

Wednesday 4 March 2020

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I draw your attention to some very special guests in our Gallery. They are grade 6 students from St Therese's Catholic School. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

***Spirit of Tasmania* - Docking in Melbourne**

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.03 a.m.]

The *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels provide a vital lifeline between Tasmania and the mainland for tourism, freight and domestic travel. Part of the value of that service is that it docks at Station Pier, close to the Melbourne CBD and with central access to freight routes to the east and the west. Last year during GBEs, your infrastructure minister and leadership rival, Michael Ferguson, refused to detail whether infrastructure upgrades would be required at Station Pier to accommodate the larger ships.

Can you confirm that you are now preparing to abandon Station Pier and move the *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels to Geelong? With negotiations with the Port of Geelong understood to be well advanced, when were you planning on telling *Spirit of Tasmania* users of this major disruption?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. You are right. The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport raised this matter at Estimates last year. He clearly made the point that, at that time, Station Pier and the arrangements with the port was becoming very expensive. Quite obviously, as a major government business, one that provides a very important route for transport of both visitors and freight to the state of Victoria, it is very important that we have a cost-effective place to dock the *Spirits*.

From the negotiations we have been having about Station Pier, it is quite obvious that VicPorts want to price gouge. They are looking to take every last cent they possibly can from Tasmanian businesses and customers and those who want to travel to Tasmania. To be clear, we make no apologies as far as the TT-Line is concerned. This Government is concerned with looking at alternative options. That is always something that a business should do.

No final decision has been made, but obviously we are very concerned by the price increases that are being proposed for the *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels. We will continue to negotiate in terms

of those. Make no mistake, what this Government has firmly fixed in its mind, is that we want to ensure that we can get freight to and from Tasmania via the *Spirits* at an appropriate and sustainable cost and, importantly, that customers, passengers - the hundreds of thousands of people who travel on the *Spirits* each year - can come to Tasmania and pay what is a reasonable and an appropriate price.

We make no apologies for looking at other options and we will continue to do so. When we get to a point when a decision about either a cost-competitive arrangement at Station Pier is arrived at or, conversely, we are frustrated to the point that we cannot get a reasonable outcome, then we will discuss other options with the Tasmanian people.

Spirit of Tasmania - Docking in Melbourne

Ms WHITE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.06 a.m.]

Your secrecy surrounding the vital *Spirit of Tasmania* service is completely unacceptable. This service does not belong to you; it belongs to the people of Tasmania. Hundreds of Tasmanian businesses, employing thousands of workers, rely on the reliable and accessible service that the *Spirits* provide. Moving a service to Geelong will add considerable travel time for freight vehicles and people travelling into the city of Melbourne or further east, up the coast. There is also the brand recognition that will be lost from having the *Spirits* dock in such a high profile location as St Kilda.

Can you guarantee that the *Spirits* will not lose customers as a result of moving the vessels to Geelong?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. What I will guarantee is that we will look for the most competitive outcome that we can possibly get. As far as VicPorts is concerned, we will continue to engage with them, but we are examining options, should we not be able to get to an appropriate landing point.

The key point is that our *Spirits* are a valuable lifeline for Tasmania. They bring passengers and freight to this state and take passengers and freight from this state to the mainland.

What we have to arrive at is an appropriate cost setting -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - I come back to the point I made yesterday. The prophets of doom on the other side are looking for any issue they can find that might provide some concern in the Tasmanian community. It is clear that nothing has been hidden here.

Mr O'Byrne - You are already docking at Geelong; you are already talking about it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - The Minister for Infrastructure and Transport very transparently raised this matter last year. Last year it was reported that we are in negotiations with Station Pier and VicPorts. Clearly from that, in terms of the concerns that the minister raised, of course we are looking at options.

Donations Disclosure Laws

Ms O'CONNOR to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.09 a.m.]

As you know, perhaps more than any member of your Cabinet, your party's last state election win was bankrolled by the gambling industry. According to the Australian Electoral Commission returns in February this year, the source of less than a quarter of the money your party received from corporate interests has been declared.

Do you acknowledge what ABC *Fact Check* confirmed: that Tasmania has the weakest donations disclosure laws in the country? While your predecessor agreed to reform and review the Electoral Act, tepid and drawn out though it is, you appear to have walked away from any strengthening of Tasmania's nation-leading weakest donations disclosure laws.

Premier, what is it: a basic lack of ethics, or a lack of courage? Are you afraid you cannot win without the millions in secret donations from your corporate backers? Are you that scared of a fair fight? You do not want Tasmanians to know who funds your campaigns and what your backers, like the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, might want in return for their contributions. The source of that \$4 million you received was not declared.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Clark and the Leader of the Greens for her question. The former premier had indicated that he would look at this matter, and I have said publicly that I will do the same. I want to make the point that very clearly, what the Leader of the Greens - the member for Clark - is advocating for is public funding -

Ms O'Connor - Every state and territory in Australia and the Commonwealth has public funding, by the way.

Mr GUTWEIN - We do not have public funding in Tasmania, which means that we do not take money from health or education or other essential services. It is clear that in the election we had two competing policies. One was advocated by Labor and the Greens, which would have shut pubs and clubs down, and would have cost jobs and caused social dislocation in many regional and rural areas. On the other hand, we had a policy that strengthened the employment opportunities and the investment opportunities for many of those businesses in regional and rural locations. Ours was a job-creating policy. Theirs was a job-destroying policy.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, standing order 45 on relevance. Perhaps the Premier could go to the question, which is: what is it, a basic lack of ethics, or lack of courage, that stops you from enacting donations reform?

Madam SPEAKER - As you appreciate, that is not a point of order. I ask the Premier to continue.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can understand her wanting to interject and stop me from explaining exactly what the Greens are advocating here.

Ms O'Connor - The question was not about us.

Mr GUTWEIN - Again, the interjection. Bingo! What the member for Clark is calling for is public funding. She has herself indicated -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Premier is being misleading about our position and he knows it. There is a suite of reforms that revolve around donations disclosure, and public funding is but one of them.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order either, so please proceed.

Mr GUTWEIN - I did not think it was a point of order, to be frank, because you said yourself a moment ago that every other jurisdiction gets public funding. We do not in Tasmania, which means we do not take money from health or education or essential services to fund elections. That is the difference. At the election, people had a very clear choice. They could vote for a job-creating policy on this side of the House, or a job-destroying policy on that side of the House.

Ms O'Connor - Who pays the piper?

Mr GUTWEIN - Who pays the piper? You want the piper to be paid by taxpayers in Tasmania. That is who you want the piper to be paid by. I have said clearly that I will look at this matter, but I am very concerned that the taxpayer will end up funding elections, which is exactly what the Leader of the Greens -

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 45 on relevance. For starters, the Premier has not bothered to go anywhere near the issue of donations disclosure and transparency, and he is deflecting to public funding so he does not have to answer the question.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not a point of order, and I did hear the Premier state he was going to be looking into it, as was Will Hodgman's policy. Thank you. That is just over four minutes, Premier.

Mr FERGUSON - On the point of order, you would not have heard the interjection that Cassy O'Connor just made during your ruling, but I ask you to instruct her to withdraw that very unparliamentary remark.

Ms O'Connor - Did Mr Gutwein hear it?

Madam SPEAKER - I am sorry, Ms O'Connor, I am not privy to what you said.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I stated that the Premier is ethically corrupt because he will not disclose the source of his donations from vested interests. I withdraw that if the Leader of Government Business takes offence on his behalf.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you, consider it withdrawn.

Mr GUTWEIN - I will finish my comments here. It is quite obvious the member again misled the House in her contribution when she said I had gone nowhere near donations reform, and as you quite rightly pointed out, I had. The former Premier said he would look at this. I have indicated publicly that I will look at this. I am very concerned that the endpoint you want to get to - quite frankly because not many people want to donate to the Greens - is public funding. It is public funding, and you want health and education and essential services to have money diverted from them to fund election campaigns.

Spirit of Tasmania - Docking in Melbourne

Dr BROAD to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.16 a.m.]

Tasmanian exporters rely heavily on the service provided by TT-Line to get their goods to market, especially fresh freight. Farmers are making investment decisions right now and entering into supply contracts with customers, including supermarkets, that are highly sensitive to delivery time frames. Have you conducted any consultation with Tasmanian exporters about the consequences of moving the *Spirits* to Geelong, which adds at least one-and-a-half hours travel time to Melbourne? Why are you keeping Tasmanian farmers in the dark?

Mr Jaensch interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Will the Minister for Housing please be quiet?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Braddon for that question and for his interest in this matter. I will make one point before I provide more background. Time sensitivities are one thing our exporters are interested in, but so is price. Being able to get our goods to market at an appropriate price is important. As I have said, it has surprised me that it has taken four months to get to this point. It was noted in Estimates last year that there were challenges in negotiations with Station Pier and the Victorian Ports Corporation. Very clearly, it is appropriate that we look at other options. It is very clear the board of TT-Line is working through these matters, because what we want is not only a time-sensitive outcome that works for our exporters and our passengers, but one that actually meets the hip pocket as well. It has to be affordable.

I make no apologies for stating that the prices that are being requested at Station Pier are not acceptable to the Tasmanian Government. We are working through that. The board is working through that. Therefore, it is quite appropriate that we look at other options.

Zero Carbon Target

Ms OGILVIE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.19 a.m.]

We all watched with horror and shock as the summer's bushfires raged on mainland Australia. The loss of life was devastating, the loss of wildlife and property a cruel blow, and our hearts broke. When it comes to the matter of climate change, we need a summit. The people of Tasmania want action. We need a zero-carbon emission target of 2040, and an independent climate commission to lead the adaptation work. Will you today commit to a 2040 zero carbon target, and the formation of an independent commission?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Ms Ogilvie, the member for Clark, for that question and her interest in this matter. Regarding a 2040 target, I made it clear yesterday that we have a target of zero net emissions by 2050 and there has been a lot of interest - from yourself as well - in having a much more ambitious target, but the one thing we need to understand is what that pathway might look like if it were to be more ambitious.

As I very clearly explained yesterday, I have asked DPAC, in concert with Treasury, to work with DPIPWE and State Growth to work through a process whereby both the science and the economics of reducing our target can be considered and understood and, importantly, we can have those conversations and discussions with industry so that industry knows what the steps might be should we set a more ambitious target.

We have a very good story to tell regarding net emissions. Our net emissions profile is the best in the country and one of the best in the world. I made the point yesterday that in 2016 we were at zero net emissions. Today we are at 95 per cent below 1990 emissions. During the consultation last year on the Climate Change Act and our 2021 targets, a number of submissions argued for a much more ambitious target and based on where our net emissions profile is at, it is something we should inquire into and understand, but before we take those steps we need to understand exactly what it might mean.

In terms of Tasmania's emissions profile, one of the most important aspects we have is our renewable energy. We will be in a position by 2022 to be 100 per cent renewable. Yesterday I announced that we want to double that target by 2040. Not only do we want to do more here in Tasmania which will provide more energy that we can use to attract businesses and consumers to the state, but we can also do our bit to reduce the overall emissions profile for the rest of the country.

Ms Ogilvie - And an independent commission?

Mr GUTWEIN - In response to the question from Ms Ogilvie, we will not set a 2040 target. We will work through the process and understand what the pathway might be to a more ambitious target than 2050. In terms of the commission, I will look into that. There is obviously a great deal more interest at the moment in the climate and the volatility we are seeing, so I will have a look at what has been suggested. I do want to be clear that regarding our current target of zero net emissions by 2050, we will understand what the pathway and the impacts might be before we set a more ambitious target.

Bushfire Safety - Long-Term Plan

Mrs RYLAH to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.23 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan to keep Tasmanians safe from bushfires, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mrs Rylah for that question and her interest in this matter. It is fundamental to the certainty and stability of our state that we take appropriate steps to ensure we can keep Tasmanians safe and, importantly, that we can protect lives, homes, infrastructure and natural assets as well. We have already taken significant action. On this side of the House we introduced a nation-leading tenure-blind fuel reduction program which has been adequately funded and has reduced fuel loads significantly over the last five years. In total there were 608 fuel reduction burns in total completed, with nearly 90 000 hectares of land that is being managed, of which just under 15 000 hectares was privately owned land. It is a tenure-blind approach.

However, what we know and understand is that the windows to take action are getting smaller. Our climate is more volatile and we also know that the intensity of fires is increasing. Anybody who was watching television or reading the newspapers over the summer period would, I am certain, have felt the same level of horror as I did as we watched those walls of flame engulfing Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. South Australia was not immune either, and nor was Western Australia. Fortunately, we did not experience the same impact here in Tasmania but it very well could have occurred.

We must do everything we can to protect life, property, infrastructure and our natural assets. We know, after watching the devastation of those bushfires on the mainland, that it is too late when the fire is coming over the hill or on your back doorstep. The planning controls we have in place at the moment can limit both public and private landholders from taking the necessary action and we know the opportunity to take those actions in terms of fuel reductions burns are getting smaller.

To keep Tasmania safe, the Government will introduce legislation in coming months to make it easier to reduce fuel and, importantly, mechanically clear vegetation for a fuel break if that is necessary under a bushfire hazard management plan. We need to make it easier for landholders, whether they are public or private, to reduce fuel loads by ensuring that approvals can be granted in a shorter period of time to enable us to make use of the windows we have through the autumn and spring to do fuel reduction burns. If we cannot adequately protect life, property, infrastructure or our natural assets using fuel reduction burns in those smaller windows, then we need to have the option available to be able to put fuel breaks in where we need them.

We are also going to introduce additional fuel reduction teams this year. There will be 12 extra staff available to ensure that we can do as much fuel reduction as possible in the windows we have available, and we will be providing additional resources to help landowners plan and undertake their fuel reduction activities. I hope that as we bring this legislation forward we get the full support of this place.

To have watched the devastation that occurred on the mainland, to have been in Tasmania when we had record temperatures over that Christmas/New Year period and know we were only a step away from being in a similar position, it is important that we take every necessary step we can to protect life, property, infrastructure and natural assets. We will introduce legislation that will enable us to do exactly that this year.

Spirit of Tasmania - Docking in Melbourne

Dr BROAD to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.28 a.m.]

A key part of the *Spirit of Tasmania's* appeal for tourists is its proximity to Melbourne. Passengers can hop straight off the boat at Melbourne and onto a tram directly into the CBD. Station Pier is positioned centrally for caravanners heading either north, east or west. Moving to the Port of Geelong will not only inconvenience travellers, it will reduce the visibility of the service, which means people could be less likely to consider it as a travel option. For a long time, a key challenge has been to encourage tourists to turn right when they disembark off the *Spirits* in Devonport. If you proceed with this option, the challenge may be getting tourists on the ships in the first place. Have you conducted any market testing to understanding the consequences of moving TT-Line's current and future passengers to Geelong?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Dr Broad for his question, but he is jumping to conclusions. I will make the point very clearly that in terms of the performance of TT-Line and Station Pier to date, it has been a very successful story, but as to the negotiations that we are having, the price point that is being requested is an onerous one. It is only reasonable that the Government considers what options might be available. I want to put on the record a couple of points about Station Pier. It sounds like Dr Broad had the opportunity to buy shares based on what he just said. Even the negative Dr Broad would understand that Station Pier has only a small freight staging area, which has been problematic. If he spent time at Station Pier, he would know that we have trucks and vehicles that are backed up around the corner into Beach Road. He knows that location has some issues. Notwithstanding that, it is quite clear that he is a Station Pier advocate.

I will come back to the points I made previously on this. TT-Line has been negotiating with VicPorts on their ongoing lease there. As the minister said nearly four months ago, what has been occurring is they have been requesting costs that are unacceptable. They would need to be passed on to our consumers - our passengers and our freight customers.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - The TT-Line board is considering options as they properly should do. To be frank, the negativity we have heard today is galling. It sounds like Dr Broad wants to argue for VicPorts' position as opposed to TT-Line's and Tasmania's position.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Premier, I agree. There are some unparliamentary, undignified and silly comments. Many people are being rude. I ask you to reflect on your behaviour and your contribution, taxpayers' dollars, all of that; take a deep breath and remember where you are.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. That side of the House obviously wants to lock themselves to Station Pier.

Dr Broad interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Broad.

Mr GUTWEIN - We said four months ago that the negotiations with VicPorts, at the time we are alluding to, prices and conditions were unacceptable. We are continuing work through this process. Quite obviously, a sensible and responsible government and a sensible and responsible board, which TT-Line has - has been a great steward for that business for a long time and together we will look at options. We need to ensure that we protect our customers; those who coming to Tasmania and those leaving Tasmania to holiday on the mainland. We are working through those options.

WorkSafe Tasmania - Referral of Bob Brown Foundation

Dr WOODRUFF to MINISTER for JUSTICE, Ms ARCHER

[10.33 a.m.]

You and Mr Barnett issued a joint media statement on the morning of 21 February that stated that you had referred the alleged unsafe workplace behaviours of the Bob Brown Foundation to WorkSafe Tasmania. Later the same day, Mr Barnett gave a confounding interview on ABC radio. First he denied the Government had referred the matter to WorkSafe; then he flipfopped and said your joint media statement was still correct.

Those positions are entirely contradictory. Since then, the evidence of Government involvement in this matter has strengthened. Yesterday the Premier admitted he had advance notice of WorkSafe issuing the prohibition notice. Unions Tasmania yesterday stated they no longer have confidence in WorkSafe Tasmania as workers' safety complaints are not being dealt with in a timely manner. In the case of the Bob Brown Foundation, things seemed to move extremely quickly.

As Minister for Justice, responsible for overseeing WorkSafe Tasmania, will you come clean with the Tasmanian people about the Government's involvement in this matter? Did you seek legal advice from the Solicitor-General to cover your sanctioning of WorkSafe legal overreach and its misuse of public resources in this matter?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I am a little surprised that the Greens have the gall to come in here again today, particularly after a fairly scathing response from the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission.

As you know this side of the House sought advice in relation to the Greens wishing to table their referral document. It has a number of allegations in it that are not currently protected by privilege outside this House and I see as highly defamatory.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Can I please hear the answer?

Ms ARCHER - I am going to read the response by the Chief Commissioner and I will respond to the other issues. It is important for this House to know that when they refer matters to the Integrity Commission -

Members interjecting.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, standing order 45, relevance. The minister is trying to divert from the very serious questions being asked here by talking about a matter of referral to the Integrity Commission. Not once did I mention the Integrity Commission. This is a question about the minister and her authority, her responsibility and her politicisation of this, WorkSafe Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I ask the Attorney-General to resume.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will address those other issues, but it is important for members to know that if they wish to make a referral to the Integrity Commission it will only be seen as politicising the issue, as the Greens are doing on this occasion.

The response from the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission to the Leader of Government Business -

Dear Minister,

I refer to your correspondence to Mr Bingham ...

He is the CEO.

... and respond on behalf of the Commission.

It is always inappropriate to have investigations being compromised by the publication of complaints.

We question the motives of those so doing and don't appreciate attempts to use the Commission for political purposes.

However, as the investigation has already been compromised by the release of the complaint to the media I don't see any further complications arising by having the complaint tabled in Parliament.

Clearly the Greens want the protection of parliament to make the allegations that they have made in the complaint. I urge them to allow the Integrity Commission to do its job. I make it clear to the Greens and to this House that we as a Government take the issue of workplace health and safety extremely seriously. Every employer has a legal obligation under the workplace, health and

safety laws. As members know, WorkSafe Tasmania is the independent workhealth and safety regulator. It makes its decisions independent of the Government. Contrary to the claims from the Greens, the Government did not refer the matter to the workplace health and safety regulator.

Dr Woodruff - Why does your media release say you referred it? Why is still on your website? Are you retracting it then?

Ms ARCHER - I am pleased that you are so hung up on the government website.

Madam Speaker, I am in parliament as the minister responsible. I know my responsibilities are not to mislead the parliament, so can I make it unequivocally clear that the Government did not refer the matter to the workplace health and safety regulator.

Dr Woodruff - Did you? Why did you release a statement that said the opposite?

Ms ARCHER - I did not refer the matter - nor did Mr Barnett refer the matter - to the independent regulator. The independent regulator has also, for the record, made it very clear, publicly, on the radio, that there has been no interference by the Government or by me as the minister -

Ms O'Connor - Then how come you put out that media release saying that you referred it?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Connor, I urge you to show restraint.

Ms ARCHER - Members in this House - and Ms O'Connor should know; she has been a minister - that following the regulator's decision to issue a notice I was advised of its decision to do so. It is normal in the course of matters of significance that a minister would be advised that something is going to happen. There was no interference at all. I have made that very clear.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I am sorry, Attorney-General, but I cannot have conversations going across the room; it is really distracting. The member asked an important question and I need to hear the answer. You may continue but you are now well over four minutes, due to the distractions.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. As members know, the Greens have referred this matter to the Integrity Commission in an overtly political manner, so I would ask that the Integrity Commission now be given the opportunity to undertake its work without any further politicisation.

Renewable Energy Generation

Mr TUCKER to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[10.41 a.m.]

Tasmanians should be proud of the long history their state has in being a leader in renewable energy generation, not only in Australia but the world. Can the minister outline what plans are in

place to ensure Tasmania not only maintains its status as Australia's leading renewable energy state, but goes beyond that?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question. He is spot-on. Tasmania has the opportunity to ensure the most compelling twenty-first century competitive advantage that any country, any jurisdiction, would want, and that is renewable energy that is affordable and reliable. Tasmania is at the forefront. This is an opportunity to attract investment, to create jobs in rural and regional parts of Tasmania, and we are proud of it. It will also help transition Australia to a decarbonised future, and not just Australia but the globe. We are on the cutting edge.

We are already just centimetres away from the 100 per cent renewable energy target by 2022 and we are on track to meet this target. If the Opposition is listening I will remind them that the Premier announced yesterday a 200 per cent for renewable energy of our current needs by 2040. That means that Tasmania will double our renewable energy production by 2040. It is a bold target but I believe we can do it. That will ensure Tasmania remains at the forefront for decades to come.

No other state or territory is within cooe of Tasmania. They are not even in the rear-vision mirror of Tasmania; we are way ahead of other states and territories. In fact we are a world leader. As Professor Alan Finkel told me just a few months ago, if Tasmania was a country we would be in the top three in the world in terms of producing renewable energy. That is because we have the natural advantage of a world-class water resource and a world-class wind resource and we are grasping that opportunity with both hands. We are taking the lead as a government to deliver low-cost, reliable, clean energy and that will create jobs and further downward pressure on electricity prices.

We are taking this action to realise on top of that our competitive advantages with respect to producing renewable hydrogen, green hydrogen, and to be using this domestically by 2022 to 2024, to be a global exporter by 2025 to 2027 and be at the forefront of that globally by 2030. There is an emerging demand for renewable hydrogen which presents a massively important opportunity for Tasmania to develop that. We are doing it to create more jobs and more opportunity, particularly in and around Bell Bay's advanced manufacturing zone in the north, supported by the George Town mayor just in the last 24 hours or so, and with a hydrogen hub at Bell Bay and likewise at Burnie on the north-west coast. I quote the CEO of the Cradle Coast Authority, Daryl Connelly, who said:

We were very keen for our region to be recognised as an ideal location for a hydrogen production plant, and we are very pleased by the news.

Burnie mayor Steve Kons said in *The Advocate* that it could be Tasmania's saviour and they could use it as an attractant to bring business into the state.

We have a \$50 million support package, \$20 million in grants, \$20 million in loans, \$10 million in competitive prices, payroll tax concessions and other support packages. All in all, it is the nation's biggest support package for a hydrogen industry in Australia. All of this complements beautifully our plans for the Marinus Link and to be the battery of the nation -

Mr O'Byrne - Other states have already got projects up. We're the only state that doesn't.

Mr BARNETT - We hear the criticisms and the opposition from the Labor Party on the other side and it is incessant. They ought to come on board and support our plan and vision for the future. We are talking thousands of jobs from the Marinus Link and the consequential wind developments, pumped hydro developments, and the \$7 billion of investment over that period of construction. It is very exciting. On top of that we have the green hydrogen action plan, which has now been released. Within coming weeks, the expressions of interest will be released and those proponents will be coming forward. We have been having ongoing discussions with them for over 12 months and those discussions are cooperative and ongoing.

I am thankful for the support of the Australian Government with \$56 million to progress Marinus, now upsized to 1500 megawatts, providing more opportunities for renewable energy projects in Tasmania going forward. In October last year, Mr Taylor said about the Marinus Link that:

... retaining and attracting on-demand 'dispatchable' capacity is crucial.

... hydro can play a role in providing flexible on-demand power which is why the Commonwealth is investing in Snowy and Marinus Link.

All of this, in conclusion, is in stark contrast to the other side, the Labor Party, which has been feeble in their comments, soft in their response and have a track record of calling for power rationing. Just a few years ago your leader was calling for power rationing -

Ms White - When you plunged the state into an energy crisis? Are you serious?

Mr BARNETT - So you support that action of power rationing during the so-called power crisis? Now we have the Leader of the Opposition complimenting the former leader of the opposition for power rationing in Tasmania.

This is the Labor Party's track record. It is demeaning of you and all the people you pretend to represent. You pretend to represent the working class and you have just put your foot in it big-time. You have just complimented your former leader. You have a track record of a 65 per cent increase in electricity prices under your watch. There is no-one in Tasmania who would want another 65 per cent increase in electricity prices and that could happen under Labor and the Greens. Let us be clear. What Tasmanians want is low-cost, reliable, clean energy and the Gutwein majority Liberal Government is delivering.

Government Business Enterprises - Dividends

Mr O'BYRNE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.48 a.m.]

The Revised Estimates Report confirmed that you are plunging Tasmania into more than \$1 billion worth of debt. It also showed that the situation would be a lot worse if you had not raided government business enterprises to prop up the Budget. Yesterday you said that money does not grow on trees, which is ironic given that one of the businesses you have chosen to raid is Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, along with Hydro Tasmania. First you flagged the \$105 million dividend from Hydro in last year's May Budget. Three months later you began to panic and took another \$15 million. In a white-knuckle panic this January you grabbed another \$70 million.

You are treating the Hydro as your own personal ATM, with almost \$200 million ripped from the business in a single year to prop up your Budget. It is clear that the real prophets of doom are the dividends you are ripping from Hydro Tas. Why are you laundering money from the government business to mask your budget incompetence

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for his question.

Mr Ferguson - No question on health funding?

Ms White - You're not the minister for health anymore. You have to get over it, Michael.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could we please have a bit of discipline?

Mr GUTWEIN - I would like to know what the shadow treasurer has got against us investing into health, education and looking after the most vulnerable?

We run our businesses well. Their balance sheets are strong. From the point of view of being able to fund health, education and looking after the most vulnerable, when there is spare capacity, it is quite reasonable for a government to invest into those key areas.

Again, he gets his facts wrong. The \$105 million dividend, which was increased by \$15 million, was because Hydro Tasmania had a very good year. They paid a high level of dividend, slightly below the 90 per cent dividend ratio. They actually provided more money than we had expected.

In terms of Sustainable Timber Tasmania, I make the point that we are light years from where you were when you were crippling that business -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. What on earth is the matter with you lot? Please. There is naughtiness on both sides and I ask you to calm down. It is giving me an earache.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, the point I was making was that they were pouring taxpayers' money into Sustainable Timber, into Forestry Tasmania, to actually fund the business. We are in a position where the business has cash, and so we have taken that, and we are using it to fund health. That is what government businesses are there for - to actually provide benefits to Tasmanians.

In terms of Hydro Tasmania, I remind the House that when I came here in 2002, they were propping up their state budget to the tune of \$50 million a year, every year, from Hydro in terms of a special dividend. What we have done is ensure that Hydro, a sustainable business, is able to make a contribution. This year, what they have assisted us to do is to put \$600 million over four years into health. I find it galling and extraordinary that the shadow treasurer would not want us to be funding health or education, or looking after the most vulnerable and using the resources we have available to us.

It makes you wonder, when he puts together an alternative budget, when he does what a sensible and reasonable opposition should do, how they are going to pay for the promises they make, which is exactly what we did on our side of the House. We outlined policies, and what they would cost - but importantly, we explained how we would fund them. We will see, no doubt, a shopping list of promises from Rebecca White this afternoon. What we want to know is how they are going to fund them. When is the shadow treasurer going to provide Tasmanians with the clarity they require to understand how their promises will be paid?

Ms White - Just like we do at every election.

Mr GUTWEIN - Like you do at every election? Your last shadow treasurer actually put money into health, and then was cutting it back each year. He was putting money in and then taking it out. Mind you, after you have had six health policies, there is no doubt he could not craft a budget to suit it.

Our government businesses are in good health. We make no apologies for using the funds that they have available to fund health and education, and to look after the most disadvantaged in this community. That is why governments own government businesses, so that they can provide services, but they can also provide a return, so you can provide the services that Tasmanians need.

Housing Affordability and Supply - Long-Term Plan

Mr STREET to MINISTER for HOUSING, Mr JAENSCH

[10.55 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Tasmanian Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan to deliver more affordable homes, increased housing supply and improvements to our planning system?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member, Mr Street, for his question, and his interest and support for this important topic.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government continues to use the benefits of a strong economy to deliver on our multifaceted plan to build more housing for Tasmanians who need housing.

I was pleased to make the major policy announcement yesterday that our Government will renegotiate and extend its current management agreements with four community housing provider organisations through to 2040, providing long-term certainty for that sector. We will also transfer the management of a further 2000 Housing Tasmania-owned properties to these four providers, which means that, between them, the community housing providers will be able to access an extra \$6 million of revenue each year through the Commonwealth Rent Assistance program, so that the properties under their management will get the maintenance and the upgrades they need, when they need it. Subject to final agreements with these organisations, we believe this additional revenue, over a longer term, will also enable the delivery of an estimated 700 additional new social and affordable houses over the life of these agreements.

We also announced a further \$22 million in community housing grants over the next three years, delivering an estimated 220 new social housing dwellings for people on the housing register. These funds, as well as the \$12 million in community housing grants that were announced in December, and which will yield another 80-odd homes, have been made available as a result of a historic agreement that we achieved to waive Tasmania's housing-related debt to the Commonwealth.

In total, we expect these initiatives to deliver about 1000 new social and affordable housing dwellings over and above the current affordable housing action plan targets. These initiatives are in addition to the initiatives announced by the Premier yesterday to extend the First Home Owners Grant for a further two years at \$20 000, the extension to the HomeShare Home Ownership Assistance Program, where the Government's contribution will increase to a maximum of \$100 000, and stamp duty rebates for downsizers and first home buyers of established homes.

Our Government is also determined to keep our economy strong, and to support and facilitate appropriate development and our building industry. We have entered a period of unprecedented growth and change. Tasmanians need to know we have the decision-making tools to guide and manage that growth in the long-term interests of Tasmania. We have made a commitment to replace the unused and inadequate Projects of Regional Significance process, and we will be introducing legislation to Parliament in May this year to provide for the independent assessment of major projects. Our new Major Projects assessment process is independent, comprehensive and rigorous, and will provide certainty for proponents and transparency for the community.

It will provide for the assessment of development proposals that are of significant scale, impact and complexity, those that cross municipal boundaries, and those that require assessment under multiple acts. Proposals that are declared to be Major Projects will be assessed by an independent expert panel specially convened by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The panel will also coordinate the range of other related permit approvals processes as provided for under the act. Statutory regulators will undertake their normal assessment processes within defined time frames, and their advice will form part of the consolidated decision on major project approvals.

Dr Woodruff - Who makes the final decision?

Mr JAENSCH - The panel, not the minister. Read it. It is on the website. It is a substantial piece of work. You can read it like everybody else.

The draft major projects bill went through two periods of public consultation in 2017 and 2018 and significant work has been undertaken to consider the issues raised and to refine the assessment process accordingly.

Strong economic growth is the new normal in Tasmania. There is strong interest, more than ever before, in investment and there is a need for large and complex projects like we have never seen before and we need the planning and assessment tools to deal with them. This Government has no intention of delivering another flawed assessment process that will never be used like the projects of regional significance process that was introduced 10 years ago. We have taken our time to revise the draft bill to ensure that the new major projects process is independent, comprehensive, rigorous and provides certainty to proponents and transparency to the community.

Only this majority Liberal Government has a vision and a long-term plan for Tasmania and the tools to deliver it. We are getting on with the job of delivering it.

Hydro Tasmania - Dividends

Mr O'BYRNE to PREMIER, Mr GUTWEIN

[11.01 a.m.]

The dividends you are ripping from Hydro Tasmania are clearly unsustainable. We know this because the board of Hydro has said so. In the 2019 statement of corporate intent which you personally signed, the board writes:

Dividends have been included based on the Government's 90% dividend Policy. However this results in forecast debt that in the view of the Hydro Tasmania's Board may be unsustainable.

Hydro is having to borrow more money to pay your cash grab demand. You clearly have not learnt your lesson from 2016 when your demand for a dividend from Hydro Tasmania forced the decision to decommission and sell the Tamar Valley Power Station, which contributed significantly to the energy crisis. Why are you recklessly ignoring the warnings of the Hydro Tasmania board?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the shadow treasurer for his interest in this question. I make the point again, as I did in my previous answer, that our businesses are in very good health. Their balance sheets are very strong.

Mr O'Byrne - They have red-flagged you. You signed it and then took another \$70 million.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr GUTWEIN - Their balance sheets are in very good health. In fact, Hydro's debt has been reducing each year we have been in government. Its balance sheet is in a solid position.

I say to the shadow treasurer, what does he have against investing in health, investing in education and looking after the most vulnerable?

Mr O'Byrne - I'm against laundering money from a GBE so it's not debt on your books.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I reject his assertions. I will not repeat them.

We are utilising dividends and special dividends as they were intended to be used to ensure that our businesses not only provide services -

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Excuse me, where are your manners? Not across the Chamber.

Mr GUTWEIN - Thank you, Madam Speaker. He forgets himself.

Hydro's balance sheet is in good health. It is a strong balance sheet and we are utilising the strength of that balance sheet to ensure that we can provide the essential services Tasmanians require. That is why we own government businesses. I make the point that every time the shadow treasurer gets to his feet in this place and raises a question about the budget, it behoves me to ask where is their alternative budget? You have no credibility in this place until you begin explaining how you would pay for your promises and commitments.

Madam Speaker, they need to ensure that they do the responsible thing, the right thing, do what Tasmanians would expect and that is bring down an alternative budget this year and explain what they stand for, what their policies are, how much they cost but, importantly, how they would pay for them. Until they do that they have no credibility in this place.

Hydro Tasmania - Dividends

Mr O'BYRNE to MINISTER for ENERGY, Mr BARNETT

[11.05 a.m.]

As a supporter for the wannabe premier, Michael Ferguson, how do you feel about Peter Gutwein jeopardising the finances of Hydro Tasmania to mask his own budget incompetence? Have you attempted to fight against the Premier's blatant cash grab? Have you taken advice from the Hydro Tasmania board about the impact that unsustainable debt may have on the businesses ability to deliver on major infrastructure projects such as pumped hydro and Marinus Link? How is this unsustainable raid on the finances of Hydro Tasmania consistent with your Tasmania First energy policy, or is it Mr Gutwein and the budget first, Tasmania second?

Recognition of Visitor

Madam SPEAKER - Honourable members, I welcome the Honourable Mike Gaffney MLC to the Chamber.

Members - Hear, hear.

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I will say how pleased I am to have a question from my shadow minister in this regard. We are very proud on this side of the House of our renewable energy credentials. We are very proud of the work and delivery of our GBEs and in this case Hydro Tasmania. As the Premier has made it very clear, the whole reason that this side of the House can invest in health, education, infrastructure and police is because of the way we manage our budget and also because of strong and sustainable government business enterprises across the board.

There was a reference to Sustainable Timber Tasmania. They lost money for 10 years and nearly killed off Sustainable Timber Tasmania and now we have been having sustainable surpluses and profits going forward. Hydro Tasmania are delivering very strongly. They are very sustainable and as a result of that and as a government in terms of the budget context, the Premier and the Treasurer on behalf of all of us made it very clear that we want to invest that money in health,

education, infrastructure and police. These are the police that you tried to knock off. Remember? You have a short memory. The former police minister put off more police, more than 100 in fact.

Mr O'Byrne - Did you read it before you signed it?

Madam SPEAKER - Mr O'Byrne, I have been extremely tolerant.

Mr BARNETT - The member continues to be a scaremonger when it comes to economic growth and development and suggesting that the special dividend from Hydro is wrong and irresponsible. You are scaremongering. You are being irresponsible. As the Premier said, we want to see your alternative budget, we want to see how you respond, we want to hear the Leader of the Opposition today when she talks about all her grab-bag of projects and priorities. We will be waiting, we will be listening and we want to know how you will fund those projects. We want to know because you still have not delivered an alternative budget. You promised. The member promised publicly to deliver his own development plan for the state. What is it now, March, and we do not have the plan.

Mr O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. Apart from the document that you signed acknowledging there is a problem, what advice have you sought from the Hydro board about the unsustainable nature of the Premier's cash raid?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. I ask the minister to remain relevant and he has one minute, 29 seconds left.

Mr BARNETT - I can sum up because the member seriously has not delivered on his promise to the Tasmanian people to deliver an economic development plan which he said he would do as the alternative leader to the Leader of the Opposition, Ms White. You said you would be doing this as the alternative leader, the shadow minister for economic development. Well, where is your plan? It has not arisen.

We are managing the economy. We are growing jobs, more than 21 000 since -

Ms O'Byrne - What advice did you get?

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr BARNETT - we came to office, so we are resolute.

Ms O'Byrne - Why won't you tell us what Hydro told you?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms O'Byrne, I just yelled 'Order'.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Speaker, they are an unruly rabble on the other side. They have no idea how to run the economy or grow jobs and that is what we are all about under a Gutwein majority Liberal Government.

Economic Growth - Long-Term Plan

Mrs PETRUSMA to MINISTER for STRATEGIC GROWTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.10 a.m.]

Can you please outline how the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is strengthening our long-term plan for Tasmania and is supporting greater opportunity for more Tasmanians to benefit from the strong economic growth that we are experiencing?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The Tasmanian majority Liberal Government has a long-term plan to continue to grow Tasmania's economy and create more jobs and opportunities. Tasmania's economy is the envy of the nation with over 21 000 jobs having been created and having 2400 new businesses than when we came to government.

However, we have always maintained that there is more to do. That is why we are committed to bolstering our partnerships with business and industry so more people can have the opportunity to gain meaningful employment in Tasmania. This is the focus for all Tasmanians across our cities as well as our rural and regional areas. Regardless of your background, where you live or your circumstances, we are focused on making sure everyone has the same opportunity as everybody else to participate and, importantly, benefit from our strong economy. We want to see local people in local jobs. We want to see our young people transitioning from school to university, training or a job.

We recognise that there are areas where the unemployment rate is still higher than we would like it to be. However, it is important to note that even in these areas, it is much, much lower than under the Labor-Greens government when we saw 10 000 jobs lost from our state and thousands of Tasmanians voted with their feet and left our state.

We know that Glenorchy is one such area where there are challenges, but also there are opportunities. We also know that the municipality is extremely well placed to capitalise on the strength of the Tasmanian economy. Last week's announcement that the in-principle NBL deal and the Wilkinsons Point redevelopment is set to bring an unprecedented level of investment, construction and economic activity to the region with an anticipated economic injection of \$102 million and the creation of around 1200 jobs. The construction of the MONA hotel also presents a tremendous opportunity for local workers, in particular those younger workers who want a career in our vital hospitality industry.

Importantly, with a Tasmania economy continuing to outperform the mainland states, major employers are telling us that they want to grow their workforces and recruit locally. All of this creates an opportunity for the people of Glenorchy, which is why yesterday we announced we will establish a job hub. This hub will support locals seeking a job by connecting them with local employers and, importantly, the transport needed to get to work.

Ms O'Connor - You're going to increase the number of poker machines in Glenorchy under your policy. You utter soul-sucking hypocrites.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Ms COURTNEY - This announcement has been welcomed by the TCCI and the Tasmanian Small Business Council. Rob Mallett, the CEO of the TSBC said -

The professionalism and support of the employment hub should provide services for both [small businesses and job seekers] ... leading to a positive outcome not only for the immediate participants but the region in general.

The new jobs hub will build on the great success of the South East Employment Hub, which has placed 108 local people in jobs since its commencement in 2018 and has identified another 330 local jobs for people in that community. This success is why we have also recently announced an additional \$300 000 for the extension of the Sorell jobs hub for a further 12 months. This was welcomed by the mayor. While the design of the Glenorchy hub will be tailored on the successful south-east model, it is important to ensure it will be tailored to ensure that it meets the needs of its local community. This is why we will be working closely with key industry and community partners, as well as the council to ensure that services provided assist local business owners to meet their workforce demands and help job seekers access employment opportunities.

It is pleasing to see that the hub will be developed alongside the Glenorchy Economic Development Strategy, which has been implemented by council to maximise the opportunities available for the people of Glenorchy.

We are also continuing to roll out other initiatives under our \$4.1 million Jobs Action Package, which has already seen over \$1.6 million directly going to community organisations and local projects to support them, to provide more than 840 employment and training-related opportunities.

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is proud of these achievements and will continue working with our community partners in the Derwent Valley, Break O'Day and on the west coast to ensure that the programs we have begun are achieving the right outcomes for their communities. This will help us deliver on our number one objective of maintaining the current economic growth and creating jobs for more Tasmanians.

Yesterday, the Premier demonstrated clear leadership in outlining our plan in government. In contrast, we have seen it this week and in past weeks and in past years, Labor still has no plan. They still have no alternative costed budget. Tasmanians know that this side of the Chamber has a clear plan and strategy to deliver for Tasmanians.

Time expired.

TABLED PAPER

Leave to Table Paper - Referral to Integrity Commission

[11.17 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, I again seek the leave of the House to table our referral to the Integrity Commission in relation to the politicisation of WorkSafe Tasmania and its issuing of an unlawful prohibition notice on the Bob Brown Foundation.

While I am seeking the leave, I need to respond to what the Attorney-General said this morning in relation to advice that we have not seen from the Chief Commissioner of the Integrity Commission; advice that the Leader of Government Business indicated last night by email that both Mr O'Byrne and I would have the opportunity to see. Instead of passing it on as pledged, he gave it to the Attorney-General to use for political purposes.

Listening to the advice that the Attorney-General read out indicates that the Chief Commissioner has some concern about us politicising this issue. I refute, on behalf of Dr Woodruff and myself, that there has been any overt politicisation of this issue of the misuse of government power, issuing of an unlawful prohibition notice on one organisation, the effect of that being that it banned any protest by that organisation anywhere in Tasmania. This is a matter of very significant public interest.

This is a situation where a government agency that is tasked with ensuring the workplace health and safety of people going about their jobs in Tasmania decided instead to focus on one organisation, which is undoubtedly a thorn in this Government's side. It is exposing on a daily basis that the Liberal Government wants to trash the Tarkine and increase native forest logging in Tasmania.

Madam Speaker, on the basis of this, I am going to -

Madam SPEAKER - You have to confine your debate to the substantive issues.

Ms O'CONNOR - The substantive issue is that I am indicating to the House that we are seeking leave to table this referral in the public interest for maximum transparency. This is about sunlight on an issue and that is why we thought very carefully about this referral before doing it. We considered very carefully the importance of making sure that this was announced publicly in the public interest.

I will end on the final note to the Chief Commissioner, just in case he is listening:

... the suppression of political dissent is a serious matter that undermines the very principles on which our democracy is founded. This is one of the most serious matters that can be examined by an integrity body.

Attempts to apply the law improperly, for an improper purpose, undermines the fundamental trust that we all need to have in the fair and impartial application of our laws.

This government becomes more bold and blatant in their over-reach, and unless serious sanctions are applied when misconduct like this occurs, we believe they will continue down this path.

We urge the Commission to use the full breadth of their powers to investigate this matter.

Your sincerely,

Cassy O'Connor MP
Tasmanian Greens Leader

Rosalie Woodruff MP
Greens Justice spokesperson

This is about the public interest. It is about maximum transparency. It is about the fact that at some level there must be consequences for governments and bureaucrats that misuse power and in so doing undermine the foundations of our democracy and breach the public trust.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Leader of Government Business) - Madam Speaker, I will respond to the remarks and also indicate that the Government is prepared to not oppose the tabling of the document in question. I disagree with much of what has just been shared, particularly the political flavour of it, but I believe Ms O'Connor is unaware of the communication that I sent last evening at 8.52 p.m. I am sensing that you genuinely do not think you got that.

Ms O'Connor - No, which address did you send it to - and when I replied to you this morning, why didn't you tell me you'd sent it last night?

Mr FERGUSON - I sent it to oconnorc@parliament.tas.gov.au at 8.52 p.m. for the benefit of the public record, and I also sent it to Mr O'Byrne. I was pleased to receive advice. I received advice from the Clerk and have his blessing to indicate what that advice was; that there is no barrier for the House to be able to table the document.

That was, of course, never in question other than whether it caused a sub judice problem in relation to the fact that, you, Ms O'Connor, have made an allegation against two of your parliamentary colleagues and a senior public servant to the Integrity Commission. You chose to make that public in so doing; prior to even the Integrity Commission having the benefit of opening their mail, you put it out into the media.

It seems that the only good-faith thing Ms O'Connor has done this morning is to believe that she has not been sent the advice. It has been sent to her but nonetheless she has pressed ahead to table her document and we will not oppose that occurring. The reason for the Government taking that position is because we took advice from actual experts in law enforcement and due process -

Greens members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - Maybe check your email. The advice is as follows. This is an email from Greg Melick to me, dated Tuesday 3 March 2020 at 6.40 p.m -

Dear Minister,

I refer to your correspondence to Mr Bingham and respond on behalf of the Commission.

It is always inappropriate to have investigations being compromised by the publication of complaints.

We question the motives of those so doing and don't appreciate attempts to use the Commission for political purposes.

However, as the investigation has already been compromised by the release of the complaint to the media I don't see any further complications arising by having the complaint tabled in Parliament.

Regards,
Greg Melick.

I table that for the benefit of the House and I think suspicion sits now only with Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff for the way in which they have conducted themselves to smear other people using the Integrity Commission as their weapon for political purposes. The Chief Commissioner has called you out and if anything has been misconducted, it is the way in which you have conducted yourselves. Allow the Integrity Commission to do its work without your political interference or your media strategy that sits around that.

That is the Government's position. I believe it has been proven reasonable to seek that advice and for the House to have the benefit of that advice before taking this decision to allow Ms O'Connor to table that document. The problem for you is that you have exposed yourself to ridicule and accusations of misconduct against you.

[11.26 a.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, we also will not be opposing the tabling of this document. I was also in receipt of the email that was forwarded to me from Mr Melick via Mr Ferguson at 8.52 last night so I can corroborate there was an email. I understand the Leader of the Greens' email address was the correct one on that email so we did receive that.

Having said that, the only thing I probably agree with the Greens Leader on this matter is that it is a matter of public importance. This is a matter of importance that has to be dealt with but we know what is happening here. This is the Liberal Party and the Greens, for purely base political reasons, repoliticising, reforecasting and refighting the forestry wars. Labor worked very hard to try to remove the forest industry from the political debate. What we have here are base political reasons about the forest industry wars between the Liberal Party and the Greens for their own political reasons.

We will not oppose the tabling of the document. I understand the advice you are currently receiving. It is in the public domain. To be honest, it is not in a form that the commission would take anyway because there is a form that you have to fill out. Regardless, this is again taking up a whole lot of time of the parliament. It is another Greens stunt to get their issue up and it is out there in the public domain. There are other forms of the House to get the content of that letter and referral in. They have chosen not to do that, so for two days in a row now they are getting their attention. It is just a constant battle in the background. Anger, bitterness and stunts. Let the parliament move on, table your document and we can move on.

[11.28 a.m.]

Ms OGILVIE (Clark) - Madam Speaker, I wanted to close out my comments from yesterday prior to having read the letter. I now have had the chance to do that and I notice it is quite extensive and contains many allegations which are yet to be proved. I understand that this is in the public domain.

I would like to share with the House my concerns generally about politicians referring other politicians to the Integrity Commission. That, in itself, is a concern. The Integrity Commission has a specific jurisdiction and I suspect quite a few of these allegations will not fit within that; however, that is a matter for the complainant. In relation to due process and ensuring that our system is not only fair but also seen to be fair, I would say that it is an extension at the very least to seek to attach privilege to a document that has already been released and provided to -

Ms O'Connor - But it is not for privilege. It is so that the parliament has a record.

Ms OGILVIE - You just cannot do it. No, I think it was for privilege and you cannot do it. It is not going to work because that is a retrospective activity that will not work.

Ms O'Connor - I'm not stupid, I know that it was made public. Privilege is irrelevant. I might not have a law degree but I do understand these things.

Ms OGILVIE - I do have a law degree. Madam Speaker, it is hard to make my contribution when I am debating with somebody behind me.

Madam SPEAKER - Just ignore them, please.

Ms OGILVIE - Perhaps, Madam Speaker, you can also keep an eye on it.

Madam SPEAKER - I am sorry, was that chastising me? I have just pulled this up. I would like an apology for that smart-arse comment.

Ms OGILVIE - Certainly, Madam Speaker, I apologise. I am less excited about allowing the document to be tabled for those reasons. However, I am content to go with the House majority view on this. I do have reservations about due process, and about the privilege issues. Also, I know there are people in this House who have been the subject of investigations before the Integrity Commission. Due process is incredibly important with all of these matters, and when allegations are put, they are merely allegations until they are proved. We have to be extremely careful in this place not to seek to taint processes. That is at the core of my concern.

Ms O'Connor - Transparency is not a taint. I know some of you people think that.

Mr Barnett - Be quiet.

Ms O'Connor - I will not take my orders from you.

Madam SPEAKER - Then take them from me. Please be quiet.

Ms OGILVIE - I will go with the majority on this decision.

[11.31 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, the point I want to make is a clarification of the term 'politicisation', which is being bandied about by the Government as a form of defence after serious actions, which include misconduct, and includes the misuse and the undermining of the public service. This reminds me of another situation involving this Government, and layers of deception and interference in the processes of Government - namely, the 2018 election, and the claims that were made, the policy that was prepared by the Liberals and kept secret, about weakening of the state's firearm laws.

When that came to light - because the Greens released that information after it was dropped to us a few days before the state election - people went crazy. They could not believe it. There was shock. It was a scandal. It was the only thing that many people talked about. Anybody who lived in Tasmania through 1986, and from then on, was shocked to the core to think that the Liberals were trading away strong gun laws. Our attempts to raise that issue were levelled with attacks of

'politicising' the state's firearm laws and being 'political'. Madam Speaker, the public spoke for themselves, and the public spoke for themselves on this matter as well.

There is serious concern about the Government's mistreatment of the public service and the misconduct of these ministers. This came to a collision yesterday with the statement by Jessica Munday from Unions Tasmania, who has also referred to the concerns that Unions Tasmania has about the politicisation of the WorkSafe regulator.

Madam SPEAKER - You have to stick to the reason for leave.

Dr WOODRUFF - On the basis of public concerns, on the basis of this Government attacking the Bob Brown Foundation and the massive overreach of the WorkSafe regulator, and the misuse of that regulator under the authority and the responsibility of two ministers, we have taken the step of referring this matter to the Integrity Commissioner. We have confidence in Tasmania's independent Integrity Commission. There is capacity within the act for the Commissioner to undertake an extensive, independent and thorough investigation into this matter. We look forward to hearing the results of that investigation.

We will not resile from the statements of facts that we have written down in our referral to the Integrity Commissioner. They have now been tabled and are available for other people to read, but it is incredible that the Labor Party stands here and calls it a political stunt, when Unions Tasmania themselves have understood that this has been going on since 2018, where referrals to the WorkSafe regulator are not being followed up.

Meanwhile, we have two field assets which were deployed to north-west Tasmania by the WorkSafe regulator to hound peaceful protestors working for the Bob Brown Foundation, instead of going to workplaces around Tasmania and investigating complaints, which is what it should be doing.

We support the tabling of these documents.

Ms Archer - Nobody is disputing it.

Dr WOODRUFF - You were disputing it yesterday.

Ms Archer - We were not disputing it. We were taking advice.

Dr WOODRUFF - So here we are today, talking about it again.

Ms Archer - You were not even here.

Dr WOODRUFF - I can read *Hansard*, and I have read the transcript.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Excuse me, through the Chair.

Dr WOODRUFF - We look forward to hearing the outcome of the Integrity Commissioner's investigation into this matter, and we will continue to make sure that the WorkSafe regulator is properly resourced, as it has not been done. This year's budget should rectify the massive under-investment that was pointed out in 2018 by an independent investigation.

At that point, it was a 25 per cent cut in the number of staff, and here we are two years later. We expect to see that matter rectified so the WorkSafe regulator can do the job it has been established to do, which is to look at real workplace health and safety issues that are happening every day in Tasmania.

Leave granted.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Spirits of Tasmania

[11.37 a.m.]

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

That the House take note of the following matter: *Spirits of Tasmania*.

We heard today that the Government is seriously considering moving the *Spirits* to Geelong, yet we have not heard any discussion about what that would actually mean. The Government simply will not answer any questions.

What will that mean for tourists, or for caravaners? Instead of being able to get into the CBD of Melbourne, straight from the ferries, straight onto a tram and into the CBD - we know they can get off the *Spirit* at Station Pier and could be in Albury for breakfast. Instead, if we have those tourists and caravaners show up in Geelong, they are going to get off that ferry and struggle with all the morning commuting traffic to get into Melbourne. They will not be able to get out of that loop. They will be jammed in with the traffic, and that will have a significant impact on those caravaners, and may even put them off - not to mention there will be extra time for freight.

Station Pier and the last-on, first-off service that the *Spirits* now provide means that our fresh freight cannot only get into Melbourne markets quickly, because the Melbourne markets are right there, but it also means they can get out of town and meet the Sydney market for the next day. If we have the *Spirits* docking in Geelong, it will be extremely difficult for that freight to get to Sydney in time to meet the Sydney market for the next day. That fresh, perishable product will be waiting around for another day.

One of the benefits of Tasmanian produce is that our longer growing season means it has a good shelf life. In effect, if the Government goes ahead with this, they need to consider the impact, because it will take at least a day off the shelf life for Tasmania's fresh products. This will have a significant impact, and I am astounded that the Government has not discussed this with freight companies and farmers.

This fresh produce is essential. There are farmers making decisions right now about planting berries. There is a booming market for berries - yet now, this idea of heading to Geelong could put all of that in jeopardy, because supermarkets and wholesalers are very conscious of time to market.

The Government says Station Pier may be a bad deal, but what is the cost-benefit here? Will people make the trek from Melbourne to Geelong to get on the ferry in the first place? Has any work been done there before the whole idea has been discussed? Why has it been kept secret? It is unbelievable. The Premier said today that negotiations with Station Pier were mentioned four

months ago but nobody mentioned Geelong. Geelong has been a secret. This Government is once again working in secret. It is astounding.

We also know that in going to Geelong the sailing will not be any quicker. From what I understand of where the shipping channel is, they have to go through Port Phillip Heads, go around the corner, head towards Mornington before they can turn back to Geelong. It is not going to be any quicker. The freight and the passengers are not going to be able to disembark from Geelong and beat the traffic. The commute between Geelong and Melbourne is horrendous.

Instead of freight trucks being able to leave Station Pier very early in the morning, get through the traffic and head towards Sydney beating the traffic - or caravanners wanting to go east, west or north - they would not be able to do that anymore because you will be on a heavily trafficked road. Instead of travelling out of Melbourne against the traffic, you would be travelling to Melbourne with the traffic. How are people going to cope with traffic jams?

There are significant costs. I am already hearing people comment that if the ferries were to dock in Geelong they would not use the service anymore. If you go to Geelong, you cannot just jump off the ferry and get a tram straight into the Melbourne CBD. You are more than likely going to have to hire a car or take a train that would take even longer to get to the CBD. One of the current advantages is that you can park your car in Devonport; you can get on the ferries and wake up in Port Melbourne and be in the CBD of Melbourne for breakfast. You do not need a car. You can do the whole trip without a car but if you have to go through the extra hassle of going to Geelong then it changes the whole dynamic. You are probably better off flying. What impact is this going to have on tourists? Why is the Government not considering this, instead of wildly hurling accusations at us?

This comes on the back of other issues. We have recently heard that the Government has dumped FSG as the boatbuilder. We knew that this project was in big trouble. We knew that the delivery was going to be delayed. For the delivery to be met, FSG had to be laying steel right now. We were saying this but the Government was in denial saying that everything was fine, right up until the last minute, only a few days ago. Now we learn that an MOU is with RMC, a Finnish boatbuilder, that has not built a ferry this big before.

Mr Ferguson - Are you criticising them?

Dr BROAD - No, I am stating that as a fact. There is an MOU so basically the Government has booked slots.

Mr Ferguson - You backed off quickly.

Dr BROAD - You are the one who stuffs all this up. You should just keep your head down.

Mr Ferguson - You were criticising RMC and you backed off very quickly.

Dr BROAD - Just saying.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Dr BROAD - Seriously, you have stuffed this up. Why are you in denial?

Mr Ferguson - You should back yourself.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Mr Ferguson, you will have your opportunity soon.

Mr Ferguson - If you believe in what you are saying, back yourself.

Dr BROAD - Where is your due diligence there, sunshine? What about FSG?

Mr Tucker - You are under pressure in your own MPI.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. The member only has 30 seconds to go.

Dr BROAD - You are kidding yourself. The people around you have made judgments about your performance. They have seen you stuff up the hospital. They have seen you stuff up the ferries; they have seen you stuff up the Bridgewater bridge. You backed yourself and you lost. Your colleagues have made judgments all over you. All you have are cheap shots. I thought you would have learnt your lesson. If you were more statesmanlike, maybe you could have convinced your colleagues. Instead, every time we raise these sorts of issues, your go-to is to crank up a nasty. It happens all the time.

Time expired.

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the member who blushes as he resumes his seat is poor in geography. He is reckless with his comments. He has made ignorant comments. He has come in here today with a range of concerns but he has failed to make a coherent case at all.

The performance of TT-Line tells a very positive story for our fantastic state. The TT-Line company is to be applauded for its work and should be unanimously supported by members of this House. TT-Line is showing record passenger numbers from previous years and record freight volumes. It is very good for Tasmania. Dr Broad did not utter a single compliment in his ramble in relation to the company.

The passenger numbers and freight volumes transported clearly demonstrate that the vessels are being very well used. The performance is even more impressive when you consider the impact on *Spirit* schedules during the peak period due to increasing cruise ship traffic at Station Pier. Vehicle traffic congestion in the greater Port of Melbourne is a major issue that Dr Broad failed to mention. Indeed, if Dr Broad was a bit stronger with his geography, he would know that those who are regular users have significant frustrations around Station Pier. It has a tiny freight staging area, which is in itself a major headache for our freight customers.

It has significant congested urban roads that Dr Broad failed to mention. Indeed, if Dr Broad was informed he would also know that there are developments now occurring that will intensify the living density around the pier and make it harder. Cars and caravans did get a mention in Dr Broad's little ramble but the feedback from the cars and caravans is very clear -

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - You do not want to listen but I am going to continue. You do not want to listen because you know you have not made a coherent case.

In a business which has almost 100 per cent positive satisfaction, the areas of complaint sit around cars and caravans battling the congestion and battling Melbourne city. So much so, that because of the small staging area cars are lined up around the block. Dr Broad did not mention that. He also did not mention the heritage-listed nature of that old pier and the increasing disruption to *Spirit* schedules as a result of the pier's owner, VicPorts, increasing cruise ship calls.

I mention these things but I mentioned them at GBE scrutiny hearings 88 days ago. We have not heard a peep from Dr Broad around this since then.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. It is very noisy in here. Let us hear the minister.

Mr FERGUSON - I made it very clear. We have heard from you. It was not very good but you have had your turn. These things have already been placed on the record. Far from allowing the state to be gouged by VicPorts we will take the Tasmanian interest and we will look at other port options. This was said 88 days ago, Dr Broad, not 88 minutes ago. While TT-Line has not made a decision of the nature that you have characterised today, it is in lease negotiations with VicPorts and ensuring that the company is looking at other port options, as I said 88 days ago.

Because of the problems at Station Pier we should not be getting price gouged. We should be getting a discount for some of these disabilities on that site. I have full confidence in the TT-Line board and management to manage these issues and to do what the Government wants, which is to take the Tasmanian interest. What I hear from the Labor Party today is a very clear determination that we should just pay VicPorts whatever they want and then increase prices for freight and we should increase costs to passengers. We will not take the Labor Party's reckless advice on this. We will continue to work through the issues in a proper and professional fashion, taking proper advice and not taking political strategy advice from the Labor Party.

TT-Line continues to work through these negotiations with VicPorts while having an eye to any other port options that are suitable. We have full confidence, as I have said. As part of these considerations we expect and know that TT-Line will assess the impacts both of staying at Station Pier with its increased lease and wharf costs, which are not sustainable, and determine what other options might be available to the company and to our freight and passenger customers, whom I ask Dr Broad to spare a thought for and think about them and their bottom line.

In the time remaining, I will touch on a very important announcement. We have always said that the Government received regular updates from TT-Line regarding the vessel replacement project, which is not due until 2028. We always said that TT-Line had solid contracts in place. TT-Line managed its relationship with FSG appropriately, not through the media as the Opposition would have preferred but through the provisions of the contract. Frankly, Dr Broad's behaviour on that subject has been reckless. TT-Line has always taken advice from appropriate professionals about how to manage through that time.

As a new minister I was confronted with the reality of those media reports of FSG having financial difficulties and I was very clear from as long ago as July when I was sworn in in this role, that we would be looking at other options. I have been transparent about that and -

Dr Broad interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Dr Broad, I ask for less commentary.

Mr FERGUSON - I am thrilled that with the Government's support TT-Line has been able to secure an MOU with RMC for the provision of the two new hulls. It is a fantastic breakthrough for our state that we have on the one hand the mutual ceasing of the agreement with FSG, together with - within 24 hours - the securing of the MOU with RMC, in whom we have confidence, unlike Dr Broad, who should be supporting the company and the Government as we take a pro-Tasmanian stance on these important ships.

Time expired.

[11.51 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise speak about this matter of public importance because that is exactly what this is. Under this minister's watch we have seen the delay of a number of the state's largest infrastructure projects and the new *Spirit of Tasmania* ships is just of those things. Tasmanians and, quite rightly, north-west Tasmanians are proud of the *Spirit of Tasmania* and what it contributes to our regional economy and the opportunities it provides us through industry, economic gain and also tourism, showcasing our beautiful part of Tasmania.

It is important to put on the record today that the *Spirit of Tasmania* is yet another example of a great Labor infrastructure initiative. We should not forget the history of the *Spirit of Tasmania* and the great benefits it brought Tasmania initially, which was indeed a product of a state Labor government.

Minister, you have said you have provided information but you have not been full and frank with that information. Today is the first time we have heard about the potential berthing of the *Spirit of Tasmania* at the Port of Geelong. You have not spoken about that. If it is something you feel so passionately about and believe people shared information about, why have you not spoken about this before today, 88 days after GBE hearings? A bit has transpired in those 88 days so you have probably had a bit on your mind and would have been pretty busy during that time. Nonetheless, it is important that people understand what those costs and potential costs might be not at the Port of Melbourne but at the Port of Geelong. How much will the TT-Line berthing at Geelong cost?

Mr Ferguson - You want Tasmanians to pay the price gouging. That's what you want.

Ms DOW - You need to be open and transparent. This is important infrastructure for Tasmania.

The *Spirit of Tasmania* is a significant economic driver for our economy and for my electorate in Braddon. It is pivotal in growing our tourism industry and uncertainty around delays in the delivery of the vessels does nothing to provide confidence to the local community. It is pivotal to our agricultural sector and it underpins people's confidence and their decisions they make to invest, whether that be setting up a new tourism business, investing in a local irrigation scheme or starting a new agricultural enterprise.

Today we have learnt that there are ongoing negotiations around the Port of Geelong and this being the new berth of the *Spirit of Tasmania*. As I said, this is the first time this has been raised or discussed by the Government. The *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels provide a vital lifeline between Tasmania and the mainland for tourism, freight and domestic travel. Part of the value of this service is that it docks in Melbourne, close to the Melbourne CBD with central freight routes to the east and the west.

The *Spirit of Tasmania* service does not belong to you. It belongs to all Tasmanians. Hundreds of Tasmanian businesses employing thousands of Tasmanian workers rely on its reliable service. One of these industries, as my colleague Dr Broad has alluded to, is agriculture, horticulture and in particular the berry industry. Fresh products are time-sensitive freight; extra travel time could impact on these businesses' ability to get their fresh product to market. An extra cost could also be incurred by those producers for increased freight and transport costs. Have you consulted widely with industry?

Yesterday, the Premier announced in his address a potential Don irrigation scheme. That irrigation scheme is well placed to initiate further investment in horticulture along the north-west coast. People who are considering buying into that irrigation scheme require the confidence that they will be able to get their product to market and whilst there is uncertainty around the service of the *Spirit of Tasmania* it will be difficult for people to make decisions around that investment.

The *Spirits* and access to markets are critical to future investment in agriculture in Tasmania but particularly in the north-west coast and the north of the state. There is huge potential for growth also in Tasmania's regional tourism sector. The brand of the *Spirit of Tasmania* is an important part of this. Tourism is not booming in the north-west like it is in the south. Airbnb and delays in significant projects such as the redevelopment of Cradle Mountain are impacting on visitation to our regions, in particular the north-west. We need strategic investment in tourism in the north of the state and the *Spirit of Tasmania* has a pivotal role to play in this. It is so important that we encourage people to turn right when they get off the ship rather than turn left.

I will finish my contribution today by again putting two questions to the minister from question time earlier today which he failed to answer. Tasmanian exporters rely heavily on the service provided by the TT-Line to get their goods to market. Farmers are making investment decisions right now and entering into supply contracts with customers, including supermarkets that are highly sensitive to changes in price and delivery time frames, and that is important. Have you conducted any consultation with Tasmanian exporters about the consequences of moving the *Spirits* to Geelong, which adds an extra hour and a half travel time to Melbourne? Why are you keeping Tasmanian farmers in the dark?

Mr Ferguson interjecting.

Ms DOW - The Government did not answer the question in question time. I stand corrected; I should have said to the Government, not the minister. The fact is you have not answered the question. The question is, have you consulted with the industry and the impact that it will have? Minister, it is time that you were open and transparent about the future of the *Spirit of Tasmania* project and the future implications for Tasmanians, our tourists, our businesses and our primary producers.

Time expired.

[11.58 a.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Deputy Speaker, under this Government the TT-Line has enjoyed great success with our plan to deliver more passengers and lower fares on the *Spirit of Tasmania*. TT-Line is now carrying the highest number of passengers on its vessels since 2004 when it had three vessels in operation. Freight volumes are also at record levels with 105 208 20-foot equivalent units shipped compared to 103 430 in 2016-17. No doubt it is galling for

Dr Broad to see the success of TT-Line under a majority Liberal government. Passengers are up, freight is up and profit is up as visitors spend in Tasmania.

Dr Broad should be reminded of Mr O'Byrne's secret socialist-style plan to make TT-Line buy two new freight-only ships to smash private sector freight competition on Bass Strait.

One of the first acts of this Government was to put a stop to Mr O'Byrne's calculated and deliberate plan to attack private investment and disrupt the Tasmanian freight system. As a result of our plan, and the hard work and commitment of TT-Line, the company is delivering a great service at fair prices and is now in a strong financial position to generate savings to the replacement of the *Spirits*.

It is entirely appropriate that TT-Line look at its future needs and the options that will deliver the best priced outcome for tourists and freight customers. This includes re-examining whether Station Pier is the right fit and whether there are other port locations that will deliver what TT-Line's customers need.

The sad reality is that Labor's negativity and sour grapes do not only apply to this decision. They hate it when we get on with the job of delivering infrastructure and outcomes that improve the lives of Tasmanians. They cannot bring themselves to support anything. Meanwhile, the Tasmanian Liberal Government has been quietly getting on with the job. We are delivering on a massive list of projects and improvements to services.

We have already delivered 62 per cent of the Midland Highway 10-year action plan and 16 projects worth \$216 million are already complete. Two more major projects, the Perth Links Road and the St Peters Pass to Tunbridge sections, are due for completion in coming months. We have already delivered the first of our projects as part of \$162.5 million south-east traffic solution, with the overtaking opportunity of Iron Creek near Sorell, now complete. Work on the Hobart Airport interchange will be commencing soon, I understand. We have delivered the new \$40 million LGH acute medical and surgical units, opened the new \$110 million Hedberg Arts Precinct, and delivered Australia's first integrated emergency services despatch system, the new \$17.3 million Emergency Services Computer-Aided Dispatch system, ESCAD.

We have invested more than \$44 million in capital upgrades and extensions to schools across the state. We have over \$235 million more in school infrastructure projects in the pipeline. We have spent over \$70 million on building new social and affordable housing, and we have a plan to deliver even more.

Have you ever expressed support for these projects or offered an alternative? You have not, because you do not have a plan. You have nothing to offer. This is why those opposite failed while they were in government. This is why they failed to lay a brick on the new Royal Hobart Hospital and did nothing to fix the Midland Highway. Labor has a woeful record on delivering projects of strategic importance.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. There are many interjections in the House today. I ask that the member have the opportunity to make his contribution with less noise, please.

Mr TUCKER - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Infrastructure spending by the Tasmanian majority Liberal Government was 230 per cent higher in 2018-19 than it was only six years earlier, in the last full year of the disastrous Labor-Greens coalition government.

In 2012-13, \$288.9 million was spent on infrastructure in Tasmania, including roads and bridges. That year the infrastructure budget was 34 per cent underspent. That was an absolutely incompetent effort by the former minister, Mr O'Byrne. Six years later, in the 2018-19 financial year, this Government spent \$676 million on infrastructure, a 230 per cent increase in only six years.

The Gutwein minority Liberal Government has a massive infrastructure plan and we will continue to deliver -

Dr Broad - He said minority. You've got the wrong line.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask members to keep it quiet, please.

Mr TUCKER - If those opposite are concerned about Tasmania's freight sector they must be more concerned about the impact that their Maritime Union of Australia mates in Melbourne are having on our ability to export fresh produce and minerals, or on our ability to deliver vital supplies of grain to the rural industries.

Time expired.

[12.05 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, the issues that were raised in question time this morning beg some real openness and transparency on the part of the Government. If it is true that the docking point in Victoria is to be moved from its current position in Port Melbourne to Geelong that would have far reaching consequences for all Tasmanians who seek to travel on the *Spirit* to avoid flying because they cannot fly or they want to take their vehicles and not fly for that reason. It would also affect businesses. It really has far reaching impacts for Tasmania.

The *Spirit of Tasmania* is a lifeline. It is an essential part of the highway to connect Tasmania with the mainland. It is the basis of our ability to export goods. It is the font from which our export productivity flows. It is a critical piece of infrastructure in Tasmania. As such, it is very concerning that we only hear about it through the Opposition in parliamentary question time, instead of having heard from the Government. From what the Premier said this morning, it sounded like these conversations with the Port of Melbourne Authority have been ongoing for some time. If that is true that is a very concerning matter. Why haven't other parties also been communicated with? Have industry leaders, tourism businesses, the RACT and other bodies been involved in these conversations? These are not just conversations purely about economics. These are conversations about the functioning of the state that goes to far greater questions than simply the efficiencies. As the Premier said, the first thing is to make sure that they are cost effective. That is one of the things that we have to secure, but it is not the only thing.

The first and more important thing, if I were premier of Tasmania, would be wanting to ensure that the docking position was functional for its purpose. Cost is one thing, but that is subordinate to its being functional and able to fulfil its purpose. From his Premier's Address yesterday, I have no confidence that the Minister for Climate Change is putting the issue of climate change first and foremost on the agenda for him as premier. If he was, he would understand that we have to shift from our historic focus on renewables in the energy generation sector. We have done this very well

and can continue to do well but we must move to other sectors. That means we must electrify transport, we must electrify agriculture and we must make carbon stores expand exponentially across the state both in soil and in forest reserves. That has implications for the electrification of all vehicles and the proximity to the heart of Melbourne.

You cannot have people getting off the *Spirit of Tasmania* from Geelong and having an extra hour's drive just to get into Melbourne. That just will not work. That is nonsense. That is really relegating us to the smallest backwater state. I cannot believe that would seriously be countenanced because it would have profound implications on travel times and on electric charging times for electric vehicles, not to mention freight and the timeliness of getting exports from Tasmania right into the heart of Melbourne to those markets which are so precious.

It is the restaurants of Melbourne within which Tasmanian produce shines. It is top of the menu and it is because of what we offer that we have to get to a market. Not only does it have to sit on the boat overnight but it cannot be stuck in traffic and not roll off in the Port of Melbourne where all the other shipping containers are being unloaded. That is the spot where so much of that activity occurs so we need to be located there as a state.

This really is again an issue of transparency and this Government yet again is incapable, it appears, of simply telling people what is going on. We have the ludicrous situation where we still do not have an end date for K Block and every single time there is a conversation about the Royal Hobart Hospital it is mired in secrecy and obfuscation. We had the potential lead contamination and we had denial and dismissal, and yet a month later we get reports that these things are being attended to. In fact, it turns out it is one of the list of reasons why K Block's opening has been put back yet again. The Greens raised this and the unions raised this but we were dismissed at the time and later it came out that of course it was a reason. Transparency in all matters would help this Government so much.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Resumed from 3 March 2020 (page 64)

[12.13 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Deputy Speaker, much has changed since we last stood in this place. I start by thanking Will Hodgman for his contribution to public life for nearly two decades. We often differed on matters of politics and policy but passion for Tasmania is something that we both share. I wish him all the very best for the future in whatever he does next.

The political landscape has changed but the task for Labor remains unchanged. We want to create a better and fairer Tasmania. While some things are going okay there are many who have been left behind, with one in four Tasmanians living in poverty. Labor's focus is on making sure that we get the fundamentals right - quality health care and education services, a good job and a roof over people's heads.

I grew up on a farm. I was taught the importance of hard work from a very early age and like many small businesses across the state, the success of the farm required the whole family to pitch in. Surviving from season to season required us to adapt and diversify. My first paid job off the farm was working at the Sorell Purity store, now known as Woolworths, when I was in college. That is where I learnt the importance of good customer service and the temperature of the freezer room. I have to say one of those skills is a lot more useful than the other, but working there led me to get a foot in the door in other jobs and helped me pay my way through university.

Ensuring more Tasmanians can get jobs is one of the most important things we can do to maintain a strong economy and overcome poverty. Labor is the strongest supporter of working people and we want Tasmanians to have the opportunity to get a good job that helps to build the strength of our community. The best way to get a foot in the door is to have the chance of an apprenticeship or a traineeship, which is why Labor has already announced free TAFE courses in our fastest-growing industries to help Tasmanians into secure, well-paid jobs.

Our primary focus in 2020 is jobs - giving people the skills they need to get a job, supporting the industries that provide jobs, attracting new industries and businesses here, providing assistance to small businesses to grow and employ more people and protecting workers and improving their conditions. We are backing this commitment with fully costed policies and we will be taking this focus on to communities in every part of Tasmania. Over the course of the next six months Labor will be hosting jobs forums right across the state. We want to share our positive plan for jobs and we want to hear from Tasmanians about the barriers to work and how we can support the creation of more jobs and the development of pathways into work.

Despite the Liberals boasting on jobs, Tasmania's unemployment rate is still the third-worst in the country. I remind the Government of the promise they made to the people of Tasmania just two years ago that they would reduce the unemployment rate to the best in the country by 2022, but it is in underemployment where Tasmania is truly failing. At 11.2 per cent, underemployment is not only the worst in the country, it is the worst it has ever been in Tasmania and the worst it has ever been in any state or territory. Over 70 per cent of new jobs created since 2014 have been part-time. Right now there are 46 100 Tasmanians who are either unemployed or need more hours.

These are people such as Luke, who works two jobs just to make ends meet. Luke works as an education facility attendant cleaning schools five days a week and then he drives to another job to work security. He sleeps in his car between shifts and even doing all of this, he cannot get enough hours. All Luke wants is a 40-hour working week. It is not an unreasonable ask, but instead he works unsociable hours and multiple jobs and it is impacting his health and the relationships he has with his family. This is not what we want for Tasmanians.

We want people to know we are serious about tackling this problem head-on. The first of Labor's jobs forums will be held in Burnie next week and I encourage people to come along to engage in the conversation about how we can help more people get a foot in the door to secure jobs. In the north-west of the state 1300 jobs have been lost in the past 12 months and in Launceston and the north-east 600 Tasmanian women have lost their jobs in the past 12 months. That is particularly concerning when we need to be providing more opportunities for women to enter the workforce, not fewer.

Financial independence is especially important for women to gain personal independence. It is one of the most important factors in tackling domestic violence. It is critical to ensure women do not retire with half the superannuation of men and it is necessary to address the growing number of

women over 55 who are now seeking housing support. Labor has a policy to introduce gender-blind job applications, which is a simple and practical measure to ensure that job applicants are assessed on their merits without the risk of unconscious bias, which research shows results in men more frequently winning jobs over women.

Helping young Tasmanians get secure full-time work is the key to keeping them in the state. It gives them security to get a loan for a house or a car and put their roots down in the community and have a good quality of life, but youth unemployment in Tasmania is 12.2 per cent. We can do better and we have to do better. If we continue to ignore this trend towards insecure work our best and brightest are going to continue to leave.

Over the course of the past year Labor has been talking to all of Tasmania's major industries through our industry advisory councils about how to grow jobs. The common thread in every one of those discussions, from tourism to aged care, is the lack of a skilled workforce. Something is very wrong when we have an underemployment crisis in this state at the same time as employers are crying out for skilled workers. Part of the solution is Labor's policy to provide free TAFE courses in key industries facing skill shortages, including tourism, aged care and disability care, agricultural and building and construction. The Liberal Government has stubbornly refused to adopt this idea, while skill shortages and underemployment gets worse.

I know this policy will make a difference because I have spoken to young people and people who are looking to retrain, who see the cost of training as a key barrier to employment. Young people like Caitlyn, who is a second-year apprentice at an engineering workshop in Launceston. She is one of all too few young people - and even fewer women - pursuing a career in a highly specialised trade. I have also spoken to older Tasmanians who see free TAFE as an incentive to retrain for a new career in life.

In addition to making TAFE courses more accessible, we are also committed to making training more responsive to the needs of industry. Our public training provider is only as strong as its relationship with the businesses it serves. If it is not offering the training that students and employers need, industry will go elsewhere. That is not an idle threat because it is already happening.

Recent data from the Productivity Commission show an alarming decline in employer satisfaction in apprenticeships and traineeships from 82 per cent when the Liberals first came into government, to 75.4 per cent now. Confidence in VET has plunged to 68.3 per cent, and only last week we saw the impact of the Government's decision to set up a private training provider to compete directly with Drysdale, with the General Manager of Drysdale resigning. The establishment of a private provider funded by government was not what industry wanted, and not what Drysdale wanted, but strangely it is what the Government decided to do. Privatisation is in the Liberal's DNA. Unlike the Liberal Party that is working actively to destroy TAFE, Labor will always be the strongest supporter of the public training provider.

As the largest employer in the state, the state Government needs to be doing its bit to support the creation of apprenticeships and traineeships. Labor will reinstate the requirement for apprentices and trainees to be engaged on all government building and construction projects. We would also extend this policy to the civil construction industry for the first time, to ensure that as we build the roads and the bridges for the future, we are also building the workforce for the future.

The Liberal Government does not even bother measuring how many apprentices are employed on government projects, and it is certainly not making every effort to ensure that Tasmanians get a job on these worksites. Rather than helping Tasmanians get a foot in the door, they are happy to fly in skilled workers from interstate to work on major projects. Meanwhile, on the planes flying out, are Tasmanians looking for work.

Tasmania's underemployment crisis is being fuelled by the unregulated expansion of labour hire practices. Right across the economy, secure permanent jobs are being replaced with precarious short-term contracts. While there are legitimate reasons for employers to access labour hire services, under-regulation of the sector leaves workers vulnerable to insecurity and wage theft. Stories of wage theft and insecure work are happening under this Government's nose. This includes Chinese plasterers who were underpaid and exploited by the subcontractor while working on the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment. Stories like these damage businesses doing the right thing, and they undermine the Tasmanian brand.

Today I announce that Labor will be tabling the terms of reference for an inquiry into labour hire and insecure work for the next sitting week. We need to understand the full extent of this problem, and strategies that can be put in place to address it. Rogue operators need to be put on notice. Worker exploitation will not be tolerated in Tasmania.

While job opportunities are at risk from the complacency of the Liberal Government, they are under outright attack from the Greens. Never is the hypocrisy of the Greens darker than when they are attacking the industries that support working people. They claim to care about overcoming poverty and social disadvantage, but they seemingly care little for communities and their families who rely on the industries they constantly tear down. Where do they think the timber and other materials come from to build more social and affordable housing? How do they think families pay to put food on the table without the secure well-paid jobs that come from forestry, mining, manufacturing and aquaculture? How do they think governments pay for essential services without the economic contributions of these industries?

Over summer, we have seen it again. The Greens have stood by as protesters have attacked Ta Ann, a business that has bent over backwards to secure approval from environmental groups -

Ms O'Connor - To trash our forests. That is exactly what they are doing.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask that the member be heard in silence, please. Ms O'Connor, thank you.

Ms WHITE - Madam Deputy Speaker, they have opposed the harvesting of small quantities of timber from areas they previously agreed should be open to forestry operations. Cassy O'Connor even attacked tourism operators who have been ravaged by the dual impacts of fire and coronavirus, accusing them of having a hand out for Government subsidies. The motives for these attacks is unclear, other than to divide communities and damage Tasmania's reputation, all in the name of politics.

The Greens are holding the state back, because they only ever provide a voice for the few. They do not seek consensus. They ridicule and talk down to anyone who doesn't agree with their view. They leave people behind. They leave working people behind. I have said it before: it was a mistake to think that Labor could ever work with the Greens. We will never make that mistake again.

My message to the people of Tasmania is that we can balance jobs growth with environmental concerns and outcomes. Tackling climate change will create jobs. Value-adding our natural resources can create jobs.

Labor understands that Tasmania has a huge natural advantage when it comes to renewable energy. That is why Labor is a strong supporter of investment in more renewable energy. We have been vocal in our calls for Tasmania to be a leader in green hydrogen, and we are pleased the Government has finally woken up to the opportunity. We note that forestry will play a vital role in replacing carbon-intensive products such as concrete and steel, while also acting as carbon sinks. Tasmanian mineral resources such as zinc, nickel, tin and copper will be increasingly important for transitional technologies such as batteries, solar panels and electric cars.

The growth in these sectors will not only help Tasmania play its role in combating climate change, but will also create new jobs. We can preserve what makes Tasmania special, while continuing to provide opportunities for our young people - and we can do it without the bitterness and divisiveness of the Greens.

Providing job opportunities is key to overcoming social disadvantage, but tackling social disadvantage can also create jobs. Today I am announcing Housing Works, a landmark plan to provide urgent relief to Tasmania's homelessness crisis and ease pressure on rental costs. Housing Works would fast-track the construction of 490 additional houses in partnership with community housing providers. These homes would be delivered in the first three years of a Labor government. This policy will create more than 550 new jobs, 75 apprenticeships, and inject more than \$300 million into the economy. These 75 apprentices will be some of the first to benefit from Labor's free TAFE policy, which will help them get a foot in the door on a jobsite across Tasmania. Housing Works will help an estimated 1100 people into new homes, at below market rent.

Under Peter Gutwein and the Liberals, too many people are being left behind. On any given night, 1600 Tasmanians are homeless, and many other families are couch surfing, relying on their friends and families, or living in sheds, cars or tents. The heartbreaking stories from people like Jenny, who became homeless when the private rental she had been living in was sold. Jenny is a grandmother on a disability support pension, and she spends most nights sleeping in her car. She shared her fear about not knowing how she was going to cope through the winter, and she spends quite a lot of time crying in her car. She has been on the priority waiting list for housing for more than a year. More than 3400 families are waiting for public housing because the Liberals have not met their promises to build affordable housing. Renting privately is more unaffordable in Tasmania than anywhere else in the country.

Labor's Housing Works plan is about jobs. It is about housing, and it is all part of our plan for a better and fairer Tasmania. We want the community to know that Labor will fight for them and their family, and make sure they have the essentials for a good-quality life.

While Labor has spent the summer working on positive policies for Tasmania, the Liberal Party has been tearing itself apart. Will Hodgman's departure has created a rift between the unelected Premier, Peter Gutwein, who does not even have the courtesy to be in the chamber right now, and the man who still wants the top job, Michael Ferguson. There is nothing stable about two grown men playing chicken in a self-indulgent, ego-driven leadership contest. Maybe that is what they are still doing outside this chamber, and that explains their absence.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms WHITE - Peter Gutwein may have prevailed, but the internal damage has been done and the splits within the party have been exposed for all to see and that is why you are all so up and about right now. The ideological divisions within the Liberal Party between the conservatives and the extreme right are not good for Tasmanians. It has meant the Government has taken its eye off the ball and the challenges that are facing our state.

Take health, for example. In September last year the former premier, Will Hodgman, promised that the new Royal Hobart Hospital would be opened 'imminently'. This Government has a very strange definition of 'imminent'. Six months on there is still no sign of the hospital being opened, let alone taking patients, and after months of denials, the Liberals made the extraordinary admission last week that the hospital is unfit to take patients. The project has been plagued with problems, from mould to asbestos, missed milestones, and even dust falling on patients in the intensive care unit. The latest problems are with unresolved concerns about lead contamination in the water and the noise of the air-conditioning. Sarah Courtney, who has been the nearly invisible Health minister since she took the job, promised 44 beds would be open and taking patients by February. It is now March and no-one in the Government knows, from the Premier down, when the hospital will be ready to take patients. The Government has been completely hands-off when it comes to delivering this crucial project to Tasmania and they have failed to be honest with Tasmanians about what is going on.

It is a similar story in Launceston. The new children's ward at the Launceston General Hospital was supposed to be completed in October last year. It is a classic example of Liberal spin. The Government now says that the project is on track for delivery in April, which they claim is just a few weeks later than the original plan. This odd grasp of the concept of time is perhaps why the Liberals do not think it is a problem that Tasmanians wait longer for surgery than anywhere else in the country, or that people with mental ill health are waiting up to six days in the emergency department before they can get a bed.

Let us be clear: the additional funding for the health system announced by the Premier just a few weeks ago is just another bandaid. It simply plugs the black hole that Peter Gutwein deliberately created in order to make his Budget look better. It is barely sufficient to meet existing demand, let alone deliver on the Government's election promise to open an additional 250 beds at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Improving the health system relies on a fundamental change in the way we deliver services. We need to be investing in preventative health and programs that promote healthy eating and physical activity in order to keep people healthier for longer. We need to improve access to primary health services, including working with the federal government to boost GP bulk-billing rates, which are the worst in the country.

We need to take the growing problem of mental health seriously. Mental ill health is a growing contributor to pressure on our hospital system. As a parent it concerns me that mental ill health is becoming an increasing problem for our kids. Young people have access to more information than ever before. They are experiencing anxiety over the impacts of climate change and the consequences of global inaction. They are exposed to the negative effects of bullying online. These types of pressures have always existed in some form, but they are amplified and intensified a thousand times over by social media and digital devices that they are on 24/7.

I applaud the Liberal Government for adopting a ban on mobile phones in schools. This removes distractions from classrooms and reduces bullying in the playground, but we need to be doing more. That is why Labor has announced a policy to put mental health workers in every school. This will ensure that every child has access to mental health support when they need it. Current arrangements are patchy, with many schools reporting that they do not have enough resources to meet increasing demand. Labor will change that. Investment in mental health is an investment in the future of our children and is a preventative health measure that will take pressure off our hospitals and support families and our schools to provide the best start for our young people.

Inadequate health funding is just one example of Peter Gutwein's budget mismanagement. After six years of pork barrelling, warped spending priorities and tricky accounting, Tasmania is now speeding past \$1 billion in debt. These are debt levels Tasmania has not experienced in two decades, since the last time a Liberal government was let loose in the Treasury. Tasmanians may ask how the Premier has achieved the simultaneous feat of neglecting essential services and racking up more than \$1 billion in debt. The answer lies in warped priorities. While Peter Gutwein promised to cut wasteful spending on consultants, travel, advertising and supplies and consumables, the reality is that those costs have continued to increase. The overspend on consultants and travel last year was \$13 million, and just last week we heard of the farcical situation of the Government employing a consultant for nearly \$600 000 to tell them how to save money on the Bridgewater bridge project, a lunacy that was rightly called out by the editorial in the *Mercury* as akin to a scene from the comedy *Utopia*.

Right now, the only thing masking this Premier's budget in confidence is an unprecedented raid on dividends from government businesses, including Hydro Tasmania. Peter Gutwein continues to use GBEs as his personal piggy bank even after he was told by the Hydro Tasmania board the dividends he is taking is forcing the business into unsustainable debt. Today, he claimed that government businesses are there to fund the activities of government. They are not. Their primary purpose is to deliver services for the people of Tasmania. Let us be clear here: the Premier is now forcing government businesses to borrow money in order to prop up his own wasteful spending. It is like borrowing money on a credit card to pay off debt on another credit card. It is fraudulent accounting on an industrial scale.

Peter Gutwein has attempted to justify his record debt disaster by claiming the Government is borrowing to build infrastructure. This claim is a cruel joke. The Government's record on delivering major infrastructure can only be described as woeful. I have already mentioned the debacle that is the Royal Hobart Hospital and last week we had confirmation that the new *Spirits* will not be delivered before the next election and there is not even a new contract in place for their completion. The lack of action by the Premier has been staggering. Everyone knew months ago that the shipyard selected to build the replacement vessels was never going to be able to deliver on them as promised. The Premier's lack of intervention has left exporters, tourism operators and travellers searching for answers.

The Bridgewater bridge has been sent back to the drawing board after Infrastructure Australia rejected the first business case and there is no sign of ferries on the Derwent. The Hobart Airport roundabout is yet to start construction. The underground bus mall and the bridge over the Tamar River exist only in Michael Ferguson's warped imagination, and things are so bad that the head of Infrastructure Tasmania has resigned in embarrassment. Every year they have been in government the Liberals have failed to spend almost a quarter of their own budgeted infrastructure funds, which is putting a handbrake on job creation. The failed leadership aspirant, Michael Ferguson, has

brought his trademark kiss of death to the Infrastructure portfolio and is failing to deliver outcomes, just the same as happened in Health.

Tasmanians need their government to be honest about the true state of the budget. If they cannot even admit that there is a problem, how are they going to fix it? Secrecy and a lack of transparency permeates everything this Government does, especially when it comes to election campaigns. Tasmanians will never have a clear picture of who bankrolled the Liberal Party's 2018 election campaign. That is because Tasmanian elections operate under the weakest donation disclosure laws in the country. For the better part of a decade the Liberals have stood in the way of donation disclosure reform, first in opposition and then throughout their first term. The day after the 2018 election, Will Hodgman finally promised to strengthen donation laws, but two years later the unelected Premier, who has long had an aversion to transparency, has seemingly walked back on this commitment, arguing he does not want to 'discourage participation in democracy'.

The Premier's reluctance to clean up political donations stinks, and if the Government will not act, Labor will. Today I can announce that Labor will be shortly introducing a private member's bill to introduce state-based donation rules. This will include lowering the donation disclosure threshold to \$1000 and requiring close to real-time disclosures to the public about who has made a donation to a political party, as well as caps on expenditure. This is sensible reform in line with measures introduced in other states. Elections should be determined by which party has the best plan for the state, not by how fat their wallet is. Peter Gutwein has no reason to oppose these changes, unless he chooses to put his party's own blatant self-interest before the interests of the public and their right to know.

This week marks International Women's Day. It also marks nearly two-and-a-half years since the state's last low-cost surgical termination service closed. Despite promises made by the Government at the time that they would establish a service locally, women are still flying to the mainland. Confusion remains about what limited services might be available in Tasmania. Labor supports a woman's right to choose and her right to make decisions about her body and her health care. We recognise access to affordable terminations is a legal and essential health service that should be provided in the public health system, just as all other legal health services are. We again remind the Government of their failure to treat women with the respect that they deserve and their failure to provide access to basic health care like they promised.

International Women's Day is also a day to celebrate women and their achievements but it is also a time to consider how we better support women to achieve equality and live free from violence. In the last 12 months the Family Violence and Counselling Service in Tasmania received 6484 referrals. However, the current resourcing is for only 1800 referrals a year. Demand for family violence counselling services has tripled. The Government needs to respond with adequate funding to ensure the service can cope. The Family Violence and Counselling Service employees have been calling on the Government to provide an additional \$1 million in funding annually to make sure they can help some of the state's most vulnerable women and children in their time of need. If the Government can find \$600 000 for a consultant to tell them how to save money building a bridge, surely they can find the money required to keep women and children safe.

Two years ago the unelected premier declared the dawning of the Golden Age. We are regularly told the economy is the fastest growing in the country but what good is economic growth if the lives of our people are getting worse. True success can only be measured by how well or how poorly members of our community are doing.

It is the Government's job to make people's lives better not worse. There are now people begging on the streets. We can do better. We can do better than the traffic that chokes our roads every morning and every evening, preventing people from spending time with their families. We can do better than the hospitals that are the worst performing in the country. We can do better than the educational standards that are amongst the worst in the developed world. We have to acknowledge these problems if we are to have any hope of overcoming them.

My vision for Tasmania is to make sure that we have a strong economy that works for all people. We will enhance those things in Tasmania that Tasmania is the best in the world at - renewable energy, agriculture and advanced manufacturing. We will support the innovators and entrepreneurs who have used technology, research and their unique Tasmanian creativity to develop solutions to some of the toughest global challenges.

Labor has a focus on delivering secure jobs and lifting wages and conditions because that will improve the health of the economy. We will make sure that people can get the training they need so they can get a foot in the door and secure a good job in Tasmania. We value trades training and the opportunity an apprenticeship or a traineeship can give somebody. We believe that when people are healthy and happy, with a roof over their heads, they can fully participate in society.

Labor is about getting the basics right so that everyone living in Tasmania gets a fair go and can have a better life. That would be our focus throughout 2020 and beyond.

Members - Hear, hear.

[12.44 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens to deliver my response to the Premier's Address on the state of the state. Before I begin I acknowledge that we are standing on the land of the muwinina people and I pay my respects to the palawa and the pakana people of Tasmania. I pay tribute to their warriors and their elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge that there is a long way to go before true reconciliation is a reality and to recommit the Greens to land returns, to changing the date of Australia Day and to treaty.

I was disappointed not to hear either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition acknowledge the Aboriginal people of Tasmania in their addresses. I take this opportunity to remind the House that there was a treaty with the Aboriginal people of Tasmania. It was made on 6 August 1831. These are the words of George Augustus Robinson -

This morning I developed my plans to the Chief Mannalargenna and explained to him the benevolent views of the government towards himself and people. He cordially acquiesced and expressed his entire approbation of the salutary measure, and promised his utmost aid and assistance. I informed him in the presence of Kickerterpoller that I was commissioned by the Governor to inform them that, if the natives would desist from their wonted outrages upon the whites, they would be allowed to remain in their respective districts and would have flour, tea and sugar, clothes, etc given them; that a good white man would dwell with them who would take care of them and would not allow any bad white man to shoot them, and he would go with them about the bush like myself and they could hunt. He was much delighted.

Further, on 27 August 1831, Robinson reported -

I omit no opportunity of impressing upon the mind of the chief and the others that they are to remain in their own country; and that I am anxious to get to them for the purposes of going to others, and I will leave a man to take care of them but some of Tyereelore women shall stay with them. At this arrangement they are much pleased and say it is very good indeed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you attended the inaugural reconciliation address at Town Hall last year on behalf of the then premier. Ms White attended that address as well and we were presented with compelling evidence that there is unfinished business that this parliament must deal with. There was an agreement between the palawa pakana people of Tasmania and the colonial administration.

According to the Dean of the University of Tasmania Law School, Professor Tim McCormack, this agreement carries legal weight. He cited the Supreme Court of Canada case *R v. Van de Peet* of 1990, the treaty between the British and the Huron tribe that was made in 1760. To this day that treaty was determined to have legal weight. 'Treaties with first peoples', said the court, 'must be given a just, broad and liberal construction with uncertainties resolved in favour of the indigenous peoples. What characterises a treaty is the intention to create obligations, the presence of mutually binding obligations and a certain measure of solemnity'.

Having attended the inaugural address and being presented with such compelling, historical evidence, I wrote to the then premier and to the Leader of the Opposition saying that the Greens wanted to work constructively to advance this issue, that we wanted to work together to develop a form of words that could come before this House that progressed the debate on recognising the 1831 agreement and moving towards treaty.

Regrettably, and I say that for Aboriginal people in Tasmania, I have received no response either from the then premier or the current premier or the Leader of the Opposition. That is shameful. I can indicate today that we will be engaging with Aboriginal people around Tasmania on this issue of the 1831 agreement. I have already started doing that. If we cannot get a constructive approach to this issue from our colleagues in government and in opposition, we will table a motion in this place that seeks to ensure parliament recognises there was an agreement in 1831 between the state of Tasmania, its administrators, and the Aboriginal people of the north east of Tasmania. I hope that my colleagues in here are able to recognise the importance of resolving this unfinished business.

I also hope that following the release of the inquiry report into the House of Assembly Restoration Bill, which made a very clear recommendation that a joint House committee be established to develop a preferred model for Aboriginal representation in the Tasmanian Parliament, that too is an issue that we can find a consensus on. It is not about us. It is about the First People of Tasmania, and the fact that they are not represented as a people in the Tasmanian parliament. There are examples for us to follow - for instance New Zealand, where the Maori people have a clear, strong, self-determining place at the table. We have to deal with this issue, because the injustice - as we found in the committee inquiry - is deep, and it is holding Aboriginal people back.

This time last year, when we were delivering our State of the State addresses, Australia was a very different place. The forests of the Blue Mountains were still there. This past summer, we have been through the most devastating bushfires this country has ever experienced. In fact, according

to Professor John Shine, the President of the Australian Academy of Science, the scale of these bushfires is unprecedented anywhere in the world. More than 25 million acres of land - an area about the size of South Korea - was burned. Thirty-three people lost their lives. Three thousand homes and properties were destroyed. An estimated one billion native animals died. Because of the vast volume of smoke and carbon dioxide and other toxic particulates that came out of those bushfires, our contribution to global heating this year as a result of the bushfires is even higher. That is a feedback loop where the fires are creating the circumstances for further global heating.

In Tasmania, this summer, we did not confront the horror of the bushfires that were being felt on the mainland. I was disappointed that the Government did not move for a condolence motion in response to the bushfires. I did suggest it, but this did not happen. The tragic scale of these fires, and the devastation, is mind-numbing. We are only just beginning to come to terms with it.

On a personal note - and I am sure this feeling was felt by millions of Australians - the horror and the grief that I felt was crushing, because we are now made aware that summer in Australia will never be the same. Summer, which was a season we always looked forward to, is now a season where climate-induced bushfires are increasingly prevalent. In Tasmania we did escape this year, but we did not in the previous year, and the cycle is now such that we can expect to see devastating bushfire seasons on a much more regular cycle.

That requires of us as a parliament to think differently, to do things differently, and to try to work together on these big issues, because Tasmanians are looking to us for leadership. I came back from the break more determined than ever to be part of the solution, and to work with Dr Woodruff in this place, to drive evidence-based policy, to listen to the science, to promote new ideas, to try to bat off as much of the politics as it is possible to do so, because our children are looking to us for leadership. Our children are looking for meaningful climate action.

I have to go to some of the issues that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition in a depressingly beige contribution. There was lip service to the need for climate action. The words were simply that tackling climate change can create jobs. Well, Tasmanians expect a bit more than that from the Opposition. In a contribution in which at least half was spent talking about either the Government or the Greens, very few meaningful ideas about how we tackle global heating together were put forward, but we did hear some highly partisan and untrue language that I need to challenge before the lunch break.

Ms White says the Greens are holding the state back. Well, we were there to defend the Franklin River from damming, and today Strahan is a thriving tourism town. We have always been there to defend the forests from felling, and today, thanks to the work of conservationists over decades, large tracks of our forest are safe from logging. We have always been there to defend the wilderness, and as a result of the advocacy of conservationists over decades, large tracts of our wilderness are protected. The work that the Greens have done has strengthened Tasmania's clean, green, wilderness brand. We stood up against a pulp mill at Wesley Vale and in the Tamar Valley, both projects which were supported by the Liberal and Labor parties.

It is the clean, green, wilderness brand that underpins the successes of our agricultural sector, our exporters and our tourism industry. If the Greens and the conservation movements had not been such an important feature of political life in Tasmania, the Franklin would have been dammed. There would have been Labor's pulp mill in the Tamar Valley, or the Liberal's pulp mill at Wesley Vale. There would have been a canal estate in the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area. There would be fish farms on every coast and corner. It is the Labor and Liberal parties who are holding this state

back, because they refuse to see it for what it is. It is a beautiful, wild little island with a strong and close-knit community which our political colleagues keep trying to divide. It is an island that is kissed by three oceans. There is more coastline per unit area in Tasmania than any other state or territory. There are 334 islands that make up our archipelago. We breathe the cleanest air in the world. We are home to the world's tallest flowering plant, *Eucalyptus regnans*. We are the custodians of one of the world's great and last tracts of temperate land forest. We are an island of Gondwana.

The reason Tasmania looks so different from the rest of Australia is because we were connected to Antarctica for much longer than the rest of mainland Australia. We have plants, animals, birds and fish here that you cannot find anywhere else in the world. We have Aboriginal heritage in places like *takayna*, the Tarkine - a human story that reaches back for 40 000, 50 000 or 60 000 years. The Tarkine coast contains some of the richest archaeological sites on the planet. This is the coast that the Liberals want to open four-wheel drive tracks through. We also have a rich, beautiful and intact European cultural heritage landscape. We have a culture of community and connection. We are still the nation's biggest per capita givers. When Tasmanians are in trouble, it does not matter what your politics are. We look after each other. There is that privilege of being part of a connected island community. We have an extraordinary culture of creativity. Partly that is because of the landscape, and because of the light. We are at the same latitude in the southern hemisphere as Tuscany.

We welcome strangers, and we make sure they do not feel like strangers for long. We are an island with heart. We are a little green heart-shaped island at the bottom of the world, and we are so privileged to call ourselves Tasmanians. With that comes a deep responsibility to look after this place. It is rare and magical in the world.

Yet we have had to listen to the bollocks from the leader of the Opposition about the role of the Greens in looking after this island - when they have been complicit in putting forward pulp mills and canal estates and massive deforestation. It is galling and completely unsurprising. Come the next election, I do not think it will be Ms White leading the Labor Party.

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

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

Resumed from above

[2.30 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Speaker, before the break I was making some observations about the Leader of the Opposition's contribution. In closing, we heard a lot about Labor being focused on jobs, with very little detail on any understanding they might have about the jobs needs of now or tomorrow. I remind Labor that without brand integrity in Tasmania, jobs will not grow, and jobs will be at risk if you do not protect the attributes of your clean, green, wilderness brand. You potentially compromise jobs in tourism and among our exporters.

Finally, Ms White states that it was a mistake for Labor to go into government with the Greens. All I might say is that the previous premier, Lara Giddings, who we worked with in government,

told us - the now Senator Nick McKim and I - that we were two of her best ministers, and she made it very clear to us that she trusted us more than she did some of her own colleagues.

Ms O'Byrne - Sweetheart, you are my favourite one. You are my bestie.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Now I find history being rewritten. In fact, the object of her distrust is the same problem you have.

Madam Speaker, we know that Tasmania and our identity are very much embedded in this place, and our island-ness, and the fact we have a wilderness on our doorstep. Sometimes when I am thinking about this place and its history, I remember that beautiful Redgum song about the Franklin: 'Oh, Tasmania, the hardest heart would understand.'

I have been listening to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition's contribution and thinking, those hard hearts do not really understand this island very well. There is no indication from either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition that they recognise the seriousness of the climate emergency that we are in, and that we are in for very testing times.

It was confirmed in Senate Estimates yesterday that, according to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy, we are looking at a 4 degrees Celsius rise in temperature within the next 80 years in Australia. This is a climate emergency, Madam Speaker, and in declaring one, you are not being alarmist. You are simply acknowledging the facts, and resolving, as a collective of the Tasmanian parliament, to work together to enable actions, policies and funding that enable our community to be better equipped to cope with the very testing times that are ahead.

On that basis we will be tabling, in the next session, our Safe Climate Bill 2020. It will establish a joint standing committee on a safe climate to inquire into, consider and report to the parliament on any matter referred to the committee by either House relating to the climate emergency. It will establish a safe climate commission to provide advocacy and advice to the government and community for actions on the climate emergency. It will establish iterative emissions-reduction targets for sectors, and require the government of the day to establish policies to meet these targets. It provides a framework in which the government needs to establish that meeting one or more targets would be unreasonable or unduly harmful in order to not progress policies to meet those targets. It would create a new normal of reducing emissions, reversing the onus of proof to favour action over inaction. It sets targets for increasing our carbon sequestration activities, and sets requirements for climate adaptation at state and local levels.

We hope that every member of this House, on examining our legislation, recognises it is well thought out, it is future focused, it is achievable, reasonable and necessary. Parliament cannot be content with amending the Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008. That act is nine-tenths of useless, and I know this because I used to administer that legislation in the Labor-Greens government. The proposed Safe Climate Act will allow us to deliver that new thinking with a strong governance framework for climate emissions reduction and adaptation.

It is a matter of regret that we have not heard from either the Premier or the Leader of the Opposition about what their plans are to help Tasmanians adapt to this rapidly changing climate. We have to be driven by the science. It is deeply frustrating to both Dr Woodruff and I to listen to

the kind of puerile commentary we have had on climate-related issues in this place for the last couple of years at least. We have to acknowledge that the climate is changing rapidly, and this will impact on every aspect of the lives of Tasmanians. It will impact on our food security and our water security. It needs to drive change in the way we build houses and large-scale developments. It must redefine our relationship with the natural environment.

I have made the point in here in recent days that business as usual is not only not an option, it is recklessly dangerous. What the scientists are now telling us - and they have the experience of last summer's bushfires to guide them - is that logging of native forests increases bushfire risk in intensity and severity. It leaves kindling and undergrowth on the forest floor, and it allows the regrowth of trees that are all of a similar height and size. This creates a highly combustible scenario.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania, the minister and the Premier, who is also the Liberal Minister for Climate Change, need to urgently come to terms with this. To continue native forest logging in that knowledge is recklessly dangerous. It risks lives, and it exposes the government in future to civil liability claims. They will know; the information is there. The science is confirmed and it has come out of the University of Tasmania, the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University.

This provides us with an opportunity to redefine our relationship with the natural environment in Tasmania: to work with the forest industry on transition; to make better use of the 310 000 hectares of plantation that we have in Tasmania; to make sure that our forest industry is part of strengthening our clean, green, wilderness brand, not undermining it and to make sure we do not enable the forest industry in Tasmania to place communities and individuals at risk of more extreme bushfires in the future.

We will be moving this year to abolish the minimum sawlog quota. It is well past time that that awful provision in Tasmania's Forest Management Act 2013 was dealt with. We will move to abolish section 16 of the Forest Management Act 2013, which establishes wood production supply. It requires Sustainable Timber Tasmania to make available each year 137 000 cubic metres of forest timber.

Dr Woodruff and I, on behalf of the Tasmanian Greens, are not going to stand by and let this Government and Labor continue unchecked with business as usual. There are places like the Tarkine, on the north-west coast of Tasmania, that any person with empathy and a soul for the planet and the life it sustains could not, in all conscience, consider destroying. That is what is happening under the Liberals and Labor is cheering them on. Clear felling operations are happening in wet sclerophyll and rainforest parts of the Tarkine. It is a disgrace that any government would think that that was acceptable or moral. It is not. We have to end the plunder of our beautiful, natural forests. We have to provide habitat for our endemic species.

Would it not be terrific if in this place we had a sense of Tasmania as being like an ark, a place that is a haven for the natural world and for threatened and endangered species? We have seen a billion animals die on the mainland and the forests destroyed, many of which will never recover. It places an enormous responsibility on us to do things differently and to be an ark for the natural world. That would strengthen our clean, green wilderness brand. We have to protect our national parks and our world heritage area and recognise that they are there not only for the people of Australia but they belong to the world. Under this Government there has been a degrading of wilderness values, a privatisation of public, protected areas and an alienation of the Tasmanian people from their enjoyment of their own public lands.

The expressions of interest process for development inside public protected areas is becoming increasingly unpopular in the community for two primary reasons. One, people recognise it is a form of privatisation. Two, they recognise that the whole process is developer driven and underpinned by utter secrecy through the Office of the Coordinator-General. We now know that since the Liberals took office in 2014 the number of licences to operate on national parks and reserves has increased from 152 to 515; and the number of exclusive leases over protected areas has doubled to 136. These parks belong to the people of Tasmania. They do not belong to developers and they do not belong to the Liberal Party.

Protecting our wilderness is a plank of our green new deal. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on global warming projected that we are heading to 1.5 degrees at best and put the world on notice. If we do not make large, unparalleled changes by 2030, we are likely to face extreme difficulties such as we saw last summer.

The Earth's environment and climate have been pushed to breaking point by the current economic paradigm. It is parasitic, late stage capitalism that is sending this planet and its people to hell in a handbasket. The extract-and-discard model of resource use is not sustainable. We should not tolerate it in Tasmania. We cannot adequately address the climate emergency without tackling the structural issues that have led to it in the first place. This is the impetus for a green new deal.

A green new deal has bold, ambitious goals to provide for a fair future where the Tasmanian economy serves all Tasmanians, not just the wealthy, and preserves our environment.

[2.45 p.m.]

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

The member may be heard for another two minutes.

Motion agreed.

Ms O'CONNOR - A green new deal will provide for an inclusion transition to a new economy rather than desperate bandaid funding to prop up failing regional industries. A green new deal will provide unprecedented, apolitical and consistent funding for regions to define their own future. Through unprecedented investment in our people and our island, a green new deal can achieve an ambitious future for Tasmania, one where equality and wellbeing, not GDP is the most important measure of our society.

In many ways, Tasmania has a head start on the rest of the world. More than half our land mass is in some form of reserve, we have the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area. Our society punches above its weight in volunteering and charitable donations, our economy has a brand and niche products that are the envy of the world. Our democracy boasts the Hare-Clark electoral system, widely regarded as the best system in the world.

The one thing I will acknowledge that came out of the Leader of the Opposition's address today is Labor's renewed commitment to donation reform. Thank you for coming on board. We look forward to seeing the legislation. We would certainly be backing any moves that led to a stronger more robust democracy in Tasmania where vested interests cannot buy elections.

[2.46 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to the Premier's Address. I congratulate the Premier on his state of the state address. His exciting vision for Tasmania, delivered with conviction, a real sense of compassion and a clear outline of how the Government is creating opportunity for all, was an outstanding premier's address.

I acknowledge the previous premier. I sat beside Mr Hodgman for 14 of his state of the state addresses, eight in opposition and six in government as premier. His commitment to the people of Franklin and all the things that he did on an individual constituent level, but more broadly his role as premier and leader of this state leaves a wonderful legacy. I was very proud to be his deputy, his colleague and friend in this House for almost 18 years as indeed I am very proud to be the deputy of our new Premier, Peter Gutwein.

A good education is the single most powerful way to ensure our young Tasmanians have lifelong opportunities, reach their full potential and lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives. In 2020 we will continue to build inclusive, equitable school communities that support all Tasmanian students to succeed in life. This includes support for our most vulnerable children and young people and those with additional learning needs.

Our new needs-based funding model for disability reflects this. For the first time students are receiving support based on their individual learning needs rather than their disability. We will have increased funding, \$34 million, which will see up to 2000 additional students receive support. Equity and inclusion are the heart of everything we do. Our Working Together initiative for three-year-olds has been expanded this year and is providing free preschool for young children who would not formerly have had the opportunity to engage in early learning programs. This nation-leading program includes wrap-around support of services for families. It is being hailed as a great success, with one participant claiming that he did not have much hope for his child before. He thought he would be straight to the too-hard basket, but after this and all the help, he has so much hope for him. He has never been so excited for his future.

The Tasmanian majority Liberal Government is continuing to invest a record amount in Education of \$7.1 billion over the forward Estimates. We are now delivering on our 2018 commitment to employ an additional 250 teachers while also undertaking the biggest investment in school infrastructure by a state government for more than 20 years. This includes new schools in growing communities such as Legana and Brighton.

Our Government has a strong plan for education, focused on individual improvement. We want every student to reach their full potential. One of our biggest successes so far has been the extension of high schools to year 12. Communities around the state have embraced our program to extend their local high schools, with 47 schools making the move so far and eight more schools to extend next year. Our plan is working. TCE attainment is more than 10 per cent higher than since we came to government. I acknowledge that there is a lot more work to do but our Government's policies are making significant improvements for our students and this will continue in 2020.

This year we will extend our innovative Packages of Learning project, which ran as a pilot last year and is helping to support and engage students at the critical decision points in years 9 and 10. Packages of Learning has been developed in collaboration with industry bodies and is aligned to our priority growth areas including advanced manufacturing, agriculture, food and natural resources, architecture and construction, hospitality and tourism. By participating in Packages of

Learning, students are able to explore a range of careers and make informed decisions about pathways for the future into further education, training and employment.

We are also continuing to connect students with industry through our school-based apprenticeship program and our regional trade training centres. I am particularly pleased with the successes at the South East Trade Training Centre in Sorell. This collaborative work is run with strong support from its advisory board made up of members from the local community, including key industries, local government, the Department of Education, the South East Regional Development Association, the South East Employment Hub, the Tasman Business and Tourism Association and the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council.

In 2019 there were over 500 course enrolments in a wide range of areas including construction, tourism, agriculture, electrotechnology, child care and animal studies. It is a model that we are going to help support in other areas, given the trade training centre and the South East Regional Development Association has filled over 100 jobs in the past year and more than 350 jobs have been identified to fill in 2020.

This year is also a significant year for TAFE vocational education and training and skills in Tasmania. I strongly believe we must ensure all post-year 12 pathways are given the same priority. For too long vocational education and training has been viewed as the second option to university but the facts paint a very different picture. Research demonstrates that nine out of 10 occupations predicted to have the greatest growth of new jobs over the next five years will require a vocational skill. This year the Government will roll out a campaign to raise the profile of VET and the awareness of employment and career opportunities available. It is critical we change perceptions and highlight all opportunities available to our students.

This side of the House is the strongest supporter of our public training provider. I am proud that since 2015 we have increased recurrent funding to TasTAFE from \$73.5 million to \$79.4 million for this financial year. This represents 80 per cent of the state's training budget, and 10 per cent more than promised by the Opposition.

In addition to recurrent funds, we are investing \$15.5 million for the establishment of TasTAFE centres of excellence in agriculture, trades, water, tourism and hospitality, which are all well underway and on track. We have committed a further \$5 million to upgrade nursing training facilities in the north and the south. We have also provided a further \$2.9 million for TasTAFE capacity building, which includes seven more nursing teachers, 75 additional Diploma of Nursing places and increased prevocational training for construction industry apprentices.

I am a big believer in lifelong learning, which is why we are working on policies to help more Tasmanians engage in education and develop the skills they need to be job-ready. Our Adult Learning Strategy will help ensure that more Tasmanians benefit from Tasmania's strong economic growth and are able to adapt to changing workforce needs.

It was an honour for me to become Tasmania's first Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing and I am particularly excited about the investment we are making to develop a fully integrated mental health system that minimises duplication and supports recovery. We are making good progress in response to recommendations made by the Mental Health Integration Taskforce. Reviews of both child and adolescent and forensic mental health services are well underway, with consultation with key stakeholders continuing this month. Planning for our mental health integration hubs is well advanced. The Peacock Centre has a development application and it is

currently before the Hobart City Council and early works have commenced on the proposed capital development at St Johns Park.

The review of the mental health helpline and crisis assessment and triage function has received over 500 responses. The reform program team is exploring all the feedback that has been received. I look forward to continuing to work closely with clinical and community sectors to deliver a more integrated mental health system that better supports Tasmanians with a mental illness to lead fulfilling lives and are able to recover from or successfully manage their mental illness.

We have also heard loud and clear that our community-based mental health service providers need funding certainty in order to better plan for the future and provide job security for the workforce. As part of the broader integration of the mental service system, we are pleased to be ending the current 12-month cycle of funding agreements, with future agreements to be over three years. This will provide greater stability for those organisations as they work in close partnership with our Government to deliver better outcomes for consumers and their loved ones as part of the mental health reform agenda.

I thank the Mental Health Council of Tasmania for their engagement with me as minister over the last number of months and all the organisations that support and make up the Mental Health Council of Tasmania and the feedback they provide. I take all their feedback seriously and on board and I know that the announcement yesterday by the Premier of more certainty around funding for a longer period of time will help their organisations.

In the coming months I will release the state's reform agenda for the alcohol and drug sector. A compassionate government looks after the most vulnerable and ensures the support is there where and when it is needed. The reforms aim to ensure Tasmanians affected by alcohol, tobacco and other drug use have access to appropriate, timely, effective and quality supports and treatment informed by best practice and delivered by a highly skilled workforce.

As Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, I know the importance of preventative health care as way of helping to reduce demand on the health system over the longer term. Across government we annually invest around \$70 million in preventative health measures and this includes through the Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan. Healthy Tasmania includes a range of actions to provide people with information and access to support healthy changes in their lives. While we have made good inroads in these areas, again there is more work to do. The Government is due to update this strategy in 2021 and I look forward to engaging with Tasmanians later this year on what preventative health should look like over the next five years.

I was also delighted to have been appointed as Minister for Disability Services and Community Development. I take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, the Honourable Roger Jaensch MP, for his outstanding work in this portfolio. Having carriage of this important portfolio area provides me with the opportunity to work alongside Tasmania's important community sectors to support our state's vibrant and diverse community and to provide opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in our wonderful way of life in this tremendous state. These portfolios are personally important to me and have strong connections and alignment with my other portfolios of Mental Health and Wellbeing and Education and Training. By bringing them together, my hope is to bring a more holistic approach to these vital areas which impact so many Tasmanians to support generational change for children and their families and to give more Tasmanians the chance to learn, grow and thrive.

The most significant change for Tasmanians with disability has been the transition to the full NDIS. The state Government is contributing \$244 million each year towards the scheme, while also continuing to deliver support for people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS. The NDIS is revolutionising the way in which people with disability are able to participate in the broader community. It is providing people with disability greater choice and control over their disability supports, and assisting them to achieve their goals and their aspirations.

As a result of the NDIS, nearly double the number of Tasmanians with disability are receiving support, tailored to their specific needs, with over 3600 people receiving support for the very first time.

The Tasmanian Government is proud to support Loaves and Fishes and the tremendous job they do in assisting vulnerable Tasmanians with food relief. I pay tribute to other organisations in the same space. I thank the Premier for providing certainty for Loaves and Fishes and their southern operations by confirming the Government will support them with \$185 000 funding over the next 15 months. This will help reduce the current pressures on the organisation, and provide assurance, not only for Loaves and Fishes, but also for the hundreds of Tasmanians who rely on their help each week.

Loaves and Fishes is one of many wonderful community organisations that advocate for and support local communities. I am looking forward to working closely with not-for-profit organisations and community partners across a range of very diverse groups, in terms of my community development 'hat'. I embrace that opportunity, working with groups including carers, young people, LGBTI Tasmanians, migrants and refugees, older persons, people with disability, the Men's Sheds and the volunteering community.

Tasmania has what the rest of the world wants, and the Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to opening up new market and investment opportunities for Tasmanian exporters. Growing trade is a fundamental driver for long-term economic growth in all regions of Tasmania and, needless to say, without our innovative and world-class exporters, Tasmania's economy would not be the envy of the nation that it is. It is important that we take a very targeted approach about our export priorities, but we must also ensure that we have an agile and flexible plan to encourage industry and government to be responsive to the ever-changing market dynamics.

The current outbreak of coronavirus is also a new source of uncertainty in the global economy. I am aware that the Department of State Growth has been closely engaged with many peak industry bodies to understand what the current and future ramifications on trade may be, and how we can assist.

Activities are already underway to assist exporters. These include a seafood showcase in Singapore in March - a study tour for the seafood industry aimed at market intelligence and diversification. Last week, representatives from the maritime and seafood sectors met with an Indonesian delegation led by the Indonesian Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister, who I had the pleasure to meet and engage with as well.

As the Minister for Trade, I am looking very much forward to leading a trade mission to the United States later this month, which has been tailored to now include activities to help Tasmanian businesses in light of the coronavirus outbreak. A Tasmanian mission to the United States was specifically championed by Tasmanian business through consultation with the department, and with excellent reason. The United States is the major driver of a global economy, and a world leader in

international trade and investment, innovation and new technologies, and research and development expenditure. It is Tasmania's sixth-largest export market, and a key market for agricultural exports, with beef exports alone worth \$96 million. It is Tasmania's second-largest tourism source market, with 6 per cent - or 44 000 - of the total US tourists to Australia visiting our state. The United States is the largest investor in Australia, with investment stock worth \$940 billion and foreign direct investment worth \$241 billion in 2018, and this includes in Tasmania through Simplot, Caterpillar and many others. We have a plan through the Tasmanian Trade Strategy to increase exports to \$15 billion by 2050. This mission will provide future opportunities and an impetus for Tasmanian businesses and industry to realise that goal.

It is important that our strategy also recognises the significant role regional Tasmania can play in increasing our exports. The Tasmanian manufacturing sector is a key contributor to our economy and a significant employer across the state, currently employing approximately 18 500 people. Many of these manufacturing jobs are in my seat of Braddon. Over recent years Tasmania's manufacturing sector has undergone a transformation, assisted by the Government through initiatives such as the Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan and the Tasmanian Defence Industry Strategy.

In my short time back in this portfolio, I am already hearing great things about the north-west coast businesses - and others around the state - and their commitment to innovation and world-leading technology and manufacturing excellence, such as Storemasta, Direct Edge and Jayben to name a few. I was at Jayben a few weeks ago, which is a wonderful business and highly innovative. I am committed to working very closely with industry, so we maintain an understanding of opportunities, and constraints on business and industry growth.

In January I had the pleasure, as I said yesterday, to visit King Island when the King Island Council hosted a delegation of European Union ambassadors. The focus of the visit was about how King Island can leverage their unique brand and better promote their tourism and agrifood sectors. I had the pleasure of meeting the EU delegation and discussing with them the Tasmanian Trade Strategy, which identifies the European Union as a key sector for both agrifood and tourism. There was a lot of excitement on King Island with the EU delegation visit, which coincided with the Festival of King Island. I look forward to returning to see how they are progressing with their interactions. It was a wonderful opportunity for the island, and a great example of their beautiful produce, well-branded beef, dairy, tourism and seafood. It is a spectacular place, and I always enjoy visiting King Island.

I also enjoy visiting the west coast of Tasmania. The award-winning Unconformity Festival in Queenstown is well worth attending. I was very pleased to hear the Premier announce extra funding for Unconformity so it can continue to grow in size and in reputation. I know it is a festival west-coasters are extremely proud of - as we should be, as Tasmanians.

On a much more solemn note, however, like other members I also acknowledge the recent tragic death of miner, Cameron Goss, who worked at the Henty Gold Mine. I send my deepest condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues. I thank all three leaders of the House yesterday for their words. This is a time when the west coast feels very deeply, having lost one of their own. They came out in force, if I can put it that way, for Cameron's farewell. It highlights the challenging nature of the very dangerous occupation that is mining. I pay tribute to all those who worked so hard on the west coast in difficult circumstances, and reiterate my condolences to Cameron's friends, family and colleagues.

As I have already indicated, our Government is investing strongly in educational capital works. It has been pleasing to see the high level of community engagement that is occurring, even around my electorate. Devonport High's concept plan for a \$10.5 million redevelopment will deliver state-of-the-art learning facilities, with construction expected to start later this year, and be completed by August 2021. It is a project the local community is very excited about. There are exciting opportunities in terms of the Penguin District high school development as well. I visited Parklands High School recently and saw their redevelopment being embraced so enthusiastically by the local community.

Tasmania's best days are ahead of us and as a government we have made many inroads, not only into budget management, the economy and more jobs but also clearly delivering on those essential services. We recognise that there is more to do. Tasmania has challenging circumstances in some of those socioeconomic indicators. When it comes to investing in health and child wellbeing, the announcement yesterday by the Premier about the first 1000 days in terms of child wellbeing was fantastic.

As to housing, we want to ensure that all Tasmanians have every single opportunity of a growing economy and the success of Tasmania so no-one misses out. That is our clear objective. We have more to do but we have made enormous inroads in the last six years and we will never be complacent about the job before us. It is my pleasure to be part of this Government as we work together to continue to deliver on our plan and ensure that all Tasmanians can benefit from our strong economy and live their best lives.

[3.11 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the Premier's Address and follow the person who I think most Tasmanians were wishing was the new Premier of Tasmania. It is unfortunate for Tasmanians that we had the debacle of the leadership outcome. I will talk more about that later.

I start by wishing Will Hodgman the best for his next stage in life, whether it be here or in another environment. I hope he has a lot of quality time with his kids. Those of us who have had our children grow up in politics, particularly when you get to those teenage years, know it is a lot harder to do this job. I have great sympathy for him wanting to have some more time with his children. I really hope he gets the joy out of that that he is looking for.

The leadership challenge was a bit of fun to watch on the sidelines. I confess that we had popcorn a few times and enjoyed it. It was good from a political perspective to be able to enjoy it but pretty unedifying for the people of Tasmania to have such a process. It was unusual to see a leader go without having some process of ensuring a stable transition. What is very clear is the mockery of the line about having a 'stable, majority Liberal government' depending on who it might be on any given day now. It is clearly not stable, it is clearly not majority, and it is clearly divided. As we watched it play out we could see that division between the very hard right of the party and those who were desperately trying to provide some kind of image of being moderate.

It is no wonder the Deputy Premier did not want to lead such a rabble. Now that the tensions have been brought out they are going to continue to play out quite viciously. We will be watching. We hope the party sorts itself out but, as we know, when you get a leadership spill and those kinds of challenges I believe the Australian average on leadership before you get your second spill is about four months. We will see how close to the average the pretender, Mr Ferguson, will be before he tries his spill. Watching question time over the last two days, watching people try to look as if

they like each other and are supportive, has probably been some of the most entertaining things I have seen in this parliament for a while. We do await the challenge.

Government members interjecting.

Ms O'BYRNE - Members over there keep trying to create this idea that there is a problem over here. Mate, we watched, we saw. It was obvious where your problems were. We know about the phone calls. We know about the numbers changing. We know how it all played out. Okay? It is the worst-kept secret in Tassie; everyone knows about it. As much as you want to cast aspersions on other political parties to try to do some kind of deflecting strategy, the reality is your ribs were open for everyone to see. The only people who in the long term that hurts are Tasmanians. We know you are not a united team and we know that that pain is going to be tearing at you for quite some time. Those ideological divisions in the Liberal Party between the moderates and the extreme right are not good.

I am going to talk in my contribution about how some of those hard-right conservative views have impacted on Tasmanians and how dangerous that can be.

We on this side of the House believe in a better and a fairer Tasmania. It is something that we all want for ourselves and our children, and while some things are going okay we know that there are many people who have been left behind. One in four Tasmanians live in poverty and that is not a record anyone should be proud of.

I do not know what conversations members opposite have. I do not know how much they engage with members of the community who do it tough, but my community conversations have given me a very bleak insight into the tough lives many are experiencing. Many are living in poverty. Many are living in insecure housing or sleeping rough. I think 30 people were cleared out of City Park in order for us to celebrate Festivale. Many are living in fear of violence. Many are not able to access or even dream of getting training. Many are not able to get work, or if they do have work they are working such a combination of small jobs and travelling between those to make ends meet that their home lives are almost unmanageable. The shine is pretty tarnished in their experience of Premier Gutwein's golden age.

Labor's focus is on making sure we get those fundamentals right, that we make sure people get access to good quality education, that we make sure people get the health care at the place they need it when they need it, and that people have a safe place to sleep and a consistent and stable roof over their heads.

In today's contribution I want to start with the issues of women and the prevention of family violence. Recent events mean that I am compelled to start here because in stark contrast to the reaction of incidents like one-punch attacks or shark attacks or needles in strawberries, reaction to violence against women has been wanting.

The Government will trumpet its increased investments. I have stood in this House before and said they are welcome, but they mask the chronic underfunding of core services. Some really good initiatives have been introduced but you cannot do that and not recognise that the underfunding of core services is having a significant impact. We know there are waiting lists to get emergency providers. We know there are waiting lists to get the legal advice women particularly often need to exit a dangerous relationship. We know that emergency accommodation has a waiting list and as

we have said in this House time and time again, the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is the point that you seek to leave and if we do not support you then we are culpable.

I want to talk about the demand for family violence and counselling services, which has tripled, and the Government's failure to respond with adequate funding to ensure the service can cope. We discussed this in the MPI yesterday but it is an issue that causes me significant concern because the response of the Government is to have a review. A review takes time and every day the review is happening we still have more calls coming in to that service than can be met.

What was urgently required was an increase in funding. If the Government had increased funding and then said they wanted a review to make sure we were getting the best support for this service, we would have a lot more confidence, but we have gone through months now of that service being absolutely oversubscribed with people not being able to get the wraparound support that they need while the Government does the review.

We know from this Government's history that reviews are often the precursor to privatisation. Any outsourcing, any movement of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service to not be a government service to be either privatised to a private provider or even to a not-for-profit provider fundamentally shifts the way they do their work and undermines the Safe at Home principles that this parliament, in multiple images, has supported.

It was introduced by Labor and was embraced by the incoming Government because it is a really good piece of work that is nationally and internationally recognised. There has been no increased investment in the adult program of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. It cannot meet current demand and adding single-worker services into the community, which is what the response has been, and fragmenting the provision of service delivery, does not create additional capacity within the sector. It gets you an announceable to say you are doing something but it does not create additional capacity in the sector because we have had a 200 per cent increase.

The staffing shortfall at the moment on current demand is 11.54 full-time workers statewide. That is going to cost more than \$1 million to fix, but those workers are saying \$1 million would make a massive difference. If they could even get 10 workers that would make a massive difference to them. The data is in. In 2011-12 there were 4482 referrals to 10.3 equivalent staff with a case allocation of 435. Those staffing numbers dropped in 2014-15 when this Government came in; they were down to 9.75. They dropped in 2015-16 to 9.04. They dropped in 2016-17 to 9.00. There has been a slight increase but we still have 9.4 - I will get that on the record for the Government. In 2017-18, we still have an allocation per full time equivalent staff person of 651.

We all do constituent work and we all have cases coming into our office. Can you imagine those kinds of numbers and the severity of the issues that are coming through? It was a long weekend in the north. Long weekends and sporting events are times when we get an increase in violent behaviour. Over that long weekend in the north the statewide figures were 67 in those three days, 12 witnessed by children, three involved women who were pregnant, three involved strangulation and as we know that is an increasing risk for women. This is something that we should all be very concerned about.

There was a sexual assault; a woman was knocked unconscious. There were forced entries into homes - the place where you are supposed to be safe - including physical assault, theft and damage. There was property damage, including a car set on fire. If that does not put shivers down the backs of any of us then that is quite distressing. That was on one long weekend in the north. When we

look at the data from really big sporting events, they are demanding. Family Violence Counselling Support Service workers come in first thing in the morning and get a list of all the police referrals. They call the ones who have already been accepted contact and they could call all the rest. We are talking about a case load of 651 per worker.

Ms Haddad - Shame.

Ms O'BYRNE - It is an utter shame, you are right, Ms Haddad. We should all be feeling very bad about this.

Let me explain what it is like in the north. In 2005-6 there were 954 referrals to the Family Violence Counselling Support Service in the northern region. There are three regions. In 2018-19 there were 1782 referrals. Those referrals went to the equivalent of 2.76 adult program workers, 646 referrals per worker in that financial year, just in the north. That means they are not able to do the other things they need to do such as the medium- to long-term counselling component that has been a key part of the service. It devalues what we need to do; it devalues the work that we do.

There are other services that provide some level of support but not for this cohort and not as a first response. The lack of recognition is having an impact not only on people trying to access the service but on the staff person who cannot do the job that they are trained to do.

The total lack of recognition in the Government's recent Safe Homes, Families, Communities Action Plan was actually really offensive. If you look at the way the staffing numbers have changed over the years, at the moment we have a service that is only funded to take 1800 referrals a year. In the last 12 months it took 6484. They have been calling on the Government to support them. They are going through every one of the right channels. They have gone through their union and their department. They have gone through every process to try to do this fairly and appropriately within the government service sector. None of these things have worked. As was said earlier today, and I think Ms Haddad might have said it yesterday, if you can find \$600 000 for a consultant to tell you how to save money on your bridge, you can find some money for women.

I must look at who made this response. It was a response when we were calling for additional money. 'Government has to make choices.' Yes, they do. If you do not choose the safety of women and children in these environments then, frankly, just quit. If you do not choose them above other priorities, that is offensive.

This Government is failing women. It comes back to some of the more politically, ideologically driven views of members of this Government and the failure to provide a low-cost surgical termination clinic. This Government oversaw the closure of the last clinic. We had a minister at that time who was quite happy to let it close. We had that debate in this House. Parliament debated the need for these services. We debated them for a fair bit of time and devoted a fair bit of energy to this. The parliament demanded of this minister that a service would be provided. The former minister said it would happen. Yet we have had an absolute failure to deliver on this service provision. We have the deliberate actions of the former minister who was openly anti-choice. We have a new minister whom I took from her earliest comments when she took on the portfolio to be pro-choice. She is failing women when she fails to provide this service, either through incompetence or blatant disregard. I do not know which one.

I met with researcher Kathy LaRoche from Macquarie University when she was here. She did some interesting work that I am sure, Madam Speaker, you in particular would be interested in. She

looked at what was happening to women over the last two-and-a-half years in being able to access services. She found that the access is limited and confused. Many women are being forced to travel interstate. She interviewed Tasmanian residents who had obtained at least one abortion since 2010 and 12 key stakeholders, including abortion providers, as part of her work. We will see her full work once it has finished its review. She found that patients had highly varied experiences. It depended on the attitude and competence of their first point of contact, usually a GP. It found the lack of a clear referral pathway to an abortion was giving undue influence to gatekeepers within the health-care system who at times were judgmental or obstructionist.

One woman, Georgia Ingle, who was prepared to be interviewed and tell her story, tried to navigate the system. After taking a pregnancy test she went immediately to an after-hours doctors' surgery. There she requested information on how to get a medical abortion, the legal and available medical process that was there for her. The doctor told her that medical abortion did not exist. It has been legal in this state since 2013. He gave her a pamphlet and the address of the Fertility Control Clinic, signed a form for her referral and said, 'Go there tomorrow'. What he obviously did not know was it was the Moonah Clinic, which had closed some time ago. She got up in the morning. She was very distressed. She went to the fertility clinic. She has the piece of paper with the address. She is knocking on doors. She is trying find it. She cannot find the clinic because it does not exist. Eventually, somebody in a café said, 'I think I know what you are looking for. It is not there anymore. It hasn't been there for two years'.

She then found the name of a respected gynaecologist that she could see but the gynaecologist needed a referral so she went to another GP. Here is the next experience that the poor woman had. He knew it was for a termination. He persisted in trying to persuade her to have the child. He asked questions like, 'When did you lose your virginity?', and measuring her. He was saying to her, 'You'd make a good mother. You're young and healthy'. It did not make her feel very good. Eventually she was able to convince him to sign the referral and received professional, timely care from the gynaecologist. She had that care but it cost her over \$1000. A clinic in Hobart was open at the time but it was not able to schedule an appointment for her in the time frame that she needed.

It is not clear to the majority of women in Tasmania how you can access an abortion. You technically can get one, although there is a view that you cannot. You can get one, but it is hard. People have vastly different experiences depending on who their first point of contact was. If they went to a GP who had information, they were able to get the process taken care of. They were able to get financial help. They were able to get the pathway. A lot of time this study found that people's first point of contact was uninformed and, at worst, was shaming, stigmatising and judgmental.

Ms LaRoche's research found that the further the patient was away from Hobart the more significant the barriers to accessing an abortion were, which is something we have spoken about a lot in this House. Many women were finding it was more feasible to go to Melbourne.

She made some recommendations. The state government should: provide both abortion seekers and GPs with more information; ensure the information is shared with the general public and not just clinicians; develop an information hub for abortion seekers, creating a clear referral pathway for abortion care and ensuring there is at least one service that seekers are able to self-refer to. It shames us that we have been putting women through this process. There is no clear affordable pathway. That impacts more on regional women than others.

I am not surprised because, as we have seen, there are members on the other side of the House who put their own personal views above that of those women. It is their choice. They can choose

not to have an abortion but if they do, people who go around speaking at anti-choice events - and there are members opposite who do it - should not be putting their views on a woman's medical decision because they are her decisions, no one else's.

She also found there was broad support for integration and care in the public hospital system, something we have also talked about, and really was saying that what we both need is significantly improved access to a legal service.

Labor has said, and our Leader spoke about it again today, that we would establish a reproductive health hub providing the full range of reproductive health services in addition to terminations being provided through the public hospital system statewide. That is the only way you can ensure, if you are regional and do not have a lot of money, you get access to a service that is legal and also your choice and nobody else's. It is a legal and essential health service and should be treated as such.

On the subject of women - and I know I am spending a bit of time in this space and I will move on soon - we have previously spoken about our policy to introduce gender-blind job applications. That is a very simple and practical measure to ensure job applicants are assessed on their merits without the risk of unconscious bias, which research has shown has resulted in men more frequently winning jobs than women.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency did some research recently which identified that gender bias is pervasive at work and in organisations, creating inequalities at every stage of the employment cycle. Gender-based stereotypes affect which candidates get recruited for certain roles and which do not, which candidates get selected for those roles and why, how salaries are negotiated, how managers provide feedback, which employees receive career development opportunities and career encouragement and which do not.

Each of these factors compound across women's careers producing sustaining gender inequality. What is interesting is how women face tougher evaluation of their credentials during the initial recruitment stage. A Yale University study asked 127 science faculty members at research-intensive universities to rate the job application materials of a prospective laboratory manager who was randomly assigned either a female or a male name. Both the male and the female evaluators rated the male candidate as more competent and hireable than the female candidate, even though both applications were otherwise identical. The only difference was the gender. Evaluators within that process also recommended higher starting salaries for the male applicant and more mentoring opportunities. The applications were completely the same.

In another study, 238 academic psychologists were randomly assigned to evaluate one of two identical resumes, either Karen Miller or Brian Miller, for a candidate applying for an academic role. Although participants said they liked the female candidate better than the male candidate, they were more likely to recommend the male for the job. Interestingly, participants were four times more likely to write cautionary remarks in the margins of the female candidate's application, questioning the independence and legitimacy of her accomplishments, such as, 'I would need to see evidence that she had gotten those grants and publications on her own'.

These findings suggest that women do face a different level of scrutiny, are held to higher standards than equally qualified men, and that either consciously or unconsciously there is a gender bias in job evaluations. That is the reason Labor has already said we will move to gender-blind applications, because we should not be providing any barrier to women. Most of those people,

when they saw those results, were horrified to discover they had done it. It is an unconscious bias, but it is a real bias.

I turn now to the public sector review the Premier spoke of in his speech yesterday. Labor has previously called for a root-and-branch review of the public sector with the aim of understanding how we ensure that those vital services that are provided by our highly skilled and respected public servants are provided in the best way.

I was interested in the approach of the former premier with regard to this promised review. I understand there were some very good conversations around what that review might look like. I now fear that under the Premier, Mr Gutwein, we are going to see not an enhanced public service but a potentially privatised one. After all, it is their DNA.

I have had some discussions with the CPSU and they were disappointed but not surprised that the Premier decided to release the final terms of reference for the review of the Tasmanian State Service to the CEDA conference rather than communicating first to those with the strongest interest in the review, those who rely on our public services and those who deliver them. It was a very rude way to treat your own staff, but as the CPSU said, this Government is always more comfortable talking to the business lobby than its own workforce.

The CPSU consulted widely with members on the draft terms of reference and provided a detailed submission. They received no feedback at all on that submission and it seems that none of the issues that were raised were addressed in the final document. The CPSU said their members were concerned that the objective of the review was to undermine job security and further privatise public services. They asked the Premier to address these concerns by taking both issues out of the scope of the review and these requests were ignored.

Yesterday's Premier's Address showed that the Premier, Mr Gutwein has plans to further privatise vital public services, particularly in areas where the Government has failed to fund services to meet community expectations, such as public housing. What we see with this Government is that they underfund a service and then when that service is struggling they say, 'See, they can't cope - we'd better privatise it.' That is not done to provide better services. It is done to reduce accountability. It is done to remove and distance ministers from failing services. We have seen it at levels of governments all over Australia but particularly we have seen it here. You underfund a service and then when it is not working well because it is underfunded, you privatise it. We talked about it before with the risk to the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service and it is certainly the concern that the CPSU have now. They have said that they will actively oppose the Gutwein Government's privatisation agenda.

I am running out of time but I want to talk about the inquiry into labour hire and insecure work. Our underemployment crisis is fuelled by an unregulated expansion of labour hire practices. We have seen across the economy that we are getting precarious short-term contracts rather than long-term permanent jobs. There are times when it is quite legitimate for employers to access a labour hire service, but under-regulation of the sector means we have workers who are vulnerable to insecurity and wage theft. That has been happening in Tasmania and in other places as well.

When those stories come out they damage the brand of the employers who are doing the right thing. There are many employers who are doing the right thing, but they all get tarred by the dodgy operators. That is one of the reasons the work in Queensland was so successful. That is highly supported by the business lobby and industry. We will be releasing the terms of reference for an

inquiry into labour hire and insecure work, because we need to understand the full extent of the problem and the strategies that can be put in place to address it. Worker exploitation cannot be tolerated.

Sham labour hire arrangements are often used by employers who engage staff through third-party contractors to avoid legal responsibilities. In many of those cases, employees miss out on basic rights such as minimum wages, penalties, loadings, overtime allowances and leave. Internationally it is often called agency work and involves a triangular work arrangement in which an intermediary - the work or labour hire agency - supplies workers to a company for a certain period of time while maintaining an ongoing relationship with the parties throughout the period. It is not illegitimate and, in some cases, can be used very effectively and appropriately. However, we are seeing that in many cases now it is being used to undercut workers' conditions and therefore it is illegal. We need to understand the scope of the problem.

Queensland businesses were very concerned about it and Queensland workers were very concerned about it. They brought in the Labour Hire Licensing Act off the back of their review, which was introduced in response to the overwhelming evidence of exploitation. We will be moving that when we come back next time.

The other issue that gets picked up a bit is wage theft. We have a particular interest in that. Wage theft refers to the unlawful underpayment of an employee's remuneration by employers. It can take a variety of forms, including but not limited to underpaying wages, penalty rates, superannuation, overtime, commissions, entitlements such as sick leave, annual leave or carers leave, termination payments, allowances, requiring workers to repay money earned or making unauthorised deductions from employee pay.

We will be watching very carefully the work of the federal minister, Christian Porter, into wage theft. We do not want to duplicate work that might be being picked up there. If members opposite want to learn a little bit more about wage theft and the scope of it in Australia I suggest they have a look at the McKell Institute paper titled *Ending Wage Theft*, which will give them a good picture about what is happening nationally.

I want to spend some time talking about jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships. We want to share our positive plans for jobs. We want to hear from Tasmanians and that is why we are having those jobs forums around the state. Our unemployment rate is still the third worst in the country. The Government made that promise about having the lowest unemployment rate by 2022. That is not going to be met, clearly, at this rate, but it is in underemployment where we are also really failing. At 11.2 per cent, our underemployment is not only the worst in the country, it is the worst it has ever been in Tasmania, and it is the worst it has ever been in any state or territory. Over 70 per cent of the new jobs that have been created since 2014 have been part time. There are 46 100 Tasmanians either unemployed, or needing more hours. We need to get serious about tackling this problem.

In Launceston and my own area in the north-east - and we were talking about women before - 600 women have lost their jobs in the last six months. Youth unemployment is at 12.2 per cent. We have to do better.

One of Labor's solutions is to provide free TAFE courses in key industries, because one of the things we do find is we are talking to industry about their need for people, and we are talking to people about their need for jobs, and there is a significant disconnect between the two. The Liberal

Government has stubbornly refused to adopt the idea of free TAFE. We have identified areas of skill shortages - tourism, age and disability care, agriculture, building and construction.

The reality is that bigger governments in other states have embraced this policy, because it works. It makes a difference because one of the key barriers to accessing training is, of course, cost. People who have never really struggled might not understand that, but many families simply do not discuss options if there is money attached to them, because they cannot even imagine affording them. Free TAFE has made a phenomenal difference. New South Wales has been adopting it recently. Studies into the Victorian experience show that they address inequity in education access, and show that they deal with issues of low aspirations related to cost. In order to make those courses more accessible, we have to be committed to making that training more responsive to the needs of the industry, and that is about an investment in TAFE. That is about recognising TAFE.

I have very limited time, but we do need to recognise that since the federal department of Education started, there has been a 7 per cent decline in apprentices and traineeships in Tasmania. We have a significant problem in training. We have a significant problem in apprenticeship numbers. In government, we will be legislating the requirement for 20 per cent of the workforce on all government building infrastructure projects to be apprentices, and we would extend that to the civil construction sector.

Time expired.

[3.42 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Speaker, I begin by acknowledging the fantastic service to our state of Tasmania by former premier, Will Hodgman - a great servant of our party, a great servant of this House, but most importantly a fantastic servant of our state. He served with distinction. His leadership was phenomenal, and has been widely applauded. He led the Liberal Party to two strong state election victories. He has taken this state from the economic disaster of the Labor-Greens government to the economic powerhouse and the employment bonanza that we are enjoying today, with more people in work today than ever before in the state's history.

We have a lot more to do - of course we acknowledge that - but that turnaround in just six years has been phenomenal. It has led to more people living lives with more work, more income in the home and more confidence for the future. We should thank him and acknowledge him and his tremendous service - and indeed the sacrifice that has gone along with that. Tasmania is no longer in the shadows. We are a confident state and we are doing well as a state for the first time in decades.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the new Premier, Peter Gutwein, our new leader, and thank him for stepping up, and for his Premier's Address yesterday, which has been widely embraced by Tasmanians, and his fantastic maintenance of the direction that our state has been travelling in - but importantly as well, showing some new initiatives that are about helping us to maintain that momentum, and take the state forward in new and positive ways.

I thank the Premier for my promotion to the Finance portfolio, which I will use to advance our state, together with the portfolios that I continue in - Infrastructure and Transport, building infrastructure that our growing state needs, getting our roads and ports working, working through difficult issues with professionalism, and carefully taking advice to ensure that while the Labor

Party wants to be reckless and uncaring about some of these decisions, we are working through them in a way that is supportive of the state and keeping our state moving forward.

This is a strong and united majority Liberal Government. This is a Government that has turned around our state. This is a Government that has the commitment, discipline and drive to deliver our long-term plan to keep the economy strong and to build jobs. It is a strong and fresh team. We are as united as ever before and looking to the future to keep this state moving forward.

An impressive 21 000 jobs have been created since we came to office in March 2014. We have come out of the Labor-Greens recession. We have come out of Labor-Greens unemployment. We have come out of Labor-Greens net migration from the state looking for work in other states. The budget is supporting the creation of more jobs, and underpins about 10 000 jobs. The majority Liberal Government is driving job-creating infrastructure, with a record \$3.7 billion investment delivering outcomes right across the state in every region. An allocation of \$1.6 billion over four years is building the roads and bridges that ensure safe and efficient transport for freight, tourists and other road users.

I know the people opposite do not like to hear it, but the fact is that the infrastructure spending by our Government was 230 per cent higher in 2018-19 than it was in the last full year of the disastrous Labor-Greens years. Our economy is strong. We are getting on with the job of delivering that infrastructure, and we do not shy away from hard work.

Initial work on the \$576 million Bridgewater bridge is underway, with geotechnical specialists on site in February to inform the final design. This intergenerational project is the largest infrastructure commitment in Tasmania's history and we are making it a reality.

At the halfway mark of the \$500 million Midland Highway 10 Year Action Plan, we have completed 62 per cent of the work. A total of 16 projects, worth \$216 million, have now been completed since work commenced on the 10-year plan in 2014.

This year we will see completion of the \$92 million Perth Link Roads project. That is the largest single project in that action plan, and it is well ahead of schedule. We will also deliver on \$35 million in upgrades from St Peters Pass to south of Tunbridge. These two projects alone will bring the total value of investment on the Midland Highway to nearly \$343 million. That project, as I have indicated, is on budget and ahead of time.

On another major project, works are expected to start in coming weeks on the Tasman Highway Hobart Airport interchange upgrade - not a roundabout upgrade, but a proper interchange. We are also progressing the remainder of the South East Traffic Solution, which comprises more than \$160 million of improvements between the airport and Sorell.

Hobart City Deal projects are progressing, including the Southern Outlet transit lane, bus priority measures on Macquarie and Davey streets, and concept designs for park-and-ride facilities in the Kingborough area.

In my own electorate of Bass, we are working on the \$75 million Launceston and Tamar Valley Traffic Vision. We are working with local government on this. This year the Tamar River crossing feasibility study will go out for community consultation and geotechnical survey, and we are also progressing, vitally, the West Tamar corridor study, with a detailed analysis of heavy vehicle movements.

Construction commenced on the Mowbray Connector intersection in September last year, aimed at improving safety, and importantly, improving traffic flow on the East Tamar Highway. It is expected to be completed on time, on budget, by April.

With the growing economy and more people in work, there are more people on the road. We are installing a roundabout, without the need for traffic lights, to replace the current outdated turning arrangement at the intersection of East Tamar and Mowbray Link in my electorate. This will make turning much safer and easier for road users travelling in and out of Mowbray Link.

In the north-west, the Bass Highway - Wynyard to Marrawah Corridor Strategy provides a long-term plan for \$100 million in upgrades to this important freight and tourism route. This strategy outlines improvement opportunities and priorities as part of our commitment to upgrade road infrastructure right across the state. What a great partnership between the Tasmanian Government and the federal Morrison Coalition Government. It is delivering an evidence-based plan to address current and future transport needs, and the proposed projects including new overtaking lanes, junction upgrades and safety improvements.

Implementing these projects will improve road safety and increase productivity by providing a more efficient road corridor in Tasmania's north-west. This important study was done on time, and now the budget has in fact been accelerated by our friends in Canberra.

We are also progressing our \$66 million Visitor Economy Roads Package, and more than \$200 million in upgrades to our state roads network across Tasmania. Tasmanians know the majority Liberal Government delivers. They are seeing that happen, and while our political opponents just whinge and complain, deliberately avoiding taking actual positions on issues or providing an alternative, we will continue to deliver. Tasmanians know the majority Liberal Government gets on with the job. The facts are clear and the record speaks for itself. Tasmanians would be hard-pressed to describe a single project delivered by Labor, whereas we are delivering safer, better roads to improve the lives of Tasmanians and support our transport industry.

From the public sector to the private sector, we are seeing unprecedented activity. Our private sector has been a key driver of economic growth, with higher rates of investment and jobs growth across all industry sectors. An important component of this surge in confidence and activity is the fact that this Government is back in business to continue to grow and thrive by taking actions to cut red tape. The latest Tasmanian Red Tape Audit Report confirms that 84 per cent of the 125 identified red tape issues have now been resolved, equating to over 100 individual reforms. A second tranche of red tape reduction reforms will improve permit and approval processes underpinning residential and commercial developments from concept through to completion. It delivers a more streamlined and timely regulatory approval process to build affordable new homes and create jobs through business investment. Reducing the burden of unnecessary regulation means businesses are free to focus on what they ought to be doing - starting, growing and managing businesses, creating jobs and employing Tasmanians right around the state.

Some key reforms in the next set of efforts to be fixed include engaging with our utilities to reduce approval times and get essential services to new subdivisions and developments in a timely manner; working with local government to improve their turnaround times for approvals; streamlining the crown land consent process; moving certain low-risk work that currently requires a permit into self or private certification; and tightening up titles approvals to release developments to market faster. These faster times regarding power utilities and local government will be given the force of law so we can implement the change that is called for. These changes are part of a

broader range of reforms aimed at improving approval times and getting more projects to the market in a quicker timeframe. The reforms have been endorsed by a number of peak industry bodies, including the Property Council's Mr Brian Wightman, who said:

Simplifying planning and building approval processes and releasing more land for development will result in more homes being built, more jobs being created and, most importantly, more Tasmanians with a roof over their heads.

He also said:

We know the most effective way to deal with the housing crisis is to build our way out of it, but to do that we need to cut through red tape ...

Actions such as these boost business confidence and Tasmanian businesses are the most confident in the nation. When businesses are confident they invest and investment leads to more jobs. That is what we need to strive for, particularly as we are aware of global challenges that are going to have an effect on the Australian economy. We need to make sure Tasmania is as robust and our economy as resilient as we can make it.

The majority Liberal Government recognises the importance of public transport and continues to invest heavily in the delivery of our transport vision -

Ms O'Connor - Give us a break, you've neglected it for six years. That's right, you don't live in Hobart so you don't really care.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - Boosted bus services have been introduced right across the state delivering faster, more frequent and direct routes on refreshed networks that are recording increased patronage.

Ms O'Connor - You need to get out of Launceston.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, you have already made your contribution today. I ask that members allow the minister to make his contribution in peace please.

Mr FERGUSON - You can argue the numbers with Metro if you want, Ms O'Connor, but they are the facts. That is the record. Our comprehensive \$30 million plan to bust congestion includes a multipronged approach, such as priority bus lanes allowing buses to take some priority, park-and-ride services, more clearways and rapid response tow trucks, all things that could have been pursued by the previous government but were not, all things that could have been pursued by the Hobart City Council when they owned those roads but were not.

The Government provides \$101 million annually to subsidise public and school bus services and in January we expanded the eligibility for bus concession fares. Adult urban concession categories have been extended to travel in non-urban areas. That is good news for the advocates of public transport and means cheaper or free travel on public bus services for people living in rural and regional areas. Our actions to incentivise the take-up of public transport are delivering results. Patronage increased by 2.2 per cent in 2018-19, the sixth consecutive year of growth.

In other initiatives, the Government will continue to press ahead with our vision, which also includes funding to build 100 new buses which are being delivered at the rate of about one new bus every 12 days, proudly manufactured here in Tasmania, in Mr Jaensch's electorate.

Mr O'Byrne - That is a gross figure, isn't it? You are also retiring a number of buses as well.

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, it is a replacement project but it is a fantastic modernising of the fleet and the best part of that is it is employing Tasmanians in the process.

Other important transport initiatives are also progressing. I was particularly excited to visit Kettering again last week to see in person the brand new \$7 million Bruny Island ferry the *Nairana* in operation. Giggles from the member opposite who did nothing when he was the minister for Bruny Island ferries, but we now have a brand new \$7 million ferry plying the trade and deserving of everybody's support. While there I gave great news to the local community, who I consulted as well late last year, about multimillion-dollar upgrades to land infrastructure at both sides of the channel at both Kettering and Roberts Point. That is news I am sure Mr O'Byrne will welcome because it is good news for Bruny Island and our visitors and Tasmanians everywhere.

Ms Butler - You mucked them around though, didn't you?

Mr FERGUSON - I would not be surprised, Ms Butler, if you started running a narrative that the ferry terminal or the ferries or even the water itself is flammable.

We are listening to Tasmanians, we act in their best interests and, importantly, we are consulting with Tasmanians on the future of gaming in Tasmania. Tasmanians have had their say on this subject at the election. There was a very sharp contrast between the Government and the Opposition but nonetheless, the first round of public consultation into the future of gaming started last week before legislation is introduced into this House.

The legislation will deliver on our commitment to facilitate a sustainable gaming industry supporting freedom of choice but minimising harm, backing jobs and providing increased returns to fund government services. Our harm minimisation framework is already recognised nationally as best practice and that will not change. The policy will effectively double the funds available in the community through the Community Support Levy, increasing support for harm minimisation initiatives as well, and I invite Tasmanians to have their say.

In the Science and Technology portfolio the Government has been diligently working to enhance partnerships with industry, create opportunities for Tasmanian businesses to prosper in a rapidly changing economy, encourage innovation and support start-ups, provide better communications infrastructure and ensure that all Tasmanians can equally participate in an increasingly digital world. This really is about access and ensuring that Tasmanians are not left behind.

I will briefly touch on the small number of initiatives we have been progressing. These include the new workforce development plan for the Tasmanian ICT sector. We did this in close collaboration with industry and professional and educational sector stakeholders. It is not just a substantial road map forward to support our 7300 strong ICT workforce, which is already growing at around 8 per cent a year, but it will also serve as a coordinated approach to help get more Tasmanians into ICT to see their future in it and keep them here, or at least allow them the choice more and more. It will allow Tasmania to reap the full benefits of digital innovation and economic

growth into the future and, if we can, reduce the demand and need for migration to allow us to meet our capacity and capability needs.

We have also launched our new digital Ready for Daily Life program to increase the digital capabilities of vulnerable Tasmanians, people who might be doing okay in life, but are not comfortable with technology, or people might be struggling with life and on the margins of employment and may not be able to afford an NBN connection at home. We want them to be part of the digital economy and to feel comfortable with government services and banking services being delivered online. Our partnership with TasCOSS on this has been a positive, constructive process.

The Enterprise Innovation hubs in Hobart and Launceston have gone from strength to strength. I invite members to visit your local, if you have not already. The Launceston Hub has moved to the beautiful new Macquarie House location and a refit of the Hobart Hub is currently underway. The hubs are doing a really great job to rally Tasmania's start-up community. They have been supplemented with a new start-up accelerator program, backed by just under \$1 million of investment and support.

Our digital Ready for Business program continues to work directly with Tasmanian businesses to increase IT awareness and skills. We have just launched a number of exciting events for 2020 around the state. We are continuing to invest in telecommunications infrastructure. The Great Eastern Drive project is soon to deliver mobile coverage to 96 per cent of the highway between Buckland right through to Binalong Bay.

Construction of a total of 15 new mobile base stations is about to begin. We are doing this in partnership with Optus after a competitive tender. It is okay not to be an Optus customer. Other telcos, including Telstra and other big names, are invited to be part of putting their equipment on those towers. Our partnership with Optus will more than triple our investment of \$3.4 million to a total of over \$11 million. That is great news for the east coast; great news for visitors. It is great news for those regional communities. We are delivering and helping people to maintain their quality of life, for businesses to be productive and efficient. Indeed, one of the great spin-offs is greater safety, because more people will be able to use their phones in more locations.

One of the most exciting things to happen in Launceston was the signing of the Launceston City Deal in 2017. The deal is designed to make Launceston one of Australia's most liveable and innovative regional cities, with growing incomes and falling levels of disadvantage being the key goals. The City Deal was formally extended to 10 years in agreement with the federal government and councils. Currently, more than half a billion dollars is being directed to the City Deal, covering a combined 37 individual commitments across the three levels of government. The largest component is the university's Inveresk redevelopment. It is a transformation. This \$260 million redevelopment is now underway with the first sod of the library and student services building being turned in the last fortnight. The development application for the bridge across the North Esk River has been approved and will be completed by the end of next year. Construction of the entire campus is expected to be done by 2024.

That is not the only project that is moving. The Government has also provided the City of Launceston with \$5.8 million in funding for the City Heart Project under the City Deal. This project is bringing new life into Launceston's city centre, particularly the tired old Civic Square. It has had a breath of fresh air. I hope members will appreciate walking through the Quadrant Mall. The first public event at the new Civic Square, the Winter Night Market, attracted more than 4000 people and a range of local food vendors and local musicians. Life has returned to Civic Square.

The first projects under the Greater Launceston Transformation Project are also complete, including - again in this innovation space - a digital twin of the city, which includes 2D and 3D models, and smart technologies to support the industries of the future. In Launceston we are converting many of the city traffic lights to be smart-enabled so that they do a much better job at managing traffic flow and minimising unnecessary waiting at red lights when there is no countervailing traffic.

The first River Health Action Plan commitments have commenced with the launch of the Tamar Action Grants Program. This provides incentives in the catchment. More than 100 expressions of interest in the program have already been received. Last year the Australian Government committed \$30 million to develop the first phase of the Tasmanian Defence Innovation and Design Precinct at the Australian Maritime College, part of UTAS; \$15 million for a community hub in the northern suburbs; and \$10 million to assist with the renewal of Albert Hall. These are all very important projects that will revitalise Launceston and some of its assets. I pay a great tribute to the federal member for Bass, Bridget Archer, for securing many of these great commitments.

The Tasmanian Government is working strategically to drive greater investment into infrastructure to grow tourism economy. The regions are seeing the benefit of this investment with 162 new rooms opening in Launceston since 2018 and many more in the pipeline.

Errol Stewart's Silo Hotel, which opened in June 2018, brought 108 rooms with a four-and-a-half-star rating and arguably the most incredible views in Launceston. This was the first new hotel development to open in Launceston since 2010. Mr Stewart's confidence to further invest in Launceston was demonstrated by his completion of the C H Smith development, supported by the Tasmanian Government, which revitalised a long-standing eyesore - for my whole life it has been an eyesore - as well as his ongoing interest in more projects going forward.

Hotel Verge on Tamar Street is presently under construction and coming close to completion. That will bring a further 86 rooms to Launceston. There are a number of other projects in the pipeline which will continue Launceston's transformation and its attractiveness as an investment destination.

Today, after six years of very hard work and six years of committed unity and teamwork on this side of the House, Tasmania is in a far better position than it was. We had seen economic recession, the loss of 10 000 jobs and an unemployment rate up to 8.5 per cent in what could only be described as the state being in the doghouse.

I again pay tribute to Will Hodgman and his family for the amazing amount of devotion and dedication that family and that man individually provided for our state. We are all better off as a result. Does that mean mission complete? Of course, it does not. On Mr Hodgman's choice of resigning from this House and from the premiership, every member here and the people of our state extend our gratitude. We wish him well in his future, whatever that may hold. Let the history of this House record how much we appreciate his leadership and his service. I thank him as a friend, wish him well and congratulate the new Premier on his address and for the remarkable way in such a short time he has developed this new and exciting set of initiatives that continue our current plan, but make it better.

[4.08 p.m.]

Mr O'BYRNE (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to contribute to debate on the Premier's Address on the state of the state. In doing so, I acknowledge the political commitment, career and contribution to the state of former premier and former member for Franklin, Will Hodgman. Whilst it is arguably the Hodgman family business -

Ms Archer - It's an O'Byrne family business too.

Mr O'BYRNE - Brother and sister. We are the only generation in this House. I did not mean that in a derogatory way. His family, father, uncle, and grandfather devoted their lives to public service. It was not meant in the unfortunate way you may have taken it, Ms Archer. This is a family who has committed their life to public service over multiple generations and that should be acknowledged. It is one thing to be elected to your seat; another to be elected as leader of your party; and altogether another thing to be premier of the state.

Once the former premier made the decision to leave there was an outpouring of support from this House and the community. Whilst we are on the opposite sides of the aisle, as a fellow member for Franklin we shared an electorate, multiple community events and sat next to each other at a number of award ceremonies for primary and high school, community groups and volunteer fire brigades. We have spent a lot of time together. I wish him and his family all the very best in their post-political life.

As has been made clear by a number of speakers, the state of this House and the state of the state looks a very different picture to the one that former premier, Will Hodgman, left at the end of 2019. It was remarkable and clearly the decision for Mr Hodgman to resign was a shock to the Liberal Party and a shock to the Tasmanian community. If you listen to members of the Liberal Party and those commentators, it was a very clear and orderly transition of power - 'Nothing to see here and we are all one happy, united team' - but we know that is not the case. Within hours, movements were being made about who was going to line up and who was going to be in the position -

Ms Archer - This is your chance to talk about your economic policy and you're still going on about this.

Mr O'BYRNE - I can understand why the member for Clark is already interjecting because she was part of the dream team that missed out. She was a part of the team that put her name forward. There are lots of rumours. I am not going to go into the inner workings of the Liberal Party. That is a very ugly place and I do not want to reflect on it. I do not want to say that it is a happy place. I can understand why she is interjecting so early because she joined the dream team of the member who just resumed his seat, the minister for Infrastructure and Leader of Government Business in the House. They were a part of the dream team that wanted to take the state in one direction.

I can understand why she is sensitive because once the announcement was made it was very clear that had Mr Rockliff put his hand up for the role he would have taken on that position, no doubt with the support of the community and the people who voted Liberal and also the Liberal caucus. It was clear that when Mr Rockliff did not want to take on the role that we had the arm wrestle between the two members for Bass, the Treasurer and the minister for Infrastructure, both very different people and very clearly representing different agendas inside the Liberal Party. If you hear the commentators, they say the Liberal Party is a happy place and it was a polite process

and this is just a normal thing and part of a democracy. However, within about 48 hours, we had one team announced and then later that day another team announced. Then it was clear the phones were working hot and we know that Senator Abetz was playing a role telling various members who and who not to vote for.

The rhetoric coming from the Liberal Party about the resolution of this leadership could be nothing further from the truth. If it was two leadership aspirants having a clear discussion about the future of the state and agreeing on who should be the best to lead, we would not have had days and days of uncertainty for the state, with members who were overseas on holidays either having to come back or get on a plane and having the meeting at the OK Corral between the two on that Monday. Minutes before the meeting it was pretty clear that Mr Ferguson did not have the numbers and he withdrew. The remarkable thing is that the member for Franklin who has just been re-elected to this House did not have a say in it. That is a matter for the Liberal Party, but he was obviously going to be the member for Franklin, everyone knew it, but there was no process to allow him to vote for who he thought should be Premier. He has come into this House quite unscathed because clearly people were lining up and sides were being picked. To say they are united is gross hypocrisy.

Regarding the first contribution by the new Premier in his speech announcing he would take the Liberal Party forward, he said two contradictory things. First of all he said it is steady as you go, there are no surprises, nothing is going to change but we need to do more, and he outlined a number of portfolio areas where it is very clear the Government is manifestly failing. In his opening address he contradicted himself by saying there was no major change, everything is okay, but we need to do more. They are contradictory statements.

Since we have returned to the House we have seen member after member on that side repeat the mantra they have clearly been given in their speaking notes that they are disciplined, they are united, they are strong and they are committed, but we know that is not the case.

Mr Jaensch - And getting on with the job.

Mr O'BYRNE - Yes, that is the other speaking note. Thanks for finishing that sentence; it is good that you know them off by heart. We know from the Premier's Address it is a very different parliament post-Will Hodgman's leadership. We know they are very different government post the glue. It was very clear that Will Hodgman's popularity and leadership held this rabble together and we saw it within days when they had the parading photos at the Perth bypass and everyone with the hi-vis and the hats and then the -

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask that the member be given the opportunity to make his contribution with fewer interjections, please.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that support.

We saw the parade of Liberal politicians at the Perth bypass having photos taken to say they are a happy team within a couple of days. It is remarkable that an edited photo of that event appeared on Mr Ferguson's Facebook page -

Mr Street - Very insular and obsessed.

Ms O'BYRNE - We know how obsessed you are with Facebook. We know how you work. There was a little peaked cap of one of the people who was in the line of people having their photo taken and it was the Premier, yet he is cut out of Mr Ferguson's photo. It is remarkable.

Ms Archer - Come on, tell us your policy.

Mr O'BYRNE - We are talking about the Premier's Address, member for Clark, and we are very clearly of the view that you have papered over the cracks in your party. You are not united and you are not leading the state.

The state, on a whole range of measures, is failing. You are failing the people of Tasmania. It is a charade that you are a united team when we know that it went to the eleventh hour and the final minutes prior to the meeting of a ballot of who would lead the state and who would be premier, and Michael Ferguson blinked. He blinked not because he was doing the right thing for the state as he said. He was doing it because he fell short of the numbers.

The address by the new Premier is a moment in time for us to measure your effectiveness and your unity as a government, which we say you do not have. There is a whole range of issues and challenges facing the Tasmanian community but we know that you were so focused on your positions, on your leadership role and on who you were going to back to be Premier, and what deal you were doing to trade ministries off against each other, that you took your eye off the ball and the underbelly of the Liberal Party and the divisions, both ideologically and personality-wise, are now exposed on your side of the House. We are very clear about that.

In the Premier's Address, there are many issues raised by the Premier and Treasurer that we feel do not reflect the accurate state of the state and we do not feel that the Government is taking concern.

We raised today in question time a range of issues regarding the Revised Estimates Report and the laundering of money from GBEs to prop up what is a budget in a mess. There is no doubt that we are heading towards \$1.4 billion of net debt across the forward Estimates. That is horrific. The Revised Estimates Report released a few weeks ago showed a budget in tatters. It showed a massive blowout in debt of \$1.4 billion by 2022-23. It showed fiscal deficits of over \$1 billion across the budget and forward Estimates and, worst of all, it show no strategy to get us back on track. The fiscal deficit actually deteriorates in the final year of the forward Estimates.

When the Treasurer released the Budget in May last year he referred to a pathway out of debt and pointed to the fiscal balance. The fiscal balance at the time of the Budget in 2019-20 showed in the fourth year, 2022-23, a tiny fiscal surplus of \$3 million. The fig-leaf defence of the Treasurer at the time, when we raised flags - as the Treasury has raised flags with its long-term Fiscal Sustainability Report, and as a number of economists and commentators have raised flags about the state of the Budget - was to point to the surplus and the fiscal balance in the fourth year, 2022-23. However, in the Revised Estimates Report, the fiscal balance has now deteriorated to \$178 million in deficit.

The single point that the Treasurer referred to as the pathway out of debt is now no longer a pathway out of debt. Essentially there was no narrative in the state of the state speech; it was a list of things that were soon to be announced. No doubt they will be announced a number of times before this year's Budget. The spending spree that he has put on endangers the fiscal balance even further. The net debt is revised up to \$1.378 billion.

How did we get there? It is pretty clear. The Treasurer, when he was the shadow treasurer, referred to the Government as not having a savings problem, but having a spending problem. Well, he is essentially repeating the mantra that he proposed in opposition. When he talks about his surplus, he is referring to the net operating balance. According to his own Budget papers, the net operating balance reflects the receipt of revenue from the Australian Government for infrastructure purposes, but does not factor in the expenditure of these funds on infrastructure projects. That is where you look at the underlying net operating balance.

When you look at that underlying net operating balance, it is significantly in deficit. When you talk about a surplus, you give people of Tasmania the impression that you have a surplus that can be flexibly applied, and that you can respond either to needs in certain portfolio areas, you can respond to a demand in the community, or there is a policy initiative that the government of the day seeks as a priority. Take out the funds from the federal government, as these are one-off, not recurrent - one-off Australian Government funding for the Bridgewater bridge, Cradle Mountain, roads and rail, the Roads of Strategic Importance initiative, the Royal Hobart Hospital redevelopment, the Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program and the Urban Congestion Fund. We are not saying we are against these things; these are initiatives that need investment - but do not use the money from the feds to put on your books. You count it as income, but you do not count it as revenue, to claim you have a surplus - because you do not.

The underlying net operating balance, which is the point of flexibility for the state Budget, is in deficit this year to the tune of just under \$200 million, next year \$287 million, \$243 million in 2021-22, and \$214 million in 2022-23. It is a paper surplus that unravels as soon as you look at the projects and the ability you have to deliver any sort of budget flexibility to respond to any challenges.

The effect of this, the effect of using those figures, multiplies when you take into account the change of accounting standards, which a number of commentators have made clear in a number of articles in newspapers across the state recently. That is Accounting Standard AASB 15. What this does is recognise the national partnership payments from the federal government as revenue when they are actually spent, rather than when the money is received. The effect of this money is that what was received but not spent in 2018-19, which counted towards the surplus, is now being counted as revenue. That is a \$134.6 million revenue that was already counted last year towards the surplus of \$10 million.

The operating balance also counts transfers from government businesses as revenue, but does not count corresponding equity injections as expenditure. For example, the TT-Line transferred \$40 million to the Government this year to help pay for the new *Spirit* vessels, whenever they appear. This is revenue for the purposes of the operating balance. When the payment is due, the Government will transfer the \$40 million back, but it is not expenditure for the state Government to use. There is this pea and thimble trick by the Treasurer, moving money around, counting money that is not able to be used beyond the purposes for which it was defined by other parties - other parties being the federal government and the TT-Line.

Then we saw the raid on the Hydro - the Olympic-standard laundering of money from the Hydro. You have a Government that is talking big on renewable energy, talking big about pumped hydro projects, talking big about Marinus, talking big about energy security and keeping prices low. Then you have a dividend policy, which even the Statement of Corporate Intent from the Hydro has said that at the 105 mark, or at the 90 per cent mark, is potentially unsustainable. What the Treasurer has done at the beginning of the year is allocate 105. Consistent with that policy, within

a few months he has \$15 million extra. That 105 figure is historically very high for the Hydro. Within six months of setting a budget, what you have is the Treasurer going after the Hydro in a white-knuckle panic and getting an extra \$70 million from the Hydro's books, so effectively the Hydro has to borrow more money to pay the dividend. It is remarkable that the dividend policy has been red-flagged by the Hydro Board in its Statement of Corporate Intent.

If you go back a number of years, dividend policy is not even referred to in the Statement of Corporate Intent, but they have red-flagged it, and after they have red-flagged it the Treasurer has gone after \$70 million. It is an absolute disgrace. What that potentially means is that the Hydro takes on massive debt. They then have to cut costs. Will they cut staff? Will they defer maintenance? If there is an opportunity to contribute to pumped hydro and the Marinus project, will they have the capacity to do so, because the Treasurer, Premier, is treating them as an ATM to prop up his paper surplus.

If you take that \$70 million out, even under the best circumstances, Treasurer, you are \$60 million in the hole. This is the pea and thimble trick, and this is irresponsible government, but this is in the Liberal Party DNA. It started with Robin Gray, and it was referred to back then as the 'forestry laundry'. It was effectively doing the same thing - forcing the forestry in the 1980s to buy big dollars to prop up Robin Gray's budget, and it bankrupted the state.

Again, you saw with Tony Rundle and Ray Groom when they left - they pushed Tasmania into \$1 billion of debt, and it took Labor to pay off Robin Gray's debt, and it took Labor to pay off Tony Rundle's debt.

Ms O'Connor - Actually, it was Labor and the Greens. Why don't you try a little bit of honesty? It was the Labor-Greens accord that saw Robin Gray's debt being paid off.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair please.

Mr O'BYRNE - It was also the Liberal-Greens accord with Tony Rundle and Christine Milne that delved us into debt as well. It took Labor to pay that off under Jim Bacon.

In terms of budget management, Peter Gutwein's performance - he has blown the budget by \$200 million every year for the past four years. I understand you are upset -

Ms O'Connor - Sorry, what do you understand about me?

Mr O'BYRNE - I understand that you are not happy, so that is why you are not happy with us.

Ms O'Connor - I am pretty happy.

Mr O'BYRNE - That is a great moment, then. I am happy for you.

Peter Gutwein has blown the budget, on average, \$200 million every year. We are heading to \$1.4 billion in net debt.

Mr Tucker interjecting.

Mr O'BYRNE - Oh sorry, there he is, the member for Lyons. We know who you lined up with. We know Eric rang you up. We know Eric rang you up and told you who to vote for. We

know you had to get on the phone to other people. We know that is why you are there, and not on the front bench.

Members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - The member only has about eight-and-a-half minutes to go. We will let him continue his contribution.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you very much. I will turn to the economy. The economy is crucial to Tasmania. In terms of the state-of-the-state, we are the first to acknowledge that there are parts of the economy that are going well. We are an export-oriented economy. The terms of trade are in our favour. We have a number of industries that are up and about and are working hard. It is important that a state government not only pats itself on the back and acknowledges the successes, but the role of a state government is also to ensure that they look at the future, to cast themselves forward and look at the trends. If concerning changes or stats come through, they take action to respond and support the Tasmanian community.

Tasmania's unemployment rate is amongst the highest in Australia. Long-term unemployment rate is the second highest in Australia, almost 50 per cent above the national average of 1.2 per cent. We have the highest under-employment. Of the jobs that this Government claims they have created, 70 per cent are part time. That means there is a structural change occurring in the Tasmanian economy. Full-time jobs are able to provide a range of benefits for workers and families but when there is significant under-employment, when people cannot get access to full-time jobs, they cannot fully participate in the economy. There will always be a level of part-time, casual and contract jobs in the economy but when the predominant job creation is part time or casual, it is a significant concern for the Tasmanian economy and the Tasmanian people.

Tasmania has the highest under-employment rate in the country. Under-employment has never been higher. At any point in time, in any state or territory, almost 50 000 Tasmanians are out of work or need more work. Youth unemployment is well above the national average. Recent data from the Productivity Commission showed that more than half of young Tasmanians leave school without going to further training, university or a job.

The Treasurer refers to a number of economic measures as an indicator of the state's economic performance. Most concerning for us is that the national account figures released since Peter Gutwein became Premier, Tasmania experienced negative growth in state final demand for the first time in over three years. Twelve months ago the Treasurer identified the figure as a key indicator of the state's economic performance. Business investment is down 31 per cent in the past year. International merchandise exports are down 4.4 per cent. Building approvals are down 19.4 per cent; building work done is down 4.6 per cent; job vacancies are down 14.5 per cent; mineral exploration is down 32.7 per cent; and building activity is down for the year.

These are indicators of the health of our economy. What we do not need is a government that pats themselves on the back, cherry-picking the data for their own benefit. We ask the Government to respond to those very concerning and emerging trends in a whole range of areas.

This Government claims they are an infrastructure government. The infrastructure shadow will outline chapter and verse about their failure on infrastructure. By interjection the infrastructure minister said, 'What did Labor build in our last term?' We built the Brighton Hub, the Brighton

Bypass, the East Tamar Highway Bypass and the Kingston Bypass. We basically revitalised the rail. We built irrigation and undertook a whole range of infrastructure projects that we built.

The only thing you can point to is the Midland Highway, which was a plan announced in 2014 by me as infrastructure minister, then premier Lara Giddings, and the then infrastructure federal minister, Anthony Albanese. The only thing you actually have done is delivered on a Labor commitment. Well done, good work. Beyond that, where is the underground bus mall in Hobart, the bridge over the Tamar, the Hobart ferries, and the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet? You have had six years of dealing with infrastructure and you have little to point to apart from delivering on Labor commitments. On infrastructure, you should hold your head in shame.

In Health, the Royal Hobart Hospital is an absolute fiasco. You had six years and the best you can do is blame Labor from six years ago. It is pathetic. The children's ward is delayed.

I refer to Opposition Leader Rebecca White's fantastic speech in reply to the Premier's Address on the state of the state, which outlined Labor's primary focus for Tasmania's working people. We want to build the skills they need; we want to support industries, we want to attract new businesses in industry; attract small business and proactively work with the working people to improve their conditions. As I have said, underemployment is a key issue. One of the signature announcements is free TAFE, supporting government trainees and apprentices being employed on government jobs across the range of government expenditure.

Election donation reform: the hard work that Labor is doing with our industry advisory councils is delivering solid policy that we can present to the Tasmanian people at the next election. Our fantastic housing works policy was announced today, investing \$19.6 million in the first three years that will deliver 490 new homes and 550 new jobs. Another \$78 million will support community housing providers to make new homes available at reduced rent over a 10-year period. The construction of new homes will create 75 new apprenticeships with the training funded through Labor's free TAFE policy. In total it will put 1100 Tasmanians into new homes in the first three years.

These are things Tasmanians want from government. It is very clear from the state of the state address that we have a government that is divided; they have no clear vision for the state. The Premier acknowledged in his first speech that they failed on Health and Housing. They have no agenda for climate change to respond to the transitioning economy within which we work.

Only Labor under Rebecca White has a plan for the future that cares about people; that puts people at the centre of all the decisions that we make. The Treasurer is raiding the GBEs, propping up a budget that is covered in red ink. The fiscal position has collapsed. The net operating balance we are heading towards is a significant debt.

We know from Liberal governments of old that Labor will have to pay off the debt of the Liberal Party. We did it in the 1980s and in the 1990s. No doubt when this Treasurer, who is desperate to be the feel-good premier, finishes spending Tasmanian Labor will be asked to fix the budget mess created by Peter Gutwein and his divided team.

[4.37 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Madam Deputy Speaker, as tempting as it is, I am going to go straight into my speech. Suffice to say, I think that was one of your worst

contributions to this House. You are better than that. The fact that you have not got any material to work with probably explains why you are so focused on us and not your job as shadow treasurer.

The Tasmanian majority Liberal Government has made its mark in delivering on its strong plan for our island state. Over this past year we have delivered a number of commitments, which I will touch on. We are continuing to deliver, particularly across my portfolios in 2020 and beyond.

I want to make comment on the former premier. I spent time with him during our school years, at university, and in our profession and now throughout my political career so I know him pretty well as a friend and colleague. I recognise his significant contribution and particularly the contribution that he made as the 45th Premier of this state.

I served in parliament with Will Hodgman for almost 10 years as a local member for Denison, which we now call Clark, as opposition whip, as a shadow minister, as the first female Speaker of the House of Assembly, and now as a minister across a number of portfolios. Throughout this time, Will provided me with great support from both an electorate perspective and also my ministerial areas. Will delivered on the promises he gave to the Tasmanian community. He was a very committed politician and member of parliament. His leadership of the state, particularly his economic leadership, has once again made Tasmanians very proud of the place in which they live and has certainly made us the envy of those beyond our shores.

From an electorate perspective, the former premier was enormously helpful in helping me to secure the Government's commitment in delivering the community basketball facilities for Hobart's northern suburbs and this week we have seen the culmination of that with the announcement of the new NBL licence, a redevelopment of the Derwent Entertainment Centre and, very importantly, a major injection in new community basketball facilities. The adjoining development at Wilkinsons Point will see an economic injection of \$102 million into our state, leading to the creation of approximately 1200 jobs, which is an enormous boost for my electorate of Clark. I am very proud to have worked with the former premier and indeed now the current Premier to make all of this happen, along with my colleagues who are very committed to carrying out that good work.

Will and I also worked together on securing some funding during the last election for the upgrade of facilities at the historic North Hobart oval. I look forward to the opening of these great new facilities this week. These two I mention now because I probably will not get a chance at the end because time always goes by so quickly but I really wanted to mention there have been so many commitments over the past 10 years and when we came into government that was an opportunity to deliver on a lot of the policy work we developed as a team.

For most of the past year I have been privileged to hold the position of Minister for Racing where I was able to engage with some fantastic and passionate members of the racing industry, with the highlight being the completion of the \$12.5 million redevelopment of the Elwick track. Even though it was a few days after when I was no longer the minister, I was recently able to officially open that track and being in my electorate I was very happy to see that come to fruition.

Under my new ministerial arrangements I was sad to see Racing go, particularly in relation to the work that I did with the now Premier and Treasurer in relation on the point of consumption tax, but I am very happy to now take on the important portfolio of Heritage, which is an area that is a critical part of Tasmania's culture and one in which I have had a longstanding interest, particularly since my time as an alderman on the Hobart City Council between 2007 and 2010.

I want to briefly turn to the announcement that the Premier made in his address yesterday where he announced that from 2023 onwards we would invest \$1.5 million a year from the increased revenues from hotels and clubs that the future gaming policy delivers to support and revitalise our unique heritage places.

What is important for our Government is the protection of those things that are intrinsically Tasmanian and set us apart from the rest of the world. Our beautiful state's rich and diverse heritage is an integral part of our way of life and is treasured by many Tasmanian people, community members and admired by visitors. Conserving, protecting and reimagining our heritage-listed places is vital to ensuring their longevity and the future success of our tourism and hospitality industries. It is critical that we move to protect these assets and create vibrant experiences that respond to local and visitor expectations. We will also ensure that our Heritage Places Renewal Loan Scheme is available to the National Trust to continue their important work to conserve our built and natural heritage. They are a couple of the initiatives that have been announced that I look forward to working on moving forward.

Moving to my areas of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, as has been the case in previous years, the coming year will involve a heavy and important legislative agenda, as evidenced by bills that I tabled yesterday in the parliament. A number of my reforms that are being progressed are aimed at protecting our most vulnerable, focusing on victims, community safety and holding the most serious offenders to account. That is important.

Community safety is a core priority for me as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and our Government will always stand up for the safety of our community, for victims and our most vulnerable. Yesterday I introduced a number of pieces of legislation aimed at protecting victims and ensuring offenders are dealt with in a manner consistent with community expectations. I know the bills have been tabled so I am just going to address these issues generally rather than the bills themselves or referring to any clauses therein.

The legislation I tabled included addressing one-punch or coward's-punch incidents, sending a strong message that these cowardly acts of violence will not be tolerated. One-punch incidents have been the focus of national attention as a result of a number of highly publicised incidents, campaigns in relation to alcohol-fuelled violence and the introduction of reforms to reduce violence, including new offences across Australia.

There is no doubt that these senseless and sometimes fatal attacks are often unprovoked and indiscriminate but can leave lasting and devastating effects on the victim, their families and our community. While there are a number of existing offences in Tasmanian legislation that can capture one-punch incidents such as assault and grievous bodily harm, I consider that reform in one area is necessary to close a loophole that currently exists for offenders to avoid convictions for manslaughter when the incident results in the death of another. This avoidance of conviction can occur if they successfully argue that the death was an accident. Therefore it is vitally important that Tasmania adopts the best possible model. I make no apology for taking the time that has been necessary for my department to -

Ms O'Connor - You people should learn to stop using that terrible phrase about not making an apology about anything. It makes you sound like children.

Ms ARCHER - Well, I do not make any apology for taking the necessary time to come into this House to introduce law reform that is well and thoroughly considered and is the result of

consultation with legal stakeholders and the public. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that phrase when that is what I mean.

Ms O'Connor - It is constantly used and is a sign of your arrogance as a government.

Ms ARCHER - Ms O'Connor, I am not being arrogant.

Ms O'Connor - We heard it three times in question time this morning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms ARCHER - I am not being arrogant when I say that as the Attorney-General I do not make any apology for taking the time necessary to come into this place with good law reform.

As our record demonstrates, this year the Government will again progress meaningful legislative reform to protect and support victims. In particular I refer to the amendments that I have now tabled to section 194K of the Evidence Act amongst others. This is an area of significant public interest which relates to the victims of rape and sexual offences and their rights to tell their stories if they wish. All states and territories have laws and defences to varying degrees in relation to the publication of stories, including Tasmania, that place restrictions on identifying perpetrators of certain sexual crimes.

However, as I have said on numerous occasions, I am conscious that some issues have been raised by our current law in Tasmania and similarly in the Northern Territory. We as a government have been progressing this important work with comprehensive consultation undertaken on the issues and then the draft bill. Through my department I welcomed contributions to this consultation by victims' groups, non-government organisations, members of the legal sector, the media and, of course, victims themselves. I have met with a lot of victims myself, legal stakeholders and organisations and the media.

As I said, I will not go into the details of the bill given it has been tabled but I want to make it very clear that there are safeguards in the bill to ensure it provides appropriate protection for victims who do not wish to be identified or who are unable to provide consent due to a mental impairment or being under the age of 18. The bill will make that very clear and will also introduce an offence for the breach of prohibition.

I have also introduced a bill to update the language used in a number of sexual crimes. This has been necessary because Tasmania has some of the most advanced and nuanced criminal laws in Australia, especially in respect of charging child sex abusers. However, whilst these crimes may be technically advanced, their terminology is not, and it is for this reason that these crimes will be amended to reflect the predatory and exploitative nature of the offending.

Our reforms are the result of a thorough review of Tasmania's sexual crimes and extensive analysis and consultation, as I have previously committed to doing. The comprehensive reforms demonstrate why changes to the Criminal Code must never be done on an ad hoc basis by the parliament but require careful consideration to ensure the integrity of the Criminal Code is preserved and that other criminal laws are not adversely impacted or there are no unintended consequences. The bill deals with a number of different sexual crimes and by doing that extensive work we have been able to deal with a whole range of naming of offences, not just one that has been raised by some in the media and our opponents.

Dangerous criminal declarations is another priority law and order reform project and I will be introducing laws that inform this area. A bill will soon be tabled in parliament which will ensure dangerous offenders can be detained in prison for the protection of the community even after their sentence expires. We understand the system requires changes to best meet the expectations of the community. Currently, a dangerous criminal declaration can only be made by the same judge who sentenced the offender, which clearly places an unnecessary obstacle in the way of having an offender declared a dangerous criminal or coming off that declaration or having it discharged. If the sentencing judge retires or dies there is currently no ability for a declaration. This has been criticised in cases before the Supreme Court and our reform will address this.

The reform will also introduce a second-tier declaration for dangerous criminals that will allow certain offenders such as repeat sex offenders or serious family violence offenders to be subject to intensive court-ordered monitoring post-release. This could include electronic monitoring and other forms of supervision to ensure these offenders do not reoffend. This is delivering on an election commitment and a lot of work has gone into ensuring that the reform strikes the right balance as well.

Turning to my Corrections portfolio, our Government is committed to strongly investing in our state's prison system through significantly increasing numbers of correctional officers and new and upgraded prison infrastructure. We have made an unprecedented investment in new correctional officers. Currently there are 40 new recruits undertaking intensive training in readiness for their graduation in April. That is the highest number of recruits since my time certainly as minister that we have had completing that course. I hope they all manage to complete it and there is no reason why any of them cannot.

Last month I was also glad to announce that applications were open for the next round of Tasmanian Prison Service recruits, so while we are training one group we are advertising for the next lot of recruits so it is a fairly intensive recruitment campaign we are conducting, so much so that these two rounds of recruitment will mean that by the end of this year almost 200 new correctional officers will have been employed since May 2016. That is a strong commitment, particularly given Labor at the last election did not offer, did not have a policy and did not commit to one additional correctional officer, but they have the gall to criticise this issue consistently.

Our major prison recruitment increase clearly demonstrates our strong commitment to also providing a safe and secure environment for staff and prisoners because increasing the level of correctional officers available will achieve that. While mentioning our major recruitment drive which is continuing, I acknowledge and thank the hard work and dedication of our current staff and welcome our new recruits. I am highly appreciative of the work undertaken by staff within our corrections system both at the prison and in Community Corrections as well. Particularly at the prison, their job is one of the toughest that exist and they deserve our deep gratitude for the job they do and the role they play in community safety and safety at the prison.

This is one of the reasons for mandatory minimum sentencing for serious assaults on frontline workers. They deserve that and it is a pity that until this very recent session late last year it did not manage to get through the House but it has now. I plead with the other place to seriously consider the bill that will come before them.

Tasmanian Prison Service staff as well as those in Community Corrections work hard every day to rehabilitate offenders and help them get their lives back on track so they can become productive law-abiding members of our community who no longer pose a threat. I note that the

occasion of Corrections Day is an initiative of the Corrective Services Administrators Council that was recently used to recognise corrections staff. Long-service medals, national medals and director of prisons awards were presented at Corrections Day events to many members of staff by the Director of Prisons. I congratulate those who were recognised and thank all the staff for their dedication, commitment and service to not only the role they carry out but their service to Tasmania.

The ongoing commitment to staff in our Corrections system is in conjunction with our strong plan to invest \$350 million to meet future prison capacity and upgrade existing facilities. This is for the benefit of staff, prisoners and visitors. The prison infrastructure is ageing and we have taken on that challenge. I acknowledge that some members of the community do not take too kindly to a lot of money being spent on prisoners but I truly believe that you have to have the right conditions if you are to successfully rehabilitate offenders and ensure they reintegrate back into our community and give them every opportunity to no longer pose a threat to our community. I would much prefer that they live law-abiding and productive lives as working members of our community engaged in their communities and connected with their families than see them in our prison system.

Our \$350 million commitment to infrastructure includes \$270 million for the northern regional prison and a new southern remand centre adjacent to the Risdon Prison complex. The new southern remand centre is currently under construction. Hansen Yuncken was announced as the managing contractor for the project just before Christmas. Hansen Yuncken has a proven track record in building Tasmanian infrastructure and has been operating in the state since 1937, making them the ideal contractor to oversee construction of the \$70 million, 140-bed facility. Early work for the project, including fencing, temporary roadworks and levelling of the site were completed by another Tasmanian company, Hazell Bros. I thank them for their tremendous work on the project and staying on budget and on time.

With completion of the entire facility expected by the end of 2021, and I must note, with input into its design by staff, the southern remand centre will significantly increase the capacity of Tasmania's prison system and also provide better conditions for remandees, allowing better separation from the general prison population.

That is essential because remandees have not been convicted. They have not yet been sentenced and they have different needs within a prison environment. For example, they need access to lawyers and to visitors. There can be quite a bit of demand on the visitor and other facilities, so having a separate standalone remand centre on the Risdon site will be a welcome addition. It will relieve pressure on the main prison system and the Hobart Reception Centre, which is the centre right next to the Magistrates Court in Hobart.

More than 130 jobs are expected to be created during the construction of the southern remand centre and 50 ongoing jobs created once it is fully operational. Hence the reason for our continuing recruitment of correctional officers.

As members are aware, the Government has made a commitment to building a new northern regional prison. As members know, land at Westbury on Birralea Road and adjacent to the industrial precinct was selected as the preferred site - and it is the preferred site only. While the northern regional prison is a key project for our Government and expected to bring substantial benefits in new jobs to the region, I can again assure the community that the Government values and is considering all feedback on the proposed site, particularly from residents of Westbury and businesses operating in the vicinity in the industrial precinct. Significant community consultation on the preferred site has been undertaken with the Westbury community and stakeholders, including

community drop-in sessions, local business visits, my own ministerial one-on-one meetings with residents, group meetings and public meetings. The Premier personally visited Westbury with me in early February to meet with some members of the local community and walking through the street we met people as well.

An independent social and economic impact study is underway. I consider that the results of this are necessary to consider the full social and economic impact on not only those in Westbury but the region. It needs to be considered, not only for those close but also in the region. It includes a community consultation process comprising a mail-out survey across the Meander Valley local government area and a phone survey concentrating on the 7303 postcode for those closest. Phone surveys are always a sample size. The mail-out survey will capture those residents who wish to have their say but who have not yet had their say in any way, shape or form. I encourage all members of the community to complete the survey. If they do not receive one, request one. We are happy to ensure that SGS Economics gets one to them. The phone survey was added as a result of my direct consultation with community members in December. It was suggested by members of the community that it be conducted. That was added to the overall way in which the social and economic impact study would be carried out.

I thank everyone who participated in all these different forms of consultation for their interest and for their level of engagement. I know it is a difficult issue for some. It is certainly not an easy issue either for us as a government. As a government, and I as the minister, we have committed to releasing the social and economic impact study once completed. It is important that this work be fully completed but it is important that it be completed as soon as possible and not be distracted. The mail-out survey is being conducted this month. I expect that the report will be able to be made public in April.

The northern regional prison and other significant prison infrastructure projects will provide modern facilities for staff and inmates. Both infrastructure projects will enhance rehabilitation options and address future prison capacity. As I said, this is part of our plan to fix the ageing infrastructure. There was under-expenditure by the former government on our prison system; it cannot have no money spent on it at all. The simple fact is prison populations around the country have increased. Tasmania is not immune to this trend but it is our Government that is prepared to put this significant investment into our infrastructure in the order of \$350 million and also a significant recruitment plan to deal with resourcing of staff.

How much time do I have?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Twelve seconds.

Ms ARCHER - Twelve seconds. I have not left enough time for Building and Construction. We have a very good story to tell about Building and Construction and about my Arts portfolio. I will try to come in on the adjournment to finish off. I was going a little slowly. We have a really good story to tell in relation to our building data that is releasing. We are the fastest growing economy in Australia.

I am very proud to be the Arts minister in Tasmania, delivering on many screen commitments. We have had a lot of success in our screen industry. We have a lot of success in our cultural and creative industries as well.

Time expired.

[5.08 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Mr Deputy Speaker, as you can understand, I have a few items to cover having a number of portfolios. I will start off with what will probably be one of the more contentious ones this year. That would be forestry.

We have seen a fair bit of action in this area over the summer break. We have seen protests, the workplace standards issue, people up trees, people locked on to excavators and going back to Ta Ann for another round, trying to drive their business into bankruptcy. Once again, we have seen the Greens move to what seems to be a change in their policy, shifting their goal posts from years ago. The Greens only spoke about old growth forests and then they moved onto high conservation value. Now they are talking high carbon value and indeed every single tree. It seems like that is where the goal posts are shifted now. Carbon rich for them means pretty much every single tree. They are not ashamed of it but are calling for an end to all native forestry. They are not talking about a moratorium or a momentary pause; they are not talking about a transition or anything. It is simply an end to all native forestry.

In their quest to destroy the Tasmanian timber industry, the Greens ignore the fact that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change actually states that a well-managed native forestry is part of the solution to climate change, and that our foresters do a good job in regenerating forest. Indeed, that is self-evident, because we have seen some of those regenerated forests actually qualify for World Heritage status. That is how good a job our foresters of the past have done.

The Greens need to drop the act and be truthful to Tasmanians and admit they are coming after the whole industry and, indeed, after regional jobs. We heard Ms O'Connor, the member for Clark, in her state of the state speech, talk a lot about what the Greens are against. It is quite easy for them to talk about what they are against, because in fact they are actually not for a lot of things. Indeed, when they do express support for any industry, you only have to wait a number of years and, lo and behold, they will back the industry into a corner and call for its shutdown.

We have seen that with forestry, we have seen that with dams, we have seen that with plantations, and so on. The Greens talk a lot - and, indeed, Ms O'Connor talked a lot - about what the Greens are against. In fact, their entire history is based around the things that they have tried to stop. It started with dams, then pulp mills, and pretty much any major development in the state - the wind farms, plantations, mines. I think they called wind farms 'bird blenders' in the past. They obviously tried to stop the mining industry, but it is forestry that really is their reason for existence.

The goalposts have shifted, as I have said. Indeed, as the Leader of the Labor Party talked about, they are against everything. They are holding Tasmania back. The question we all need to ask is: what is next? What is the next industry they will come after? We know the Greens have already mounted a case to shut down the salmon industry, but what is next? If the salmon industry is shut down, what would they go after next? They have to have something to go after because that is their history. What would it be? Would it be the dairy industry? Would it be the sheep industry? What would it be?

The Greens will not admit that we have an amazing carbon story in Tasmania. We were net zero in 2016 - one of the first jurisdictions in the world to be net zero for carbon emissions. That is something we should be proud of. The Greens should be talking about it to their global friends. The rest of the world should be coming to Tasmania to see how a First World economy can manage to be net zero. We have 13 times fewer emissions per capita than the rest of Australia. This is a

good story. Indeed, if the rest of the world was performing as well as Tasmania, then we would not have climate change.

This has happened not because of the Greens. I would argue this has happened in spite of the Greens. A lot of the infrastructure and the policies that have been put in place that have led us to be net zero carbon, or very close to it - we might be just a bit above at the moment, but very much closer than most of the other jurisdictions in the world - most of the things that have been put in place to lead us to this point have been opposed by the Greens.

The Greens wanted to stop hydro developments. Instead, there is the famous quote from Bob Brown wanting to build a coal-fired power station in the Fingal Valley. Where is Bob Brown on that one nowadays? They also wanted to stop plantation developments. We know that the Greens are saying, 'Okay, you need to end all native forestry because plantations are the solution', and yet they have stood against plantation developments. Every time that they can support something, it is only temporary, until they turn around and say it needs to be shut down.

They wanted to stop wind farms, too - so-called bird blenders. They want to stop well-managed native timbers replacing steel, plastic and concrete. The Leader of the Greens comes into this place and talks about all of the negatives with forestry. They talk about how when forests are logged, it is almost like the carbon in those forests immediately evaporates into the atmosphere. That is not the case. There is a good story to tell with well-managed native forestry, because those timber products lock up carbon for a very long time - for as long as that furniture is still being used, for as long as that flooring is still being used.

The Greens do not talk about the other side of the equation. It is about what does that timber replace? We know that once you cut down a tree in a well-managed forest, trees grow in its place, again locking up carbon. The other point is what does that product replace? If you use a timber floor, you are not using tiles, you are not using carpets and glues, you are not using steel and so on. Framing timber is a good product. If you replace framing timber with steel, that is bad for the environment. You are better off using a renewable product like timber, rather than plastics, steel or concrete. That is a very good story for us to be telling. Yet it is almost like the Greens are pro-petrochemical, because they do not want to see our native timbers being used for high-value products.

I will talk about the Greens for a little bit longer. It really came to a crunch when the Greens opposed the harvesting of 60 trees in the Tarkine. Sixty trees. No, I am not talking about 60 hectares of forest. I am not talking about 60 square kilometres. I am literally talking about 60 trees. This is again the absolute changing of the goalposts. For years and years, the Greens were arguing that low-volume, higher-value timber processing was the key to the timber industry. That is where the industry should transition to. There are numerous examples. There is a letter from Bob Brown and Christine Milne as part of the Forest Agreement process. The letter was to Bill Kelty, who was running part of that process, and in their point 3 they say a rapid phase-out of logging in other native forest be implemented, except for agreed areas to be set aside for sustainable selective logging of high-quality specialty timbers. That was in 2011. Fast-forward nine years and it is the end of the earth. Carbon rich, blah, blah, blah. Absolutely backflipping on where they were before.

The Greens' forest policy from 2010 stated, when reflecting on specialty timbers, that adoption of single-stem harvesting in specialty timber zones preserves the carbon-carrying capacity of mature native forest. They are not saying that now. They are saying it needs to end, and it needs to end

right now, otherwise it is a climate disaster and a crime against future generations. That is the language they use now, but in the past, single-stem harvesting was the solution, especially for high-value specialty timbers.

Tasmania's specialty timbers industry and distinctive high-value finished products should be icons of the Tasmanian timber industry. Instead, we have Ms O'Connor saying things like the Tarkine is being logged, apparently so some luxury building in Hobart can have blackheart sassafras on its ceiling. That is a complete turnaround. We should be proud of products like blackheart sassafras. I made a bedhead out of blackheart sassafras, but I could not do that now because you cannot get it. When there is this huge opportunity for Britton Timbers to massively value-add 60 logs, that is the end of the world.

They go on to say that specialty timbers have evolved to regenerate without catastrophic disturbances such as fire, and do so more effectively following small-scale disturbance on the forest floor. Well, that one has been thrown out now. In 2010, they said the Greens have been long-term supporters of Tasmania's specialty timber sector - a sector which is underpinned by traditional skills, innovation and design to produce quality products like wooden boats, furniture and craft, products that set Tasmania apart as unique and inspire respect from the island's native timbers. It is important to be able to hold a \$4000 guitar to sit on a \$7000 table. I wonder what would happen if some of those 60 logs were actually being processed for someone like Harvey Norman, for example. Would the Greens supporters be chaining themselves to that table and calling for it to stop?

It is not only them. In support for the Greens' 2010 policy, Vica Bayley stated that the Wilderness Society supports small-scale, high-value, low-volume logging of native forest for specialty craft timbers and so on, but the bulk of native forest logging needs to be rapidly shifted to the existing plantation base. I wonder where they are on that one now. It seems like all these environmental groups are now calling for an absolute end to all native forestry. No if, no buts.

Another report from the Wilderness Society, Greenpeace, Australian Conservation Foundation and most Tasmanian environmental groups in 2004 states that labour-intensive boat building, fine furniture and craft-based industries use distinct, relatively tiny volumes of special species timbers and employ approximately 650 people. Further industry development access to specially managed forests will see this industry grow. Fast forward years down the track and now they want to shut it all down.

Finally, an article in *The Examiner* from 14 August 2011 states that Bob Brown said:

'The Greens have always wanted to provide for specialty timbers for craft work, furnishings, the things Tasmania are so famous for and proud of, in an ongoing forest industry,' he said.

'If the Libs find fault with that, crikey, is there anything they can agree too?'

The irony of those comments is outstanding considering all the rhetoric and the moves from the Greens movement to shut down native forestry and all the comment demonising Britton Timbers which has headed way down that path of value-adding that are rotary peeling these logs now. It is not just sawlogs. When you cut up a sawlog roughly half of that log becomes by-product and is no doubt chipped or used in some other lower-grade products, so you lose half the log. When you rotary peel, your recovery is extraordinary yet you are not allowed to do that anymore. It looks like you cannot touch those sorts of timbers now and that is outrageous. That is exactly what Tasmania

should be noted for; blackheart sassafras is a beautiful product and yet the Greens want to shut it all down.

Mr Barnett is no doubt going to be happy with the Greens' approach because he has been spoiling for a fight for a number of years over the forest industry. It looks like the Greens are now going to step up to the plate and have a swing as well. The only thing that will do is damage the timber industry. I can understand why the Greens want to do that because they need to have a campaign. They have to have something to talk about. It seems from Ms O'Connor's speech today they are going back to their bread and butter, which is forestry. They want to drive back their members with forestry and no doubt so does the Wilderness Society. We have seen only a few months ago, last December, where a group of Wilderness Society life members, led by former Greens leader, Bob Brown, were calling for an independent review of the conservation group after it recorded a \$1.7 million deficit last financial year, forcing it to sack campaign and other staff.

The Wilderness Society is in significant financial trouble. In calling for the review, the organisation has obviously hit a rope, Bob Brown said, and there has never been a time when the Wilderness Society was more needed to be firing on all four cylinders. There was talk the board would organise a meeting with its life members to discuss their concerns. He said the group's revenue was down about \$2 million last year, \$1.5 million which was due to a decline in bequests, and membership was down from 28 000 from more than 45 000 last decade. The numbers in the Wilderness Society are plummeting and that is why we see the Wilderness Society starting to support the campaigns of Bob Brown and his people out in the Tarkine, chaining themselves to businesses and gluing themselves to glass surfaces at Sustainable Timber Tasmania. There is obviously a campaign because they need the membership. Their membership is declining, they have a \$1.7 million deficit and they have to get back into it otherwise they are in danger of disappearing altogether.

They are walking away from their previous agreements. Some comments were made by the member for Clark, Ms O'Connor, during that period and as recently as Wednesday last week she was talking about plans to log Lapoinya. In the media release from Wednesday 26 February, Ms O'Connor states that going back to log Lapoinya in the north-west is 'like a dog revisiting its vomit'. We know that the Greens are very good with their turn of phrase and very good at evoking emotions. The only thing I would point to when it comes to a dog returning to its vomit is that it is actually Cassy O'Connor's vomit, because in signing up to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, this was an area put into the permanent production zone. This is an area that was approved by the Greens to be logged. Now it has rolled around that the time in the rotation is for this coupe to be logged, it is the dog returning to its vomit. Indeed, it is Ms O'Connor's vomit as well.

She goes on to say that 'this inflammatory move is about creating division for political gain', which is exactly what Ms O'Connor is attempting to do by creating division, by not standing by her previous agreement to stand by the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, the deal she signed up for, which has literally ended the disputes in the forest up until this point. Then she talks about the fact there is enough timber in the plantation estate to satisfy the market and logging places like Lapoinya is simply about politics. It is not. It is about an agreement that was struck between the industry and the environmental groups, putting in place areas that were acceptable to be logged, the permanent production zone. This is exactly what we are talking about here. Yet now, when there is politics in it, a few votes out the back of Wynyard, who is up there banging the drum? It is not about politics apparently. I call that rubbish.

We also have the long-term strategy of the Greens to talk about Tasmania's hard-won and fragile clean, green brand. In a press release of 10 February they were saying that logging in the Tarkine comes down to ideology and greed. What it comes down to is an agreement that was signed by the members of the Greens and all the conservation movement.

No doubt we will have a debate here about the so-called need to end all native forestry and the Greens will be talking about carbon storage and bushfires. They talk about it like it is rock-solid that any logging of any scale increases the risk of bushfires, shamelessly trying to come in on the back of the fire tragedies we saw on the mainland where huge swathes of Australia were burnt, millions of animals died, and people lost their lives. Trying to connect the dots between Tasmania's forest operations and those tragedies is shameful politicking. They say the science of it is rock-solid. I can say it is not.

I will move on to agriculture. First up I pay tribute to Peter and Una Rockliff for their contribution to the Tasmanian economy and the community. Recently we heard news that the Rockliffs have sold their remaining share in Petuna and that really marks the end of an era. Peter and Una are pioneers of the Tasmanian aquaculture industry and made an enormous contribution to the Tasmanian community, particularly on the west and north-west coast. Their vision and investment helped to create hundreds of jobs and contributed to what has become one of the state's most important industries that needs to grow and that we want to grow. The salmon industry is something we also should be proud of.

The purchaser of the remaining share was Sealord, which up to that point had owned half the business for a number of years. Sealord is made up of the Maori peoples of New Zealand in a joint venture or some sort of arrangement with a Japanese company. I am pleased that Sealord confirmed that they plan to significantly invest in the business. That is good news and will be good news for the north-west especially. It is good news because Sealord understands the business and the Tasmanian industry and we look forward to seeing what this new chapter holds. I would like to heap more praise on Peter and Una Rockliff for what they have done. It is magnificent.

I will talk briefly about the coronavirus. What we are seeing with the coronavirus is that basically overnight, the rock lobster and abalone industries were hit really hard. Their orders were cancelled overnight. We know from the SARS epidemic a few years ago that it took about 18 months for the industry to recover. Let us hope it is sooner than that, but more than likely it will not be. These industries rely on those markets.

There have been pushes in the past to diversify their markets. Again, that is something that we need to support the industry in achieving. If something like the coronavirus comes along and China stops buying these high value products, then you have a market that drops off the edge of a cliff. That is not sustainable for businesses. The rock lobster fishers and the abalone divers are hurting. Anything that we can do to help support them would be worthwhile. This is a momentary bump in the road. The industry has a sound future.

We would be interested in a bipartisan approach. The minister has done some good things already but in the coming months we may need to give the industry more support, especially lobbying our federal colleagues to help with income management. It is the seafood equivalent of a drought when the market completely stops like this. We will need income support similar to drought funding. That is something we should discuss and push with our federal colleagues.

I move on to the saleyard closure at Quoiba. We have seen a number of ups and downs in the meat industry. Despite the Liberals nothing-to-see-here approach, when it came to the closure of beef and cattle slaughter at the Devonport City Abattoir, I predicted that the saleyard was vulnerable. It is an entirely predictable outcome because of the lack of action over the Devonport Abattoir, which was shut down a little over a year ago.

What we see now is that if butchers go to the saleyards and buy stock, they cannot simply take it next door to be slaughtered as they could for years and years. The volumes through there have no doubt declined, but it was the abattoir that was a key driver of this. Centralising everything to Powranna will not solve problems. The cattle will be in the trucks a lot longer. People will not get to the sales.

With fewer sales, there is less market information. We do not know what the price of a cow is if the markets are few and far between. One of the essential parts of having a robust sale is that the market information is disclosed regularly. If everybody does private transactions with processors, the market information is not there for the public to see what the price is for them to judge. You get an offer from Greenham; you get an offer from Swift, but how does it stack up with what the market is saying at the moment? You do not have that market information.

Another thing is going to happen with Quoiba. Where is the pig industry at? The pig industry is on a precipice. Quoiba is on life support. A third major pig supplier-grower for Tasmania has gone out of business. He has retired. The pig processing at Quoiba is being propped up but only for a short period. I am not sure how long it will go on for. What will the Government do to make sure there is a service kill facility in the state?

Scottsdale Pork are working on an abattoir. What happens when that gets up? If the support for Quoiba disappears, then a lot of smaller pig producers may be in trouble. Shutting down Quoiba means that farmers will have to pay more to transport their stock. Also, sale days are an institution. It goes far beyond trading in livestock. Often the weekly sales are the only social contact many farmers have with each other. It is sad and we have seen the comments.

I welcome the proposal to build a saleyard at the Agriplex in Burnie but a better option would be to try to keep Quoiba open. I support the Cradle Coast Authority stepping in. They see the importance of it.

I will talk quickly about mining. I express my sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Cameron Goss who was killed at the accident at the Henty Gold Mine. Mr Barnett, Rosalie Woodruff and I were at the funeral. Cameron's family, his wife, Christine and Alysha and son Kaleb were grateful that all parties were there. That was well recognised by the community.

Henty had a good safety record. I had only ever heard good things about Henty. It is such a shame but these things do happen in the mining industry. Dion Alford, the manager, spoke at the funeral. He talked about how he would carry this death with him for the rest of his life. That is how serious it is. I would also like to recognise the huge efforts from the mining industry, the police and many others in retrieving Cameron. I talked briefly with the Pybar chairman Paul Rouse. He confirmed that Pybar are in here for the long haul. That was really good to hear.

We also heard recently about the ship loader in Burnie. We know from RT's that this is not new money to build the ship loader. We still have a problem in Burnie. I have been driving past Burnie quite a bit and three ships are waiting out at sea. That is because we have a huge boost in

cruise liners coming into Burnie because of the coronavirus. People are not going to Asia. That means it is more and more difficult for the ships wanting to load up timber or mineral products. The cruise ships take precedence. A ship starts to load but has to go out to sea to anchor when a cruise ship comes in. Then it goes back and fills a bit longer. Another cruise ship comes and they go back out. This is a big problem in the Burnie port. That is why we need some action in the Burnie port. We have not heard anything about what the Government is doing to expand the Burnie port or to put in place the Burnie port master plan.

The recent ABS mineral exploration data was another terrible result for Tasmania. Mineral exploration has now fallen for its eighth consecutive quarter. It fell 13.2 per cent for the quarter and 32.7 per cent for the year. Nationally, mineral exploration went up by 26 per cent and yet Tasmania went completely in the other direction and more. Mineral exploration is now half of what it was when the Liberals came to government in March 2014. This needs to be turned around. We know how important mineral exploration is so that mine operators know the amount of minerals they have in front of them and also so that new projects can get up. If there is no exploration, there will be no new projects. We really want to see exploration turn around.

Infrastructure has already been canvassed in question time over the last couple of days. I reiterate that the Government's record is extraordinarily bad. The Bridgewater bridge is definitely back to square one. We have this farcical situation where there is money going out the door for consultants. Infrastructure Tasmania says it is five to 10 years away. The Government says it is on track, which it is obviously not. They are paying \$600 000 to tell someone to tell the Government how to save money. I will tell you how you could have saved \$600 000 - by not putting on the consultant.

Michael Ferguson does have a trademark kiss of death. We have seen his handling of the hospital and the Health portfolio. In the words of Daryl Kerrigan from *The Castle*: 'We've got life imitating art'. When Daryl was out the back of his block and the fellow says, 'What's that? Is that fill? He goes, 'Yeah, is there anything in it? Old Daryl pulls out, the 'Yeah, nothing to worry about. Do you know anything about lead?' We are seeing that again in the hospital. Let us hope that this can be sorted out very quickly because that hospital is desperately needed. We have a situation now with coronavirus on our doorstep. The last thing we need is the hospital to be under capacity. It is imminent apparently but it has been imminent for a long time.

Talking of the kiss of the death, we have seen the new *Spirits* delayed again and again. Today we heard that they might end up docking in Geelong. We are very concerned about the cost benefit analysis. This is simply holding the Government to account. What is your due diligence? Will this be bad for Tasmania? From the comments that we are seeing on Facebook and so on there are a lot of people who think moving to Geelong would be a bad move and the benefits of being in Station Pier is that it is very good for the freight industry, tourists and caravanners and so on.

[5.39 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Primary Industries and Water) - Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to stand here as the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Minister for Energy, Minister for Resources and Minister for Veterans Affairs. I thank Tasmania's 46th Premier Peter Gutwein for the opportunity to continue serving as a member in his Cabinet. I have known the Premier for a long time. We both hail from the state's mighty north. I have no doubt that he will do a terrific job in this role in the months and years ahead.

First, I put on the record a wonderful tribute to the former premier, Will Hodgman. Will was committed to making Tasmania a better place and was a member in this place for nearly 18 years, leader of the State Liberal Party for 14 years, Leader of the Opposition for eight and Premier for six. He entered parliament in 2002, the same year I entered the Australian Senate. I was in there in February 2002. It was a tough time for Premier Hodgman, particularly early on as premier, and he inherited the worst economy in the country at the time, with people leaving in droves, business confidence down on the back of an economic recession, 10 000 jobs lost, but the confidence rebounded and the economy over time also grew. In fact, he has left the fastest-growing economy in Australia and it is a great credit to him.

ScoMo, the Prime Minister, who I have known for many years and have a very high regard for, called Tasmania the turnaround state under Will Hodgman's stewardship. He led us through that period from deficits back to surpluses and under Will's leadership investing more in health, education, essential services and infrastructure to help Tasmania grow. He will be remembered, in my view, as one of Tasmania's most successful premiers. I am proud to have served as a member of his team during that six-year period with Will. I wish him and his wife, Nicky and the children all the very best, as I said to him privately and I am saying publicly. I am happy to spend some more time with him fishing or doing some other things that he might enjoy doing. I wish him well for his future endeavours.

Before I share some of my thoughts and views on the Premier's Address - and I am very confident about that - I quickly pay a tribute to the late Cameron Goss. It has been referred to already by my shadow, Shane Broad, that we both attended the funeral and thanksgiving service for Cameron Goss yesterday along with Rosalie Woodruff and many hundreds of others, particularly from the west coast town of Queenstown where he was born and raised and loved and lived. He was a wonderful man and some wonderful, generous reflections on Cameron Goss's life were shared yesterday. It was an absolute honour to represent the Premier and the Government at that service.

He left his wife, Christine, and Alysha and Kaleb, his two children. His family and his wife's family and broader family were all there and so were many friends. It says so much about the west coast and how resilient, close and caring the community is. It says a lot about the mining and processing industry as well. We know that mining is inherently dangerous work. I make a point of recognising the incredible efforts put in during the initial search and eventual recovery of Cameron Goss from the mine.

Mrs Rylah - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT - I visited Henty Gold Mine three times in the last four weeks - and I hear a response from the member for Braddon behind me who was there on two of those three occasions. We visited Henty Gold just last week together for a bit of an update and to show our support and encouragement in any we could to those at Henty Gold and caught up with Dion Alford, the general manager there who spoke so well straight from his heart yesterday about Cameron Goss. He also thanked those who did so much during that very difficult time to recover Cameron.

I put on record my thanks to not just the mine management and owners but the police search and rescue, mines inspectorate and all the people who worked and assisted in this recovery. They should be given all of our thanks. On behalf of the Government and all of us here I say thank you. The whole mining industry should be included in that. There were mine teams from not just Tassie but all around Australia ready to assist with whatever they could do to support the team. Skilled

manufacturers on the north-west coast dropped everything to manufacture specialist equipment required to make the recovery effort a success.

I note that even during this extremely difficult time for the family, Christine, who I caught up a few weeks ago in Queenstown, was supportive of the mine continuing its work. I say thank you as well to her and the family. It means a lot. She wanted the work to go on knowing that there was a tragic accident and an unlikely event but they knew Mr Goss would have wanted that to occur. That was a message we shared. It was upfront and the community really appreciated that. It was great being down at the footy clubrooms yesterday afternoon having a drink with many of the friends, colleagues and family members of Cameron. They were very appreciative of that message of support.

Certainly mining is in the blood of the west coast and it is a critical element in its development and survival over the last 150-plus years and we will continue to stand with the industry in making it a key pillar of the west coast for another 100 years. As Minister for Resources and Minister for Energy, I am committed to doing so and will continue to support them. We will be standing also with Henty Gold. The Premier visited just a few weeks ago with myself, Joan Rylah and others and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them as they work their way through these difficult times and do whatever we can to support them continuing. I join with others in this place in sending our condolences to his wife, Christine, and the family at this difficult time.

Over the last six years we have demonstrated that we have been a disciplined and united, responsible Government. We have had sustained strong economic and jobs growth, over 20 000 jobs in fact, which is terrific. We have the commitment, focus and a drive to deliver a better future for Tasmania.

The Premier laid out yesterday a pathway for a growing economy, one that we can invest in the services that our community needs, whether it be health, education, infrastructure, or safety and security. A principle I have held all my life, including in federal parliament, is that you need a strong economy to reinvest those funds back into health, education and essential services. I have always believed that. John Howard was strong on that. You need a strong economy. The top priority must be growing our economy and more jobs and opportunity for Tasmanians young and old. It is really great the Premier outlined that plan yesterday and it has helped spread the benefits of that strong economy to even more Tasmanians. We have plans now with the major projects legislation. We are speeding up the approval process for energy, TasNetworks, water and sewerage and TasWater, additional support for tourism, and housing investment.

There are many initiatives that I am very proud of but I will focus on some of my portfolio areas, in particular Primary Industries and Water, and Energy, to start with and say how proud I am to be in this space. It is a world-class water resource, a world-class wind resource and agriculture is a priority in this state and we are proud of it. We are making the most of it. I was so proud yesterday, punching the air in fact, when I knew the Premier would be announcing a new renewable energy generation target of 200 per cent of our needs by 2040. It is exciting. This is historic. What was announced yesterday is a watershed event that will see Tasmania double its renewable energy production by 2040.

This is so exciting and, with our water and wind assets, we are making the most of it. We are grasping this opportunity with both hands and we are capitalising on this competitive advantage in the twenty-first century. There are very few jurisdictions that have any chance of doing this. We

are going to do it in Tasmania and we, as a majority Liberal government, are laying the foundations now for decades to come.

The Premier announced the design option for the Don irrigation scheme. I will talk more about that and the fact that water is liquid gold. You have heard me say that before but I will say it again because it is so exciting. That commitment is going forward jointly with the Australian Government.

I want to speak a little bit more about our world-class renewable energy generation and our credentials in that regard because it is all about low-cost, reliable clean energy. Guess what, it is not just about exporting our excess energy to the mainland; importantly, it is also about growing that opportunity here in Tasmania. This will attract investment. This will attract jobs and opportunity in Tasmania - low-cost, reliable, 100 per cent clean renewable energy.

We have what everybody else in Australia wants and needs; in fact what many in the world want and need. We are going to make the most of it, and we are doing that in so many different ways. We have just 2 per cent of Australia's land mass, about 12 per cent of Australia's rainfall, and up to 27 per cent of Australia's water and storage. Tasmania is Australia's leading renewable energy state - just 2 per cent overall in terms of energy production, but 25 per cent of renewable energy production for all of Australia, and we are on the up because we are targeting 100 per cent fully renewable by 2022.

We are on track, and we are now planning for 200 per cent of our current needs by 2040. This target will be detailed in the Renewable Energy Plan, which I will be releasing in April, and that will be setting out our clear objectives and actions to transform Tasmania into a national and global renewable energy powerhouse. As the rest of the world looks for cleaner renewable forms of energy in order to decarbonise their economies, Tasmania is on the cutting edge.

A few days ago, we released our final Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan. Hydrogen is the internet of energy. It is the next big thing. Renewable hydrogen is the internet of energy on steroids. Emerging demand for renewable hydrogen presents a significant opportunity for Tasmania to develop a hydrogen industry powered by Tasmanian renewable energy, creating jobs and further growing our economy and position as a global leader in renewable energy supply. We are on track. Renewable hydrogen offers the answer. We have a \$50 million package over the next 10 years to build that renewable hydrogen industry here. That is the largest package of support in Australia. It is happening here in Tasmania. We are going to make it happen under our Liberal Government.

We have support. All this aligns with the Australian Government's Australian Renewable Energy Agency support of \$70 million. It is consistent with the National Hydrogen Strategy, which was signed off by all the COAG energy ministers and the federal minister last December - a \$370 million package. We are acting in alignment with the Australian Government, our Coalition colleagues in Canberra. We are working shoulder to shoulder with them to create history and opportunity for future Tasmanians, and the future of our country. In Tasmania we can produce renewable hydrogen up to 15 per cent cheaper than from the mainland power grid, and up to 13 per cent lower than from dedicated off-grid renewable resources, thanks to our natural and established advantages, including our transmission infrastructure, significant water availability, access to deep-water ports, and of course pumped hydro, hydro itself and wind.

We are on track. Our Tasmanian Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan maps out our vision for Tasmania to be generating renewable hydrogen by 2022-24, and to be commercially exporting

hydrogen as a global exporter by 2030, and by 2025-27 to be exporting hydrogen to the globe. We have identified Bell Bay as the hydrogen hub, likewise Burnie as a hydrogen hub, and we know that there is opportunity, and jobs galore in the years and decades ahead.

All this is complementary to Marinus Link and Battery of the Nation, and our plans for each of those. We are working shoulder to shoulder with the federal government in terms of Marinus Link, and we know that will deliver 1400 jobs directly and indirectly. Together, Marinus Link and the associated pumped hydro and wind projects will deliver thousands of jobs, over \$7 billion into the economy during that period of construction, and it is an exciting time. It is all because we are backing our natural assets - a world-class wind, a world-class water resource - and we are making the most of it. We have three renewable energy zones - north-west coast, the north-east and the Central Highlands - and we will be seeing quite a bit of development in that space. We have had the top three sites in terms of pumped hydro sites being assessed - Lake Cethana, Lake Rowallan and Tribute - and up to \$30 million invested to make those assessments. They are progressing positively. We will have more to say about those and the assessments, and the feedback on that assessment, in the not too distant future.

We have a 'Tasmania first' energy policy, which we announced at the previous election, and we are implementing that. We still have one of the most generous electricity concession schemes in Australia, and we have been capping our regulated electricity prices to keep them down as low as possible, and we will continue to do that. We know that the cost of business, the cost of living, is critically important to all Tasmanians and that is why we stay focused. I am convinced that our best days are ahead of us as a state, and a new chapter of opportunity presents itself right here. We are creating history and creating those new opportunities.

In terms of Primary Industries and Water, I know I will need a little bit of time tomorrow to wrap up, but I do want to say that it is one of the most exciting opportunities and a great honour, because we have a long-term plan to build the farmgate value of agriculture at \$10 billion by 2050, and we are on track, with a 9 per cent increase at the last assessment. We are a state of two halves, and I want to acknowledge those drought-affected areas - particularly on the east coast, the south-east and the southern midlands. They have been doing it tough, it has been really hard, but we have responded earlier last year with a \$400 000 drought package, and we will continue to provide support to those areas in need.

I did want to say that we are very keen to develop younger people in agriculture. We have an Extension Accelerator pilot to help fast-track the development of young agricultural professionals. We also have a new charter for working on private farmland, and that is enhancing relations between our farmers and state utilities, and are complementing the TFGA's Living Next Door to a Farmer program, which we helped fund and support.

I am excited about the whole-of-government white paper Competitiveness of Tasmanian Agriculture for 2050, which is out for consultation at the moment, and will help ensure our agricultural industries remain globally competitive. I encourage feedback on that discussion paper, and look forward to finalising it later this year.

All of this is, of course, consistent with the Tasmanian brand. Pure, fresh, clean, natural - all those ingredients are part of our success. It is across not just my portfolios in terms of agriculture, seafood, fishing and renewable energy, but across so many parts of Tasmania. Yes, I am pleased and proud to be a minister for gourmet food, wine and beer and such things, but the Tasmanian brand is growing. On a trade mission last year, I had the opportunity to talk about those aspects of Tasmania, and they really appeal. People are loving it. They are getting on board, and that is

another reason you are seeing population growth in Tasmania, and another reason you are seeing the economy growing.

I see the Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade in the Chamber with me, and our trade strategy is all part of building on the Tassie brand and growing those opportunities, and that investment is really important. That trade strategy has been launched and is now being implemented. I wish the Deputy Premier all the best on his trade mission to North America in April.

In agriculture, we have so many good things to talk about in terms of dairy and red meat. In the few minutes available, I will touch on this and finish off tomorrow. The dairy industry is the largest contributor to farmgate value, with over \$400 million per annum. We have done a lot to support that, but it is near production records, and is now at 11 per cent and going up in terms of milk production across the country, on behalf of the nation. The Tassie dairy industry is going well and I look forward to being at the Dairy Tasmania event next week. We have done work in supporting them with a stock underpass program, the farm energy audit and capital grants program, and we continue to work shoulder to shoulder with the dairy sector. Likewise with red meat, they have had some tough times but the red meat industry is fundamentally in good shape again, worth over \$400 million to the economy, and thank you Leonie Hiscutt MLC for chairing the red meat working group and developing a long term strategy for the future. We are investing \$1 million to drive development of that red meat sector and providing another \$800 000 to help those small processors increase that Tasmanian base capacity. We know there is more work happening in that space. There has been a mention of Scottsdale Pork and the abattoir there that is on track in terms of that development.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Jayben Australia

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Speaker, I will be brief but I wanted to congratulate Jayben, a manufacturing plant and facility at Cooe. I mentioned them very briefly in my contribution today but I want to expand on that because last week I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of their new manufacturing facility at Cooe. The new premises, constructed at a cost of \$1.2 million, will now facilitate up to 30 additional FTEs as the company ramps up production capability. Jayben Australia manufacture a range of industrial and commercial vehicles and specialises in power train products and light to medium industrial plant and equipment. Mr Chris Johnson, Jayben's project manager, said:

It has been a 10 year journey for us so far so this is about leveraging that existing capability and product development and then growing it to build future product lines to drive future jobs and growth in the area.

I had the pleasure of meeting Chris and his father, Allan. I am sure both of them would be known to my colleagues in Braddon and I know they would be to Ms Dow because she and I went on a trip as a result of the Caterpillar closure and the centralisation of their manufacturing facility to Rayong in Thailand and Chris and Allan were outstanding contributors to that. It was great to get to know them and their passion for advanced manufacturing and what they do and to get a better

understanding through them and others on the trip of the enormous capability we have within Tasmania but in this case in the north-west coast region in terms of the skills we have and the passionate people in this area.

Jayben is a great example of an innovative advanced manufacturer who is developing niche world-class, state-of-the-art products. The latest product developed by the group, and this was on show in the new facility there, is the Scorpion Scaler, which is a remote-controlled robotic high wall scaling excavator designed predominantly for bench restoration of open-cut mines. Jayben's success has been built on the business's ability to respond to its customer needs, and it is a great example of this, and design and construct innovative products that meet their specific requirements. There is nowhere else in the world with respect to this piece of equipment. The alternative has been essentially people on the end of lines with crowbars. This is a machine now that actually scales down the open-cut mine and can be controlled from another room on top of the mine. It is amazing equipment. It blows your mind and it has been developed here in our wonderful state.

Their tailored product range supports global companies in Europe, USA and around Australia. Jayben's new facility was made possible by a \$430 000 investment from the federal government through the Regional Jobs Investment Program which is giving local industries the capacity to expand their businesses and their employment capabilities. Jayben also received \$15 000 from our Government under the advanced manufacturing innovation and growth voucher system to incorporate industry 4.0 into some of its product range and to develop a core capability within the business for the development and manufacture of industry 4.0 products. The advanced manufacturing market expansion program and the advanced manufacturing innovation and growth voucher system were introduced in 2018.

The jobs and investment outcomes already delivered through both those programs are further complemented by the activities of the businesses supported by the Caterpillar transition task force which I mentioned earlier. Combined, the programs and activities supported a net increase to almost \$42 million in annual turnover and more than 260 new Tasmanian manufacturing jobs over the last four years, so very well spent.

We are currently developing the next advanced manufacturing action plan and consultation with business and industry has already commenced to ensure that government actions and industry programs are moving forward to meet the current needs of industry. Like so many advanced manufacturers I congratulate Jayben, Chris and Allan and their wonderful family on their commitment to innovation and growth. I look forward to working with them and other advanced manufacturing businesses in my roles as Minister for Trade and Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries. It is a great opportunity to once again highlight the expertise we have in the north-west coast region but also right across Tasmania when it comes to advanced manufacturing and high-end products being exported across the world and the enormous skills that people have, not only business management skills, but I think more importantly the manufacturing skills of people on the factory floors. We are very blessed with our capability. I want to pay tribute to all of those people in those businesses.

Bus Services in Northern Tasmania

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about some of the challenges that have been experienced as a result of the changes to the bus services in the north of Tasmania - not to play on the whole kiss of death thing, but this is Mr Ferguson's portfolio as well, surprisingly.

I will start by saying that the consultation on this process commenced way back in 2016 with Mr Hidding, the former minister. There were a number of concerns then and I met with him then but they were delayed to get past the election, because these matters were not resolved around the time when the changes were meant to be implemented. There has been significant consultation to the point that Metro has in fact produced a consultation report of around 51 pages telling everybody just how much they consulted on the project. However, I have received probably more than 51 pages worth of issues that people are now having with the route.

The reality is when the draft was out for people to look at, there were some people who were aware of it and they responded. Some of their issues were picked up and some were not. We all know, though, that with busy lives it is not until something actually happens that people start to recognise what may or may not be suitable or gone well with it.

I am particularly concerned about some of the issues affecting children. I spent some time at one of the bus stops in Mona Road, Riverside the other morning because some parents had contacted me. This is a bus stop where four buses go past in the period from 8 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. One of the buses is a public bus. It is the only bus that a mum and her small child can get on to catch the bus down the hill to Riverside Primary. If the bus goes past because it is full, as it does on most occasions, they then have to walk all the way down Mona Road to Riverside Primary where the child goes to school and mums walks back up the hill. When she goes to pick the child up at the end of the day there is no bus that comes back up the hill, so it is a significant impact for a young child who is not yet confident to get on a bus full of high school kids.

The other three buses are all dedicated school buses and regularly two of them will go past and the third one may or may not stop. A lot of the kids have to make a judgment call as to whether they start the two-kilometre walk to school around about that point. The weather has not been that bad but there have been some rough days already and we are going to have some rough days in winter and those kids standing there not being sure if they can get a bus is a significant issue.

There were issues during the first week with a lot of buses. Some of that was teething problems because people did not necessarily know and there were some changes of different dates when school started, so I think there was some teething issues in that first week. We are preparing a large document for the minister to compile some of these but I thought I would touch on a few of the concerns.

An elderly woman in South Norwood has lived there for 18 years and has been able to use the Metro bus the whole time. It used to make a two-minute diversion along Charlton Street to go through South Norwood. The new route cuts out the diversion, so the new bus stop is about 700 metres way, which might not sound a lot, except it is up a bit of a steep hill and a lot of people who use it are elderly. She says that she and other people such as her husband, who is not physically capable of making that distance, can no longer catch the bus. Many of the online sites have recommended the walking distance to public transport be about 400 metres. That is a reasonably long enough distance for people to walk. She said that would apply for able-bodied folk but it is a

significant difficulty for her because they are simply not well enough and her husband would not be able to manage. He would struggle with 400 metres so he certainly cannot manage 700 metres up the hill.

South Launceston is an area comprised of many elderly people where a lot of people probably have income stress. I think it is fair to say that a lot of people probably have income stress. There are a number of housing commission units along Marys Lane and Heather Street. There is a block of flats on Heather Street. Napier House is behind Door of Hope off Thistle Street. So Metro now have found it quite an issue.

It is at least a distance of one kilometre to access a bus now in Wellington Street. To get to Wellington Street from that area is a long walk around the Door of Hope, up Pipeworks Road to Wellington Street then down Thistle Street and across the overpass, up a further hill to Wellington Street and then they could walk through Connaught Crescent and try getting across the seven lane Southern Outlet. It is significantly difficult. Whichever way this person goes, they say it is far too long a walk for the elderly or disabled, mums with prams and shopping and another kilometre to get home again.

This person says -

We are in a hilly environment, and I am 75 years old. Do people really expect me to march 1km to get on a bus, then do the same to get home again? In winter it gets down to minus 5, and in summer it can be over 30 degrees. Obviously they are wanting to kill us off.

I am sure that is not the intent but you can see how distressed people are.

Some bus users have been told to transfer buses but there is inconsistency in that. This letter says that the spokesperson speaks of shortening travel time but apparently travelling a greater distance between start and finish points, bypassing the finish point, travelling to and transferring to another bus when returning to finish point shortens the travel time. There has been no consideration regarding people who are unwell travelling to the LGH who need short convenient travel time. The alteration of the route has had a significant impact.

We have this one.

I am totally convinced the people making the decisions on the routes never use public transport. They have cars, some of them supplied, along with parking spaces in close proximity... but people who use public transport are in most cases the strugglers, and are totally reliant on a good service, so why make it harder. Only someone who did not care would do that. Commonsense, compassion and understanding is what is needed.

Someone has sent me a sign of the new stops and says that there are no Metro public buses to and from Dandenong Road, Delungra Road, Anderson Road, Fairthorne Road, Denman Road, Reatta Road to take you to the medical centre or the shopping centre or the CBD or the LGH or anywhere.

This person says -

The West Launceston bus previously stopped at the LGH, travelled via Normanston Road. But there are no longer any buses travelling Normanston Road, even with two retirement villages there. [To go] to town or grocery shopping, my only route home is struggling up the very steep hill of Lithgow Street, which in my 80th year is not as easy to do anymore, particularly laden with groceries. As a result of the intervention of the department, Launceston Metro is getting a little less money from me and taxi services a little bit more.

This is quite a long story but it talks about being concerned about the new bus route. They rang and got advice from Metro about where to catch the bus. The advice from Metro was incorrect in terms of what side of the road they had to be. Fortunately, she ignored it and she was on the side of Talbot Road where the bus stopped. However, when they were at Amy Road a very elderly lady who had been told to wait on the other side of the road waved vigorously. The bus driver did not see her because it was not supposed to stop there. The bus that would come through that side of Amy Road was another hour away. The temperature was 30-plus degrees. It is often running ahead of time, so elderly people are struggling to get there on time.

This person said that passengers from Summerhill and West Launceston are no longer able to directly access the hospital for specialist appointments, scans and x-rays or for light treatment at any LGH clinics.

This person was a bit upset. They contacted Michael Ferguson. They have heard nothing back. I would urge the minister to go through his emails. We do get a lot of emails so it is possible that it has been missed.

This person says -

I travel to the LGH to volunteer and the old route was great as the bus went right past the front door. On the homeward trip, I just had to go across the street ...

This person now cannot get to the hospital on a bus route. They have to catch two buses.

There are a number of concerns. I will come back to them tomorrow night. We will be compiling them for the minister. It is extremely concerning that since 2016 we still cannot get the bus route right.

Diabetes Australia - Pollie Pedal for 2020

[6.14 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, this member for Lyons is a proud member for Lyons and Diabetes Australia Ambassador. I am so proud to have that role and to report on and pay a tribute to Diabetes Tasmania and all those 'pollie peddlers' who I joined last weekend on the Pollie Pedal for 2020.

Mr Shelton - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT - I hear 'hear, hear' from the member for Lyons colleague and friend, Mark Shelton, who has done many of them over many years. It has been a fantastic three days. It has been one of the best Pollie Pedals ever. It was the 15th annual Tasmanian pollie pedal last Friday,

Saturday and Sunday. Diabetes Tasmania started this at the oval at the back of Burnie in 2016 and it has been going ever since.

We have now raised over \$700 000 for people with diabetes and their families in Tasmania, particularly services for children who have diabetes and those support services and education and community awareness is a key part of that role going forward and it is fantastic.

The Pollie Peddle is all about raising awareness and money for diabetes. This year I am pleased to advise that we reached our target of more than \$45 000. We are now close to \$49 000. I am hoping we can get to \$50 000 in the coming days. As a target it would be great to have it under the belt. I want to say it is a fantastic time. The camaraderie support of all 22 Pollie Peddlers during those three days was terrific.

We launched ourselves from Wynyard and we ended up at Longford, north-west coast through to the north. We officially launched at the Yolla District School. It was such a lovely time and a real highlight of the Pollie Peddle was because we met with so many of the young children. We talked about the importance of healthy active live styles and talked about diabetes and its impact on peoples' lives.

Anita Dow was there. Joan Rylah was meant to be there but she had a flat tyre. She is in the Chamber tonight. I know how supportive she has been of the Pollie Peddle and I appreciate that. After that, interestingly, we went down the hill and then up the hill again to Hellyers Road Distillery. We had a short stop there and met with Mark Littler and his team. It is one of Tasmania's iconic whisky distilleries and congratulations to Hellyer's Road for their success to date.

We went to the Lions Park at Penguin and then along the scenic north-west coast. It was glorious along the beach, riding along there to Ulverstone and then up through to Forth. The Forth River is one of the most scenic rides I have ever been on. Then you hit the Paluma Dam and then we had to climb, climb, climb. We did that up to Lower Barrington. There were rowing boats and vehicles around. We stopped at Lower Barrington.

It was hard yakka but it was well worth it for a good cause. We stayed at Gowrie Park that night. We caught up with Mayor Tim Wilson from the Kentish Municipality. He gave us a good overview of the attributes of his wonderful municipality and how proud he is as a local mayor. Thank you so much, Tim, for your support.

The next day at Gowrie Park Wilderness Village, we used our \$1 coins to get our showers. I had two \$1 coins to get enough time under the shower, did the job, cleaned up and then it was up to Mt Roland the next day. That was a tough climb as well. We then rolled through the hills and mountains down towards Mole Creek and the Earth Water Café. Wonderful hospitality was shown to all the Pollie Peddlers and their supports. Then to the Meander Memorial Hall.

That took a while - rolling hills - again the most glorious working forest, native forests, state forests, national parks. We saw it all over those three days. Beautiful agricultural country, seeing the benefits of it again, irrigation, water is liquid gold, dairy, crops, potatoes, peas, carrots and the like all the way through. We ended up at the Three Willows Vineyard and then went to the Mountain View Country Inn in Deloraine.

On day three we were at the Verde Coffee Shop at Westbury. That was fantastic. Thank you Peter and your support there. Cricket was being played at the Bracknell Recreation Ground. Mark

Shelton was out the back somewhere. His relatives were out the front cheering on the cricketers, the women of cricket.

Mr Shelton - A niece and a granddaughter played in the game.

Mr BARNETT - He couldn't make it on this occasion but we ended up at Bell and Bong Vineyard. All in all, 330 kilometres. The first day was clearly the hardest day; so many hills. It was a really tough day, especially for me. I nearly conked out. I was exhausted but happy at the end of it. I want to put on record thanks to the terrific sponsors, Ascensia Diabetes Care Contour - I use contour monitoring strips for my blood sugar; I have type 1 diabetes and have had since my wife's birthday in 1997 - but also to Pfizer, Super Fresh Tasmanian Scallops, Digital Ink, MAIB, Norske Skog, LJ Hooker St Helens, IGA 'where the locals matter' thanks to them, and a special thank you to the rapid relief team for their support, lunches, and morning teas along the way. They have done a great job and a wonderful charity they are.

Special recognition to Nicki, one of our fellow riders and friends who also has type 1 diabetes. She did a terrific job. Managing our blood sugars during that three days is not easy. It is challenging and we had a few ups, a few downs, but we got through and made it for a good cause. Thanks to Greg Johnson for coming down as Diabetes Australia CEO and Michael Bailey, CEO of Tas Chamber of Commerce and Industry who is such a fine cyclist. He did a great job and cheered us on.

To Diabetes Tasmania, Caroline Wells and to the support team of Ange and Leanne and others and the volunteers along the way. I really appreciate it. It was a great job well done. To all of those Tasmanians with diabetes in their families we say this is for you. The 15th Diabetes Tasmania Poli Pedal was a great success.

Women in Resources Tasmania 2020 Awards - Burnie

[6.21 p.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Speaker, on 20 February this year I had the pleasure of opening the launch of the Women in Resources Tasmania 2020 Awards in Burnie on behalf of the Minister for Women, Ms Courtney. It was a wonderful place to be. There were over 50 people attending at TMEC in Burnie at the Manufacturing Centre of Excellence and this is in a period in the lead up to the International Women's Day.

This year is the seventh year of these awards and Women in Resources Awards recognise and encourage women to consider a career in what has traditionally been a male-dominated industry. As Shelly Hunter, one of the speakers on the panel, said during her presentation it is her desire, goal, dream that these awards will become redundant, that women will be so much a part of the mining industry that it will no longer be important or necessary to encourage the participation of women in this sector.

The Women in Resources Tasmania Awards are part of the national awards program. The launch of the 2020 awards was hosted by the Tasmanian Minerals Manufacturing and Energy Council and the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Women in Mining Network Tasmania with great support from the sponsors Bell Bay Aluminium, Nyrstar, Caterpillar, Underground Mining, Hazell Brothers and Cement Australia.

The 2019 winners were present at the launch and they included Shelly Hunter, the contract coordinator for South32 TEMCO, recipient of the award for Exceptional Woman in Tasmanian Resources 2019 and also the award for Exceptional Young Woman in Engineering and Professional Services in Tasmania. Delia Sidea, a principal geotechnical engineer at Pitt & Sherry, received highly commended in Exceptional Young Woman in Engineering and Professional Services in Tasmania. Jane Bellis, the metallurgist from Nyrstar, was the recipient of the award for Exceptional Woman in Manufacturing in Tasmanian Resources. Janine Simmonds, specialist scheduler, Bell Bay Aluminium and Julia Henry, occupational hygienist at Nyrstar, both received highly commended in the category of Exceptional Woman in Manufacturing in Tasmanian Resources. Lou Clark, principal adviser, Communities and Communications, Bell Bay Aluminium, received the award for Exceptional Woman in a Non-Executive Role in Tasmanian Resources. Clare Waiss, production administration officer at South32 TEMCO, was announced highly commended in the category of Exceptional Woman in a Non-Executive role. Jessica Richmond, commercial manager and lawyer with Grange Resources, was the recipient of the award for Exceptional Young Woman in Tasmanian Resources. Diana Felipe, plant metallurgist at MMG, Chia Chia Jong, civil engineer from GHD, was highly commended in the category Exceptional Young Woman in Tasmanian Resources. Kayla Williams, quite a character, an apprentice fitter and turner of South32 TEMCO, was the recipient of an Outstanding Tasmanian tradeswoman, operator and technician. Kayla was joined by Hayley Williams, electrical apprentice Bell Bay Aluminium, who also received highly commended.

I was impressed by the calibre of these women who not only have chosen to work in the traditional male-dominated workplaces but who are leading by example and are able to celebrate their achievements and encourage more women to consider a career in the resource sector. Mining and mineral processing a key part of the Tasmanian economy and accounts for approximately 55 per cent of our net mercantile exports. Mining and mineral processors indirectly employs more than 5600 people throughout regional Tasmania.

Tasmanian mining and mineral industries are well supported through TMEC and it represents the largest industries in the state including the large mining companies and key downstream processors like Bell Bay Aluminium, TEMCO, Nyrstar, Norske Skog, and diverse industries such as Elphinstone and Simplot.

I congratulate TMEC, Alison Hilder in particular, and the Tas Women in Resources awards committee and last year's award women. Every woman entering and considering becoming part of our exceptional mining sector. The three women - Shelly Hunter, Jessica Richmond and Kayla Williams, who provided fascinating insights during their excellent panel discussion on that night. It was fun, it was exciting and a great place for women to be.

Westerway Primary School - Centenary

[6.26 p.m.]

Mr TUCKER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about the Westerway Primary School 100-year anniversary which was held on 29 February this year.

First I want to talk a bit about Westerway, a bit of the history behind it all. Westerway was originally known as Russell or Russelldale and was named after the surgeon, J J Russell. Due to the confusion between Russell and Russell Falls the name changed in 1919.

The school officially opened on 1 January 1920 with 36 students. This school was one of the first communities to accept the state government funding for voluntary school amalgamations with the 60-year old Maydena Primary.

Activities that were held at the Westerway Primary School 100 year anniversary were wood chopping, which is held at most events these days and shows, sheep shearing which was a very big attraction for many of the smaller children who had not experienced sheep shearing and the feeling of the wool and things like that, draught horse and carriage rides, hop picking, vintage equipment, history trails, bee keeping and blacksmithing which were quite extensive things for people to look at at this function.

There were many past and present students who attended with a lot of locals along with the Bothwell Mayor, Lou Triffett. That night they also held an old-time dance and this was held in the Westerway Hall with more than 120 people attending. Unfortunately, I could not attend that night but I am sure many of them would have cut loose on the dance floor. It was a great event.

Westbury Residents Against Prison Group

[6.28 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I have some correspondence from a Westbury resident, Peter Wileman. Peter was a former owner of the business, Green Door, and he has been part of the Westbury Residents Against Prison group from day dot. He is quite articulate and well measured and factual in his information.

I am going to read a little bit of information he has provided to me. It states:

A couple of months ago I received an email reply to a question about the socio-economic study relating to the proposed prison at Westbury. In the reply it was stated that the views of the residents would not be taken into account and that the study would be a case study of similar proposals in Australia, which begs the question - where in Australia has any government chosen to build a maximum security prison two kilometres from the centre of an historically important village and about one kilometre from the closest house in the village?

The proposed labelling by one of the Government's major prisons experts as bordering on insanity. The socio-economic study appears to be underrated despite no terms of reference having been seen or perhaps even exists. Despite the statement that we would not be listened to in the socio-economic study we have recently been subjected to another phone survey, not quite as ridiculous as the first one a few months ago but almost.

In the current myriad research survey mention is made to the proposed prison to be built on Birralee Road at Valley Central, no mention of Westbury at all. Five questions are asked. Each one of them is a leading question, one asking to rate feelings by nominating a number between 1 and 5; 1 being totally against the proposal, 5 being totally agreeing with the proposal. Any response will result in a positive number. Zero was not an option.

I know about this survey because they surveyed me three times within two days. Just more spin and more money wasted on this rigged proposal that will cost a

fortune to build and run by a government that cannot even manage the one prison and one youth detention centre that they already mismanage.

Peter contacted the minister and asked for those terms of reference for that socio-economic study. I have some correspondence he has written to the minister. He stated -

In reply to my request for the terms of reference for the socio-economic study relating to the proposed prison, Minister Archer sent me an internet address which took me to a brochure as explained in my reply below. This is a continuing request which leads me to think they must not have bothered to provide their consultant with proper parameters, so here is my email to Minister Archer -

Good Afternoon, having time to search for the terms of reference for the socio-economic study relating to the proposed northern prison and what is constantly referred to as Valley Central. At the address you provided I am unable to find anything other than a brochure entitled *Strategic Infrastructure Project*, which reads - 'Department of Justice'. All of the other sites that showed up on Google search for that address contained press releases and documents referring to the site selection, etc.

What I am questioning is the terms of reference that might reasonably be expected to have been developed in order to set the parameters of the socio-economic study in relation to the effect of the proposed prison at Westbury, not only Valley Central, which is an industrial centre at Westbury.

I am hoping to gain an understanding of what aspects a consultant or a team will take into consideration in their evaluation, what the objectives and the scope of the evaluation are, including a definition of the responsibilities of the consultant with a clear description of the resources available to conduct the study.

So again, may I request a copy of such a document in respect to the proposed prison if such a document exists.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Wileman.

As far as I know, to date there has not been any terms of reference provided. It does not look like there are any meaningful terms of reference. There has never been a feasibility study done on this maximum-security prison, a \$270 million investment in the north of Tasmania, really important to the building and construction sector, a great potential job creator, and not even a feasibility study or a proper socio-economic study stating the truth.

The House adjourned at 6.33 p.m.