluntary assisted dying process. This has been developed and tested with stakeholders and is being reviewed by the Voluntary Assisted Dying Commission. There are protocols and other support material to support medical practitioners with prescribing and administering voluntary assisted dying substances. Also forms, guidelines and information systems necessary to manage the operation of the act are under development. A voluntary assisted dying pharmacy service is also being operationalised.

I can update you on other matters relating to where we are with voluntary assisted dying, if you want to put a question on notice or I can come to you and update the House at some particular point in time with some more information, if that is what you request. That is fine.

I also want to mention the changes in relation to Environmental Health Officers and Medical Officers of Health who have various powers and functions under the Public Health Act, including the power to enter and inspect premises and vehicles, and the power to issue infringement notices. Environment Health Officers undertake important work out in the community, including managing and regulating drinking water, recreational water, public health risk activity such as tattooing and piercing, legionnaires disease, environmental hazards and toxicology impacting on human health.

Given the nature of the powers and functions, the bill proposes inserting provisions, clarifying and removing any doubt about the validity of past appointments of powers and functions exercised by Environmental Health Officers or Medical Officers of Health prior to the making of the amendments, while also clarifying appointment process for the future and making it contemporary with similar appointments under other legislation.

With those few words, I thank very much the team from the Department of Health who have worked on this bill and provided briefings to the members of House that have requested it, and I know it has reflected today, they have very much appreciated that and I appreciate the work that you have done as well. Thank you very much.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

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

Second Reading

[7.08 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Environment and Climate Change) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

Tasmania is a leader in addressing climate change, having recorded net zero emissions for the last seven years. From 1990 to 2020, our net emissions reduced by 120.9 per cent, while our economy has nearly doubled in size and more than 50 000 jobs have been created. This globally significant achievement is due to a combination of our long-term, renewable energy investments, and our managed forest estate, along with ongoing emissions reduction in our waste sector.

In addition, since November, 2020, Tasmania now has capacity to generate 100 per cent of the electricity it needs from renewable sources, but modelling shows that as our economy and population grow and the risk of severe bush fires increases, we will need to do more to reduce emissions across all sectors to maintain our net zero emissions status.

The Tasmanian Government recognises that the climate changes already under way will affect our way of life, our industries and our environment in our lifetimes. Climate projections

and the most recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicate that Tasmania is projected to experience increases in the severity and frequency of extreme weather events, including extreme heat and bushfires. Likewise, storm events will increase and result in heavier and more sustained rainfall, high winds, coastal flooding and erosion which will be exacerbated by sea level rise.

That is why Tasmania must contribute to the global response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build our resilience to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. This bill amends the act in response to the findings of its most recent independent review: detailed emissions and economic analysis and extensive consultation with business, industry and the community. More than 200 Tasmanians and organisations participated in the independent review and more than 60 written submissions were received on the draft bill. I thank everyone who contributed.

The bill proposes a number of key amendments, legislating for a statewide emissions target for Tasmania of net zero emissions or lower from 2030; consolidating the existing 10 objects of the act around five key themes including explicit reference to a consultative partnership approach with business, industry and the broader community, including local government and consideration of the impacts of climate change on future generations; a requirement for the Tasmanian Government to prepare a climate change action plan at least every five years; a requirement for the Tasmanian Government to undertake a statewide climate risk assessment at least every five years; a requirement for sector based emissions reduction and resilience plans to be prepared in partnership with industry and updated at least every five years; a requirement for the minister to prepare annual climate change reports, including an annual greenhouse gas emissions report and an annual activity statement; and a requirement for the minister to table all key climate change reports in parliament, including the action plan, emissions reduction and resilience plans, statewide climate risk assessment, greenhouse gas emissions report and annual activity statements, increasing the transparency and accountability and raising awareness and understanding of the Government's action on climate change.

The bill legislates a statewide target of net zero emissions or lower from 2030. This will be the most ambitious legislated target in Australia and one of the most ambitious in the world. A whole-of-economy target provides a flexible approach that recognises different sectors have different opportunities to reduce their emissions and some will require more time, support and technology than others to transition to a low emissions future.

The Tasmanian Government is confident that our target, whilst ambitious, is achievable. The Tasmanian emissions pathway review identifies 16 economy-wide emissions reduction opportunities that, if implemented, are projected to not only achieve our target but improve our net zero emissions profile over time. The identified actions include:

- increasing the uptake of electric vehicles.
- developing a renewable hydrogen industry.
- the use of innovative feed supplements to reduce livestock emissions.
- fuel switching by replacing fossil fuel boilers with alternatives powered by renewable energy including bioenergy technology.
- reducing agricultural soil emissions through precision agriculture.
- use of wood in construction in place of emissions-intensive building products.

- planting trees to improve agricultural productivity and on-island timber processing.
- diverting organic waste from landfill.

Economic analysis demonstrates that these actions will not only reduce emissions but can also improve productivity and increase demand for Tasmania's renewable energy and products, generating higher economic growth and employment. By 2050, our economy could be \$475 million dollars larger, employing over 1200 more Tasmanians as a result of these actions.

The Tasmanian Government is already working to reduce emissions across our economy through new investments in the waste, transport, energy and agriculture sectors. Recent examples include:

- committing \$6 million in funding towards two new industrial-scale organics composting facilities in the north and south of Tasmania, diverting organic waste materials from landfill and reducing associated emissions.
- transitioning the government vehicle fleet to electric vehicles by 2030, reducing emissions associated with imported liquid fossil fuels and increasing the supply of used EVs in Tasmania.
- supporting Metro Tasmania to trial zero-emissions buses, with over \$16 million in funding in both northern and southern Tasmania. The outcomes of the trial will inform future emissions reductions across the Metro Tasmania bus fleet.
- supporting the wider adoption of EVs to reduce transport emissions, with investment of \$1.4 million into a comprehensive statewide charging network.
- replacing fossil fuel-burning boilers in government-owned facilities with renewable energy-powered alternatives, with an additional commitment of \$10 million over four years.
- installing solar panels in over 100 government schools, with an investment of \$5 million in the Renewable Energy Schools Program to reduce energy costs and associated emissions.
- supporting Norske Skog to consider alternative fuels for its new boiler, as part of a \$2 million State Government commitment to ensure the sustainability of its operations. According to Norske, this could reduce emissions up to an estimated 160 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum.
- supporting Sea Forest with an investment of over \$500 000 to further research the use of *Asparagopsis* seaweed as a livestock feed supplement, which could not only increase productivity but also reduce methane emissions.

Government businesses are also making significant investments to assist the state to reach 200 per cent self-sufficiency in renewable electricity by 2040, and significant green hydrogen production by 2030, both of which could facilitate emission reductions across Australia and globally.

Many of Tasmania's major companies and industries already have well-established emissions reduction targets and goals on the public record. For example, Liberty Steel Group, TEMCO and the Australian red meat and livestock industry are aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2030. Rio Tinto Bell Bay is seeking to reduce emissions by 50 per cent by

2030. Norske Skog, Tassal, Fonterra Australia and the Cement Concrete and Aggregates Industry Australia Association have a target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Given the substantial work underway across industries and sectors, the Government will not legislate additional sector-based targets but will instead legislate the requirement for sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans. The emissions reductions and resilience plans will be developed by the minister in consultation with relevant portfolio ministers and in partnership with industry and sector stakeholders. The plans will incorporate and support existing targets and opportunities to reduce sector emissions, aligning our efforts with those directly involved in managing the emissions. They will identify further actions to reduce emissions and accelerate the required investment, while increasing each sector's resilience to climate change and supporting productivity and economic growth.

The first plans will be developed within two years of the commencement of the act. Responding to consultation feedback, the plans will consider both the target and the objectives of the act, and will be tabled in parliament, ensuring accountability and transparency in the Government's response to climate change.

The Government will also continue to lead by example through the development of an emissions reduction and resilience plan for government operations. The plan will include the various actions the Government is taking to reduce emissions, including our commitment to transition the government vehicle fleet to 100 per cent electric vehicles by 2030. It will also include actions for the Government to adapt its operations and increase their resilience to climate change.

In its current form, the act has 10 objects which establish the purpose of the act. The independent review found that the current objects of the act are not explicit, that they overlap and are poor at guiding effective climate action. Consolidating the objects will clarify the purpose of the act, ensuring a more robust legislative framework for evaluating climate action and the act's effectiveness, consistent with contemporary best practice.

Responding to feedback on the draft bill, the bill's objects now explicitly reference the important role of local government in responding to climate change and the impact of climate change on future generations.

In addition, since the tabling of the bill, the Government has received further advice and feedback on the impacts of climate change on human health and wellbeing, which are projected to increase over time. The Government has listened and will be moving an amendment to the bill to explicitly include consideration of these impacts in addition to the impacts on future generations in both the objects and the statewide climate change risk assessment.

The bill legislates the requirement for the minister to prepare a climate change action plan at least every five years. This will ensure that the Tasmanian Government will continue to take action to grow a climate-ready economy, reduce emissions, build resilience and adapt to climate change. The climate change action plan will provide clear direction and accountability for the Government's short- to medium-term climate change priorities and provide opportunities for industry and community input over time.

The bill also requires that the climate change action plan is produced in formats that allow a broad range of the Tasmanian community to stay informed and to participate in consultation on our climate change initiatives, including children and young people.

Importantly, while the bill as tabled refers to the impact on future generations, and the preparation of the action plan in formats accessible to all Tasmanians, we have listened to further advice and feedback regarding the importance of children and young people being involved in decision-making that will affect their future lives. On this basis, the Government will be moving a further amendment to the bill to require that children and young people as a distinct interest group are consulted within the development of Tasmania's climate change action plan and in other relevant aspects.

The first climate change action plan will be prepared within six months of the commencement of the act and will include as key actions the development of the first climate risk assessment and commencement of the first emissions reduction and resilience plans.

Responding to climate change also involves adapting and building the resilience of our community and environment to the projected impacts of unavoidable climate change. Responding to this, the bill legislates a requirement for the minister to complete a statewide climate change risk assessment every five years. The risk assessment will inform the development of the climate change action plans and emissions reduction and resilience plans, which will include actions to build resilience and adapt to climate change, as well as providing detailed information that the broader community can use to build its own resilience and adapt to climate change. A key principle in the assessment of climate risk will be the consideration of its impacts on future generations and, as noted earlier, its impact on the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.

Responding to consultation feedback, the bill includes a number of requirements to increase the transparency and accountability in reporting of Tasmania's actions and progress towards our 2030 target. This includes a requirement for the minister to produce additional annual reports with sectoral details, including an annual greenhouse gas emissions report and an annual climate change activity statement. The minister is to table all key climate change reports in this parliament, including the climate change action plan, emissions reduction and resilience plans, statewide climate change risk assessment and greenhouse gas emissions report, and an annual activity statement.

The Government also acknowledges the strong interest and expertise across the community in Tasmania's approach to reducing emissions and responding to the climate changes already underway, and the importance of continuous communication and information-sharing in this rapidly changing field. That is why, following the passage of the bill, the Government will establish a climate change reference group to provide a forum for advice and feedback on strategic priorities and emerging opportunities in climate change mitigation and adaptation as we work towards our 2030 net-zero emissions target and increase community resilience to climate change.

The climate change reference group will be convened by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change and will include members of relevant industry, community, business and stakeholder groups, state and local government, as well as individuals with relevant expertise. Some feedback on the draft bill called for a legislative approach to consideration of climate change in government decision-making. In response to the independent review, the

government will develop a whole-of-government policy framework to ensure that climate change is considered in the development of all relevant policies, plans, and strategies.

This approach acknowledges the need for flexibility for decision-makers given the range of factors to be considered and the diversity of decisions climate change is relevant to. The framework will include ministerial guidelines, principles to guide decision making, guidance material and decision-support tools, information on recent scientific, legal, and market developments, and training opportunities.

The framework will build the capacity and capability of the Tasmanian Government to embed climate change into all decision-making. The framework will be informed by the statewide climate change risk assessment and will be important in the implementation of the Government's emissions reduction and resilience plan for its operations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, our 2030 target sends a strong message that Tasmania is committed to leveraging our unique advantages to their greatest effect, to respond to climate change, protect our lifestyle and environment, and grow our economy and jobs. It is one of the most ambitious legislated targets in the world, but one which we believe Tasmania can meet by building on the significant work already under way in our community and economy, leading by example in the government sector, and harnessing the knowledge and ingenuity of Tasmanians to accelerate our transition to a successful, resilient, low emissions economy.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the House do now adjourn.

kutikina Productions ***RENT* - Launceston College**

[7.28 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I have two matters that I want to raise tonight. The first is to put on the parliamentary record the excitement that I think everyone felt yesterday with the launch of kutikina Productions, which is the first Tasmanian Aboriginal screen production company. It is owned and operated by someone I have known for quite some years, playwright and screenwriter Nathan Maynard, and author/screenwriter Adam Thompson.

Screen Australia, the National Indigenous Television and SBS today have announced first development funding for a project called *Moonbird* which is being developed as a six by 10-minute digital original series for NITV and SBS On-Demand. They are getting funding from Screen Australia. It will be co-produced with Rummin Productions, and an

earlier version of the project received development funding from Screen Tasmania, which has obviously assisted in getting to this point.

The name 'kutikina' represents a long history of palawa storytelling, but it is also a symbol of accountability and truth-telling, something that Thompson and Maynard consistently embed in their work. It will have a focus on scripted content and telling Tasmanian Aboriginal stories, as well as engaging in broader industry and practitioner development for emerging first-nation screen culture in Tasmania.

A quote from Nathan Maynard:

'We are a dynamic people. Our culture didn't stop with invasion and colonisation and neither has our story. It has grown and with it has grown the evolution of our storytellers, our audiences, and the mediums and forms our storytellers use to engage these audiences. kutikina will have its place in the evolution and history of palawa storytelling by giving our storytellers access to world-class film and TV makers.'

Adam Thompson said:

kutikina Productions is a new avenue for palawa stories to go out into the world. We are sick of non-Aboriginal people exploiting our stories and our culture. Through our company we will create fresh, authentic and high-quality content and we will bring our community along with us through collaboration and by developing the technical and creative skills of individuals.

I commend Screen Tasmania for the work they will have in the leading role they will play in content production and in the indigenous practitioner development work that they will undertake in the state. Alex Sangston said that she is thrilled that Nathan and Adam have launched kutikina as the first palawa production company. We all look forward to seeing what this production company will produce and look forward to a great future with *Moonbird* and other projects across lutruwita.

The second thing that I wanted to mention is another arts project. I went to see *RENT* by Launceston College. It is the school edition but I do not want people to think that this in anyway made this incredibly powerful and confronting performance any less powerful and confronting.

For those who do not know *RENT*, it is set in the late 1980s, early 1990s in Manhattan, down in the Alphabet Street areas of Manhattan. It deals with confronting issues of HIV, and many of the characters in this are HIV positive. It deals with drug abuse. It deals with violence. It deals with homelessness. It deals with protesting about homelessness. It deals with so many issues that we are still confronting today.

I always expect Launceston College productions to be good. You go in knowing they are going to be pretty okay. I have never seen a bad one. When the production commenced that was absolutely the case. It was a very polished performance - the ensemble, the musicians, the technical work - everything was just amazing, beautifully produced and beautifully directed.

The cast across the board had a depth of talent and quite often when you see productions you will see a few stand-out performers but overwhelmingly every person on that stage lived the part and did it really well and every person supporting - whether it was a muso or production or tech or publicity did the same thing.

I want to talk about what it would take to get to that level. The depth of teaching that would be required to deal with these incredibly confronting issues for those young people - 17-, 18-year-olds to deal with such compassion and with such a polished performance with those really difficult issues. I do not think that we give anywhere near enough credit to our public education staff.

I do not think we understand the depth of teaching that they do every day but I have to say that Liz Bennett, Cheyne Mitchell, Travis Hennessy, Tanya Lanham, Nicholas Parker and Sophie Lucas have done an incredible job in getting that team together and absolute credit should go to them. I wish I had enough time - two minutes and 24 seconds would not be enough to list all of the young people at LC involved in this production. I want to say that their supporting staff, their crew publicity staff, their production team, their backstage team, the band and the backing vocals, the ensemble and the lead positions were all amazing.

What incredible teachers we have who can take such complex issues and for 17 and 18-year-olds to deal with that level of homelessness and violence and death in such a powerful way - I genuinely do not think I have ever seen it. I was sitting in front of Liz Bennett - one of the teachers - at the end of the funeral scene for Angel and if you have seen the production you will know what an emotive point that is. I turned around and grabbed her hand which is probably not very COVID-safe because it was so breathtaking.

Then when we got to the end of the production I am clapping away but you know how you cheer a bit for all of the performers as they come out - I actually could not do it because to cheer would have brought me to tears because I was still so emotionally impacted by the depth of their performance.

Unfortunately, you cannot go and see Launceston College present the *RENT* school edition any more but we should all take a moment to commend the incredible teaching that happens at Launceston College to have allowed such a performance with such depth, such compassion and such integrity towards the original story and even though it was the school edition, you would not have known it for a minute. These kids gave a raw and gritty story telling.

It is interesting - we see many productions of nice stories of high school musicals and those sorts of things and we expect kids to be good at that. I did not expect kids to be good at these issues and they were simply superb.

Congratulations to Launceston College and everyone involved in *RENT*.

***Matilda* - Marist Regional College**

[7.34 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to the performance of Marist Regional College students in the recent musical *Matilda*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if you are like me, you would be very familiar with the stories of Roald Dahl. I know the important role they played in my childhood and the fond memories I have of each of the wonderful books that Roald Dahl wrote and that were shared with me as a child. Matilda is one of them.

There were 11 performances which is a lot by any means, and the cast did a fantastic job each and every night, stepping up and performing for the north-west community.

I congratulate Ms Jessica McGee, who was the director of this performance. It really was outstanding. I have been involved in many Marist musicals over the years and watched many of them and I think this would have to be the best one by far. It was absolutely sensational: very professional and the young people who were involved in the production were nothing short of amazing. I know what a wonderful experience it is for young people to be involved in theatre and this year was our daughter's first opportunity to do that and she thoroughly enjoyed it.

I know that Mr Jaensch's daughter, Charlotte, was involved in this production. She had a lead role and her performance was simply superb. She did an amazing job. I want to name a couple of the lead roles and congratulate them on their performance as well, those being Matilda Wormwood, the lead role in Layla McCarthy who is a year 8 student and did every performance and was absolutely amazing. Mrs Wormwood, who was played by Georgia Williams, Mr Wormwood by Fraser Perry and Flynn Rowcroft who shared that position and Michael Wormwood, played by Zander Williams, who was a quiet achiever in the musical, to say the least. He did not say a lot but his character was quite entertaining.

Agatha Trunchbull was played by the very talented Charlotte Loring and I think this would have to be my favourite character in the performance. Miss Honey, as I mentioned, was played by Charlotte Jaensch. Miss Phelps by Faith Hersey. Doctor and Nigel Smith by Miller Jackson and Rudolpho Bruce by Ally Brett.

I congratulate everybody involved in the performance. As I said, it was outstanding, from all of those in the chorus, right through to the lead roles, to the musicians and to all those involved in the lighting and theatre technicalities that are associated with putting on a performance. It was second to none and congratulations to Marist Regional College.

AMWU - Fearless Festival

[7.37 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to congratulate the AMWU who hosted the Fearless Festival last week, concluding with a significant event on Friday night where the MC was our own Janie Finlay, who was Australia's youngest mayor and where a number of eminent female leaders were guest speakers, including our own Governor.

There were a number of other speakers on the night, as well as what were called table hosts, who hosted a group of about 10 young women at each table to offer them insights into how they came to be leaders in their field and many of them from industries that are traditionally male-dominated industries. That is really one of the primary reasons why the AMWU has hosted this event for six years now.

It commenced in the north-west coast, where Mick Wickham, who is the organiser of this event is an organiser for the AMWU and has large coverage across different industries in that area and saw the opportunity to encourage more women to pursue careers in the industries that he provides support for but also, opportunities for women to breakdown those barriers and to really take up the opportunities that are available to all of us but for some, particularly women, do not feel necessarily encouraged to pursue or to explore.

The Fearless Festival happens over two days. It is an opportunity through the course of the Thursday and the Friday for young students at schools across Tasmania to come together to learn about different career opportunities they might like to pursue; to speak with people who are working in those industries and to try some training in those industries as well, if they are particularly interested.

It concluded on the Friday night with a big dinner event where over 500 people came together to hear from very distinguished and courageous women who have been quite amazing in their own careers; who have excelled in their careers and who shared their stories which often included setbacks, self-doubt; lack of self-belief and challenges to them progressing along the pathways that they had an interest in. Each of them spoke about being vulnerable and about how they overcame their fear. All the young women in that room on Friday night came away feeling extremely inspired and ambitious for themselves, and hopeful that they could pursue a career like that if they chose to in the future. I love that the tag line for the Fearless Festival is 'the future ignores stereotypes'. That is exactly what Mick Wickham and the AMWU set out to do in hosting this event when they started it six years ago.

I have heard from some extraordinary women who have spoken at the Fearless Festival over the years, from young sparkies who are the first in the construction company they are working for to go into that field in a traditionally male dominated industry and talking about what that has been like for them.

On Friday night I met a woman who is the first welder with the Australian Army and she is a Tasmanian. She started her career on the West Coast in Tasmania. Every time I go to this event I am floored at the amazing stories these women share about how they started in their career, what inspired them, what made them passionate about it. It is so exciting when they share that with the broader audience, and all these young girls who have come from schools right across Tasmania to hear them speak.

I was fortunate to be a table host again this year. The role of a table host is to share your own story and background, about how you got into what you were doing and any tips you may have for somebody who is looking to do either the same career or looking to embark on any range of different careers. The table hosts move around tables throughout the night so that we can speak to as many young girls as we can.

I can tell you, I am extremely optimistic for the future of our state after speaking with those young women. There are some amazing young people in Tasmania doing extraordinary things already. The number of young women in that room, some who came along as individuals because they had seen an ad placed in the paper, shows how brave some of these young people are. They just want to learn and they want to find out what is available for them in our state. None of it would have been possible without Mick Wickham and the AMWU putting this together, with the support of a number of different sponsors who make it all possible.

I offer my appreciation to them for what they do every year. I know Mick, in particular, puts many hours into making sure this is a success. He does it off the side of his desk. He does not receive any direct funding to make sure this event happens every single year. He does it because he is passionate about making sure that young women get a chance to pursue a career in an industry that they might not have considered. I believe that he deserves special recognition for what he does. I am extremely grateful to be asked to go along every year because I find it inspiring to be able to hear from those guest speakers.

The more of these events, the better. The more opportunities we can offer to young women to pursue careers that are outside those that are routinely offered up to them, the better. It is better for them to be able to have those options, but also better for our economy and those industries because we hear every day how they are looking to diversify their workforce, how that improves their productivity and how they are looking to be more inclusive in their work practices.

One place that can provide that doorway for young women to start one of those careers is by participating in programs like this. It is excellent that the AMWU and Mick put this on every year. I wanted to share that with people.

The House adjourned at 7.44 p.m.

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 98 of 2022

House of Assembly

The petitioners ask the House to:

The inherent animal cruelty and suffering of greyhounds in the publicly-funded racing industry;

That opposition to the cruelty in the greyhound racing industry cuts across politics, and that greyhounds are rescued and re-homed by Tasmanians of all political affiliation;

That it is opposed by the majority of taxpayers and by the RSPCA; and

That as pet owners, we will use our purchasing power and influence to send a message to retailers, veterinary practitioners, pubs and all businesses supporting and enabling greyhound racing.

Your Petitioners therefore request that the House call on the government to end the taxpayer subsidy of the inherently cruel greyhound racing industry.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

The Government accepts that people will have differing views on the racing industry in Tasmania.

The Government and the racing industry regard the welfare of animals as critically important. The majority of industry participants provide great care to their animals. The Government and the industry are investing more money than ever before into animal welfare - ensuring that racing animals are treated with dignity and care, before, during and after their racing days.

There has been great work undertaken on animal welfare and the government acknowledges that more needs to be done to meet community expectations and the Government remain committed to this.

Fewer greyhound litters are being bred, fewer greyhounds are being euthanised and more greyhounds are being rehomed than ever before. Strict welfare rules surrounding euthanasia of greyhounds have played an important role in driving euthanasia numbers down, especially over the last three years. Greyhound's euthanised or deceased in 2016/17 comprised 54% of the greyhounds no longer in the Industry that year. In 2021 that number is 17%. Greyhounds rehomed/breeding over the same period increased from 44% to 83%.

To ensure improved transparency regarding animal welfare, Tasracing provides information in their annual reports on track injuries, euthanasia rates, retirement and rehoming statistics. Greyhound welfare statistics are now updated monthly and provided on the Tasracing website.

Probity and integrity are critically important in the racing industry and underpins confidence in all three codes in the state – thoroughbred, harness, and greyhounds.

The review of the *Racing Regulation Act 2004* provides an opportunity to ensure Tasmania has a contemporary governance model for the industry and animal welfare.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government has received and publicly released the independent review into Tasmania's *Racing Regulation Act 2004*. The Government notes, and supports in principal, the recommendations within the Report.

Up until the sale of Tote Tasmania in 2011, the Tasmanian racing industry was self-funded. It was clear when the sale of TOTE Tasmania was finalised, that the ongoing and future funding of the racing industry would rest with the State.

In 2020/21, Greyhound racing received \$5.2m in Code Funding along with other funding for welfare and track maintenance. This funding was used to deliver approximately \$9m of commercial revenue for the same period and generated \$53.2m in economic benefit.

RESPONSE:

- Animal welfare is a high priority for the Government. The Government and the racing industry are investing more money than ever before into animal welfare - ensuring that racing animals are treated with dignity and care, before, during and after their racing days.
- The racing industry through Tasracing is funded by appropriations of \$27 million per annum by Deed of Agreement between Tasracing and the Government for the life of the Deed. The Deed was signed in 2009 and provides funding for a 20 year period (2029).
- The Government will continue to honour the deed that that was introduced in 2009.
- The Review of the *Racing Regulation Act 2004* recommends that it is in the best interests of the Tasmanian racing industry and the broader community that further integrity and welfare improvements are implemented, to ensure continued Government support for the conduct of racing in Tasmania, including the industry's social licence



Madeleine Ogilvie MP
Minister for Racing

Date: July 2022

22 JUL 2022

Appendix 2

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No PET22-2-HA

House of Assembly



The Petitioners ask the House to:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House that your petitioners were distressed by the sudden reduction of the size of the House of Assembly from 35 to 25 members on July 23 1998 immediately before an election, and that the petitioners have suffered a decline in the quality of governance as a consequence of the reduction of the House of Assembly.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to restore forthwith the size of the membership of the House of Assembly to 35 members, so as to restore both the quality of Government and the confidence of the petitioners in the Government of Tasmania.

Government Response

- Our priorities as a Government are focused on strengthening Tasmania's future and making Tasmanians' priorities our priorities – improving outcomes in health, housing and education. Keeping Tasmanians safe and taking action on the cost of living, while also investing to continue the growth in our economy, which has occurred under this Government.
- But when things need fixing, we need to have the courage to fix them.
- This is one of those issues that we have long supported in principle and as Premier, I have outlined publicly our intention to take action.
- The Tasmanian Liberal Government will introduce a Bill by the end of this year (2022), to restore the numbers from 25 to 35 seats in the House of Assembly with five electorates of 7 members. This would come into effect at the next state election.
- Because ultimately this is about ensuring the Tasmanian Parliament remains in the best shape to deliver the best outcomes for Tasmanians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Powell".

16 August 2022