

Wednesday 30 October 2019

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 the presence in the gallery of students from TasTAFE. Welcome to parliament.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS

Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators - Recruitment

Ms WHITE question to **MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.02 a.m.]

At the last election you promised that every school would have access to specialist teachers as literacy and numeracy coordinators - every school. The commitment to recruit an additional 35 experienced teachers as literacy and numeracy coaches came with a \$26 million funding commitment. Can you confirm that the rollout of the literacy teachers has been paused until 2022?

It is clear that these teachers have fallen victim to your Government's budget cuts in yet another clear breach of your promise not to cut frontline services. Why have you broken your promise to roll out specialist teachers in literacy coaches to all Tasmanian Government schools in this term of government?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Every school will have access to specialist teachers. That could be in the form of music or art; it could be in the form of STEMM. I assure the member that there is more funding for education within our school system than ever before. We have more teachers in our schools than we did in 2014 - some 220 more teachers in our government school system - and more teacher assistants. I was very pleased to announce a few days ago that 113 new teachers will also be in our schools at Term One 2020.

I assure the member that each school will have access to a specialist teacher. We take literacy and numeracy in our schools very seriously.

It is also very pleasing that we have extended the Learning in Families Together program, the literacy and numeracy initiative, the Kindergarten to Grade 2 initiative, parental engagement initiative, which is great news, from 80 schools to 109 schools.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing Order 45, relevance. I ask you to draw the attention of the minister to the question, which is whether he can confirm that he has paused the rollout of literacy coaches until 2022?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order, but I draw the minister's attention to the relevancy of the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Investing in literacy and numeracy is relevant here, Madam Speaker. As a result of extending the successful Learning in Families Together program, commenced in 2016, we are committed to and we are extending that to an additional 5000 students who will have access to that Kindergarten to Grade 2 parental engagement program -

Ms White - It is a different program.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It is focusing on literacy and numeracy. Have you read the literacy strategy?

Ms White - It is different to what you promised.

Madam SPEAKER - Through the Chair, please.

Mr Ferguson - Which we launched on line. Don't you talk about dumping policies.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Ferguson. We had an agreement yesterday that there would be a little more calm in the Chamber. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is pleasing that we have so much interest from around the community, the state and interstate to be a teacher in a Tasmanian school. With the first tranche of our 250 teachers that we committed to at the 2018 election, and we will deliver over six years, we had 600 applications and 69 teachers commenced earlier this year. We had over 300 applications for the recruitment of tranche 2, which will have 113 teachers commencing in term 1. There can be no doubt of this Government's commitment to education; \$7 billion over the course of the next -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. It is unfortunately to Standing Order 45, relevance. There is still some doubt as to the answer of the question, which is whether the specialist program promised has been paused? The minister says there is no doubt about his position. Perhaps he could tell us if there is any doubt about whether the program has been paused.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not a point of order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I assure the House that every school will have access to specialist teachers. As I understand it, that can be at the school's discretion. A specialist teacher in music, drama, art, or STEMM, is a school-based decision.

Our election commitment was very clear and a lot clearer than yours. We are going to commit to 250 additional teachers over six years of which we have commenced and are delivering on that commitment.

Education - Disability Funding

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.09 a.m.]

Next year the long-awaited new disability funding model will be introduced to incorporate an additional 2000 students living with disability. Despite this massive influx of students, your

Government has only allocated an additional \$4 million to the model for the 2019-20 year. It has become clear that schools across the state are facing funding shortfalls to support their students. Some schools are being asked to support more students with less funding and are facing difficult decisions, like having to top-up teacher aide support time from their general budgets and cutting back other school programs.

Forcing schools to make these decisions will result in winners and losers, and it will work against the inclusive principles of the scheme.

How many current severe disability and supported students will receive less funding and support next year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. The new disability funding model is nation-leading. The member would be well advised, if she has not already taken the opportunity, to take a briefing on this particular matter, because this is a nation-leading student-with-disability investment, of which this state can be very proud. The people within the Department of Education who have worked so hard and consulted with every school with respect to this matter can also take a great deal of pride in this model.

This model will provide funding for students with disability to another 2000 students in our government schools. Another 2000 students, based on need - the needs of the students. That may well be resourced in terms of human resource. It may well also be in terms of equipment. The students' needs will be assessed and the resource will flow accordingly.

Ms White - How many will be receiving less funding next year? Some students are missing out. They are receiving less funding next year than they had this year.

Madam SPEAKER - Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to refrain from interjecting. Thank you.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Madam Speaker, the students with disability are assessed, and funding will flow to the students based on need. This is nation-leading. There is too much of a rigid approach; too many people in the previous model were missing out. A rigid approach around the 50 to 70 IQ, where people fell through the gaps. It was not fair. This is the fairest system.

Madam Speaker, 2000 more students will be able to access resources for their learning needs. If there is one thing this Government has done in education is to break down every single possible barrier that a student in our government schools has when it comes to learning. An addition to the resource package, of which I am also very proud, which was released a few weeks ago to every school. That does not include the trauma resource that will also flow next year as well: another nation-leading example where we are reducing those barriers.

With children's learning, it does not matter what your circumstance is, where you live, what your background is in Tasmania. The Education Act states that, and as I have stated many times, it is the fundamental right of every child around this state to have a quality education. That is why we have a more inclusive system when it comes to trauma-informed practice.

When it comes to increasing the opportunities of providing 5000 more students with the Learning in Families Together initiative, and our investment in the early years - that is why we are

funding more in our child and family centres. That is why we are extending high schools to years 11 and 12, where students in our regions can access education, again breaking down those barriers, such as travel, for example. They can have access to a year 11 and 12 program. Our education system, based on the Gonski principles and needs-based funding, says fundamentally that every child, no matter of their circumstance, around Tasmania has that fundamental right to quality education, and we are delivering it.

I know it hurts the Labor Party, who should be focusing more on education policy, but they failed their students in their 16 years, and the education outcomes prove it. Not only that, when it comes to budget savings measures, in their 2011 budget, their alternative was to close 20 schools by media release.

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Standing order 45. This has been a very long answer by the minister, and he has not yet revealed how many students next year will receive less funding. If he does not have that information, he can come back to the House and provide it at a later date.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order. You might need to save that for another question. I am sorry, Ms Ogilvie, the tradition of this House is that the first two questions go to the Leader of the Opposition and the third to the Greens.

Ms Ogilvie - Is it.

Madam SPEAKER - Just to save you bobbing up and down.

AFAC Recommendations - Bushfire Control

Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[10.15 a.m.]

Yesterday bushfires threatened Lachlan, Elderslie and Scamander for several hours. While those fires have been contained thanks to the hard work of the Tasmania Fire Service volunteers and other crew, the risks for the south of the state are very concerning later this week. There is a great deal of anxiety across Tasmania about the level of fire risk, with the memory of last summer's extreme fires still fresh for many. It is still October and TFS has accepted these earlier emergencies are unusual. Your hollow words last night talked about these conditions being normal at this time of the year, with your response being 'business as usual', even though rural area fire crews are still grounded.

People need to know you understand we are in a climate emergency. They need to know you are doing everything you can, and are told to do, to keep them safe and protected. Will you tell us which of the AFAC and the Tony Press review recommendations have been resourced and actioned to date?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. If the member had turned up to a briefing from the Chief Fire Officer that was accepted by many members of this House and the other place, she would understand -

Ms O'Connor - I beg your pardon, we sent our policy adviser.

Mr SHELTON - As a member of parliament who attended the Chief Officer's -

Mr Hodgman - Then they can pretend.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Premier.

Mr SHELTON - recent fire session briefing would know, bushfires in Tasmania in October are common.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of clarification, Madam Speaker. The minister is misleading the House. The Greens sent a representative to that briefing. Would you please correct the record? We are very concerned about the state of fire risk in Tasmania and we take every opportunity to inform ourselves of the facts.

Mr Ferguson - This is just a disorderly rant, not a point of order, Madam Speaker. This is completely out of keeping.

Madam SPEAKER - It is certainly not a point of order.

Dr WOODRUFF - Madam Speaker, I was still on my feet when the Leader of Government Business got up, which was very disorderly of him.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Let us all remember our manners. We have the minister on his feet and I will start the clock.

Mr SHELTON - I do not believe I was out of order. I believe I said that the member had not attended that briefing, and that is absolutely correct.

The information that was obtained there was that the Chief Fire Officer indicated that, in October, we can have strong equinox winds with warmer temperatures. That is what he indicated. It is astonishing that the members opposite, particularly the Greens, would be seeking to politicise any fire that happens while it is still burning. It is shameful that they would try to undermine -

Dr Woodruff - It's not still burning.

Mr SHELTON - I will say to the Greens trying to undermine the confidence of our fire professionals, the total fire ban yesterday and the foreshadowing of total fire bans for Thursday and Friday is prudent to ensure that the number of fires we currently have are not added to. At 9.25 this morning we have three fires at advice level, meaning that people need to stay up to date with the developments.

In preparation for this week, the Tasmania Fire Service and Parks and Wildlife Service established an incident management team at Cambridge. That is what I said last night. This is business as usual for the Tasmania Fire Service. They set up, whenever they have high fire incident days, then 'business as usual' will mean that they will strategically set up and position fire equipment in the relevant places.

Dr Woodruff - Did you read the review? They criticised the way that was running.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr SHELTON - At all times Tasmania needs to remain vigilant and heed the advice of our experts, with our best bushfire defence always being preparedness. It is important that Tasmanians living in bushfire-prone areas should know and practice their bushfire survival plans and prepare their properties by removing flammable materials from their yards and gutters.

Like all Tasmanians, I should refer to the advice of our experts, including the Chief Fire Officer, rather than some members opposite. Regarding resourcing, the Chief Fire Officer has the necessary resources, so much so that at 6.30 a.m. this morning we sent a contingent of 40 firefighters to assist the efforts in New South Wales, and plans are in place to send a second contingent of 40 in other weeks.

As far as the Hobart-specific fires go, the statewide relative fire risk is now the lowest it has been in 15 years, thanks to this Government's investment in strategic fuel reduction burning, significantly decreasing the bushfire risk across the state.

Dr Woodruff - Did you listen to the Hobart City Council yesterday? Are you deaf?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr SHELTON - As members of parliament who attended the Chief Fire Officer's recent fire season would know -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. We will have a bit of discipline for a few minutes and reflect on that. I thought we were a state of kindness and not saying things that are mean.

Ms O'Connor - As long as it applies to everyone.

Madam SPEAKER - It does apply to everyone in this Chamber. We have all signed up to it.

Mr SHELTON - the fuel reduction program we have in place has conducted a significant number of fuel reduction burns across the Hobart area since the commencement of the program. Madam Speaker, I will table this map. If the member had turned up and had a look she would have seen that all the blue area is areas around Hobart that have been significantly decreased in fire risk.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Speaker, under standing order 45, relevance. The question was about the AFAC review and the Tony Press recommendations, not about a briefing in private to members of parliament last week. It is about the AFAC recommendations. Have they been resourced?

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order but the minister needs to be relevant, if possible.

Mr SHELTON - The member started talking about the fires around Hobart. I cannot get any more direct than that. I can advise that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to adhere to the recommendations of the AFAC report. I am also pleased to confirm that the airdesk has been

established and is delivering recommendation 6 of the AFAC report. There will be two personnel dedicated to the airdesk when the aircraft arrive in the state.

At the multi-agency statewide briefing on the upcoming fire season held in September 2019, the Chief Fire Officer stated we have a rapid rate of response attack, which includes the doubling of the fire brigades on these normal days. Inter-agency fire management protocols are currently under review and are intended to be authorised by the agency heads in place prior to the 2019 fire season. This will deliver recommendation 5 of the AFAC review.

Dr Woodruff - And all the rest of them?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff; I urge you to remain calm.

Mr SHELTON - There is substantial work going on on the AFAC review and it will all be in place by the start of the summer bushfire season.

Visitor Economy - Long-Term Plan

Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for TOURISM, HOSPITALITY and EVENTS, Mr HODGMAN

[10.24 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on how the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is delivering our long-term plan to support the visitor economy? Is the Premier aware of any other approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my parliamentary secretary for the question and am delighted that today we will be tabling a report that shows the great performance by the TT-Line. It supports the extraordinary growth we have seen in our great tourism industry and our visitor economy, where we have taken the economy from being the bottom of the pile to one of the best performing in the country which it now is.

Under our plan since we came to government, 25 per cent more visitors are coming to our state, and visitor spending in that time has increased by 49 per cent more than when Labor and the Greens were in government. It is one of those coincidences perhaps, they would say, but it does not happen by chance. It is because this Government is the strongest supporter of our great tourism industry and we will continue to do so.

At the centre of what has been described as a renaissance for our tourism industry is one of our great government businesses. The TT-Line and the *Spirits* have done so much of the heavy lifting and under this Government, the TT-Line company has delivered more passengers and more freight on more sailings and at lower fares. Today as we table its annual report, it shows that in 2018-19, TT-Line carried 456 869 passengers, in line with the record set last year, and that last year was also a record number of TT-Line sailings at 867, including a new record of 169 day sailings.

Under our plan, there is increased capacity importantly facilitating the increased movement of above-height vehicles such as caravans and motorhomes, which is supporting our regional

economic growth. Those who come on board our *Spirits* in those vehicles tend to stay longer and see more of the state while they are here. Freight volumes are also at record levels, carrying more Tasmanian exports than ever before, and the company is in very sound financial condition, with record revenues of \$260.3 million compared to \$244.6 million in 2017-18 and an after-tax profit of \$44.1 million. I acknowledge the excellent management and leadership of chair, Mike Grainger, and CEO, Bernard Dwyer, but also the very passionate and committed staff on what is one of Tasmania's great success stories.

It has happened under this term of government under our plan, which was very different to Labor's. When we came into government in 2014, not only did we inherit an economy that was in recession, budget deficits of a billion dollars and 10 000 jobs lost to our state, we also inherited a very different plan for the TT-Line under then minister David O'Byrne. On coming into government, we learned that they had what was in fact a secret plan for the TT-Line to buy new smaller vessels to carry freight across Bass Strait, competing with, and which would inevitably hurt, the private sector shipping companies.

In one of the first acts of this Government, we put a stop to Mr O'Byrne's plan which would have hurt Tasmanian businesses, our shippers, and the business community, which was then the most negative and least confident in the country. It would have damaged our economy. That is what would have happened under the Labor plan. Under ours, we refurbished the ships, opposed by Labor. We increased sailings, criticised by Labor, and the private sector responded. Since then, SeaRoad has increased its capacity to meet the growing demand under our economy which has been growing since we came into government. In March this year, Toll launched two brand-new vessels on the Bass Strait run, also providing a significant uplift in capacity and more benefits to our Tasmanian economy.

This is the result of a more confident business community, a key difference between us and the Labor Party. They cannot be trusted with the economy. When Labor say they do not have a plan for the economy, they mean it, because under the then minister for economic recession, David O'Byrne, what he was proposing to do would have the state and its taxpayers compete with the private sector and that would damage our economy.

Under our plan, the TT-Line is performing strongly, as the annual report confirms. The private sector is now the most confident in the country, employing more, and there are 1600 more businesses operating since we came into government, all part of the strongest performing economy in the country, which has happened under a majority Liberal government.

Skilled Migration to Tasmania

Ms OGILVIE question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.30 a.m.]

I also welcome the TAFE students here today. I think they will like the question.

Premier, our thriving and important multicultural community adds great value to Tasmania yet skilled migrants are now being encouraged to move to the Gold Coast and Western Australia as part of the federal government's expanded plan to attract migrants to the regions. Were you consulted about this recent announcement by the federal government and the impacts this policy change would have on future migrant and population growth in Tasmania, jobs and skills? How can we be sure

that Tasmania will continue to be the prime beneficiary of skilled migrants choosing to live and work in Tasmania? What damage could this expansion announcement do to skilled migration to Tasmania?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. With respect to population growth strategies and the intersection between our Government and the Commonwealth, I do engage including at COAG meetings and in exchanges with the Prime Minister and other first ministers about opportunities for our respective jurisdictions, including in our regional areas.

That is now an important part of national government policy. This is well reflected in not only our population growth strategies but also the business migration programs that we have in place and a number of other important initiatives designed to increase our population and support the growth, which we welcome. This includes people coming from interstate. We have seen net migration increase under this Government. It went backwards under the former government. We also welcome more visitors from abroad, from overseas, into our community. They are important contributors to our strong economy and we welcome that.

Skilled migrants are not only supporting our labour market, countering the effects of our ageing population and contributing to our economic growth, they are supporting Tasmanian businesses by filling skills shortages in critical areas such as health, agriculture and hospitality. In 2018-19 we have nominated 2067 prospective skilled migrants with 23 business migrants committing to a potential \$36 million of investment generating at least 75 new jobs into our local economy. Our skilled migration programs are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the current needs of Tasmania's businesses and industries and to ensure that the program complements employment opportunities for local people; not displaced but are complemented.

In response to the question, yes, we have a number of state-based initiatives. We will continue to work very closely with our federal counterparts and that includes the relevant ministers at ministerial meetings and forums to ensure that we are in sync and the Commonwealth Government is in no doubt of our strong commitment to grow our population. It needs to happen to ensure our economy remains sustainable, buoyant and productive, as it now is. It depends on strong population growth, backed by the Population Growth Strategy delivered under this Government which has seen that positive increase in people wanting to come to our state. We will work very closely and cooperatively with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that continues.

Northern Regional Prison - Alternative Sites

Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER

[10.33 a.m.]

You have stubbornly refused to release the short listed sites for the northern prison and seem determined to push ahead with building a maximum security prison at Westbury against the community's wishes. You are hiding behind the excuse that the short list is commercial-in-confidence. However, this document, the Northern Prison Siting Project targeted expression of interest document, makes it clear that you, as minister, have the discretion to release details of the short-listed sites. The document states:

The minister reserves the right to publish the names of each Proponent and the location of a Proposed Site put forward in an EOI submission.

Why are you keeping this list secret when it is clear that you do have the power to release it?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Members opposite know, as they have been in government - and I know that the member who asked the question has worked in government - that these types of arrangements are not unusual. In fact, they are quite commonplace. That clause is, I would hazard a guess, in most of these types of dealings when we are dealing with commercial-in-confidence situations.

As I quite clearly stated yesterday, that clause is in there for a very good reason. It is to allow for legal and audit situations. I made it exceptionally clear. I do not want to keep going over old ground and being repetitive, but I will say that Labor continues to be an absolute policy-free zone in this area of Corrections. They went to the last election not even promising one additional correctional officer and they have the gall to come in here when they would not even say what they would do, where they would put a prison. They keep flip-flopping about as to whether they support the actual preferred site.

As I clearly stated yesterday, this is a preferred site which we are listening to the community on. We could not have direct consultations with the community until we had a preferred site to consult on.

I am being repetitious now. I keep repeating myself because the message simply is not getting through to those opposite in relation to this.

It is important to highlight the importance of this facility, not only to our Corrections system generally, but it is a \$270 million infrastructure development, part of a \$350 million infrastructure plan that we have, to address the issue of the state's ageing prison infrastructure.

What would Labor do?

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please. Through the Chair.

Ms ARCHER - They seemed to be confused yesterday about the total number of applications, and what was short-listed and what was not. They come in here and make this sort of stuff up, thinking that they have 'ka-ching' moments and all sorts of things.

As I said yesterday, there were only 10 applications in total, one having withdrawn, another withdrawing and another property selling through that process. It would be totally inappropriate to start releasing all of these sites when many of the sites were not even appropriate against all of the siting principles. I have taken the time to read these out to this House in a contribution to an MPI in the last session in this House. I think it was an MPI. In any event, I made the contribution in this House and listed the siting principles in the hope that those opposite would see the sorts of services and other factors that need to be taken into consideration when we are looking at a significant infrastructure investment such as this.

This major project will deliver enormous employment to the broader region: over a couple of hundred jobs, permanent post construction and during construction. Hundreds of jobs to the region. That seems to be lost on members opposite. They want to put that at risk. Local businesses in the region, the broader region, will be major beneficiaries as well.

It is important to note that there has been support for this project. Specifically the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation has stated that, and I quote:

The construction of stage 1 alone over the next five years will deliver about \$160M in economic output for Meander Valley and provide 733 jobs ...

At Stage 1 if we assume that 140 people are employed - that will generate an additional 27 jobs in the community to service those jobs. The total value to Meander Valley is an additional \$35M per year from the first year of operation, increasing to \$62M per year by the time it is fully operational.

This is good for the northern and north-west region of our state. This cannot be forgotten and yet Labor refuses to state its position. They are flip-flopping about with the Leader of the Opposition having one view one day. The shadow spokesperson Ms Haddad said during her interview -

Ms Haddad - I would be careful. I was misrepresented yesterday. You can read my *Hansard* on the Adjournment last night. I have told you what I said.

Ms ARCHER - Actually, I will quote, and if this is not supporting the northern prison preferred site. I quote from Ms Haddad. This is her transcript of a door-stop interview on 30 September and she somehow interpreted it a different way to how this reads:

Ideally, the people of the Westbury community should not have anything to worry about in having a prison built in their community, but that is only the case if this prison comes with the budget that is required to actually run an efficient and well-run prison system, which is not what we are seeing in the south.

Ms Haddad - Quite right. Risdon is an absolute mess and you know it. That is what that interview was about. Prison escapes, custodial officers leaving in droves - you know that.

Ms ARCHER - We are fully funded, we have a commitment, there is a \$350 million infrastructure plan. We are embarking on all of the recruitment.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I inform the minister that she is approaching six minutes. Thank you.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I will wind-up because those opposite look awfully uncomfortable when you quote them back and explain how we are funding this. This is funded. The correctional officers that will be required are funded. We have said that we fully support this project. A number of ministers stated that yesterday that this will be good for the region, good for jobs, good for the economy and good for the north and north-west region of our state.

Wilderness World Heritage Area - Commonwealth Funding for Bushfire Protection

Ms O'CONNOR question to PREMIER, Mr HODGMAN

[10.41 a.m.]

Madam Speaker, that was a seven-minute answer from the minister following on from a 10-minute answer yesterday - pretty self-indulgent.

Premier, in January this year, fires ripped through Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area torching tens of thousands of hectares of wilderness, some of which, as we know, will never recover. At the time you said you wrote to the Prime Minister to flag a request for additional funding to protect the TWWHA. Nine months later, and with an early bushfire season already here, in Senate Estimates last week, Senator Nick McKim had it confirmed that your Government has as yet made no request for extra money. How do you explain that delay, given the urgent need for more resources to protect the TWWHA from burning beyond repair again this summer?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question and note not only the significant impact of the bushfire season gone but also the preparedness that we have in place for the upcoming season. That has been well covered by the minister and I urge the members who asked the question to inform themselves of the facts around this.

Greens members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr HODGMAN - It is not adequate, in our view, to simply send a staffer along to listen so you can then come into this place with some deniability and deliberately plead ignorance when a lot of work is being done by our excellent Fire Service and emergency services personnel to best prepare our state. Similarly, under this Government we have reduced the fire risk to our state, but we need to ensure that all communities remain vigilant and provide our support to our Tasmania Fire Service.

In relation to the season past, I have written to the Prime Minister and have also spoken to him. We are still assessing the cost of those bushfires to our state. The total cost at this stage, I am advised, is around \$80 million and that includes almost \$60 million for firefighting costs. The Tasmanian Government, in due course and once the extent of those costs are fully known, will be making a claim to the Australian Government under the disaster recovery funding arrangements to alleviate the financial burden on the state. We will be formally requesting additional financial assistance from the Australian Government in relation to the costs incurred in protecting the environmental and heritage assets.

Ms O'Connor - When?

Mr HODGMAN - If you listen to the answer - it is appropriate for that to occur once the full extent of those costs are known so appropriate application can be made. State and territory governments have until 31 March 2020 to submit the 2018-19 financial year claims to the Australian Government. The arrangements are complex and subject to two separate audit processes. It is essential that our agencies, the experts who are entrusted with compiling this information, are

enabled to have sufficient time necessary to ensure that claims are accurate so we do not sell ourselves short and miss out on funding opportunities for the state.

We have made our position very clear. As I say, I did write to the Prime Minister so it is not something that is open to question.

Ms O'Connor - I acknowledged that in the question.

Mr HODGMAN - I think you suggested that I may have written to the Prime Minister. I want you to be aware that I did.

Dr Woodruff - So you're not worried about getting that \$50 million now? Everything's all right?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Mr HODGMAN - It is always so simple and easy for the Greens, who do not have the responsibility of following the well-outlined, documented and understood processes to ensure Tasmania gets all that it deserves. If we took the Greens' approach and just ran in half-cocked we would sell our state short and likely miss out on additional funding support for our firefighting costs incurred, including and protecting our environmental assets.

In response, the Prime Minister reiterated the Commonwealth's support and, as a result, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has been working with Emergency Management Australia, the Department of Home Affairs and Tasmania's Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to analyse firefighting costs and determine the proportion of costs incurred in protecting our environmental assets. This additional funding application will be in addition to the \$9.9 million received for the Community Recovery Grant which was jointly funded by the Tasmanian and Australian governments to restore damaged Parks and Wildlife infrastructure and other recovery measures for the bushfire-affected communities - the Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley and west coast.

We will always endeavour to ensure we get appropriate and justifiable support from the Commonwealth to assist us with the significant costs that have been incurred, but we will always do the right thing by our state and make sure that we are best placed through our agencies to provide a full account of the damage and to recover that in due course as that process properly allows.

Parks and Wildlife Service - Website

Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for ENVIRONMENT, PARKS and HERITAGE, Mr GUTWEIN

[10.47 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's plan to support our visitor economy, improve our national parks and our spectacular environment?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank Mr Tucker, the member for Lyons, for his interest in this important matter. Our visitor economy is a key pillar of the state's economic success, contributing over

\$3 billion to gross state product and supporting around 42 000 jobs across the state. We know we cannot afford to take our foot off the pedal and risk losing the momentum we have built in past years. Our plan is to encourage more visitors to the state, for them to stay longer, see more of the state and, importantly, spend while they are here. The plan we have is to ensure our offering meets the highest standards expected by Tasmanians and also by our diverse interstate and international visitors.

Today it is my pleasure to officially launch the new-look website for the Parks and Wildlife Service. The new website offers an inspiring gateway for Tasmanian parks experiences and is designed to be intuitive, nimble and easy for visitors to navigate. Importantly, the site encourages visitors to take full advantage of the exceptional beauty and rugged wilderness our state has in abundance, along with a wide variety of experiences, many that have come about as a result of our nation-leading EOI process. Our expression of interest process is helping to reimagine our regions, attract investment and, importantly, create jobs in every corner of the state. The combined value of all the projects is around \$100 million in new investments, which it is expected will create more than 250 full-time equivalent jobs when fully realised. We recognise the need to get the balance right and we remain committed to presenting and preserving those very things that make Tasmania special and unique in the first place.

I have a note here. As I am reading it, there could not be anything closer to the truth, and whilst the Greens will continue their mindless, hypocritical, robotic opposition, the facts of the matter are that leases, licences and tourism opportunities in our national parks and reserve estates are not new. These arrangements have existed under all political persuasions, including the Labor-Greens government prior to it losing power in 2014. Examples of arrangements made under the last one and previous governments include the Maria Island Walk, Pumphouse Point, the Bay of Fires Walk and Standing Camp, Cradle Huts, and the Freycinet Experience. The hypocrisy is writ large from that corner of the Chamber.

Our expressions of interest process provides, for the first time, an additional layer of transparency on what previously existed. Under previous governments, the first the public would know about a lease or licence agreement over public lands would be after the fact, once it was signed, once it was a done deal.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, come on. A bit of respect.

Mr GUTWEIN - After the fact, under you, that is when people would have known. Under us, we do an early assessment, we protect the intellectual property of the idea, we assess that, and then we allow it to move to lease and licence and the full and robust planning process. That is before it goes into lease and licence negotiations. That is when it is made public, not like under this lot before, when it was signed and it was a done-deal before anybody knew anything about it.

We do not subscribe to the elite view of the Greens, that the only way you should see our wilderness is if you are prepared to carry a pack and hike in the wilderness for days.

Ms O'Connor - It is not what we say.

Mr GUTWEIN - That is what you say; that is your position.

Ms O'Connor - Not your sort for the top end of town.

Madam SPEAKER - Goodness gracious, please. Do it through the Chair.

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, where is Labor on this issue; where do they stand? A bob each way again, 'Two-Bob' O'Byrne, a bob each way.

Madam SPEAKER - Treasurer, I think you are inciting them.

Mr GUTWEIN - I thought I was stating a fact, Madam Speaker. After five-and-a-half years in Opposition -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Mr Hodgman interjecting.

Ms O'BYRNE - We were never allowed to talk about you and your Dad, so just be quiet for a moment.

Madam Speaker, I have two points of order. The first point of order: is it appropriate to refer to members by their name? The Premier who interjects knows that because he took great umbrage if anyone ever spoke about his father sitting behind you. Absolutely true, that is in *Hansard*.

The second, Madam Speaker, please, standing order 48, the Treasurer has had such a very long time to answer this question.

Madam SPEAKER - Yes, Treasurer, you have had a very long time. Could you wind-up?

Mr GUTWEIN - Madam Speaker, I will wind it-up. It is a statement of fact and if they search *Hansard*, the Premier and his father were not a protected species. In fact, there are many contributions from that side of the House, especially Judy Jackson.

Does Labor support the expressions of interest process or are they going to side with the Greens later on today once again, as they have done more than 80 per cent of the time, in this place, and vote with the Greens against investment, against jobs, against a stronger economy.

Dr BROAD - Point of order, Madam Speaker. The member is pre-empting an order of the day.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you for that gratuitous advice but it is not a point of order.

Northern Regional Prison - Absence of Minister at Community Rally

Ms BUTLER question to MINISTER for CORRECTIONS, Ms ARCHER

[10.54 a.m.]

Since announcing Westbury as your preferred site for the maximum security prison four weeks' ago, you have not visited the community once. Yesterday you said you could not attend the community rally against the maximum security Westbury prison because you had a longstanding

family commitment. The community rally was at 11.30 a.m. Can you confirm that at this time you were in fact at the Royal Hobart Show Youth Art and Photography exhibition which ran from 10.30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday? Why did you mislead parliament about the reason for your Westbury no-show?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, this is a very embarrassing moment for Ms Butler. She should be aware that it takes two-and-a-half hours to drive there and I did that morning commitment before I then had the rest of the weekend's commitments due to the longstanding family arrangement. Members opposite know that. In fact, one of them even tried to corner my husband last night to try to sniff for information. I do not have to justify what that family commitment was.

Ms White - At the same time you were at the Royal Hobart Show.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Ms ARCHER - I think it was fairly reasonable that I was not available last weekend. That being the case, I still did a morning commitment before I then had to go off to the rest of the weekend commitments that I had to mark a very significant occasion.

Community Safety - Long-Term Plan

Mrs RYLAH question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr SHELTON

[10.56 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Hodgman Liberal Government is delivering our long-term plan to keep Tasmanians safer and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. Only the Hodgman Liberal Government has a long-term plan to keep Tasmanians safe and to support our emergency service workers as they protect our communities and keep Tasmanians safer. Since we came to Government we have been delivering on our plan. Our plan includes the recruitment of an additional 238 police officers by the end of this term of government; the recruitment of 15 additional career firefighters this year, boosting our career firefighting numbers to 323, the highest they have been in 10 years. A further recruitment course is underway.

We are supporting our police officers with better infrastructure like new police stations, upgrades to police housing across Tasmania, new multipurpose patrol boats, body worn cameras and drones. We are supporting our firefighters with better infrastructure by delivering and planning for new medium tankers, heavy pumpers and aerial appliances, replacing and refurbishing fire stations. We are also investing in the mental health of our first responders with the Tasmanian \$6 million health and wellbeing program for our first responders.

In addition, we have legislated a presumptive PTSD provision and removed workers compensation step down provisions for our police officers. We have legislated to crack down on

organised crime by banning outlaw motorcycle gang colours and modernising the offence of consorting. We are -

Mr Ferguson - What would you care? You voted against it.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mr Ferguson.

Mr SHELTON - investing in our \$55 million fuel reduction program to reduce bushfire risk across Tasmania.

Tasmanians must be asking themselves what Labor stands for. Labor stands for sacking police officers, cutting 108 when last in government with the Greens. Labor stands for siding with organised criminal gangs instead of putting the safety of Tasmanians first. Let us not forget last year when Labor was keen to let Tasmania be the only state not to act on the outlaw motorcycle gangs and were willing to risk Tasmania becoming a safe haven for these serious organised criminal groups, even after they knew full well that these bikies were involved in drug importation, distribution, serious criminal behaviour, debt collection and firearms offences.

I would like to now reflect on Labor's siding with criminals rather than victims. Labor does not support guaranteed prison time -

Ms WHITE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I ask the minister to withdraw that comment. He just said that the Labor Party sides with criminals rather than victims which is patently untrue.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. I ask the minister to withdraw that. It is a pretty wild accusation.

Mr SHELTON - Madam Speaker, I can withdraw if that is too close to the bone for Labor.

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Hold on, Mr Shelton. It would be much easier if you just did it gracefully. We are going to have a lot of points of order.

Mr SHELTON - I withdraw the comment.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you.

Mr SHELTON - Labor does not support guaranteed prison time for violent criminals who assault off-duty police officers. Labor does not support guaranteed prison time for violent criminals who assault our front-line emergency service workers. Labor does not even support guaranteed prison time for child sex offenders, a reform strongly supported by victims of abuse, advocates and support groups, and the broader Tasmanian community who strongly support this reform.

Labor initially supported the early release of prisoners, known as remission, before the sentence was handed down by the courts.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Mr SHELTON - They then back-flipped to support a sensible remission reform. Labor has flipped and flopped on the northern prison. It is hard to keep up with their acrobatics. They say it should not be in one location, but that is absurd if they cannot name a better location. Complaining is not a policy.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, order. I have been trying a new strategy today to see if we can get through this a little more peacefully without throwing anyone out, without giving warnings, without allowing people to incite dramas, but it is not working without your cooperation.

I would like everyone here to reflect on why you are here, and how you can debate in a far more professional and elegant way, without name calling, without yelling - nice and dignified and calm. Let us get on with the work. Minister.

Mr SHELTON - Thank you, Madam Speaker. In winding up, in the five and a half years since we came to government with a strong mandate on law and order policies, Labor has shamefully tried to block and obstruct our efforts to keep the community safe, and to protect victims and our most vulnerable. We are delivering on our long-term plan, which is working. In contrast, Labor has no plan, they stand for nothing and simply cannot be trusted to keep Tasmanians safe.

Launceston General Hospital - Escalation Protocols

Ms WHITE question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.02 a.m.]

The worsening crisis at the Royal Hobart Hospital has been well documented. The failed former health minister, Michael Ferguson, operated in a state of perpetual denial about the pressures that Royal Hobart Hospital staff are forced to work under.

In 2017, the Royal Hobart Hospital finally introduced a new escalation plan, after multiple requests to declare a 'code yellow' or internal emergency were refused. Escalation protocols allow for more staff and senior decision-makers to be called in during times of peak demand.

Now it appears that under you, history is repeating itself, with reports that requests by the Launceston General Hospital staff to instigate a code yellow or internal emergency were ignored. The Auditor-General's report shows that the LGH was operating at its highest level of escalation 70 per cent of the time. With chaos becoming the new normal at the LGH, staff have called for the introduction of new escalation protocols similar to those at the RHH.

Are you listening to those Launceston General Hospital staff, and when will the new escalation protocols for the Launceston General Hospital be introduced?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. In her question she asked if I was listening. Yes, I am. I was at the hospital twice last week listening to clinicians and understanding the challenges that they have there.

I understand that the LGH has seen significant pressure in their emergency department of late. That is why we are working with clinicians to look for solutions. We have Access Solutions that we are rolling out. Indeed, we have capital developments at the LGH site - \$87 million worth of investment on the site, right now, to be able to open more beds. It is prudent to remember that it was the other side, when they were in government, that closed a ward at the LGH.

On this side of the House, and under the former minister, Mr Ferguson, we saw almost 240 more nurses, more FTEs at the LGH and more than 45 FTE doctors at the LGH.

I would like to be very clear that this side of the House has been responsive to the demand. I understand there is demand and we are listening, and that is why we are working with clinicians, both within the hospital, as well as working with community participants outside - whether that be GPs, whether that be aged care, or whether that be the Community Rapid Response, which we have seen rolled out in the northern region. We have seen a remarkable response in terms of the diversions from the emergency department as well as better patient outcomes.

In terms of escalation protocols, we empower our local hospital leaders with regards to escalation protocols. I rely on the professionals to make sure they have the tools available to them to be able to respond at times of need. It is not for politicians to say when something should/should not be escalated. I rely on the experts working within the Launceston General Hospital. I rely on local management, and they are empowered to make the best decisions for their hospital.

North West Regional Hospital - Rehabilitation Services

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Ms COURTNEY

[11.06 a.m.]

You are showing complete disregard for people living in our west coast, Circular Head and King Island communities by shutting eight rehabilitation beds at the North West Regional Hospital. This is despite a commitment by your government to keep these vital rehabilitation beds open. The failed former health minister, Michael Ferguson, without consultation, decided to shut them a month before the government claimed record funding in health and hospitals.

The north-west coast has an ageing and highly dispersed population, with a high incidence of chronic disease, and services must be enhanced, not downgraded. This change will mean more travel time for people living in our rural and regional communities, which is simply unacceptable. Understandably, members of the community are outraged over this short-sighted decision.

Will you listen to the community and reinstate the eight rehabilitation beds at the North West Regional Hospital?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I hope she was listening yesterday in parliament when I outlined what this Government is doing to invest in regional facilities within our health system across Tasmania. It is this side of the Chamber that is committed to delivering services for regional communities.

Yesterday I outlined a number of the capital and infrastructure programs that we are doing to make sure that service delivery is of the highest level across regional areas of Tasmania. This side of the Chamber has a clear commitment and we are delivering on that.

I want to be clear regarding the rehabilitation services on the north-west coast. This is about four more beds on the north-west coast delivering services for people on the north-west coast. This is investment in their region. This is more service, and a higher level of service, regarding clinicians for people on the north-west coast. The data speaks for itself regarding the number of people who would have otherwise been diverted to Launceston or Hobart for their treatment and who can now be treated on the north-west coast.

Mrs Rylah - Where is the travel there?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Mrs Rylah.

Ms COURTNEY - These are not only for the patients themselves being treated in their community, but also family members. This Government has a clear commitment to people in regional areas. This is about more services for people on the north-west coast. This is about higher levels of services for people on the north-west coast, so that people from those communities do not have to travel to Launceston or Hobart.

I am disappointed that the member does not welcome this initiative because at its very heart it is about service delivery for regional areas, improved services and more beds.

TasTAFE - Accreditation for Enrolled Nursing Course

Ms O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for EDUCATION and TRAINING, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.09 a.m.]

Back in April and in May of this year and again in Estimates, we raised questions about the lack of accreditation by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Board for the enrolled nursing course at TAFE. At that stage you admitted that accreditation was pending, because you needed to resolve issues, including staffing and resources, but that those matters would be addressed and accreditation achieved after you reapplied in July.

It is now almost November. Can you confirm that you still do not have accreditation for that course, and that to date you cannot advise prospective students when - or even if - the new enrolled course will commence, and that prospective students are told they can only register an interest with the hope that an information session might be provided early next year?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her interest in this matter. Of all of the people, it surprises me how anti-Labor is when it comes to TasTAFE and how much they are willing to criticise the 800 employees of TasTAFE so regularly. There is incessant negativity from them when it comes to TasTAFE. I say with a reasonable amount of good nature that I am surprised by it, but history would reveal that they abolished TasTAFE, so really, I should not be too surprised by that at all. We had the Tas Tomorrow reforms, the biggest educational disaster and I will be kind and say it was probably well intentioned, but it was certainly not well implemented whatsoever.

Mr Hodgman - Brilliant reform.

Madam SPEAKER - Premier, you are not helping.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am very proud of TasTAFE, the team of TasTAFE, the board -

Ms O'BYRNE - Point of order, Madam Speaker. I ask you to draw the minister's attention to the question, which is whether accreditation has been achieved for this very important course that needs to have -

Madam SPEAKER - Standing order 45?

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Okay. I have to ask you to be relevant, thank you, minister.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. When it comes to accreditation I commend the board of TasTAFE, the CEO, Jenny Dodd, the executive and all the 800 employees for their seven years accreditation from the national regulator, ASQA, which is fantastic. When it comes to the nursing regulator, ANMAC -

Mr O'Byrne - Here it is - three minutes to get to this.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. If you are not going to listen to the minister you will lose the question and I will ask him to sit down. Please let him finish.

Mr ROCKLIFF - It has probably taken three minutes but I want you to absorb the fact that this side of the Government very much supports TasTAFE and is very proud of their seven years accreditation. In the last 24 hours, ANMAC has notified TasTAFE that they will be re-accredited for their nursing delivery. We are very proud of them. They will be recommending the Nursing Midwifery Board of Australia endorse TasTAFE nursing registration at their next board meeting. That is a fantastic achievement in the face of such negativity of those opposite.

Recreational Boating and Fishing Facilities

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

[11.13 a.m.]

Can you please update the House on measures the Hodgman majority Liberal Government is taking to protect the Tasmanian way of life, particularly in relation to Tasmania's strong recreational boating and fishing community?

ANSWER

Madam Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, for his question. It is obviously the period of time when we receive annual reports and I am very pleased later today to be tabling the 2018-19 annual report from Marine and Safety Tasmania. They do a fantastic job looking after recreational boaters and fishers around our beautiful state, noting that Tasmania has one of the highest proportions of boat ownership in the country.

The Hodgman majority Liberal Government took the policy to last year's state election, which we won, to take recreational fishing and boating to the next level and make it even more attractive and possible for our 30 000 registered recreational vessel owners, which is actually 60 000 boat licence holders and our 100 000 recreational fishers. It is important that we invest to protect the safety and amenity of recreational facilities around our state.

I congratulate the team at MAST, particularly the CEO, Leah Morris, who does a great job and also her chair, Sue Smith. They have delivered the Government's plan to improve recreational boating and fishing facilities.

In view of the time, I will in summary point to the extra improvements at South Arm, Swan River, Lake Rowallan, Montagu, the Tailrace and Southport, and also at a range of locations there are now new personal watercraft fenders that have been installed. I am very pleased to advise that in the financial year we delivered on our commitment to invest in one of the most important regional marine facilities at the Nubeena jetty. This is a \$200 000 extension of the jetty to provide access for more and bigger vessels. This has also become more important strategically with the Port Arthur jetty becoming increasingly required for cruise boat visitors.

Anyone who has driven on the Great Eastern Drive could not help but notice the completion of the Prosser River mouth stabilisation project. That is a \$1.4 million project that has involved many contributors. It was completed in December with an \$800 000 contribution from the Hodgman majority Liberal Government and contributions from both MAST and the local council. I am pleased that this project is working to keep the river mouth open for vessels. That is despite the many naysayers. Not only has this project stopped the 60-year propagation of the river mouth to the north but it has also helped preserve Raspins Beach, de-risked damage to the drive and stemmed the need for regular and costly dredging. What a great project.

It is important that I emphasise that this is helping Tasmanians enjoy their state and enjoy the benefits of the growing economy, more people in work and the way of life that we want to support for Tasmanian families.

I want to wind up on an important subject and that is in relation to safety. As we continue to learn lessons, particularly when there are sad outcomes and tragedies on the water, MAST has put an increasing focus on safety. In 2018-19 MAST's key education campaign, Be Boatwise, was launched and the organisation has delivered a 45 per cent increase in the number of schools that have been visited under its water safety program. As well, MAST has continued to promote its incentive scheme to upgrade lifejackets to the new standard which comes into force very soon. Nick Duigan and Andrew Hart's commercials and amusing ways of engaging with the Tasmanian boating community is a great way to cut through what might at times seem like a boring message about safety when it is something that we need to be very mindful of because, unfortunately, there are still incidents on the water and loss of life. We need to do everything we can to prevent that.

In conclusion, Tasmanians should be proud of our state's nation-leading model of delivering improved marine infrastructure to ensure the safe operations of vessels and manage environmental relating to vessels all under our one roof of Marine and Safety Tasmania. MAST continues to deliver these services cost-effectively in our island state, where boating is, as the Liberal Government believe, essential for many people to our Tasmanian way of life.

Time expired.

PETITION

North West Regional Hospital - Rehabilitation Services

Ms Dow presented a petition signed by approximately 1878 citizens of Tasmania praying that the House to call on the Liberal Government to reopen the eight rehabilitation beds they have closed at the North West Regional Hospital to ensure equitable access to rehabilitation services on the north-west coast.

Petition received.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE (STATE EMPLOYEES) AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 47)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Ms Archer** and read the first time.

POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT (REPEAL OF BEGGING) BILL 2019 (No. 49)

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Shelton** and read the first time.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

TasTAFE

[11.26 a.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: TasTAFE.

I appreciate the opportunity to raise this issue and I look forward to the minister providing some more information. It is welcome news that accreditation has been achieved. It would be useful for the House to know when that board meeting will take place, when students will be advised of the course dates and when the course will actually commence. What we have is a significant issue in the way our TasTAFE is being resourced.

The minister can stand up here and say we are being mean about TasTAFE and their staff. We are the voice of so many of those staff who are utterly frustrated at the significant lack of resources and funding and support they have received. That frustration is playing out in many ways. One of those is the fact that we lost nursing teaching staff; that there was not enough staff to teach that course. That is one of the reasons it was so difficult and that accreditation was suspended because there was not enough staff to teach the course and there were problems with the facilities.

That matter has had an impact and it is all well and good to say it is okay now because we have got this note in the last 24 hours saying we have been reaccredited, but we have lost an intake, or maybe two intakes in that time. That is a significant issue.

Ms O'Connor - Ms O'Byrne, can I ask you to speak up a little bit, thanks? Are you sick?

Ms O'BYRNE - No, I do not think I am speaking quietly, though.

Ms O'Connor - Okay. I cannot hear a word you are saying. I will put my glasses on and I might hear you better.

Ms O'BYRNE - Madam Deputy Speaker, would you mind if I face this way so Ms O'Connor can hear me? I think it is because I am directing my conversation through the Speaker? I am happy to go straight to the minister as well.

Minister, as a result of that under resourcing and under support, particularly in areas like the enrolled nursing course, they do not have enough staff. You do not have enough staff to teach the course so getting reaccreditation was very difficult; that was one of the things at which you failed. That means that in the time it has taken since this problem was identified, since the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council - ANMAC - advised that you would have to teach your course out, we have lost intakes of students.

There are still significant concerns about the quality of teaching that is being provided to those who are being taught at the moment in the existing course. There were reports in the media earlier this week from staff - staff who are too frightened to speak publicly because this is a punitive government, a vicious government, a government that does not want to hear criticism. Even former staff are nervous about giving their names when they raise these concerns. That is something that you need to consider because one of the strongest ways to ensure we have good and robust public services is the ability to have frank and honest conversations about the quality of those services, to not have people too scared to raise concerns. I wonder if they were not as frightened these issues may have been dealt with, so we would not have lost an intake of students because it would have been clearer that there were problems.

Another issue that was raised in that article was the marking. We talked about this Estimates in June this year. There were some 700 hours of marking not done. Whilst the media article talks about concerns in 2017, those concerns have played out in 2018. They have played out in 2019 because students who were attempting to continue their work had no idea how they had gone on other work. Marking had not been done as far back as September when we spoke in June. That is significantly concerning. TasTAFE had to spend additional money to get other people to come in and mark because the resourcing of the course was so poor.

That goes to the broader problem we have with TAFE. The minister says we are critical of TAFE. We actually support TAFE. We support TAFE students. We support TAFE staff who are desperately calling out for more support. There are not enough teaching hours to do the coursework. There are not enough teachers to do the coursework. As a result, students are not getting the opportunity to participate.

We have lost at least one intake of enrolled nursing students, possibly two, during this process. The minister might be able to clarify when the next intake might take place as a result of finally re-achieving accreditation.

It is not just nursing where we have that problem. We know we have that problem in IT. We know we have that problem across the trades. I am getting really tired of the minister saying, you do not like TAFE. We do. It is not a matter in the end of liking them. It is a matter of whether or not we are resourcing them to provide the education and training that our people need in this state; to make sure it is meeting the standards it needs to meet. We need to make sure that it is relevant to the industries that are seeking jobs, to make sure that young people, particularly when they contact TAFE and say, can I do a course, are given an affirmative response.

If you rang yesterday to find out about the TAFE course you would have been told that there was not an enrolled nurse TAFE course to be done, so how many students have we lost in that time period? What about all those construction students we talked about last time we were here? People had applied to do the certificate III in construction, a substantial number of students, and were told that there would only be 12 students accepted because that is all you had the teaching resources for. They were then encouraged to do another course that was not even being run either because you do not have the teaching staff.

The solution for Launceston that you have come up with is great because at the beginning of next year you said it will be moving out to Alanvale. That is already unravelling, minister, because staff were told yesterday that it is not possible to move out there at the end of the year. It is going to take at least until the middle of next year before that can be progressed. I know there is pressure on them to find something to move out there simply to make good on the political promise but that does not deal with the significant issues of resourcing TAFE.

You have said you have borrowed \$4 million from Treasury to do some upgrade work at Alanvale while you wait for the sale of the building. You still have not told us who you have spoken to about that. You still have not told us what conversations are taking place around that, but \$4 million is also not enough to do what needs to be done if you are going to make that site purpose fit. If that site is going to be what you have said it is, it is going to cost substantially more than \$4 million.

Perhaps when the minister stands he can tell us what it is going to cost to get TAFE at Alanvale fully up to standard, when that work is going to take place, what courses will be moved and whether or not each course will be provided? Will we get the same depth of courses and will they be appropriately resourced, because that is a significant issue for TAFE? It is a significant issue that you are going to move them out of the city at a time when you are also standing hand in glove with the university saying we have to move into the city if we want to make education relative and obtainable for everybody. If we want young people in Launceston to know about education the university has to sit in the middle of town but TAFE does not. Minister, you have so many questions to answer about what you are doing in this space.

[11.32 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Minister for Education and Training) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the matter of public importance. Of course TasTAFE and vocational education and training is definitely a matter of public importance.

Despite a five-year decline in apprentice and training activity around the nation, Tasmania continues to perform better than the Australian average across most key indicators. In the 12 months to March 2019, trade apprenticeship commencements in Tasmania increased by 10.4 per cent, I am advised, compared to the previous year, while trade commencements for Australia decreased by 0.6 per cent over the same period. Tasmania is bucking the national trend, which is very pleasing

indeed. I applaud all those involved in Skills Tasmania, private training organisations and our public training organisation TasTAFE.

As I said previously, this year TasTAFE secured seven years' accreditation from the national regulator, ASQA, the maximum amount. Some members might want to reflect on what happened in the Labor state of South Australia when it came to TasTAFE and their re-accreditation. It was a disaster but because of the hard work and diligence of the CEO Jenny Dodd, the board, the executive and all in TasTAFE, seven years accreditation was secured. You do not receive seven years' worth of re-accreditation, the maximum term possible, unless you are performing at the top of the national regulator standards.

We recognise that there is more to do and we have made significant commitments to TasTAFE, particularly when it comes to infrastructure. We recognised when we came to government the deplorable state that our schools were in and the massive need for investment when it comes to improving our school environment, so that the infrastructure can reflect twenty-first century ways of learning. I congratulate TasTAFE.

The news from the nursing regulator, ANMAC, is also very positive. In the last 24 hours ANMAC notified TasTAFE it will be re-accredited for its nursing delivery and will be recommending the Nursing Midwifery Board of Australia endorse TasTAFE nursing registration at their next board meeting. The national regulator for nursing has endorsed the standard and quality of delivery for nursing at TasTAFE and they are saying that the standard of teaching delivery and assessment meets the national standard.

I congratulate all TasTAFE staff on achieving this accreditation, something that none of us can ignore. This is a result of a lot of hard work, but we know there is more to do. It does no-one any good and it does not do the morale within TasTAFE any good when those opposite continue to talk TasTAFE down. Scaremongering does not help our students or our teachers. It does not help our community engagement with education and talking down the success of our public provider is not a policy position.

We would welcome a policy position from those opposite, such as the policy we took to the last state election, including \$5 million into a centre of excellence for agriculture at Freer Farm, a much-needed resource. There is funding for the water and trades centre of excellence at Clarence. That is a fantastic initiative. We also have around \$1.5 million, or just under, for the Providore Place hospitality training as well, which is open and by all accounts doing very well.

The accreditation for nursing by the national regulator is a testament to the leadership of TasTAFE's CEO Jenny Dodd and her team. When I speak of her team, I speak of everyone in TasTAFE. They are transforming nursing delivery at TasTAFE. For example, TasTAFE recently recruited a head of nursing to manage all teams statewide. This is a new role and will coordinate and standardise delivery across Tasmania. I am also advised that TasTAFE recently recruited a work placement coordinator, again another new role, who will work with industry to ensure more student work placements can be achieved, given the expansion of nursing delivery.

We are backing up this transformation with investment. The budget clearly highlights that we have provided an additional \$2.9 million for more teachers and more training places in priority industries. For nursing it will see seven new nursing teachers and create an additional 75 places in TasTAFE's Diploma of Nursing qualifications statewide and this is a massive 45 per cent increase on current student levels. Our investment in nursing does not stop there.

We are all well aware of the age of TasTAFE's Launceston city campus, but only this side of the House, it would seem, recognises the cost to update those buildings would be enormous and would never eventuate in a contemporary learning environment. As there is no space to increase the capacity in the city, we are moving to the Alanvale campus, which will receive a \$4 million upgrade to improve learning opportunities for students.

I do not have such a dim view of the Alanvale campus. I toured it recently and had a great tour and I believe it is a wonderful learning environment. Yes, it needs some work and \$4 million will go a long way. The redevelopment will include extensive classroom refurbishments, new student amenities, upgraded library facilities and a new fit-for-purpose practice rooms for nursing courses. This move will allow an additional \$1 million to be spent on updating the refurbishing facilities at TasTAFE's Clarence campus as well.

Let us get some facts straight. This state Government supports TasTAFE and is investing in TasTAFE. Since 2015 we have increased recurrent funding to TasTAFE from \$73.5 million to \$76.5 million in the 2018-19 financial year, which represents approximately 80 per cent of the state's training budget.

Time expired.

[11.39 a.m.]

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to respond to today's MPI. TasTAFE remains a great institution and we are rebuilding, transforming and providing it with resources and leadership to make it even stronger so it can deliver even more. After a seven-year registration from the national regulator, all those opposite can do is talk TasTAFE down. Getting seven years accreditation does not happen by accident. We know and have continuously said that TasTAFE is a smart operator, delivering quality training and education. Seven-year accreditation is an endorsement of their standing and we should be supporting TasTAFE.

Again, we are hearing nothing but fearmongering, especially when it comes to nursing training. As the Minister for Education and Training has announced, TasTAFE has secured reaccreditation for its nursing program. What an accolade, what a great thing for TasTAFE.

The national nursing training regulator has said that TasTAFE does meet the national standards, and this is as strong an endorsement of TasTAFE's nursing training as you can get. How those opposite us think that TasTAFE can be in such a dreadful position but are also aware of the ASQA and ANMAC accreditation is bizarre. The cognitive dissonance is unrivalled.

We recognise there is more to do. The continual commentary on the TasTAFE Launceston campus move and verballing on nurse delivery is typical from those with no plan. Remember, it was Labor who destroyed TasTAFE when they were last in government. We have no idea what they stand for. Can they tell us where they want Launceston nursing students to study next year? Can you tell us how much they want to invest in renovating the Launceston city campus to keep it open? How much do you want to spend on Launceston? Can you tell us how many students they want to turn away from nursing in Launceston city because the campus is too small? It is unsurprising that, again, they have failed to support good ideas for our public training provider, and lack the strategic thinking. The lack of policies is astounding.

Scaremongering does not help our students. It does not help our teachers, and it does not help our community engage with education. Talking down the success of our public provider is not a policy position. As those opposite are aware, TasTAFE CEO, Jenny Dodd, and Chair, former auditor-general Mike Blake, are doing a fantastic job, as we have seen. Seven years reaccreditation with ASQA, and reaccreditation of nursing. Tasmania is achieving the highest completion rates for trainees and apprentices in the nation. Given TasTAFE trained the majority of those students, that is a strong endorsement of our public provider.

We have delivered on our election commitments, such as the Drysdale training facility in Devonport's Providore Place, both under budget and ahead of schedule, and as the minister said, operating now. We are delivering. We have continued the remarkable student success on the international platform at the World Skills events and maintain fantastic feedback results, with over 88 per cent of employers and students satisfied with the training.

Those opposite have little to shout about when it comes to supporting training. The Tasmania Tomorrow reforms were a disgrace. Under Labor and the Greens, the number of people commencing apprenticeships actually declined by 40 per cent, as revealed in the Skills Institute 2013 annual report. What a tragedy for those people. Shackling TasTAFE with a starting debt of \$2.5 million was an embarrassment and an indignity. We know those opposite lost more than 4000 traineeship and apprenticeship positions statewide, and did nothing to reverse the concerning trend. Four thousand - that is four and three zeroes - apprentices and trainee jobs gone.

The truth is, while claiming to be a friend of young Tasmanians, Labor's track record of job and opportunity destruction speaks for itself. They have zero credibility on this issue.

We all hear from those opposite the empty promises like fee-free TAFE. Their sole policy is not only uncosted, it lasts only 12 months and has so few details, we do not even know how many teachers are needed, and at what cost. What an absolute joke. It is a policy by press release at the best - a 'copy and paste' of a disastrous policy of Victorian Labor.

Ms O'Byrne - Why is it disastrous? They are funding it; they have a massive uptake.

Mrs RYLAH - They had to rescue it from the budget. In stark contrast, the Hodgman Liberal Government has taken pragmatic steps to support learners, apprenticeships and trainees, and what we are seeing is positive signs on the back of a strong economy. Tasmania's training system is strong, and the statistics speak for themselves. In the 12 months to March 2019, trade apprenticeship commencements in Tasmania increased by 10.4 per cent compared to the previous year, while trade commencements in Australia decreased by 0.6 per cent over the same period.

In the 12 months to March 2019, the total number of apprenticeships and traineeship commencements in Tasmania increased by 5.7 per cent compared to the previous 12 months, to 5140 new commencements. Nationally, total commencements decreased by 2.7 per cent over the same period. These numbers do not happen by accident.

This government has overseen a huge positive change to the Tasmanian economy, and we are directing significant investment into skills development. We are the only party that can be trusted with TasTAFE.

[11.46 a.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this matter of public importance because it is something I am passionate about. I take umbrage at the assertions of those

opposite that we are criticising TasTAFE, criticising the hard-working staff of TasTAFE, the board and the executive. We are not. We are holding the Government to account. You are the government. You do very well to reflect less on us, and look more at your own achievements and your own plans for the future of Tasmania and making sure that people have a good, robust vocational education and training system in Tasmania that enables them a solid pathway to employment. That should be a key priority of governments.

There might be some good economic indicators in Tasmania right now, but our unemployment indicators are still poor. We know that those in regional areas struggle most when it comes to under-employment. Just this week we have seen unemployment figures in the north-west of the state rise. That is concerning because there are a number of key projects on the horizon for the north-west and the north of the state.

For Tasmania's economic prosperity to continue, we need to have continued investment in skills and training. Industry, and small to medium enterprise, all rely heavily on a highly skilled workforce. For example, new industry development across the sectors of advanced manufacturing requires a flexible training system that can work with industry, meet their needs and provide flexible training opportunities for people within industry. We know that our local industries have changed significantly over a number of years, and there is an opportunity for new sectors of growth, predominantly around the health and human services sector.

There needs to be targeted investment in skills and training in Tasmania across key sectors of growth that will enable people to get a job, earn a living and provide for their families. TasTAFE, as our public vocational education and training provider, has an important part to play in that. For you to say it is us putting down TasTAFE and what is currently happening within TasTAFE, I draw the attention of those opposite to the Launceston TasTAFE campus. It is *The Examiner* that puts it very succinctly in their editorial when they say:

Public vocational education, in Tasmanian public provider TasTAFE, is failing its students and that has not been more evident than in the countless stories emerging over the past fortnight. Course delays, cancellations, students left to teach themselves and assignments being marked up to six months after submission are all things that have been uncovered during *The Examiner's* investigation of TasTAFE over the past fortnight.

Stories of students having to teach themselves, or modules being taught entirely online, are not positive images for TasTAFE, as vocational education prides itself on being hands-on and caters for students who enjoy a different style of learning.

While much has been made by the powers-that-be in Tasmanian and federal parliament about the fact TasTAFE has plans to sell and close the Launceston city campus and consolidate its courses at Alanvale, the discussion so far has failed to hit the nail on the head about what is truly wrong with TasTAFE's model of education - and that is the responsibility of government to be strategic.

You have your infrastructure plans, which are insipid at best, but you do not have a long-term plan for skills and training in Tasmania.

You have an MOU with the university. We have not heard anything about that in recent times and yet that strategic partnership is critically important, particularly across regional Tasmania where

we see the introduction of associate degrees which will be in competition with TasTAFE. There is a need to look more closely at what the model of delivery will be in metropolitan centres but also -

Mrs Rylah - You do not support associate degrees?

Ms DOW - I do, absolutely, but I am outlining that there are different players entering the market. It is important that there are strong pathways from TasTAFE offerings into associate degrees or that TasTAFE offerings are not watered down across regional areas because of associate degrees.

The university is moving into the cities to help grow small business, to revitalise CBD centres; as we know retail is changing significantly across the country and across the state. One initiative is about making our cities, our regional cities, vibrant and diverse and having students, yet you are moving students out to Alanvale out of the city. That goes against the grain of that philosophy as well.

I am a strong supporter of associate degrees and have been heavily involved with that through my role in local government and the development of those and the campuses, particularly in Burnie. It does pose a question around TasTAFE and what TasTAFE -

Mr Gutwein - She likes to have a bet each way.

Ms DOW - I am not having a bet each way. I am highlighting what some of the considerations are around vocational education and training. There is also the extension of years 11 and 12, which also have similar offerings to TasTAFE.

Mr Gutwein - I am sorry, but it sounds like you are having a bet each way.

Ms DOW - I am not having a bet each way.

Mr Gutwein - Well, that is what it sounds like.

Ms DOW - Well, I am not.

The other question that the minister has not answered is around the Alanvale campus and just how much that upgrade in its entirety will cost and when the nursing course will commence?

The other question that we have is around the Drysdale development at Claremont College and when that will happen? This was a commitment at the last state election.

It is essential. As I meet with local industries and with local government, skills and training is the number one issue they raise with me. They want to offer additional education and training opportunities in their municipalities and TasTAFE has an important role to play in that, alongside other parties such as the University of Tasmania and their offerings as they move into the associate degrees and the university college model of delivery across regional Tasmania.

This is about advocacy. This is not about scaremongering. It is not about putting down staff, teachers, the board or the executive. This is about advocacy. This is about advocacy for the importance of vocational education and training in Tasmania. It is about making sure that TasTAFE, as our key provider, has the resources and the contemporary infrastructure.

Time expired.

[11.53 a.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, there are matter of public importance debates where I wonder what we have achieved by having the debate and today is one of them. We have the Opposition making some very valid points about issues with TasTAFE funding, resourcing, the fact that it has been letting down students, that two intakes of nursing have been lost. Valid points are made. Then the minister gets up, and the member for Braddon, and just talks about how great they are without any real reflection on the points that have been made.

Mrs Rylah - I talked about nursing.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I sat through this one and waited until the end because I wanted to hear what everyone said. It would be much more helpful to these debates if when the minister stands up he acknowledges that there is much to do instead of -

A member - I did.

Ms O'CONNOR - But the minister talked pretty much the whole time, as did you, Mrs Rylah, about Labor. To be fair, Mrs Rylah, Labor was in government five-and-a-half years ago and it was not a federal Labor government that cut the funds, the guts out of the TAFE system in Australia. It was not a Labor government. It was a Liberal government, a Liberal-National coalition that started the rot of public skills and vocational training providers in this country. It was the proliferation of our private training providers, a lot of whom in the past, it has been very clear, were a little bit dodgy, a little bit unregulated. There was an undermining of the TAFE system in this country that goes right back to Tony Abbott as prime minister.

Mr Rockliff - The 2012 Labor policy did a lot of damage to the VET system right across the country.

Ms O'Byrne - We recognise that, but then we sought to resolve it and you would not support the resolution of it. We can move through this genuinely.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Both members have made their contribution. I ask that the member be allowed to make a contribution.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It was wonderful to see in here this morning English language teacher, Ginny Annels, and her students from the migrant learning program at TasTAFE. It was a reminder to us all of the enormous importance of a publicly-funded, well-resourced, robustly politically supported public skills and training provider. The young people who come to this island from other parts of the world, with limited English language skills are incredibly well supported through that program. I pay respect to Ginny Annels and the outstanding work that she does, also the work that she does with students against racism. It is a reminder to us all that you need to have good, publicly-funded providers like TasTAFE.

We also need to make sure that our TAFE system is equipping young Tasmanians for a very different future, for a future where there will be increased automation of a lot of sectors, which have been jobs-rich sectors in the past. We do have to teach our young people the skills that will allow them to go into the jobs that robots cannot take. We believe that should be a real focus of our public education and training system in Tasmania.

As we know, the areas of skill shortage for Tasmania in the future are pressing. They are in areas like aged and disability care and health services. Employment in health services is growing

enormously. There has been a big lag in training up the people to go into the aged and disability care systems. We are dealing with a very significant shortfall of employees for those sectors. Given they have been in government for five-and-a-half years, that is on the head of this Government.

We also need to be making sure that when we invest in training people to go into the construction sector, that we are giving them green skills in construction. We do not want to just keep building houses and buildings like we used to in the past. We cannot do that because, as we know, there are a whole lot of risks associated with global heating. We need to be really clever about the construction sector and how we are building homes that keep people and communities safe.

We should also recognise that some of the most vital work to be done in this century will be in the area of landscape restoration, of repairing some of the damage of the 20th century. Wouldn't it be fantastic if not only we had the centre of excellence at TasTAFE in aged and disability care, but also in landscape restoration? We really could be a beacon to the world of how to repair some of the damage of the past and skill young people up to be part of that vital repair work.

I have a question for the minister which he is not going to be able to answer, necessarily, because he has already spoken. As I understand it there was an allocation in this year's budget of \$200 000 for TasTAFE's involvement in the new training college at Kangaroo Bay. Is that right, Mr Rockliff? Did we? What happened?

Mr Rockliff - If you provide a question on notice I can get that question answered for you.

Ms O'CONNOR - But is that allocation still with TasTAFE, or is it for Claremont College now, or is it for Kangaroo Bay?

Mr Rockliff - I suggest you write to me on that because it is with me. It is not with TasTAFE now. Maybe you can drop me a note.

Ms O'CONNOR - As we know, the University of Tasmania has made a decision to support the Kangaroo Bay hospitality college, which is being built by Shandong Chambroad. I know there are concerns within the community that three or four potential providers were given an opportunity to partner in that Kangaroo Bay development and chose not to. As I understand it, one of them was Drysdale, and yet UTAS has signed up. I believe there are some legitimate questions about why UTAS would attach itself to that development and how much benefit will come to young Tasmanians in rural and regional areas through that college.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPERANNUATION REFORM AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 41)

Second Reading

Resumed from 29 October 2019 (page 94)

Mrs RYLAH (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, Tasmanians can be assured that under the Hodgman Liberal majority Government public sector superannuation is being well managed. Our

2016 reforms of the Tasmanian public sector superannuation partners have proven to be successful, with positive feedback from members' and employees' associations.

Research from Chant West recently rated Tasplan as the fifth-best performing growth fund for 2018-19, but I also note of significant interest that Tasplan also reduced their administration fees in the last year, contrary to many large public funds which have in fact increased fees nationally. Tasplan is achieving competitive fees and strong returns to members. This is good news for Tasmanian public superannuants who have had their superannuation with Tasplan. In fact, the reforms to our public sector superannuation in this state have helped to strengthen both members' interests and also the finance and insurance sector services industry.

Since these groundbreaking reforms, a number of matters have been identified to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the new arrangement. The current bill before the House amends the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Act to more effectively support the administration arrangements of public sector superannuation in Tasmania. The bill reduces red tape.

Superannuation as an asset class is significant, as it creates the assets from which we can generate an income to support us in retirement. Your superannuation is personally important. In some cases, superannuation can also help you in the case of illness, injury and disability if you select to have those covers. The bottom line is, everyone needs to know their own superannuation, what risks you need to cover, when and what you need to do to pay the cost of that protection, and what investment risk versus growth you are comfortable to hold.

I will take this time to remind all workers, including public sector workers, to take the time to read the letter that comes in the mail every year or is delivered to your email inbox. For people operating a self-managed fund, make sure you understand the report prepared for you by your fund administrator and accountant each year and review your circumstances and needs. Make sure the settings of your superannuation are right. Take the time to understand the fees and charges. Take the time to understand the implications of having multiple superannuation accounts and whether it may be better to have one account.

In many cases, seeking practical financial advice can be very important. It is never too late to look at your super. Taking stock and regularly reviewing the superannuation fund for our public sector employees is exactly what this Government is doing. We are walking the walk. The Government is looking to make improvements to address efficiency and effectiveness that is prudent, essential and timely.

A key point to note at this point is that through the Government's reforms it is managing public sector superannuation in this state sensibly and responsibly, which cannot be said of the Opposition. Let us look back and reflect on what happened. When it comes to superannuation, let us consider what those opposite did and why Tasmanians are lucky to have the Hodgman Liberal majority Government in charge of their retirement. In an act of absolute fiscal vandalism, the Bartlett Labor government spent the money set aside in the future fund for public sector superannuation obligations saved and set aside to fund the deficit by the Liberals. Mr Bartlett termed it 'getting the hay out of the barn'. What he should have said was that he was then burning the barn down and destroying the farm too.

Mr O'Byrne - So you had \$200 million in the black and now you're heading towards a billion dollars in net debt. How's that working for you?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Mrs RYLAH - Labor cannot be trusted when it comes to public sector superannuation. You still have no long-term plans for Tasmania and you have no credibility on keeping the economy strong or the budget in surplus.

Mr O'Byrne interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. The member has made his contribution.

Mrs RYLAH - I will now turn to consultation on the bill.

Opposition members interjecting.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. I ask the members to allow the member to make her contribution in silence, please.

Mrs RYLAH - In closing, in my support for these important and timely changes proposed in this bill, I will reflect on the consultation that has been undertaken. The bill has been widely consulted on, which is the hallmark of this Government, and those consulted are positive about this bill. This included all relevant unions and employee associations, specifically the Superannuation Commission, Inland Fishery Service, Private Forests Tasmania, Forest Practices Authority, Marine and Safety Tasmania, TasTAFE, State Fire Commission, United Firefighters Union of Australia (Tasmania Branch), Ambulance Tasmania, Health and Community Services Union Tasmania, Unions Tasmania, Community and Public Sector Union, Police Association of Tasmania, Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Incorporated, Australian Education Union, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Retired Police Association of Tasmania and the Law Society of Tasmania.

This change is an important one. Tasmanians can be assured that under the Hodgman Liberal majority Government, public sector superannuation is being well managed.

[12.07 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not going to speak for very long on this bill. It is a matter of record that we supported the original Public Sector Superannuation Reform Bill and had a number of conversations with people working in the superannuation and finance sector before coming to the conclusion that it was an improvement on the legislative arrangement that had been in place before. It certainly brought more resilience and kept superannuation accounts safer by moving away from the old RBF super and into a more streamlined Tasplan superannuation regime.

I want to briefly touch on something Mrs Rylah said: consultation is not a hallmark of this Government.

Mrs Rylah - Yes, it is.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, the people of Westbury would disagree with you very strongly because they were not consulted when your Government decided to plonk a prison in their backyard. The people of Tasmania such as fly fishers, bushwalkers and other conservationists and people who love the wilderness were not consulted about any expressions of interest development proposals

which have come before government. There has been no consultation. In fact the only consultation that was really part of the EOI process was the consultation that led to the rewriting of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, which specifically enabled expressions of interest developments and the more than 7000 submissions opposing changes to the TWWHA plan were ignored.

There is nothing that this Government does in relation to consultation that is meaningful, integrated and in any way other than politically convenient. You can consult on the easy stuff like this legislation -

Mrs Rylah - Like Westbury prison, unlike the EOI at Lake Malbena.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, the member has made her contribution.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, after the fact, or you can use consultation as a delaying tactic, as the Liberals in government have in relation to electoral reform.

All of this stuff about we have to consult, we have to consult; 18 months after an election which was bought by the gambling industry, there is no clarity that we will have anything like robust electoral laws in Tasmania at the next state election. You are consulting into the never-never, and, in fact, there was an almost three or four-month further delay to the development of any reforms to Tasmania's electoral regime because of an obscure High Court decision.

I am in pain today, but I am more pained by having to listen to this sort of rubbish that we got from you just then, Mrs Rylah, when you claimed that consultation is at the core of what your Government does. It is completely untrue.

I have been back to the original act that we passed and recognise that these really are inevitable consequential amendments. Once you put a major piece of structural legislative reform in, there is always a need to tidy up the act once you have seen how it has taken effect and has been implemented. We have no concerns with any of the amendments that we are dealing with today, no concerns at all. We regard this as a mechanical tidy up bill following on from a substantial, and I would say, positive reform, for public servants in Tasmania.

[12.12 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Treasurer) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank all members for their contributions, some more relevant than others. I thank members for their support for the bill. The Leader of the Greens in her summing up nailed it in terms of the fact that when substantial legislative changes are made, there is often and usually a requirement and a need for minor tidy-ups and that is what is appearing here.

A number of matters were raised and I will deal with them based on the advice that I have. Regarding the heads of agreement matter that was raised and compliance with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, the compliance requirement in the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Act is being amended. Currently, the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Act provides that the Superannuation Commission must comply with the heads of government agreement in relation to superannuation. The effect of this drafting is to place a higher obligation on the Superannuation Commission to comply with the principles of the agreement and the obligations of the state as a party to the agreement. This includes reporting and clients' responsibilities to the

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority which are not considered to be relevant in the context of the government guaranteed Defined Benefit Scheme.

It is noted that states and territories are currently required to comply to conform with the principles of the heads of the government agreements to the best of their endeavours and ensure that members accrued benefits and exempt public sector superannuation schemes are protected. We are proposing to amend the functions and powers of the Superannuation Commission to provide that the commission must have regard to the heads of government agreement, rather than adhere to compliance, as to the reasons I have just explained. This was the intended agreement in respect of exempt public sector superannuation schemes which is, in terms of the intent of that agreement because, to be frank, a defined benefits scheme is a completely different vehicle to an accumulation scheme.

In terms of retrospectivity, there is a question raised there, and, like you, I find any retrospectivity is of concern. We do not want to see an individual lose their rights or, in the case of superannuation, their money. My advice is that there will be no reduction in entitlements as a result. While this amendment will be required to have effect retrospectively from 31 March 2016, agencies have continued to calculate superannuation on the same basis as they were previously, which was the intention of the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Act. Therefore, there will be no financial impact as a result of the amendment.

Mr O'Byrne - Okay, just backing in the current practice.

Mr GUTWEIN - It just backs it in.

Regarding the dispute process, I took the opportunity last night to read Part 2 of the act, and that will not be changing. There is no change at all to that as is currently understood and as is carried out in practice.

In terms of consultation, it was an interesting matter raised by Mr O'Byrne. I will touch on - and again, I do not want to split hairs about understandings of conversations - but in the briefing, Treasury's view is that they made it very clear that they would consult on both the amendments and the regulations. They are firmly of the view that they did not commit to doing that concurrently. It was a matter of when the regulations were available that they would be consulted upon and again, as regulations are a disallowable instrument, it is understood that we will go through that process of consultation. If there are any issues then they can be dealt with.

I want to touch on correspondence and contact. Last night I had a look at who was contacted. I understand that there was some issue in terms of the original letter that was sent. To be clear, the initial consultation covered United Voice; the Association of Independent Retirees; Australian Services Union; the Australian Workers Union; the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union; Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; Independent Education Union; Pensioners Union, Association of Tasmania, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union; the Shop Distributive Allied Employees Association, and other stakeholders. Obviously the Superannuation Commission; Mercer Consulting; Link Group Fund Administration; Inland Fisheries Service; Private Forests; Forest Practices Authority; Marine and Safety; TasTAFE; State Fire Commission; the United Firefighters Union of Australia the Tasmania Branch; Ambulance Tasmania; Health and Community Services Union; Unions Tasmania; the CPSU; Police Association; the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc; Australian Education Union; Australian Nursing and

Midwifery Federation; Retired Police Association of Tasmania; the Law Society of Tasmania and also, without listing every government business, every government business as well.

I do understand, and the point was made, in terms of the contact with the federal arm of a union, to be clear the advice that I have is that the original correspondence was sent to Tom Lynch at the postal address on file from previous correspondence with the CPSU. Interestingly enough, the letter was returned to Treasury unopened.

Mr O'Byrne - That has not changed in over a decade, but anyway.

Mr GUTWEIN - It was then readdressed and sent to the Tasmanian regional secretary of the CPSU.

Mr O'Byrne - That is a different bloke from Tom Lynch.

Mr GUTWEIN - Which may be why -

Mr O'Byrne - The regional secretary is the federal CPSU.

Mr GUTWEIN - Is the federal, which is the point that you made yesterday, but I want to make the point very clearly and I will put on the record the GPO box. If that has changed then perhaps someone might advise us. The original correspondence was sent to Tom at GPO Box 54, Hobart, but it was returned unopened, which surprises me.

Mr O'Byrne - You mucked it up twice then. You sent it to the wrong post box and then you sent it to federal CPSU.

Ms O'Connor - Is that the wrong post office?

Mr GUTWEIN - No, we sent it to the address that we had on file that in the past has worked. This time, for some reason, it was sent back to Treasury and then we did our very best to ensure that the correspondence was received by the CPSU.

There are a couple of matters raised by Ms Ogilvie, who I note is not here for this. I will read it into *Hansard* and if there are further questions then the member can speak to me later. This was in relation to the five RBF sub-funds and I will list those. In terms of the contributory scheme, there is the main RBF scheme with approximately 4800 members; the SFCSS which has approximately 85; TASSS, approximately 110; PRBF, no members; and PSF, 20 life members. The five sub-funds do not sit under the same trust deed. The governing rules of the contributory scheme are contained in the Public Sector Superannuation Reform Regulations 2017, the PSSR regulations. The SFCSS and TASSS currently have their own trust deeds and the amendments proposed in PSSR Amendments Bill 2019 would enable the governing rules of those schemes to be incorporated into the PSSR Regulations 2017.

I will read this word for word because it is reasonably complicated and if the member has further questions she can raise them with me. The question was, 'does the beneficiary nomination process sit within the sub-funds or does it sit at the deed level?'. My advice is that the RBF schemes do not have a beneficiary nomination process in the same way that other superannuation schemes do. The only elections that members of the contributory scheme, the SFCSS and the TASSS may make in relation to the death benefit - that is, in the event that they die prior to retirement - is that

the death benefit is paid to their estate. If the member does not make such an election their death benefit will be paid to their surviving partner as defined in the scheme's governing rules if they have one. If the member does not have a surviving partner the death benefit is paid to their estate. This process is currently contained in the governing rules for each scheme. That broadly covers what Ms Ogilvie was looking for.

There is one other point I will make. In terms of the amendments broadly, it is not considered that the amendments will provide a high degree of flexibility for the trustee to make determinations in relation to paying some money to widows and widowers during the process of sorting out where the benefits of the fund go. The options for the trustee on the death of a member or pensioner are very limited. The proposed amendments are designed to ensure continuity of an income stream for the surviving partner of an RBF life pensioner and avoid creating additional stress for them. We have had this matter raised with us in the past and this administrative matter has arisen and we found that surviving partners can sometimes be delayed. The amendments in the bill will take care of that for an interim period whilst these matters are sorted out.

With that, I think I have covered the issues members raised. I thank all members for their support for the legislation. It is sensible legislation and simply ensures that in an administrative sense the scheme can be administered as one would expect it to be.

Bill read the second time.

Bill read the third time.

DOG CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2019 (No. 43)

Second Reading

[12.24 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons - Minister for Local Government - 2R) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

The Tasmanian Government is taking action to protect our sensitive wildlife from the threat of dog attacks. This bill specifically targets irresponsible dog owners. The new offence provisions and stronger penalties contained in the bill send a clear message: if your dog injures or kills sensitive wildlife like little penguins, then there will be serious consequences. The Government has listened, both to the experts and to the broader community, in responding to the recent spate of dog attacks in little penguin rookeries.

This bill forms one part of the Government's broader response to the work of the expert Tasmanian Penguin Advisory Group, which recommended a review of penalties under legislation associated with dog attacks on wildlife. We have also been directing significant resources towards research, education and mitigation to help enhance protections for little penguins. Key initiatives include:

- working with Cradle Coast National Resource Management (NRM) in collaboration with key stakeholders on a specific project to coordinate monitoring and management of penguins across the state;
- working with community and NRM groups to enhance penguin habitat through weed removal and the establishment of artificial nesting boxes on both reserved and private land;
- mitigation of roadkill through the installation of culverts and roadside exclusion fencing;
- installation of little penguin viewing platforms to manage visitor impacts; and
- deployment of discovery rangers over the summer months at popular little penguin colonies on reserve land to provide education services and protect birds.

This bill creates a new offence in the act where a dog injures or kills wildlife that is declared as 'sensitive' wildlife in locations that are specified as 'sensitive areas'. An offence committed under this new provision carries a fine of up to 30 penalty units, currently \$5040. Where an attack occurs, other penalties may also apply in addition to those under the new offence, depending on the circumstances. For instance, it is also an offence for a dog to be at large and for an owner to allow a dog to enter a prohibited area containing sensitive habitat for native wildlife.

On top of this, the bill provides that the court may order that the owner pay for the collection and analysis of DNA sample collection, as well as compensation for any damage caused or costs incurred as a result of the dog attack. The court may also order that the dog be destroyed.

The minister responsible for Part 4 of the Nature Conservation Act 2002 will specify by ministerial order the species and areas to which this new offence applies. Initially, the order will capture little penguins in declared 'sensitive areas' that are known to be vulnerable to dog attack. The Government will take advice from the Penguin Advisory Group on the specific areas that should be included in the order. The order can also be amended in the future to apply the offence to other species and/or locations.

This approach provides the Government with the flexibility to respond quickly to new or emerging threats to wildlife without having to amend legislation or regulations. The order will be made as soon as possible following enactment so that the new offence and penalties are in place and operational ahead of the summer breeding season.

Supporting the new offence provision, the bill also doubles the penalty for having a dog in a prohibited area that contains sensitive habitat for native wildlife, with a fine of up to \$3360. The provision has been broadened to ensure that it covers instances where a dog is at large and is found in a prohibited area, as well as where a dog is deliberately taken into these areas by its owner.

The penalty for a dog attack that causes serious injury to a person is also being increased in response to stakeholder feedback that this should be set at least at the equivalent level to an attack on a sensitive species.

The bill makes some minor but important changes to streamline the process for the collection of samples from dogs. The changes will support investigation and enforcement in the event of an

attack by reducing the risk of DNA degradation. A police officer or ranger will now be able to collect a sample from a dog, without seeking the prior approval of the relevant council's general manager. This will allow authorised officers to act quickly to gather evidence to identify the dog involved in an attack. State government veterinary surgeons will also be able to collect a sample from a dog without council approval.

The bill also makes some minor amendments in relation to greyhounds, which support the Government's efforts to increase the number of ex-racing greyhounds that are re-homed as pets. Currently, councils cannot legally set aside public spaces for the off-leash exercise of greyhounds because of how 'effective control' is defined in the act. Greyhound advocates and some local councils have approached the Government asking that we fix this situation.

The bill responds to these calls, and will give councils the option to allow for, and set conditions around, the exercise of greyhounds in declared exercise areas, in the same manner as all other dog breeds. For example, a council might decide to provide a dedicated fenced exercise area for greyhounds only, or alternatively, set specific times for greyhounds at an existing exercise area.

As is the case now, councils will have the discretion to set their own policies and conditions for the off-leash exercise of greyhounds. There will be no express requirement for councils to establish designated greyhound off-leash exercise areas or to allow existing dog exercise areas to be used by greyhounds at certain times. As the declaration of an exercise area by a council is subject to public consultation under the act, dog owners and the broader community will have the chance to provide input around what might be appropriate areas and conditions for greyhound exercise.

Another minor change to the act will clarify that greyhounds are under effective control when off-lead on any private premises, so long as they are securely confined to those premises. These amendments build on changes made in 2017 that allow greyhounds that have been assessed through an approved suitability program to be muzzle-free while on a lead in a public place.

This Government takes attacks on our sensitive wildlife extremely seriously. The Tasmanian community rightly expects us to act to protect our little penguins, and that is what we are doing. The new offence and penalty provisions contained in this bill are targeted, proportional, and will better align with penalties under other wildlife protection legislation. They will increase the overall effectiveness of the framework that seeks to protect Tasmania's wildlife, without imposing any additional burden on law-abiding dog owners or those authorities responsible for enforcing Tasmania's laws relating to dog management and the protection of wildlife.

I commend the bill to the House.

[12.34 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Local Government Office and the minister's office for the briefings provided to us on this amendment bill.

Recent attacks on penguin rookeries have been very distressing and confronting for local communities, local government, friends of little penguin groups, animal welfare groups, wildlife experts, advocates and the Tasmanian community in general. I understand that this amendment legislation has been developed in response to these recent attacks and calls for the Government to impose harsher penalties for harm inflicted by dogs on little penguin rookeries and populations.

This amendment bill also includes some changes in relation to exercising greyhounds in designated areas.

I want to begin by reading to you from a media article which was on the ABC News website on Wednesday, 4 September, earlier this year.

Eric Woehler is sick of the continuous penguin deaths from dog attacks in Tasmania.

'It's unbelievable that we're having this conversation yet again,' he says.

He is referring to the latest attack, which saw 42 little penguins being mauled to death at Wynyard in the state's north-west last Thursday.

There have been seven attacks on little penguin colonies in the north and north-west in the past year, leaving a total death toll of more than 170.

It is an all too common scenario for Mr Woehler, the convenor of Birdlife Tasmania.

'It just seems that we barely forget about one dog attack and then there is another one that happens almost straight away,' he says.

This article goes on to talk about the wonderful work of those who work in penguin rehabilitation and release facilities. It says -

After the latest attack, the nearby Penguin Rehab and Release facility swung into action rescuing orphaned chicks.

'They are standing at the edge of their burrows, calling for their parents,' treasurer Sondra Roberts says.

'They're struggling. They're little, they're vulnerable, they can't fly.'

Ten orphaned chicks were taken in, but one has since died.

The chicks need intensive care; they are kept in a dark room, each one in a separate box and they are laying on towels that need to be washed.

Ms Roberts and her colleagues have had a 'hectic few days', trying to keep the chicks alive.

'That involves a tube down their throat so you can imagine a little penguin is not keen on having a tube down its throat' she says.

'[The volunteer] had to do that every two hours and at that time she was doing that for 10 chicks.'

On Monday, Ms Roberts did 10 loads of washing and the group put a call out for towel donations.

The article goes on to say -

Each time there is another attack, solutions - such as installing fences, security cameras and even dog bans - have been suggested, but advocates complain no government action has followed.

I want to turn to the impact on breeder adults as well, which is also mentioned in this article, which is important. It starts -

Survival of Tasmanian population 'becomes more tenuous' with attacks

Chris Burridge, an associate professor from the University of Tasmania who has been researching little penguins, says Tasmanian colonies have taken a hit.

While data on Tasmanian penguin populations is decades old, there have been suggestions the attacks have left colonies under threat.

Dr Burridge says the loss of breeder adults can set back a population two or three years in terms of reproductive output.

'We will certainly lose local colonies if there's no intervention to protect those colonies from access by predators,' he says.

Wynyard Mayor, Robby Walsh, also weighed into the conversation about this issue and is bewildered as to why nothing has been done.

'Whilst we want to help, we can't interfere. It falls within the jurisdiction of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE),' he says.

'We as a community are seriously concerned about what's happened. We're worried that it may happen again.'

'It's a serious thing and I think the Parks and Wildlife need to work in some sort of assistance.'

In response to that, I note that the Government said they were going to consider tougher penalties, which is why we see this legislation before us today. They also said they were forming the Tasmanian Penguin Advisory Group, which is a good initiative.

A number of submissions were received in relation to this amendment bill. I have read them all, and I intend to read a number of them to reinforce the key points that I am about to make. I thank all those who have made a submission to this review. I enjoyed reading each of the submissions and the information they presented. There was mention in some submissions of the short turnaround for feedback and submissions, and the Government must be considerate of this, I believe.

I put on the record from the outset that we will be supporting this legislation, but we believe that additional resourcing and intervention is required for its success and, more importantly, for the protection and wellbeing of our little penguin populations in Tasmania.

A number of submissions also noted that, to date, there has not been identification of any of the offending dogs in these attacks. This fact presents a challenge and will require a comprehensive approach, not just the single proposed enforced mechanism within this legislation.

I would like to read from the submission of Animal Liberation Tasmania, where they say -

For these amendments to effect real change, however, there needs to be greater enforcement of penalties. To date, no dogs have been caught or owners have been charged in relation to any of the penguin attacks. Animal Liberation Tasmania urges the government to commit greater resources enforcement of the Dog Control Act 1999, including monitoring around sensitive habitats and breeding areas, to ensure that offending dogs and owners can be caught before wildlife are harmed.

We also believe that in order to take wildlife preservation seriously, the government needs to more strongly legislate for the control of domestic cats. Roaming cats kill millions of native animals in lutrawita/Tasmania, and an individual cat has the potential to disrupt entire colonies of many species of sensitive wildlife. Last year in Western Australia a single cat was implicated in the total collapse of a fairy tern breeding colony, comprising over 100 nests.

...

As such, Animal Liberation Tasmania urges the government to implement cat control legislation in a similar vein to that which governs dogs. Cats ought to be kept under the direct control of their owners when not on private premises, and should not be allowed to roam or stray unattended.

He goes on to say that -

Finally, in relation to the amendments pertaining to greyhounds, we support the amendment allowing for greyhounds to be exercised in designated areas as other dogs,

and it goes on. The last line in that submission is -

However, for our wildlife to be truly protected by law the Government needs to commit greater resources to enforcing these regulations, and to take greater responsibility in managing the significant threat that cats also pose to wildlife.

I thought that was a really important point to put on the record.

Another point which was raised in the submission is around the adequacy of the monetary penalties that are being proposed in the legislation. There was also great discussion about the need, as I have said, in reflecting on that Animal Liberation submission, that there is a need for additional resources to ensure enforcement and enable good monitoring.

I note that in his second reading speech, the minister referred to more resources being put into education and monitoring, and we have been directing significant resources towards research,

education and mitigation to help enhance protections for little penguins. I would like the minister to detail how much resource is being allocated to that thus far.

I would like to read from another submission from Stephanie Gleeson, which I thought highlighted some really good initiatives that should be accompanying this particular legislation. They are -

To protect existing penguins and other wildlife from future attacks, the government may need to consider some or all of the following measures:

- Banning or restricting dogs in some areas, or imposing curfew conditions
- Fencing areas to prevent easy access to penguin burrows
- Signage to indicate penguin areas
- Installing CCTV where appropriate
- Having rangers patrol known penguin areas, especially during the peak breeding season and including at night
- Creating a dedicated tourism centre and information bureau or museum to further engage and educate tourists and locals about penguins
- Extra or on-going funding for the Penguin Rehab and Release Facility
- A penguin hotline to offer monetary rewards regarding information that leads to a prosecution regarding attacks on penguins
- Dedicated dog exercise areas away from penguin nests ...

I acknowledge that some of these things are already in place. I thought it was important to reinforce them.

There is a need for more government support, financial and in kind, to the 'friends of penguin groups' around the state and rehabilitation and release centre. The establishment of a little penguin advisory group is a good initiative, and work needs to be collaborative across all groups, government departments, and, of course, local government as well.

A number of the submissions outline the concerns of local government and detail those. As I said before, cat legislation was mentioned in a number of submissions as well, and the importance of this. There has been some recent media coverage of this as well.

There are some issues raised by dog-walking groups, and that comes back to balancing their right to walk their dogs each day and communication also around restricted areas, which highlights more broadly the importance of that community education campaign.

With regard to the greyhound amendments, it was noted in one of the submissions that there is not a definition of greyhound within this legislation. I ask the minister why. I have a couple of other questions about greyhounds as well. The second reading speech states that off-leash greyhound exercising areas will be at the discretion of councils and their dog management policies. I would like the minister to confirm that.

In section 18(1)(a)(ii) of the act, in a number of the submissions, reference was made to this part of the act. I want some clarity around 'effective controls of greyhounds'. Paragraph (ii) says that a greyhound is under the effective control of a person if -

- (a) the greyhound is -
 - (i) muzzled; and
 - (ii) secured and restrained by means of a lead that is not more than 2 metres long held by hand by a person able to control the dog;

Within a dog exercising area that is allocated to greyhounds, should this be removed? That was the question that was raised in the submission. I want to understand if it has been and for the minister to clarify that there is not a need for a greyhound to be on a lead in the designated exercise area as per the original act. That was raised by Maggie Murray and Rosie Saville.

I also note that a number of councils have different resources when it comes to be able to budget for and create dog exercising areas. Some will be in a better position to do that than others. This may create expectations in the community that there will be greyhound exercising areas pop up all around different communities around the state. As that will be at the discretion of local government through their dog management plans and the like, it is something we need to be mindful of when we work with local government around that.

I thank the minister's office for clarification regarding the covering of wildlife rehabilitation costs. We raised that in our briefing and it is pleasing to see that included and confirmed. We also talked about some of the surveillance cameras in some areas being ineffective and that is often a barrier to the identification of perpetrators in those areas. I wanted to put that on the record as well and it highlights the importance of that overarching community education campaign and the different methods of communication that should be utilised across different sectors of our community to get the message out about restricted areas but also about the importance of protecting little penguins.

That brings me to community education campaigns. I would like to minister to detail how the message will be put out into the community about these changes. We know that we have low levels of digital literacy and literacy in general across many population groups within Tasmania, and we have many visitors coming to Tasmania now. I would like to understand better what methods of communication will be employed to them around areas that protected species can be found in but also that restrict people being in those places with their dogs or general access to those areas.

We know it is difficult to engage certain target groups and I wonder if the Government has given any consideration to television advertisements and education campaigns in local schools. Sometimes that is a really great way to start if we want that generational education and messaging to flow through to parents and for messages to get out there, and obviously signage as well certainly needs to be considered when we look at visitors from different nationalities to our state.

We all know that engaged owners understand the restrictions and will do the right thing, but there are some disengaged owners and we know that dogs do not read signs, so there needs to be more thought about how we reach those target populations to encourage people to be more responsible around their dogs and where and when they let them off a leash or keeping them in their own backyard rather than letting them wander. I am interested to know how we will measure the effectiveness of these changes and whether there will be any sort of formal reporting on that.

I had a question about the inclusion of assistance dogs, which we know many people utilise in our local communities, and what the implications of that would be and why that was not included in section 22 in the principal act.

In summary, we support the intent of this legislation but overall believe that it alone will not protect vulnerable little penguin colonies around Tasmania. I have listed a number of the other initiatives from reading through submissions but I am also talking about the importance of a really strong far-reaching community education campaign. It will require additional resources and additional Government intervention. I ask the minister to commit to that today to make sure this is done holistically and that we can prevent stories like this, which are so sad.

I will finish my contribution by extending a great, heartfelt thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers who give of their time to care for and protect our little penguin populations and their habitats. In the past, I worked closely with the Friends of Burnie Penguins, which does a fantastic job in my local community.

I also extend my sincere thanks to all those who were involved in the rehabilitation of penguins in our communities back into their natural habitats.

[12.50 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on the Dog Control Amendment Bill 2019. Our primary spokesperson on this issue is Dr Woodruff, in her capacity as shadow local government and environment spokesperson, but I am taking this opportunity to say a few words before Dr Woodruff is back in the Chamber to speak.

The ongoing depressing news of the deaths of little penguins in Tasmania demands of this parliament and of government, a very strong response and this amendment bill is a reasonably positive start. I will not stand up here and point the finger at anyone or accuse the Government of not caring about penguins, because it is very clear that people do care about little penguins and all of us are horrified when we see those stories of yet another massacre of little penguins on one of our beaches in and around Tasmania, by dogs who are not controlled and not where they should be.

In the past year, there has been at least 170 little penguins die because dog owners did not take responsibility for their pets and the dogs have got into the colonies and in some cases, almost wiped out colonies, creating a terrible precariousness for those colonies. It is the breeding adults that are taken out when dogs attack colonies in this way and the viability of those colonies in places like Wynyard is in question now. That is why so many community organisations and so many Tasmanians are really concerned about this issue.

I acknowledge Ms Dow's contribution. That was an excellent contribution and you asked all the right questions. It is important that we have strong laws and regulations in place to protect penguins but the fact is, there has not yet, as I understand it, ever been a charge laid against a dog owner for the deaths of penguins at a colony anywhere around Tasmania.

You can have the best laws in place, you can raise your penalties, but as Ms Dow said, unless you have got monitoring, compliance, education and resourcing to support your laws, you are not going to be effective. We need to make sure that this legislative change is matched with the resourcing that Parks and Wildlife needs but also local government. There is an intersection between local government and Parks in relation to the management of little penguin colonies and the protection of those little penguins.

We need to make sure that there are cameras at colonies: that we are allowing for the possibility of drones and new technology to be used, that we are investing in rangers and dog control officers so that there can be that compliance and yes, we need to be engaging right across the community, in our schools, in our community groups, and to new arrivals to Tasmania who have come here to see our beautiful environment. We need to talk to them about respect for the species and the vulnerability of the species. They are particularly vulnerable because they nest in the dunes and in the bushes along the coastal dunes.

In September, in one attack, 42 little penguins were killed at Wynyard. That creates a pressure on that colony which it is difficult to see the colony sustaining. If not for organisations like Penguin Rehabilitation and Release, which picked up those chicks who were, as I understand it, standing at the edge of their burrows crying for their parents, if not for the work of those community volunteers there would have been a double tragedy. The chicks would have died as well without their parents.

It takes an enormous amount of time and energy, and it takes money, to look after wildlife that has been affected by human behaviours. Dogs are a part of that human behaviour. I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of the community volunteers in this space.

We made a substantial submission to the draft of the Dog Control Amendment Bill. It was in Dr Woodruff's name and it makes the point that no-one has been fined because no-one has been caught. To make an effective response from this legislative initiative it will require surveillance and protection measures for penguin rookeries. It makes the point that protecting little penguins from being killed by dog attacks is not an insoluble problem. There are many willing community members already working across the north-west, north and east, to protect colonies from being wiped out.

As well as needing more money for Parks and local council staff, concerned community people would also step up to do more if the Government provided that base funding to support them in doing that work. We strongly suggest the Penguin Advisory Group needs to be properly funded to map rookeries and to coordinate the necessary monitoring, surveillance and protection measures for little penguins.

Senator Peter Whish-Wilson is passionate about little penguins and he has been raising these issues with increasing alarm over a number of years now. He did make the suggestion once that in order to protect the colonies we should consider using snipers to take out dogs that would kill little penguins. He says they were used in Sydney. He made this statement three years ago but there was such concern about dogs that were killing wildlife in Sydney that residents were letterboxed and warned there would be snipers in the area. As a result, everyone kept their dogs indoors and no wildlife was killed. That is at the extreme end of how you might protect little penguins from being killed and the species being driven to extinction. Clearly, there is some merit in letting dog owners know if their dog is off leash and in a restricted or prohibited area, there is a reasonable chance that that dog will be dealt with.

I know that in this legislation there is provision to destroy dogs if they are found guilty of an attack and you would hope that would be enough for dog owners to keep their dogs indoors and out of little penguin colonies but it is not. This requires a level of community engagement with dog owners which is deep and sustained and it makes it clear what the responsibilities of dog owners are but also what the consequences might be for their beloved dog should it get off the leash and into a little penguin rookery.

I pay tribute to the incredible work of one of my favourite Tasmanians, Dr Eric Woehler, who I first came into contact with when we were working hard to save Ralphs Bay. Birdlife Tasmania and Dr Woehler have been demanding of government for a prolonged period now that there be effective measures in place, that fines be increased and that resourcing be increased in order to protect little penguin colonies, because there is a real risk of not only localised extinctions but extinctions of the species.

Debate adjourned.

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

MOTION

Tourism Developments in National Parks

[2.30 p.m.]

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

That the House supports the Government's expression of interest process for sensible and appropriate tourism developments in our National Parks, Reserves and on Crown Land.

The Government's expression of interest initiative, a key policy platform prior to the 2014 election, was designed to enable enterprising operators to bring forward new and innovative ideas, to showcase our spectacular national parks and environment for the world to see and experience, and to help re-imagine our regions.

Our EOI process has taken two elections and has been backed in by the Tasmanian people. We have what the world wants: an unrivalled natural environment, premium experiences, world-class produce and an unbeatable way of life. The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to supporting sensitive and appropriate tourism that showcases the Tasmanian way of life and protects what is special about our state. The EOI process for sensible and appropriate tourism developments in our national parks, reserves and Crown land has helped to create jobs and grown Tasmania's reputation as an eco-tourism destination. It is no secret that our spectacular natural environment is a key driver for our tourism industry.

Tourism Tasmania has confirmed that the highest rated trigger for people who visited Tasmania in the past 12 months was because they were interested in nature and wilderness. Visitors to our national parks are first into regions. This means they tend to travel further, spend more per person, spend more per night and stay longer than the average visitor to Tasmania, benefitting all Tasmanians, especially our regional economies.

The Hodgman Liberal Government's EOI initiative provides an open and transparent process -

Ms O'Connor - You are supposed to tell the truth in here. Tell the truth in here.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr TUCKER - to enable entrepreneurs to bring forward innovative ideas for sensitive and appropriate tourism offerings and experiences in our state. There are no secret developments, nor attempts to subvert or weaken approval processes. There has been an ongoing campaign over the last 18 months, fuelled by misinformation and scaremongering against the Government's EOI initiative. Most recently, the initiative has been used as a pawn in the ongoing freedom of the press campaign, whereby blatantly incorrect information was knowingly put to print. The heated debate is duly centred on a so-called privatisation of public lands -

Ms O'Connor - Well, that is exactly what it is.

Mr TUCKER - and an alleged lack of transparency of the expression of interest initiative. Such is the level of misrepresentation, the basic facts are no longer understood, let alone being considered in the debate.

Ms O'Connor - I had to explain this process to your Premier at Estimates last year. He had no idea.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr TUCKER - This Government has warned Labor and the Greens of the damage they are doing to our reputation as the premium tourism destination. Instead of supporting the industry, they want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg by calling for a tourist tax and talking down the state's ability to cater for growing visitors from around the world. They continue to stir up anti-tourism sentiment with false claims that Tasmania is grappling with an over-tourism population when the facts and data indicate anything but.

Let me also get some truths on the record right now. Our EOI initiative is an important process. It means that all significant tourism proposals for Tasmania's public lands are pre-assessed by an appointed expert panel, against predetermined criteria and guided by a set of high level principles. In determining if a proposal should be allowed to proceed to lease and licence negotiations, the assessment panel considers the appropriateness of the proposed development to a particular site, the qualifications of the participant to establish and operate the proposed development and the commercial and financial viability of the proposed development. This robust process is overseen by external probity auditors who attend each meeting and sign-off on the decision-making process for each and every application.

Ms O'Connor - Without reference to the owners, the people of Tasmania.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, Madam Speaker, but he is repeatedly misleading.

Mr TUCKER - This is an additional step and an extra assessment that previously existed and demonstrates the Government's EOI process brings greater rigour to the assessment of significant tourism proposals on public lands.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Madam Speaker. Mr Tucker is now overtly misleading this House. If you are going to make a claim like that you need to back it up. That is a complete and utter mistruth. It is the most opaque and corrupted process ever to be inflicted on our parks and protected areas.

Madam SPEAKER - That is not a point of order.

Mr TUCKER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This process also provides an important first level filter and robust process that ensures -

Ms O'Connor - Do you not read the letters pages? People are furious about this.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Could we have some decorum.

Mr TUCKER - that an equitable consistent and statewide approach is maintained in the assessment of commercial tourism proposals on public lands.

It is also true that all proposals that have been initially assessed and greenlighted to proceed to lease and licence negotiations are listed on the website of the Coordinator-General. That includes proposals received from round one and round two. Of the 30 proposals currently listed on the website of the Coordinator-General, I am advised that 11 are proposals that have been received through round two.

Whilst The Greens will have the public believe there is wholesale selling-off and privatisation of public lands, this could not be further from the truth. The facts of the matter are that the leases, licences and tourism opportunities in our national parks and reserves estate are not new. These arrangements have existed under all political persuasions, including the Labor-Greens government, before our EOI initiative was introduced.

Earlier today we heard from the Treasurer that a number of high-profile arrangements for experiences such as the Maria Island walk, Cradle Mountain Huts and Pumphouse Point were enabled under previous governments and were entered into without a level of public notice, consultation and input available through an EOI process. The Hodgman majority Liberal Government's expression of interest initiative provides an additional layer of transparency on what previously existed because under previous governments, the first the public would know about a lease or licence agreement over public lands would be after the fact.

Finally, it provides for greater transparency and public confidence because when proposals are assessed as being appropriate, but before they are issued with lease or licence, they are published on the website of the Office of the Coordinator-General.

Ms O'Connor - Oh, my goodness, so the people can see them. What a load of garbage.

Mr TUCKER - So the public is fully informed, yes, Ms O'Connor.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, you will have your chance to debate the point. It would be nice to keep you in the room to do so.

Mr TUCKER - As part of this process, the assessment panel provides recommendations to the Minister for State Growth who provides a subsequent recommendation to the minister for Parks and Crown Land.

To reiterate, when projects progress to an appropriate stage, they are publicly announced. Importantly, any proposal that is recommended to proceed and listed on the website of the Office of the Coordinator-General, still needs to go through all requested Australian government and state

planning approval processes. Members may recall commentary from Luke Martin, CEO of the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, who has previously indicated through an EOI initiative,

This Government has enabled a more effective, efficient and transparent process to support nature-based tourism in Tasmania.

An outcome that is clear the Labor-Greens government failed to progress, let alone deliver, when in government.

Our nation-leading EOI process rightly ensures the protection of intellectual property to enable proponents to submit ideas to be initially assessed while confidentiality is maintained. It is crucial that proponents can be confident that sensitive commercial information will be appropriately managed and not end up in the hands of the proponents' competitors via the media.

Again, it was only recently that Mr Martin explained the EOI process from the industry's perspective, and I want to take a moment to reflect on that. Mr Martin spoke of a small operator who some years ago wanted to start a simple guided walk on an obscure and little-known track on the west coast. No-one was operating a commercial tour on that track, nor was anyone proposing to do one. It was completely his own original idea. He had an idea for a niche product and wanted to proceed accordingly. Mr Martin tells that following an approach to the relevant department, the operator was told that because he was seeking a licence as an exclusive operator for his niche product, they had no choice but to take his original idea and advertise it publicly to see if anyone else may be interested in running a tour on that particular track. Because of that, because of the way the system functioned, the operator's intellectual property - his time, effort and money in developing his original idea - could not be considered, and was effectively dismissed because there was simply no other way to progress his request for exclusive commercial access to that track.

Tourism is a key driver of our economy and we cannot take our tourism success for granted, nor underestimate the contribution it makes to our economy, with a record \$2.46 billion spent by visitors last year, creating jobs in every corner of the state. This government has repeatedly warned Labor and the Greens that now is not the time to put the handbrake on the tourism sector.

When we first launched our EOI process for sensitive and appropriate tourism offerings, many in the environmental movement claimed that the Tasmanian national parks and World Heritage Area would be filled with resorts, casinos, highways and caravan parks. These fears have been proven to be completely unfounded. Instead, the EOI process has delivered mountain biking, walking and eco-accommodation offerings such as the Blue Derby Pods Ride, Maydena Bike Park, Moulting Lagoon Eco Tours and the Freycinet Lodge expansion, all of them sensitive and appropriate to their locations and the surrounding environment -

Ms O'Connor - By interjection and through you, Madam Speaker, I need you to understand the Freycinet Lodge expansion was wound back by the RACT because they responded to community concern about an incursion into a protected area. Well done RACT, which rejected your colleagues' policy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you.

Mr TUCKER - Through the EOI process, the Blue Derby Pod Ride is showcasing Tasmania to visitors from around the world. The Maydena Bike Park is another success story, with visitor numbers soaring at this world-class bike park. Such is the success of the bike park that Maydena

and surrounding areas have experienced an economic boom with strong growth in property prices, new businesses emerging and many benefits to the local communities. Such is the confidence of the operator in the government's EOI initiative that they have recently submitted a further proposal for the development of a bike park at Meehan Range on the eastern shore.

Dirt Taxi, Dirt Art's latest offering, has been granted approval to proceed to lease and licence negotiations and commence a reserve activity assessment through the Parks and Wildlife Service. The proposal is for the development of a mountain bike park experience with uplift service, new trails, tours, retail, food and beverage, and by car at the Meehan Range Nature Recreation Area. This proposal includes plans to upgrade the existing fire road, develop new gravity trails and provision of way-finding information signage.

The Dirt Taxi offering will uplift bike riders to the start of the new gravity trails, and existing and new trails will remain free to the public. For those who choose not to pay for the uplift service, the proposal also includes check-in, guest services, small retail cafes, guiding, coaching and bike hire, which will operate from a fitted-out shipping container that would be located at the base of the ranges. The investment is valued at over \$1 million and will create up to 10 full-time-equivalent jobs when fully realised. The proponent will undertake comprehensive community consultation, as well as working closely with Clarence City Council.

Without being open to new ideas, Tasmania would not have the Overland Track, the Three Capes Track, or so many other iconic Tasmanian experiences which allow us and visitors from around the world to experience and enjoy our wilderness.

The combined value of all projects in the EOI pipeline sits at approximately \$100 million in new investments, and those projects have the potential to create more than 250 full-time jobs. We are getting the balance right and we are committed to protecting what makes these areas so special in the first place.

Unlike the Greens, who can only complain about our booming tourism industry and want to tax it, the Government is excited to see what the future of our state holds, as entrepreneurs take advantage of opportunities our EOI initiative is creating. We will continue to back tourism operators who are willing to put up their own time, effort and money in order to develop new and exciting tourism ideas in our national parks, reserves and Crown lands.

We understand that to lock in growth for the future, we must protect what is special about Tasmania. The hypocrisy of the Greens group is outrageous. On the one hand we have the Greens' spiritual leader, Bob Brown, lobbying for support for his 100 kilometre multi-day walk in the Tarkine. And let us not forget Senator Nick McKim, who in his days as the guide hosting multi-day walks in the World Heritage Area, was involved in the very activities our EOI process is designed to enable.

On the other hand we have the Tasmanian Greens group slamming the Government's EOI process for sensitive and appropriate tourism developments. People are sick and tired of the Greens party's negative attitude toward anything and everything other than a policy to lock up Tasmania and throw the key away. What do they stand for? The Greens oppose any plan to allow sensitive, appropriate development in our national parks and reserves. For years, they kept telling us that Tasmania's future was in tourism and we needed to shut down mining and forestry. Yet whenever there is a proposal for any tourism development in our parks and reserves, all we hear is their opposition. Funny that.

We understand that to lock in growth for the future -

Ms O'Connor - You do not need to trash the wilderness to have a healthy tourism industry.

Madam SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor. Final warning.

Mr TUCKER - we must protect what is special about Tasmania. We do not support the Greens' elitist view of locking up our parks and making them accessible only to whom those opposite deem worthy. We have a plan to make Tasmania the ecotourism capital of the world, and with sensitive and appropriate development in our parks and reserves, we are well on the way to achieving that.

These are not haphazard developments in the wilderness World Heritage Area, or on any of our parks and reserve lands. They are proposals that undergo rigorous planning and assessment, and only once approved provide unique and various ways that people can interact with our pristine environment.

Madam Speaker, what is more disappointing than the question on everyone's lips, is where is Labor on this issue? Will they vote in support of the Government's EOI process for sensitive and appropriate tourism proposals in our national parks, World Heritage Area and reserves, or will they sit on the fence? Will they vote in support of the EOI initiative that has already seen over \$13 million of investment generated and approximate 50 full-time equivalent jobs realised, or as they have 80 per cent out of every vote this year? Will they side with their mates in lockstep, the Greens, once again, at the expense of investment and new jobs in the state? If they do support the proponents in the various innovative, sensitive and appropriate proposals that have been submitted through EOI process, they should have the courage to stand with us in condemning the Greens for their misinformation, scaremongering and anti-tourism sentiment.

[2.51 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on this motion brought on by the member for Lyons, John Tucker. I have to say, that was a pretty abysmal end to his contribution. It was not a terrific contribution, full stop, but that last bit in particular demonstrates that this Government has no agenda. They have resorted to picking fights because they have run out of ideas. That is your new strategy - pick a fight because you have no agenda and you have no ideas. It seems to be happening all over the place.

The member who has just resumed his seat unfortunately went down a track where he started to politicise tourism. Tourism, in our state has, largely speaking, had a strong bipartisan support, and I know from speaking to the industry about this motion that you have put on the books and are coming to this House today and debating, Mr Tucker, that they do not want their industry to be politicised.

I do not know whether you have bothered to speak with them or whether you have just had the speech given to you and you have trundled up to the podium here and delivered the lines that the Government wants you to, or whether you have actually thought about what you are doing here. If you have thought about what you are doing here, perhaps you would have spoken to industry and asked them if they feel comfortable with you politicising something that traditionally has had bipartisan support, and that is tourism in this state.

Arguably, the strongest proponent and advocate for tourism this state has ever seen was Jim Bacon, former Labor premier. In fact, he was the architect of the modern tourism industry that our state appreciates and enjoys benefits from today. It was Jim Bacon who drove a lot of the innovations we enjoy in tourism, arts and culture in Tasmania, that help Tasmanians feel proud about who we are and the place we live.

I find it pretty galling that you come in here and politicise tourism when we have enjoyed a bipartisan position on this and the industry has appreciated that because that gives them certainty that they can pursue tourism opportunities in this state and the political will on both sides of the House, Labor and Liberal, will support them.

For whatever reason, possibly because you have no other strategy except to pick fights, you have decided to draw a line in the sand and start creating division over something that previously has not had to worry about politicisation. The member went so far as to say the question on everybody's lips is what is Labor's position on this. Rubbish; as if that is the question on everybody's lips. Talk about exaggeration. That just goes to show the hyperbole of this member when it comes to this issue and the division he is trying to create in an industry that is enjoying extraordinary success in Tasmania.

I pay my respects to the hard work of those individuals and the industry body that supports them because they are the ones who have invested their money and time, put up their ideas, tested the market, grown the visitor economy and risked their hard work and ideas and put that on the line. The Government has enjoyed the benefits of that, but it is not because the Government has done the hard work. It is because those individuals in the tourism industry have, so I want to recognise the innovative businesses and the great product they have brought to market and the hard work that many people have done over many decades now to grow Tasmania's visitor economy and capitalise on the brand values Tasmania enjoys.

I have had a briefing from Todd Babiak, the CEO of Brand Tasmania, about the strategy that will be launched later this year. They have worked closely with Tourism Tasmania to ensure that there is consistency of messaging there. The new campaign that was launched by Tourism Tasmania has taken an enormous amount of work and they have launched that into markets hoping to drive more visitation to our state, high yield, and disperse visitors across our regions, making sure we extract greatest value from the people who come to Tasmania so our visitor economy can continue to thrive. The work that the Brand Tasmania board and CEO, Todd Babiak, are doing is very commendable and I was impressed with the briefing I received.

One of the things that was important about that to me is that it capitalises on the brand values and especially for Tasmania, that we have a quiet pursuit of excellence. That is one of the messages that has come through and that sums up Tasmania particularly well. But that is undermined when you have a government seeking to politicise the particular attributes that underpin our brand, whether it be iconic places or the enterprising businesses and the innovative product they bring to market. When you politicise tourism in the way you just have you undermine the brand values that so many people have worked so hard to grow and protect.

I find this motion galling because there can be no doubt that the Labor Party supports sensible and sustainable developments in our public places, and that is demonstrated by our actions from when we were in government. Let us talk about the Three Capes Track. That occurred under a Labor government and Labor premier. We can talk about other iconic proposals as well. The Tasmanian Walking Company runs the Bay of Fires lodge walk. That was developed in the 1990s.

Of course the Labor Party supports those activities. They have won multiple awards. They won the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in 2017 and Tourism Tasmania Awards in 2015 and 2016 as well. These are nationally recognised products that have been brought to market and have our full support. The Freycinet Experience walk was a vision that was also brought to market in the 1990s. These are iconic products that have been brought to market under Labor governments, under Liberal governments, in our protected areas, because they are sensible and sustainable and we support them. This particular product has won multiple awards - Tourism Tasmania awards, *Australian Traveller* magazine awards, *Australian Gourmet Traveller* awards, and architecture awards as well, for that particular product.

The Government needs to reflect on the history of our state and the work of previous governments of all colours to support tourism product to be brought to market to showcase our iconic places. There is Pumphouse Point and the hard work of Simon Currant over many years. It took longer than I know he would have liked for that project to become reality, but that started under Labor. In 2004 it was a Labor government that gave the final tender for that tourism development to Simon Currant so that he could begin the journey towards bringing Pumphouse Point to market. That is an iconic product that has won multiple accolades for the success it has generated in terms of economic activity, particularly in our regions, and also the way it demonstrates Tasmania to the rest of the world. Pumphouse Point has won gold at the 2017 Tasmanian Tourism Awards, bronze at the 2017 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, and gold at the 2018 Tasmanian Tourism Awards and entered the Tourism Hall of Fame. I want to recognise the hard work of Simon Currant who has championed the tourism industry and new product in Tasmania for a very long time.

I also acknowledge the work of another very hard-working individual in Ian Johnstone, who is the founder of the Maria Island Walks, again a product that has been brought to market providing a very unique experience for walkers who travel to Tasmania or maybe who are here as Tasmanians, wanting to go to that beautiful place, Maria Island. They can do a walk, experience all of the natural beauty and the history that Maria Island offers and either go glamping or stay at Bernacchi House. It is in our national parks and it has our full support. It is another product that has been a winner of Australian tourism awards, winner of Australian Gourmet Traveller Awards, winner of Tasmanian Tourism Awards, winner of Australian Travel and Tourism Awards for the Best Eco-Wilderness Experience and winner multiple times of the Tasmanian Telstra Business Awards.

This motion by the Government is not to demonstrate their commitment to the tourism industry. It is designed to politicise the tourism industry and they should be ashamed of themselves.

Ms O'Connor - It is actually designed to wedge you.

Ms WHITE - Yes, that is what I mean. It is designed to politicise the tourism industry, which for a very long time has experienced, and continues to experience, bipartisan support until this Government, right now, with this tactic.

I will be moving an amendment to the Government's motion, because I am hoping to put on the record, not only Labor's support for our tourism industry but to recognise that these activities in our public places must be done in a sensible and sustainable way, in accordance with the management plans and consistent with Tasmania's brand values. I will circulate that amendment for members now.

Madam Speaker, I move -

Omit all words after 'supports'

and insert instead -

'sensible, sustainable and appropriate tourism development in National Parks, Reserves and on Crown Land in accordance with management plans and consistent with Tasmania's brand values.'

I have also been on the record and have raised with the tourism industry, my concern that the community does not feel that there is adequate transparency with respect to the Government's EOI process. From my conversations with them, I know that they are interested in identifying how they can be improved. They do not want what they are doing and their reputation to be tarnished, particularly not by a government that is willing to politicise this issue.

They want a good outcome. They want to enhance Tasmania's brand and enhance its reputation as a tourism destination. They want to support visitors' experiences in our state and they want to showcase our iconic places and destinations. They want all the same things that we want but they do not want a fight about it. They want us to work together, to codesign a solution here, not this politicking that we are getting from the Liberal Government at the moment.

This motion before the House does not recognise that we should also ensure that any development is undertaken sustainably and in accordance with management plans and consistent with our brand values. In order to reflect the will of the House, it should.

I recognise also that national parks management plans should be regularly reviewed and updated. There is a motion that we will be debating at a later date and I will not pre-empt that debate but the RAAs were promised to be reviewed by this Government 12 months ago and to my understanding, nothing has happened there. If this Government was serious about ensuring community support and consensus for our tourism industry operating in our national parks, they would give them the tools they need to do that and not politicise the issue in the parliament and in the media.

I recognise that the Parks and Wildlife Service needs to be adequately resourced to be able to cope with the additional demands of increasing tourist visitation. From myself visiting those destinations and from the feedback we get from the industry, the operators and visitors, as well as the locals who live in those places, there is a huge amount of work that needs to be done to ensure that those destinations that are achieving extraordinary visitation levels are resourced appropriately. We must ensure that the infrastructure is keeping up with demand, that the facilities are being supported to meet the demand and that the Parks service is resourced so they have the people on the ground to support what they are doing: providing access to beautiful, wild places and iconic destinations that underpin our brand as Tasmania.

This Government is cutting money out of the Parks and Wildlife Service. At the same time, visitor numbers are growing and those visitors are visiting our national parks. Therefore, demand is increasing and this Government is cutting funding and resourcing to the agency that is responsible for caring for that land and ensuring that the visitor experience is as good as can possibly be. The last thing we want for people and locals alike who visit iconic places, whether it be Freycinet, Maria Island, Three Capes, the Overland Track, Cradle Mountain, Binalong Bay and the Bay of Fires is to find that they cannot get a car park, that the toilets are not working, that they have run out of toilet paper, that the tracks have not been maintained or that the signage is inadequate. Their visitor experience is diminished because of that.

We need to make sure that the offering we are providing, the product that we have here in Tasmania, is matching visitor expectations. I ask the Government to think very seriously about how they can adequately resource our Parks and Wildlife Service so they can cope rather than cutting their budget which is what they are proposing to do this financial year.

I have moved the amendment and I recognise that the other members of this place want to make a contribution to the motion the Government has put but I will wind up by saying how disappointed I am that the Government is seeking to politicise an industry that has enjoyed bipartisan support for the longest time. We will not be buying into that. We will support the industry. We will continue to support activities in national parks that are sustainable and sensible and appropriate, as we always have. The Government should identify what its agenda is and get on and deliver good governance as opposed to picking fights all over the place because you do not know what else to do with yourself. You have clearly lost your way and we see that every single Wednesday in this House.

[3.08 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, who until a moment ago was the mover of the motion so I am a little bit surprised to see you in the Chair but I am sure there is no conspiracy here or anything like that. I am sure of that.

We will not be supporting Labor's amendment and we will not be supporting the original motion because we do not support the secretive and corrupted expressions of interest process for development inside Tasmania's national parks, wilderness world heritage area and other public lands.

It is not just the Greens who have a problem with this Government's approach and policy. I do not know where Mr Tucker has been. I know you are probably not reading the *Mercury* every day because you are living on the east coast. The *Examiner* is probably your local paper but, wow, Mr Tucker, there are many people right across Tasmania who are very unhappy about the expressions of interest process that your colleagues started back in 2014. I am not using these as a prop, I am simply making the point that we have had full pages of letters to the editor all of which are damning - damning of this Government's approach to Tasmania's national parks and wilderness world heritage area.

There are a few issues here. In a lot of people's minds, the issue is that the wilderness on our door step is a shared treasure. It is part of our shared common wealth. It is not the property of private developers; it is not the property of the government of the day. It belongs to the people of Tasmania, it belongs to the Aboriginal people of Tasmania, and it belongs to the world. It is our gift to the world, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

The other issue people have with this corrupted process is the appalling, contemptuous secrecy that surrounds it. To hear Mr Tucker spout such utter untruths about transparency - it is the old trick of the conservatives. They think if you lie about something and repeat the same lie often enough, somehow or another it will morph into the truth. It is not the truth. This is the most corrupted and non-transparent process that I have seen in my time in politics, and before that in the community as an activist and as a journalist.

People are concerned about the loss of their shared wealth. They are concerned about the transparency here, and they are deeply concerned about the impact on wilderness. We know that this Government has an aversion, not only to the concept but the word 'wilderness'. The word 'wilderness' so offends them, so disturbs them, so gets in the way of their plans to exploit public

protected areas that they tried to - initially when they stitched up this process - remove the word 'wilderness' from the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. That was not long after they had trundled off in a fevered state to the United Nations to try to revoke the extensions to the TWWHA that came about because there were Greens in government between 2010 and 2014.

If you want to understand why people are so concerned about the loss of wilderness, I refer people to the Tasmanian Wilderness Society's PowerPoint slide, which takes you through the scientific metric of the damage to wilderness caused by such things as huts, lodges, helicopters. I know I have waved this around at the Estimates table before, but I simply encourage members in this place to go to the PowerPoint slide, which makes it absolutely clear - by a scientifically verified and accepted metric - that if you put even one hut in a place like the South Coast Track, you have trashed wilderness values on the South Coast Track. But this Government is not talking about one hut, are they? No, they are talking about seven.

This all began with the process to rewrite Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, which began under the then minister for State Growth - and for Environment, Parks and Heritage, totally conflicted - Matthew Groom. The rewrite of the TWWHA Management Plan was designed with one purpose, and one purpose only. That was to facilitate increased commercial development, huts, lodges and helicopters in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, which I remind the House again is the only property on the World Heritage List that has wilderness in its name.

The difference between the original 1999 World Heritage Area Management Plan is that it was an award-winning plan. It had strong protections for wilderness in it. It had explicit prohibitions on development. Then, in 2015, under the then minister, Mr Groom, a draft World Heritage Area Management Plan was put out for public comment. It allowed for logging in the TWWHA, and mining. It guaranteed the loss of wilderness protection, and it significantly ramped up and enabled the capacity for commercial and private development inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. There are a whole range of issues which I will come back to in our private members' time.

The 1999 plan, for example, had an over-arching management objective, which was 'to maintain or enhance wilderness quality'. What did that turn into under the Liberals in the 2016 final plan, after 7000 public submissions were ignored? It changed into 'to protect and conserve the natural landscapes of the TWWHA, particularly in areas of exceptional natural and aesthetic and cultural importance'.

The word 'wilderness', is gone from the management objective of the World Heritage Area management plan.

Then of course the 1999 plan had, 'in the Southwest National Park, development of infrastructure, including huts, is not allowed in view of the natural character of the area'. The 2016 final plan replaced this with, 'the number of commercial huts on the South Coast Track is limited to seven'.

We had other corruptions of good process in this disgraceful this management plan. It is disgraceful, it has prostituted the Parks and Wildlife Service, and it is the vehicle for degrading our wilderness.

But it has the most overt corruption of good process around Lake Malbena, for example. There is a specific cut-out in the map for the self-reliant recreation zone to allow the development at Lake Malbena, Halls Island in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. It is cut out to enable it in a World Heritage management plan.

The other thing about Lake Malbena - and there are so many things to talk about with Lake Malbena - is that all of it has been secretive. We have here Mr Groom's note going back to 2015 - the minute to the department which was leaked to us - which approves the development to lease and licence phase, and no-one found out about it until 2018 - three years later. As we know, that development comes with in the vicinity of 200 helicopter flights each year and landings, and it comes with it a double lease handed to Daniel Hackett, the proponent of the Lake Malbena development. Not only does he have a lease over Reg Hall's hut, but he has been gifted a lease by the Parks and Wildlife Service over all of Halls Island.

Dr Woodruff - Gross.

Ms O'CONNOR - Exactly, Dr Woodruff. Halls Island has, for generations, been used primarily by fly-fishers and bushwalkers. Now, they are the people that Mr Tucker would like to call the elite, but Halls Island is a treasured, traditional place of recreational enjoyment for generations of fly-fishers and bushwalkers. They will no longer be able to access Halls Island because, for all intents and purposes, the place belongs to Daniel Hackett in a lease arrangement which has not been made public. We do not know how long the lease over the island and the hut is for. We do not know what, if anything, Mr Hackett has paid for that lease. All of it was done in secret, as it is with the reserve activity assessments. All done in secret.

I do not know if the minister for Parks is going to come in on our Private Members Time and explain himself. I understand that this motion that we are debating today has one purpose, and one purpose only, and that is to try to wedge Labor. We know that. We understand that and it is highly regrettable.

Ms Haddad - That is what Private Members Time is all about.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, that is right, and that is what it has been reduced to. But if we are going to discuss the shared public treasure that is the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and our national parks, let us be honest about it. Let us be honest about the fact that this is a privatisation agenda. Halls Island has been privatised.

Mrs Rylah, if you cannot see what hundreds of fly-fishers, bushwalkers and everyday conservationists can see, then you are wilfully delusional. Halls Island will be closed off to traditional users, fly fishers and bushwalkers, because it will be reserved for the actual elite, Mr Tucker, the people who can afford to fly in on a helicopter for a three-night and four-day experience - that is what is happening - privatised for exclusive use for the elite.

There has been nothing put on the public record by this secretive government about the terms of the Lake Malbena leases, just as there is nothing on the public record about the Three Capes Walk. No deal that is stitched up through the Office of the Coordinator-General and the EOI process has any level of public transparency about it whatsoever. The only place where there is a true capacity for public comment is when a stitch-up is happening on a management plan to enable a development, or if in an internal and secretive process Parks and Wildlife Service determines that

a development is a level-4 reserve activity assessment and sends it to the Commonwealth, then there is another opportunity for public comment.

Madam Speaker, as we found out in Lake Malbena, even when you have 1300 submissions made to the Central Highlands Council in opposition to the Lake Malbena development, even when a council responds, as it should in a democracy, to the objections that have been raised by the owners of that property and says no to a development - on the grounds, mind you, that it was not compliant with the Central Highlands planning scheme and potentially even with the World Heritage Area dodgy management plan itself - a decision is made by council, people are finally given a say three years after then minister Matthew Groom signed it through the lease and licence negotiations, it goes off to the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal and the tribunal basically overturns it, only because it sees its jurisdiction is limited because once there is a stitch-up in place there is not much else you can do, whatever planning authority you are under in this regime.

The people spoke, they made their view clear on Lake Malbena, they thought they had an outcome and a council that had responded to those concerns and the evidence of being in breach of planning schemes and the World Heritage Area Management Plan. It goes off to RMPAT and is overturned because what we discover is that if there is a management plan in place, nothing else matters. That is the problem with this process, when you can have a rewrite of a management plan and more than 7000 people say, 'You can't do that, this is our shared common wealth, you can't degrade wilderness and cultural values like that'. More than 7000 representations were made and every one of them ignored. That is why there is no public faith in this process.

Outside the Liberals and Luke Martin, I have not spoken to any everyday Tasmanian who thinks this is a good process. People sense that this is an act of thievery. It is taking away from them something that they have shared and treasured and tried to look after and trusted their Government to look after. People are angry about the expressions of interest process, and I think the Liberals know that. The reason they are trying to wedge Labor here is that they want Labor to attach themselves to the Liberals on the EOIs so it gives a bit of a whiff of legitimacy about it.

Dr Woodruff - As if that would make it legitimate.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are absolutely right, Dr Woodruff, but if they can get Labor to stand with them on the EOIs, then they can share the public opprobrium of this distorted, destructive and disrespectful to a globally significant wilderness and other natural cultural areas process.

We do not support the amendment. I was very unsurprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition barely talk about the wilderness and natural values and cultural values. We do not support the amendment. The amendment says -

The House supports sensible, sustainable and appropriate tourism development in National Parks, Reserves, and on Crown Land in accordance with management plans and consistent with Tasmania's brand values.

When you have stitched up a management plan so it enables a development and shuts people out, that is the problem we are dealing with here - an absence of statutory process, a secretive reserve activity assessment process, and no referral back to the owners of the land, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Tasmania, none whatsoever. There are behind-closed-doors negotiations through the Office of the Coordinator-General, and that is why people are angry. We know they are angry because they get in touch with us: people from across the political spectrum, from across

the social, cultural, professional and political spectrum. People realise this is an absolute stinker of a process that does not have legitimacy. I hope you get it at some point, minister.

Mr Tucker - We were hoping that you might actually get it.

Ms O'CONNOR - So you can come in on my contribution. Mr Gutwein, as minister, I hope you get it.

Mr Gutwein - Let me have a couple of minutes.

Ms O'CONNOR - But you will say what you have said before about this.

Mr Gutwein - Let me have a couple of minutes and I will put some facts on the record and the House will be aware of it.

Ms O'CONNOR - All right, I will let you have a couple of minutes. In closing I thank not the former premier of Tasmania, Jim Bacon. I thank the conservation movement for fighting to defend these beautiful places that allow us to say that we are the only World Heritage property with the word 'wilderness' in its name.

[3.27 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage) - Madam Speaker, we will not be supporting the amendment. Once again this is Labor trying to walk both sides of the street.

Regarding the last contribution that was made, there are a couple of facts that need to be put on the table. In terms of Halls Island, the original lease was for the whole island and you complain about the fact that there is now a new lease that covers the whole island. Interestingly enough, under the access plan the Hacketts have released, which I believe you would be well aware of, they have allowed for an increase in public visitation to the island over and above what has occurred in the past. Importantly, they will be making available both the hut and toileting facilities so that people do not have to carry their waste out. These are facts that you completely ignore.

Interestingly, in terms of the TWWHA and the reason -

Ms O'Connor - There was no restriction on Halls Island before.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor, some dignity, please.

Mr GUTWEIN - Halls Island was not classed as wilderness because there had been a lease and there was a built structure on it, so it was hardly wilderness. Again, these are facts of the matter that the member for Clark conveniently ignores on every occasion in this discussion.

In terms of the EOI process, we have added another layer of transparency that did not exist when that member was a member of the previous government, or under the previous governments before that. Leases and licences were signed in secret then. Now through our EOI process, before a lease or a licence is signed the proposal is made public and has to navigate the robust state and federal planning arrangements associated with that project if it is a substantial one. The member chooses to create an argument that suits her own position. That is, she wants to see no development, no economic growth. She wants to see regional areas of Tasmania not share in the benefit of Tasmania that this Government is working so hard to create.

Labor's amendment they have moved is a nonsense. They need to demonstrate where they stand on the EOI process. It is a process that has ensured that we can bring forward development, sensitive development, development that treads widely, treads softly in those areas of Tasmania that are unique.

Question - That the amendment be agreed to - put.

The House divided -

AYES 8

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Standen
Ms White

NOES 14

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms O'Connor
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Ms Houston

Ms Courtney

Amendment negatived.

Question - That the motion be agreed to - put.

The House divided -

AYES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

NOES 10

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

PAIR

Ms Courtney

Ms Houston

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Northern Prison

[3.40 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Recognises the concerns of Westbury residents who do not support a maximum security prison being built on their doorstep.
- (2) Calls on the Government to abandon Westbury as the preferred site for the project.
- (3) Further calls on the Government to release the nine other shortlisted sites to fully inform public debate over alternative sites.
- (4) Requires the Government to consult with shortlisted communities before making an announcement about a new preferred location for the northern prison.

I would like to begin by reading a letter which was sent to relevant members of the Government by the Westbury Residents Against Prisons group. The acronym is WRAP. It is my understanding that WRAP has asked the Government to read their letter onto the public record as they feel misrepresented and would like to make the record clear.

I will read this letter, and it starts -

To Guy Barnett, Mark Shelton, John Tucker.

Dear Members,

Late last night this letter was written by our new community group Westbury Region Against a Prison, WRAP.

It was decided to send it to our three current Liberal Government members and to the Speaker.

It is polite and respectful.

If you are unable to read it out to the Parliament, we will ask another party to do so.

Thank you,

...

WRAP.

I will read the letter. It is dated 29 October 2019, House of Assembly, Parliament of Tasmania.

Dear Members,

Westbury prison.

We write regarding the repeated assertions in the media recently that fear has been 'peddled' in the Westbury community about the proposed prison.

We wish to inform the House that these assertions are upsetting to those in the community who are genuinely suffering distress as a result of the announcement of Westbury as the preferred location for the prison.

We in the community know how so many in Westbury feel about the proposal to locate a maximum security prison two kilometres from the centre of our beautiful historic village.

We know about the community's **shock** about this because of the look of utter disbelief that was written over the faces of our family and friends on the day this was announced.

We know about the community's **distress** over this by the number of times we have individually broken down or have seen someone we know break down over this.

We know about our community's **need for comfort** about this by the number of times we have needed support, or have been needed to offer it to someone else.

We know about the **fear** that the community feels about this most notably by the elderly and parents of children in our community. They feel they will never again feel secure in Westbury if this prison goes ahead.

We know about the **anxiety** that the announcement has given and continues to give so many in our community. This is so particularly for the elderly when they think that they might need to leave this community because of how anxious the thought of a prison makes them feel, in circumstances where they are in no financial position to leave.

We know about the **stress** that the thought of this prison places on people who own fledging business in the region that have been built around tourism, whose dreams stand to be shattered by the location of the prison in this beautiful heritage rich region.

We know how it feels to go to bed thinking about this, and waking up thinking about this, sometimes in the middle of the night, trying to think how we might stop this thing going ahead.

These feelings have not been peddled. There has been no need to do so.

These fears were born on 30 September 2019 when this bombshell was dropped on our community.

We write to seek acknowledgement from the House that our feelings have naturally and justifiably flowed from this completely unforeseen and momentous announcement.

Our community is suffering enough without our feelings being dismissed as something artificial which we are naive enough to have been sold.

Westbury Region Against the Prison

I am glad I have put that on the record. It is very important for that community to feel that their own opinions and voices are being heard. The angst from the residents is clear.

Ms Archer, on Thursday 30 May 2019, you said -

This year's budget funds the first four years of work on this major project. The Government has committed to undertake public consultation on the new prison site in the second half of this year and an announcement on the final location is anticipated in coming months, once the due diligence process is complete.

It is very clear that this is not how the process undertaken by Government has advanced. Evidence suggests that this Government is using the Kempsey Prison Study as evidence to suggest that Westbury will not be affected. A prison for 500 people that is 14 kilometres from a town of 30 000 people is not a realistic comparison -

Ms Archer - Did you say 500 people? What are you quoting from?

Ms BUTLER - to a maximum security prison for 270 people that is two kilometres away from a town of just under 2000 people. In fact, the community does not refer to Westbury as a town; they refer to it as a village.

Recently, in the Northern Territory, the state government tried to build a youth and drug rehabilitation centre in the industrial park near a town with a population of about 1800 people. This example would be a far superior comparison. In the case of the Northern Territory, the town and the business united. They fought and they won.

On the 'frequently asked questions' page for the proposed maximum security prison in Westbury, it says the prison footprint will be 13 hectares. However, in an article written by Rob Inglis, it says the site will be 41.5 hectares. Does this mean that there will be an exclusion zone of 28.5 hectares between the complex and the boundaries? The community is seeking accurate information about the size of the prison, and the complex itself. The 'frequently asked questions' page, or 'the Q&A' as the minister kept referring to yesterday, says that measures will be taken to reduce light pollution. However, if you are lighting up a 28 hectare exclusion zone, it seems unlikely that you will be able to reduce light pollution.

How will you be able to explain this to Fred and Mary Baker, the Gatenby family, Ms Swinton and other residents and business owners adjacent to that proposed site?

It is interesting that an artist's impression has graced the information pamphlet, when the design of the prison has not gone out to tender at this point. Nobody has any idea of what this prison will even look like.

Apart from the 6 metre wall with anti-climb measures, will any other safety measures be explained to the Westbury residents, or is that information simply classified as well?

There also seems to be a lot of talk about how this will create jobs in the Meander Valley area. Again, in the article written by Rob Inglis, he quoted world-renowned economist Mr Saul Eslake, 'who suspects a lot of the jobs will most likely go to Launceston residents'. These are his words, they are not mine.

Ms Archer - They are not mine either.

Ms BUTLER - I hope you are listening, because these are things you need to know. These are facts.

According to the latest census data, the median age of Westbury residents is 50 years, and more than 25 per cent of the Westbury population is over the age of 65 - retirement age. It seems unlikely that the prison project would deliver on its promise to employ from the Westbury community. The numbers simply do not back up the poorly executed marketing points.

The Government has stated that preference will be given to locals; however, they have also talked about employing from a pool of appropriate candidates Australia wide. Does this mean that only a small percentage of Tasmanians will actually work at the new prison? What statistical evidence is there to prove that prison workers will live near the prison they work in? I have not been able to find any, and I have undertaken quite a bit of research. There is nothing I can find.

Given Tasmania has the lowest median income in Australia, what incentives will the Government offer to ensure the prison is adequately staffed, so as to be secure and serviced appropriately?

Westbury is clearly known as a tourism town. It is similar to Richmond and Evandale. It has countless historic buildings, tourist attractions, accommodation, et cetera, multiple cafes and galleries. The town is set up to be a beautiful boutique town and it is known as, and I quote, 'the most English village of all villages in Australia'. It is quaint and charming with an old world feel. It has an historic walk that visitors can collect a copy of the map for from the village green. Having a prison so close to a tourism town will destroy the boutique feel of the town in multiple ways.

I have undertaken a lot of research into the building of this new prison, and also other prisons around Australia and across the world. I am not taking this lightly at all, minister. My study has provided me with a good picture about what I think the Government is really up to, but I will keep my opinions to myself and provide facts that have been provided by academics in this field. This way there is no case for me to be accused of scaremongering.

A case study on Kempsey and the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre cautioned against building a prison in a struggling area for economic reasons. It states:

The correctional centre should probably be treated by a potential host community as simply another land use with its own set of impacts, positive and negative, on the surrounding area. To do otherwise places economically depressed communities that are desperate for growth at risk of taking on a correctional facility that might not necessarily benefit the community as much as it is hoped. Communities in the United States have placed tremendous investment into the pursuit of correctional centres and have typically not received requisite economic benefits once the facility begins operation.

The study then continues to state:

Generally speaking, the impacts associated with the development of correctional centres in the community needs to be assessed in the same manner that any other land use would also be assessed. Prisons are large-scale facilities and have the potential to have a great detrimental impact on their environments if their impacts are not adequately managed.

It is very important to be mindful of this research since the Liberal Government is loudly proclaiming the economic benefits about Westbury.

In another report, *The Development of Last Resort: The Impact of New State Prisons on Small Town Economies* by Terry L. Besser and Margaret M. Hanson, while the paper states that it cannot be copied or reproduced without written permission from the authors, it also echoes many important elements from the previous thesis about the fact that the promised economic benefits to the prison are not often the reality for the community. There is cause for concern about increased crime rates in the local area of the prison, and that the area can experience greater levels of poverty after the prison is built.

Another sensible fact I would like to discuss is the proximity of the proposed maximum security prison to Tasmanian Alkaloids. Let us get this clear: the people of the Meander Valley are very proud of the local poppy industry and they do not want to see any development that could risk that. Even a small risk is far too great. It is worth millions of dollars to the Tasmanian economy and it also employs nearly 200 people - it is 191 people.

It is my understanding that the Government has not made any references to any peer reviewed academic papers or journal articles when making a decision on where to place the new northern prison in relation to proximity to pharmaceutical drug plants and prison complexes. In making the decision, they have not consulted any case studies or long-term studies of prisons and proximities to drug plants that are capable of processing both opioid and cannabis pharmaceuticals, either within Australia or worldwide.

Have you evaluated how many escape attempts there have been in the past and what safety measures could be used when a prison is built only 150 metres away from a drug plant, minister?

These are basic questions and these are the questions that the people of Westbury would like to have answered.

I thank you for your time but I would really appreciate it if you could take on board these facts and these words from the community. It is not appropriate to hide behind the local representatives or any voices that are opposing you and blast those people out of the water. You do have the

opportunity to provide a really good communication and consultation process. You have the opportunity to sit down and speak to people, you have the opportunity to read and research and really get to know this topic well. I do not think you will be backing it in as highly as you would if you actually understood that it is not as black and white as you are putting up.

The people of Westbury are pretty clever about this, they are very clever. There are many academics, there are many community members, there are mums, dads, local vets, and solicitors, and they are all working together. They are going to keep fighting on this because they love their community. They would like some proper answers about why you have chosen to do this in the first place. I do not think it is going to cut it any more to say it is just us scaremongering.

I hope it has been well and truly put on the record now by that community, that this is a fear that you have created. This is between the Government and the community and this is something you need to resolve. We would like to see you put the other nine sites on the table and change your approach in the way in which you deal with the communities when it comes to major projects.

[3.55 p.m.]

Ms ARCHER (Clark - Minister for Justice) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there are a few things I need to state at the outset. Regarding the correspondence that was sent by WRAP to our local members, I have responded to them directly this afternoon with a letter sent by email. I am happy to read that out to the House to get it on the record because the member seems to interpret my comments about her going around doing the fearmongering as me criticising community members.

As I stated on the record yesterday, and it is in *Hansard* and I have quoted it in here to my response to community members this afternoon, those comments have not been directed at Westbury community members at all. I have always stated at the outset that the Government and I understand and are listening to their concerns. We will be working closely to address those concerns. It does not help that I continually get verballed in and outside this House by the member for Lyons, Ms Butler.

To quote my letter that I sent to community members this afternoon, and I will read it into the *Hansard*:

Dear Community Members,

The Hodgman majority Liberal Government recognises the announcement of the preferred site adjacent to the Valley Central Industrial Precinct outside of Westbury has raised questions in the community and we want to work with you to answer them.

As you are aware, this is the preferred site on which we are consulting and I want to assure you that we are listening and responding to community feedback.

In relation to your concerns about specific assertions in the media that there has been a number of mistruths and inaccuracies spread within the Meander Valley Community, I can confirm that at no time have I accused Westbury community members of doing this.

I refer to you the below quotes from parliament on 29 October 2019:

I quote myself:

... I have never said that anybody in the Westbury community are the ones spreading the mistruths.

I go on to say:

... I also want to make it clear that there is a lot of misinformation being spread by the member for Lyons, Ms Butler. She has just confirmed that in here because she stands up here and makes stuff up and says that I have called people this, that and the other and that I have called people 'NIMBYS'. During this whole process I do not even think that word has even come out of my mouth ...

I end my extract from *Hansard* there and then finish off the letter:

I want to reassure you that we are listening and responding and that we will continue to work closely with the Meander Valley residents and businesses to ensure a good outcome for the entire community.

I have sent that this afternoon because I wanted to address those concerns immediately for those members, noting that Ms Butler would probably read it out in the House this afternoon and I wanted them to get my version of exactly what was said yesterday.

Ms Butler - Catch up, minister, the community was here yesterday.

Ms ARCHER - I am hoping Ms Butler does not continually interrupt.

Madam SPEAKER - So am I.

Ms Butler - You interrupted me. I could hear you.

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, order.

Ms ARCHER - I said largely. There are quite a few things that Ms Butler said that I disagree with. One of the things she was referring to was the Kempsey study and claimed we were using it for our own purposes. As part of the planning application process we were required to do our own social and economic impact study. Members in this House are aware of planning processes in that regard.

Regarding the site itself, there was a particular thing I wanted to address. The Q&A largely addresses a lot of this sort of stuff and it is certainly an opportunity to discuss these things with community members at the community drop-ins. I and the Government have repeatedly said that the prison itself will be approximately 13 hectares. However, the site itself will be around 41.5 hectares, providing a large buffer or boundary area. That has been in the Q&A publicly for residents and community members to see. I am not quite sure why the member came in here and said that there was something to clarify in that regard. The prison itself would take up a small portion of the entire site, which allows for a buffer boundary. That is quite clear.

There were other matters I would like to touch on. There were things that came out of this week's time in parliament and I found a rather disturbing comment yesterday from the member for

Lyons, Ms Butler, who said that the northern regional prison would be in the village. That is a gross misrepresentation and is the sort of language I am talking about. It is not in the village when it is two kilometres outside it.

Ms Butler - The community referred to the place as a village.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair.

Ms ARCHER - It is language like that that is not factual and totally unnecessary. You do not need to use that type of language. That is the type of language I am talking about which has come out of Ms Butler's mouth, not anybody else's mouth. They are the sorts of comments I am referring to.

Ms Butler - I'm being scolded for saying 'village'. Shame on me for saying 'village'.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Ms Butler.

Ms ARCHER - The truth hurts sometimes but I am actually quoting the member for Lyons.

Ms Butler - Seriously, come on. You're better than this.

Ms ARCHER - No, you are better than this, Ms Butler. Do not come in here and misrepresent the truth. That is the sort of thing that is unnecessary and causes unnecessary fear. A prison is not going to be in the village of Westbury.

Ms Butler - Because I said village instead of town?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, I am giving you a warning - one warning.

Ms ARCHER - Ms Butler also said yesterday:

You have been accusing them of fearmongering and peddling mistruths. All you have done is denigrate that community even more.

That was what I quoted in my letter to the community members this afternoon to clarify that you are the one going out there and saying I have said these things about the community when I have not. As members of parliament we should be above this sort of thing. I am an adult; I do not mind criticism and I certainly do not mind fair criticism, but I do not want to be verbally abused and I do not think any member in this place appreciates being verbally abused. I know it is a bitter pill to swallow when you get found out with quotes, but if you are going to criticise a policy, fine, but do not make things up and say that I was calling them NIMBYs when I never called them that.

Member Suspended
Member for Lyons - Ms Butler

Ms Butler - Are you going to spend all this time attacking me?

Madam SPEAKER - Ms Butler, would you like to step out of the room please and come back when the vote is ready? Thank you.

Ms Butler - I did not even get two warnings.

Madam SPEAKER - No, I said you would get one, and you still spoke.

Ms Butler - That is disgraceful.

Madam SPEAKER - It is not disgraceful and do not reflect on the Chair.

Ms Butler - I am not reflecting on you by saying that.

Madam SPEAKER - You can stand and apologise or you will be out for the whole day.

Ms Butler - I apologise. I did not reflect on the Chair.

Madam SPEAKER - Thank you. Be more careful in the future.

Ms Butler withdrew.

Ms ARCHER - Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is the sort of thing we have had to put up with, the stretching of the truth. Ms Butler also said that she had been visiting Westbury almost daily for the past month. That is a bit of an overreach, I think we can all accept that, because for two out of the last four weeks we have been in this place.

Ms White - Yes, but that is only three days each week.

Ms ARCHER - I am just pointing to the fact that Ms Butler stretches the truth and she needs to be careful because these are the sorts of statements that are an overreach and she is verballing me. I believe I have made my point; we need to be a little more careful with language of that nature. Criticising policy is fine, criticising locations for having various concerns - we are working with the community on that, as I said.

Ms Butler has had an opportunity to mention the concerns the community has. It is also really important for the House to be aware of some of the positive things that are being said, not just from the Government but on the Meander Valley Council Facebook page we found a comment from an individual on that which is a public comment. I want to read it out to get it on the record. It says:

Plenty of people who live in Westbury do not mind the prison being built there.

The prison will not be in the township centre of Westbury.

The benefits of the committee are huge. The prison is placed in northern Tasmania to help with rehabilitation of the lives of the people as their families will have closer access.

What community members need to be concerned with is securing local services such as butchers, grocers, builders, social workers, psychologists, fitness instructors, cooks, maintenance workers, electricians, landscapers - the list is endless for the job opportunities.

Also the grounds surrounding the complex need to be well planted out with trees and landscapes accordingly.

Westbury has been settled for a long time and is known for being an 'English-style village'.

A rehabilitation centre in the near proximity is not going to change the safety or quaintness of Westbury.

Westbury has become increasingly industrialised and has some high-risk workplaces such as the gas company and the poppy factory placed next to one of the safest places in the world.

Even with the possible dangers from these places, Westbury is still known worldwide as one of the safest places on Earth.

Let us look to the good and positive and be grateful for our blessings.

I read that out because there are some really valid points made in that and matters that we have been trying to emphasise as well in relation to this project, not only in relation to jobs. As I have said, hundreds of jobs will be created in the construction phase of the project but the ongoing permanent jobs will also be in the order of about 250 jobs or thereabouts in prison staffing requirements, not to mention the direct and indirect jobs and services that have been highlighted by this post that I just read out.

In relation to planting trees and landscaping, the area out the front of a prison, this is really crucial to note. I want to place on record that when all modern prison facilities are built you can barely tell they are actually prisons these days because of the nature of the planting around the boundary area to ensure that aesthetically -

Dr Woodruff - No, modern prisons are actually more like hotels. You should check out Scandinavia. You should look at the countries that have been successful. They don't build razor wire and concrete places like you're planning. They just don't.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Ms ARCHER - Although I have been verballed this afternoon and been told I have not done my research I have visited facilities and visited some facilities in Victoria quite recently - last year, I think it was. I stand to be corrected what month it was, I cannot remember, but I have visited different types of facilities. I have visited remand centres and facilities that have a very pro-rehabilitation and training focus. I have also visited facilities that have had to have their security strengthened. Even within the strengthened facility - which is what we propose building, the perimeter being maximum security but within it you allow for all of the classifications - you cannot tell from the outside the requirements of what goes on in the prison. What I mean by that is it is aesthetically more pleasing than what we see with our Risdon Prison complex, our Ron Barwick complex, our Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison, and O'Hara Cottages all being on the one site. It is quite a hilly undulating site that can be seen from Risdon Brook Dam. A flat site means that you cannot see in, you cannot see out. It is a much better facility in those terms. A lot of them have car parks out the front too, and you can have very well-designed facilities with plantings and things like that.

I can always understand that an announcement such as a prison can be very confronting for any community. It would be confronting if you went around the whole state saying we might plonk it in 10 different places. That is not a process that creates anything other than fear. It is best to go through a process where you can at least identify a site that ticks all the boxes and all the requirements of being close to services and then be able to say this is a preferred site because it does and you consult with the community on that.

In her contribution Ms Butler was basically saying we had only a computerised design - I cannot remember what she called it. We certainly do not have an architectural design or a development application ready to go. That is for a very good reason: we are consulting with the community on the site. All of that will come later. Imagine if we had got that far down the track and we sent it to the community, 'This is what it is going to look like, we have done all the design, we have paid for all of this design, we have gone to all this trouble'. That would have gone down pretty poorly. That is not good process. That is not open and transparent process.

Ms Butler's argument was flawed and inconsistent. On one hand she says we should be consulting on a number of different sites, with which I strongly disagree. For that reason, the expression of interest process was a good process and a commercial-in-confidence process at that to ensure that we had people putting forward properties that could confidentially do so and withdraw if they needed to - which some did - or their properties remained on the market, they could sell it and they did. That sort of thing. It gave the applicants the ability to still do with their properties what they wanted throughout this entire process.

I note that the membership of positive Facebook sites has been quite enormous as well. It is good to see those positive comments. This is part of democracy. People have their say. People would like to say whether they are for or against something, or yet to be convinced. The Government has said we welcome that. We welcome the feedback. We are listening and fully wanting to work with the community and address those concerns.

There are many things I have already placed on the record in relation to just how significant this investment is. The other thing those positive comments did highlight was the rehabilitation focus. A new modern facility allows us to have something that is purpose built, that is fit for purpose. It is not ageing infrastructure. We are not retrofitting certain training courses and we can actually design certain areas to suit the capabilities of what we actually want in terms of courses for prisoners. Most prisoners will be released one day back into the community and we want to ensure that they no longer pose a threat to the community. In that regard, the best thing possible is to ensure that they have education and training to enable them to get a job, to support themselves and support their family - if they have their own family - or to reconnect with their family, a better chance of that.

At present, 46 per cent of our prison population is from the north and north-west region of the state. There are distinct benefits in having family nearby. They are able to visit more frequently. The drive is shorter. Many people choose not to move to an area to be closer to their loved ones because of the stigma. We are seeing this by the very fact that people do not want a prison near them; that is the sort of stigma that people do stay away from. Therefore, they might live in Launceston, they might live in Burnie or Devonport and travel and it is a significantly shorter distance than travelling to Hobart at present.

Statistically, it is proven that having that reconnection with family, having that regular contact and being able to have contact with their family does reduce recidivism. It gives them more chance

of a likelihood of succeeding outside of the prison environment. Prisoners I have spoken to, and I do visit the prisons as regularly as I can, particularly when I am in various areas of the state, if it is the Launceston Reception Prison or the Hobart Reception Prison or all of our facilities out at Risdon, I take time to have a chat to prisoners and ask them about their personal stories if they want to discuss them.

I met one female prisoner who had five children. All of the children were in care. She was intent when she was to be released - and she has since been released - to reconnect with those children that she was able to. She was excited about her future and that she was going to obtain employment. She had housing to go to. She had reconnected with her sister and she was positive. That was because of family connections. She had reconnected with some family members who she had lost touch with when she was living a life of crime, as is often the case in these situations. She had managed to mend a few of those relationships. Being closer to family can have a significant impact on someone's rehabilitation prospects and their likelihood of being able to successfully reintegrate back into the community and everyday life, whether that is work life, with the family, or all of the above.

There are some positive things, in addition to the significant investment of \$270 million for the northern regional prison project as part of the \$350 million infrastructure plan we have to fix our ageing prison infrastructure. It has been an ongoing task. There is \$70 million for the Southern Remand Centre and that is to separate our remandees from the general prison population in the south. That will be a significant improvement for both prisoners and staff.

I want to move an amendment, which I have here to be distributed. I will read it out:

In paragraph (1), remove all words after 'Recognises the concerns of Westbury residents' and insert 'about the preferred site for the Northern Regional Prison.'

- (2) Notes the major benefits such a project, including hundreds of jobs, will bring to Westbury and the Meander Valley region.
- (3) Notes the Government's community consultation has begun with local residents and businesses including weekly community drop-in sessions to help address community concerns.
- (4) Notes the Government's assurance that it is listening to community feedback.

It is important to note and I will make it clear again that we are working our way through a process for the new northern regional prison and direct community consultation has always been at the forefront of this process. As I have said previously, when we called for expressions of interest, local councils from the north and north-west region were specifically invited to identify sites, either publicly or privately owned, and submit them, with some choosing to do so and others assisting people to do so. Community consultations could not begin until a preferred site was determined to consult the community on.

As I have said in this contribution many times - and I think I have started almost every media release with this - we recognise that the announcement of the preferred site near the Valley Central industrial precinct outside of Westbury has raised questions in the community and we want to work with them to answer them. I want to make it clear again that this is the preferred site on which we

are consulting and we are listening to community feedback. However, as I have pointed out with the types of statements that the member for Lyons has been making, there can be a lot of fear as a result of that type of verballing of me of misinformation, so we are keen to address concerns and dispel any of those mistruths. The residents and businesses of the Meander Valley region can be assured we are listening and responding and we believe the project will be positive for the broader region as well.

As I have stated, we have embarked on a process where 4000 pamphlets have been distributed and there have been drop-in sessions, which continue. Our local members have visited and will continue to do so. Yesterday I confirmed that I fully intend to attend the community as well. The Government followed all required procurement processes for the preferred site. It is a standard process which included commercial-in-confidence negotiations with private landowners to ensure that we could end with the best outcome for taxpayers.

I know there has been an issue raised through correspondence to me and others in relation to rates. The Government would be paying rates to the council, so I can state that on the record.

It is important to note that I have also acknowledged that there was support from the Meander Valley Council at the time for correctional facilities in the region. That includes the Ashley facility already located in the municipality. I note that there was an *Examiner* article on 12 December 2017 that stated the council motion - which I have referred to in the House - to write to the state Government proposing the municipality as a potential prison site passed with no opposition.

Ms White - Is that the motion you referred to yesterday?

Ms ARCHER - Yes, it is. That is what I was obviously referring to.

Ms White - From December 2017?

Ms ARCHER - The *Examiner* reported it on 12 December 2017 and that is what I have been going on. Interestingly enough, nobody could find the actual motion itself but it was certainly reported that the motion was that they would write to us, which they did, proposing the municipality as a potential prison site and it passed with no opposition. That is why I said yesterday it stands to reason that they would be broadly supportive of a correctional facility. I believe some of the local council members have changed since then, so if that view has changed, that can happen, but certainly that is what that is in relation to. In fact the Meander Valley Council assisted with some applications as well so there was certainly that assistance with our invitation to do so as part of the expression of interest process, and other councils did the same as well.

I must say that local government has been very good throughout this process across all areas in the region as to whether or not they have properties, did not have properties or knew of any, and whether they thought it be embraced or not within a community. With Meander Valley already having the Ashley Youth Detention Centre there it did stand to reason that that particular community might be more embracing of this type of facility.

Ms White - I am just looking at the report. They wrote about it being located next to Deloraine at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. That is the motion they passed.

Ms ARCHER - Yes, and I can go back and quote myself in relation to what I said in the House yesterday. I am trying to avoid any muckraking here as well. I said:

I also note that the council passed a motion welcoming a prison in their municipality. It stands to reason that in that area a prison development would be a welcome development.

That motion is what I was referring to. Some of the local councillors have changed and some of them have said to me whether they do or do not support a prison at a different area rather than Ashley. I have said on the record why the Ashley facility itself is not suitable either on that site or on that facility or building on that facility or doing whatever on that facility. That has not been an option.

I know other members will want to talk and I have moved an amendment in relation to that, but this motion deals with community concerns. The amendment I have just moved states what our process has been and what we are committed to continuing to do in relation to consultation with the community. It is important to note our commitment in that regard. In relation to paragraph (3) in the current motion that we release nine other shortlisted sites, I have already addressed that issue in this House at some length as to why that should not and cannot occur as part of the commercial-in-confidence process. Whilst community consultation is continuing on the preferred site it would only be appropriate to do so as part of a legal or audit process. The expression of interest process says that. There is always a clause in that giving a minister the flexibility to name because of the requirement to do so in legal circumstances or audit requirements as well. For that reason we have moved the amendment because we cannot support the motion in its original form.

[4.29 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin) - Madam Speaker, I would like to make some points on the amended motion and foreshadow that we have an amendment to the motion ourselves and to the original motion.

Let us put on the record that we have had this conversation a number of times about the northern prison. This is cycling on with the same comments from the Labor Party and it is interesting that the focus is incredibly narrow. It is just a focus on the issue of the concerns the residents of Westbury have. Residents in Westbury would know, at least those who have contacted us and we have been in touch with, and if they have read the papers on this, that the Greens support their concerns. We listen and hear their concerns, because we agree with them that there should not be a prison anywhere in Westbury.

In fact our position is that there should not be a new northern prison in Tasmania. We have made the point on numerous occasions.

It is clear, by the Government's own measures, that they are failing on every single measure of success that they ought to have - what I consider they would hold up, if they were in opposition, as to what a successfully run corrections prison would look like. In the minister's capacity, she ought to understand that since the Liberals have been in Government in the last five and a half years, all the measures have been going backwards in terms of the successful outcomes for a prison.

The rate of reoffending - recidivism - has been going up and up, year on year. The rate of assaults in prisons has gone up and up, year on year, since the Liberals took over from the Greens' corrections minister, then minister Nick McKim, who had a huge intervention and cultural change

in the prison because of his concerted effort to turn around the history of the Risdon Prison development complex, and the corrections system as it had been run under successive Labor and Liberal governments. Which was just continuing with an old punitive style, an old Tasmanian, 'comfortable old shoe' Port Arthur-style way of approaching rehabilitation.

Ms Archer - I think you should quote statistics. I would like to see the source.

Dr WOODRUFF - The minister should know the statistics, because at every Estimates we point them out to her and previous ministers. We point out how year on year they are getting worse. Do not waste our time in this short period.

Ms Archer - It is not because of Nick McKim.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, please.

Dr WOODRUFF - Focus on stuff which you know as a minister you are failing on: your own measures. Serious assaults between prisoners and between prisoners and staff are going up. The rate of crime in the community is increasing, as the evidence from the police statistics from last year show us. Let us not waste our time coming up with the evidence of how the Liberals are failing in their mismanagement of corrections.

The worst failure, in their own measure, is the vast sums of money they are wasting on a failed approach to rehabilitation in Tasmania. Risdon Prison Complex is bursting at the seams because of the whole range of social policies which they have essentially gutted: the supports for people in Tasmania, the poorest people. The people at risk are more likely to choose a path of crime: people who are homeless, people who are drug-affected, people who are desperate. We open the newspapers. We hear stories of people committing petty crimes, stealing for food. I read one just the other day. Again, another one: a person who was arrested by the police for stealing food. This is a disgusting situation. People are desperate in Tasmania. The Speaker knows it. We all know it. People are desperate.

This is something this Government takes colossal whole-of-government responsibility for - or being at the helm for five and a half years, for driving down the availability of affordable accommodation through not pressing pause on Airbnb, through not taking control of the rental situation, where there are levers that this Government can be pulling. They are choosing not to do it, day in, day out. Still choosing not to pull those levers. There is not a magic wand, but there is a lot more that can be done.

This is a Government that is scraping money out of community services and handing over so much of it to private contractors, to private consultants, to all the other organisations other than the charity organisations and the ones that need to be doing the good, systemic work. Like the Salvation Army, which had the money ripped out of them for the first three years under the REO program by this Liberal Government, who chose to take that pathetically small amount of money - some \$260 000 a year, that was successfully rehousing people who left prison, successfully reducing the reoffending rate for the people that they worked with - to zero. That is an unheard-of rate.

Back to the situation with the northern prison in Tasmania. It would cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build, and I am quite confident \$170 million is already out of date. It would cost tens of millions of dollars a year to run: money that should be put into other places like the Launceston General Hospital, for example, in terms of the current costs.

What we have is a situation where, by their own measures, they are failing, and yet the Labor Party is jumping on the bandwagon to be tough on crime as well. Both parties committed to a northern prison. Building a northern prison is a dumb idea. It is dumb on every measure. It will not restore people. It does not provide an opportunity for rehabilitation. It does not put the money where we need it, and where other countries are putting it.

May I suggest that the Corrections minister, rather than going to Melbourne and looking there, why not go to a best-practice country which actually does rehabilitation and restorative justice properly? Why not actually go and look at those places, rather than holding up an Australian prison as gold standard, because we know we are not? A country of convicts. Born as convicts, came out here in the hulls of ships as convicts, and guess what, we still have a punitive approach, by and large. There are some shining exceptions, absolutely, but by and large, as a country, we are not 'best practice' worldwide, so what the minister needs to do is update herself.

The Greens have been onto this as an issue for a very long time. Clearly, we had a corrections minister, Nick McKim, but where I want to come to is the opportunity that is sitting there for people in the north, people in Westbury, people in other parts of the undisclosed other areas that were considered for the prison site.

What we should be doing is closing the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. It has been apparent now for such a long time that Ashley is failing the young people who come in there. They are not getting care, they are not getting rehabilitation, they are not getting the restorative justice that they need. We put out a policy in 2016, three years ago now, which detailed then what was already well known: that it is failing to give young offenders the chance that they deserve to exit the system more confident, more resilient and better equipped to make something positive of their lives. Instead, the recidivism rate for Ashley is very high. Some groups have suggested it could be as high as 80 per cent. I do not have the most recent figures, but that certainly was the case.

It is a well-acknowledged pathway to Risdon Prison, and the staffing model and the way it is being managed has led to violent interactions between staff and residents, and we know that some of those residents can be as young as 10 years old.

There are alternatives to Ashley Youth Detention Centre. They are very clear. The policy of the Greens is to close it, and to replace it with two smaller centres that are based on the Missouri model, which is a gold standard, and is proving that young people can be given the support, education and the compassionate care that they need.

Children who are there are there because of their history of violence, because of the trauma that they suffer, and the custodial inspector makes that abundantly clear in his report: the children who enter Ashley are the children who have poorer mental and physical health, higher occurrence of suicidal thoughts and behaviours, more family difficulties, poorer school attendance, and emotional and behavioural problems.

These are the children who are all likely to have experienced higher levels of either disabilities, abuse, neglect, substance misuse and mental health issues, often collectively - all of those things. It is no surprise that children who have been subjected - some of them their whole lives - to those experiences, will act out, misbehave, have difficulty engaging in school activities, in social activities, in sitting and resting in a family environment because they have never known one other than one which is brutal and uncaring. It is very difficult to trust as a child when you have had really harsh experiences. What the Custodial Inspector's recently released report last week shows

abundantly clearly is that these children are not being supported in an environment that is appropriate for them.

I am so glad that the minister has walked into the House because he needs to hear about this heavily and disgracefully redacted report, hiding really important information about the failure of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre to ensure that consultants and contractors who come into the prison have had background checks and police checks, as is required in every other school system in Tasmania. Every volunteer organisation in Tasmania that works with or are in contact with children are required to have to these checks, but in the prison, people or children are kept all day sometimes in isolation behind closed doors, without screening, without records being kept properly, and sometimes without records being kept at all about experiences of isolation.

The Custodial Inspector pointed to reports of the incidence of use of force, multiple reports that appeared to be a copy and paste, so that there were not documented reports kept of incidences of the use of force, restraint and isolation. There are deeply concerning questions about the way our vulnerable children are being cared for in an institution which purports to be therapeutic. It is pretty clear from the Custodial Inspector's report that the cultural change demanded of Ashley Youth Detention Centre has never taken place. If it has taken place, and if good people have tried to bring that in, and I am sure that good people who work there have done their best, the culture has not changed. They are irredeemable, it is unable to be reformed and it should be closed.

That is what should happen and this is an opportunity for those 50 beds to be freed up to be used as the northern prison. It is an obvious way of dealing with two problems at the same time and finding a solution. At least it should be investigated. We are not pushing this, but it is obvious that Ashley must be closed. We wrote to the Commissioner for Children and Young People about our deep concerns after that heavily redacted report. We have asked questions of the minister in question time and he has given weasel word answers. Who redacted those sections of that report? Why did the independent Custodial Inspector's report come with such heavy redactions that pages of them are totally blacked out? It is important information which it seems was not even done properly because the information there can still be read so it is another level of incompetence.

But this was not about incompetence. Our question was how did it happen and who directed it? The minister needs to come into parliament tomorrow and explain why he misled the House, because Mr Richard Connock, the Custodial Inspector of Tasmania, released a statement just a couple of hours ago which says:

On completion of the custody inspection report relating to Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018, my office presented the report to the Department of Communities Tasmania and Minister Jaensch with no parts of the report redacted.

At the request of Communities Tasmania in response to concerns about information contained in the report, specifically communicating security concerns, parts of the Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 were redacted.

The redacted version as requested by Communities Tasmania was then presented to Minister Jaensch for tabling.

As a result of events, the Inspectorate will be taking a strong stance in relation to future redactions of reports. No redactions will be made unless the information is considered by the Inspector to be a significant security risk.

Madam Speaker, that is a damning vindication of the concerns the Greens have had all along that this was about political interference. It is pretty clear that what was redacted from that report was not about security concerns alone. It was about risk to the minister. It was about risk to this Government and the disastrous mismanagement of Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the children in the care of this state. This minister is failing them by continuing to perpetuate that cruel and inhumane centre. It should be closed. That leaves 50 beds and they need to be considered as a possible place for a northern prison site.

To that end, coming to the amended motion we have from the Government -

Mr Jaensch - So you don't think there should be a northern prison?

Madam SPEAKER - Order, minister.

Mr Jaensch - I am being somewhat baited, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER - Sorry, but I am really over this incitement argument.

Dr WOODRUFF - we have an amendment to that.

Ms Archer - Sorry, it is Labor's motion. We moved an amendment just to correct it.

Dr WOODRUFF - Coming to the amendment the Government has moved, I move -

That the motion be amended by removing all words after paragraph (1) and inserting a new paragraph (2) -

- (2) Calls on the Government to consult broadly on the prospect of closing Ashley Youth Detention Centre and repurposing the 50 beds to become the northern adult prison, and establishing two new purpose built facilities for Youth detention.

Although we have no concerns with the first three paragraphs of Labor's motion, given the Liberals have moved an amendment it falls to us to amend their motion. For simplicity, that is what we have done. This makes it very clear that there is no place for messing around with a consultation process for another site. The Labor Party, along with the Liberal Party, continue to want to push the building of a brand-new northern prison which would be a disastrous waste of money. They are both in agreement on this. We do not agree that we should be canvassing all the top possible places in the north of the state because we do not agree with the premise that we should be spending money on a new-build northern prison facility. Everybody who has looked at the evidence and who understands what really happens at Ashley Youth Detention Centre and how it is failing in models of rehabilitation and restorative justice for the young people there: that model has failed and those children need to be moved out immediately to appropriate premises that are designed for their care, one in the north and one in the south. Young children at the age of 10 should not be so far away from their families or their support networks.

This would leave that building untenanted and there are 50 bed spaces, as I understand it, as listed in the Custodial Inspector's report, that would become vacant. That is the proposal that we have before us. I hope members find it in their hearts to step off political platforms and to look at the way things are and do something good for children and all adult prisoners in the state.

[4.51 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Speaker, I can indicate at the outset we will not be supporting either the Government's amendment or the Greens' amendment, and I will explain why.

The motion that is before the House is very straightforward. The intent of it is to call on the Government to abandon Westbury as the preferred site for the project, being the prison, and calling on the Government to release the other shortlisted sites to fully inform public debate about alternative sites.

The Government has moved an amendment that reaffirms their view that the prison should be at Westbury. Whilst they are saying that they are listening to the community, clearly that demonstrates they are not. The Greens' amendment is really no different from the Government, choosing a site and then consulting after the fact because irrespective of what you might think about the Deloraine Ashley Youth Detention Centre, it is not an adult prison. For the Greens to come in here and say it should automatically become an adult prison without any community consultation, is no different from the Government choosing Westbury as an adult prison without any community consultation.

Dr Woodruff - Consult broadly? That is not what they said. It is the site.

Ms WHITE - Yes, but you have already chosen the site; you are no different from the Government in that respect.

I want to share some stories from Westbury, and particularly one that was shared in *The Examiner* on 9 October, and it was titled 'A real kick in the teeth: Westbury industrial landowner slams prison plan'. It talks about a family that owns more than half of the Westbury industrial estate, saying that the state government's northern prison plans will halt business investment and put a strain on the infrastructure they privately funded a decade ago. Simon Gatenby, who lives just north of the estate, said the global financial crisis of 2007 had stymied investment in the area but it had finally picked up in the past two to three years. He said the prison proposal had blindsided them and it would set business development back by years. He said, and I quote:

It is a real kick in the teeth for us. We have been here developing it for 10 years, then along comes this investment killer. We have been through the GFC with this, we do not want to be plunged into another scenario that will have the same effect.

As the industrial development funded the roads, the water, the sewerage and other infrastructure, largely via a loan from the Meander Valley Council, but they have not been made aware of the prison plans.

I have spoken to the Gatenbys and they are incredibly distressed about this. It is reported in the paper here, they had just settled on the purchase of land on Birralea Road three days before the prison announcement. They had expanded their land at that site and settled a property three days

before the prison announcement. Mr Gatenby said that they were not made aware by the council or by the Government that a prison would be built nearby. He said:

We will put it on the market, but it will be the perfect test case for the impact the prison will have. We had it valued prior, now we will get another valuation.

Fellow prison neighbour, Fred and Mary Baker - and my colleague, Jen Butler, has spoken about this family as well - he said he was informed of the prison plans by the media who were doorknocking in the area. This is so true for so many residents in Westbury that I have spoken to, and I was there on Wednesday and Friday last week. They tell me they found out about the prison announcement for their town through the media.

The minister has had four weeks since that announcement to get back to Westbury and to speak with the community. Now she is saying that she will head their way, and they will certainly welcome the opportunity to discuss the preferred site for a prison at Westbury. It is incredibly damning of this Government, and demonstrates their arrogance and secrecy, that four weeks after an announcement, the minister still has not been to that community, knowing full well the concern raised in that community. It has been well documented through the media. I have taken a look through *The Examiner*, the *Mercury*, ABC sites, reporting through the radio, social media.

There has been extensive concern raised by that community, and while the minister says there are public drop-in sessions, the Government cannot keep hiding behind consultants to do their consultation for them. The minister needs to go to the community. The Premier has barely uttered a word about the prison. He has not been to Westbury. He should go to speak to the community as well.

When she was making her contribution, the minister quoted a commentator on social media in support of the project. I have been informed by members of the Westbury community who are listening to this that that person does not live in Westbury. They live quite a way up the Bass Highway, so quoting somebody in support of your prison who does not even live in the community completely disregards the legitimate concerns of those people who do live there. They are aggrieved by the shock announcement of a prison for their community that they were never told about.

The minister had an opportunity on Saturday to speak with the community, to hear from the community. Instead, and we have talked about this already, she was at the Royal Hobart Show and then had the gall to post about that on her social media site. It is like you are rubbing it in their faces. Not only did you not go, you were at another event where you were handing out art prizes. I do not think that would be as important, given the extraordinary interest in the prison at Westbury and I do not know how you can justify that. I do not understand why you have not been back.

Ms Archer - Because it takes two-and-a-half hours to get there and I had a midday commitment.

Ms WHITE - If, for whatever reason you claimed you cannot get to Westbury on a Saturday, why haven't you been there over the last four weeks? Do you not get out of Sandy Bay? Is that your problem? The community of Westbury has every right to know why they have not seen the Government minister who made the announcement; flew in, press cameras there, did a big media event, never been back. What a disgrace. Talk about treating people with utter contempt and disrespect.

The minister said that the council supported the prison through a motion that was passed in December 2017. I have not seen the wording of that motion. It was reported in *The Examiner*. I took a look at that. It said in that report:

The Meander Valley Council will lobby the state government to build a Northern prison next to Ashley Youth Detention Centre near Deloraine.

That is quite different from supporting a prison at Westbury. In the comments made by the minister yesterday, she did not state explicitly, and you read that and I respect what you said, but you did not state explicitly that they supported a prison at Westbury. However, you made it sound as though they supported a prison at Westbury. You did not go to the detail which was they had written to you about it being placed near Deloraine at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, which is a completely different part of the municipality.

Ms Archer - Stop verballing me.

Ms WHITE - I know you have not been to Westbury but it is not in Deloraine.

Ms Archer - I have actually.

Madam SPEAKER - Order.

Ms WHITE - It is a different part of the municipality.

I find it outrageous that this Government feels that they can say something is consultation when they make an announcement and then do not go back for a month, and hold open sessions that are run by a consultant -

Members interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER - Order, through the Chair.

Ms WHITE - and say they are listening when the clear voice of the community - as shared through the public meeting on Saturday, the media, the social media, the letters you have received, the letters we have all received - is that they do not support Westbury as the site for a prison. They are calling on you to abandon that site as your preferred location for a prison and they are asking you to be respectful of other communities and release the short list.

You said there was a short list that went to some kind of sitting panel, I think was the phrase that was used. There was clearly a panel of who knows who because there has been no transparency about who sat on that panel, who made that decision, or the parameters around how they made that decision. Nobody knows who was on the sitting panel that made that decision. Nobody knows how many of those sites were considered in part of that short list process.

That is the point of this motion. We want you to come clean with the people of Tasmania, reveal the short-listed sites and have a proper consultation process with the community about the appropriate location for a prison, rather than doing what you have done to the town of Westbury and completely blindsiding them with the announcement, to the point where you have not consulted with those landowners who are directly impacted as neighbours.

I find the arrogance of this Government galling. Their secrecy is outrageous. The motion is straightforward. It requires the Government to release those sites and consult with the community.

Time expired.

Question - That the amendment moved by Dr Woodruff be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 2

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

NOES 20

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Amendment negatived.

[5.05 p.m.]

Question - That the amendment moved by the Attorney-General be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 12

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Petrusma
Mr Rockliff

NOES 10

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms O'Connor
Ms Standen
Ms White

Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton
Mr Tucker

Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Ms Courtney

Ms Houston

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Expression of Interest Process - Developments in National Parks

[5.08 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens - Motion) - Madam Speaker, I move -

That the House -

- (1) Understands Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves are protected for their outstanding natural and cultural values.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government's Expressions of Interest (EOI) process is conducted in secret, and is a matter of growing concern for Tasmanians across the social, cultural and political spectrum.
- (3) Notes that the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT) concluded in the recent Lake Malbena case that 'a proper interpretation of... the Scheme only requires... that a Management Plan is in existence; and... an assessment of use in accordance with the Management Plan has been undertaken and approved up to and including Step 7 of the RAA process'.
- (4) Further acknowledges this means that a project's compliance with a Management Plan cannot be appealed to RMPAT.
- (5) Further acknowledges this means for a level 1, 2, or 3 Reserve Activity Assessment there is no opportunity for formal community consultation on matters pertaining to compliance with a Management Plan.
- (6) Agrees that, at a minimum, developments in Reserved Areas should be subject to a process that allows for public consultation on compliance with a Management Plan, and that this compliance must be able to be tested in an appeal to RMPAT.

- (7) Calls on the Government to halt the EOI process until a new statutory process - that allows for public consultation and an appeal on matters pertaining to compliance with a Management Plan - is in place.

I rise on behalf of the Greens to move a motion that goes to the heart of public concern about the Liberals in government, their mismanagement of our national parks, Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and other public lands, and the growing level of community concern about what has become a corrupted, secretive process to privatise parts of Tasmania that have been loved and treasured by Tasmanians for decades.

Members of this House know I am not of the Christian faith, but this morning I went along to the Tasmanian Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast. It was a fantastic event, and I do go each year. This morning we heard from John Zeckendorf, a Tasmanian entrepreneur, but also one of only 25 Australians who has climbed all seven great peaks of the world. The reason I mention John Zeckendorf is because he told the story of moving to Tasmania eight years ago for a year. He is still here because he and his family fell in love with this place. He talks about when he was climbing Everest being able to see the curve of the earth and the stars almost beneath his feet and understanding he was in one of the great temples if you like, the great beautiful wilderness of Everest and the Himalayas. He was talking about how being in Tasmania now that he has that sense of wonder and awe about what a beautiful island this is and those same comments were reflected by Stephen Baxter, the head of the Baptist Church in Tasmania. He was talking about our environment and what a remarkable, beautiful island lutruwita/Tasmania is.

What is at the heart of that beauty? It is our wilderness. It is our public protected areas, places that have been set aside for their natural and cultural values, set aside for current and future generations. They are our gift to the world but, under this Government, our wilderness, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, our national parks, coastal reserves and other public lands are up for grabs through an expressions of interest process which has entirely corrupted good management of our protected areas in Tasmania.

It all started back in 2014-15 when this document was produced. This document, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan of 2016, was the foundational vehicle for the corruption of good process around development in Tasmania's wilderness. This document was written with the express purpose of enabling increased commercial development in the wilderness. Lodges, huts, helicopter flights and this document, let us not forget, was written not long after the Liberal's returned from their fevered, and thankfully unsuccessful, attempts to wind back the extensions to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage area which were made in 2013 as a result of the fact that there were Greens in government.

Mr Gutwein is obviously feeling some heat over this issue because of the growing constituency of concern not only amongst conservationists but fly-fishers, bushwalkers and everyday Tasmanians about this process. They are filling the letters pages of our local papers with letters of extreme concern about the secrecy and the privatisation. We had Mr Gutwein in the earlier debate on the expressions of interest process trying to claim that this is the same process that was in place under previous governments. We know that is a lot of crock because previously we had the 1999 Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan - it was award winning. It was regarded as an outstanding mechanism for protecting Tasmania's wilderness world heritage area and of course it was imperfect, but here are some of the contrasts. The 1999 World Heritage Area Management Plan had an overarching management objective to maintain or enhance wilderness quality. The 2016 final plan - and let us not forget the final plan ignored the more than 7000 submissions that

came in from the people of Tasmania in opposition to the draft management plan - totally ignored those submissions. In the final plan, 'maintaining or enhancing wilderness quality' is replaced with 'to protect and conserve the natural landscapes of the TWWHA, particularly in areas of exceptional natural aesthetic and cultural importance'. The word 'wilderness', hey presto it is gone.

The 1999 plan said, 'In the Southwest National Park, development of infrastructure, including huts, is not allowed in view of the natural character of the area'. The corrupted 2016 final plan replaced this with, 'the number of commercial huts on the South Coast Track is limited to seven', which tells us everything we need to know about a statutory document which was written through the lens only of enabling commercial development inside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

I know that the Liberals in Government struggle with not only the word 'wilderness' but the concept of wilderness. We have seen them try to erase wilderness from the Tasmanian World Heritage Management Plan. We have seen the undermining of the ideal of wilderness, and the importance of protecting it, through the work that is happening on Tasmania's brand. Here is the International Union for the Conservation of Nature definition of wilderness:

... are usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas retaining its natural character and influence without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Wilderness, according to the National Wilderness Inventory, and this is a condensed version, has four key elements: remoteness from settlement; apparent naturalness; biophysical naturalness; and time remoteness. The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area has all those qualities and so many more.

One of the huge problems with this expressions of interest process, apart from the fact it is a total stitch-up for the big end of town, goes to the lack of a proper statutory process for assessing applications to develop inside protected areas. We know that the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal, or RMPAT, concluded in the recent Lake Malbena case -

That a proper interpretation ... of the Scheme only requires:

- a) That a Management Plan is in existence; and
- b) That an assessment of use in accordance with the Management Plan has been undertaken and approved up to and including Step 7 of the RAA process ...

What RMPAT told us is that they cannot test whether any development proposal is compliant with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan, even the weak one of 2016. They cannot even assess whether it is compliant with the planning scheme. All they are able to determine is whether a management plan is in place. Because the management plans have been cooked in order to enable development, the ground work has already been laid to take away all power from local government, and most significantly and by design, the whole process has been set up so that Tasmanians have so few opportunities to input that it is almost meaningless.

The only place where the people of Tasmania who are concerned about the protection of our wilderness and national parks can have a say when a management plan has been stitched up - as it was with this one - and the management plan, for example the Narawntapu National Park, or if the

secretive internal process that is the Parks and Wildlife Reserve Activity Assessment process determines that a proposal is at the level four - that is the highest level - then there is a requirement for public consultation through the federal EPBC process.

People who love Lake Malbena and want to see the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area protected, made their views known when Daniel Hackett's proposal to privatise completely Halls Island came to the Central Highlands Council. The people of Tasmania who were concerned put their views to the council and overwhelmingly they rejected the proposal. I believe there was something like 1300 submissions made to council. In an expression of democracy, the Central Highlands Council said, 'That is right; we are not going to approve this project', on whole series of grounds, including non-compliance with the planning scheme and non-compliance with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan.

You want to talk about the secrecy around the Reserve Activity Assessment process. Here is a letter to Mr Jason Jacobi, the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service, from 7 April this year, from one of the true champions of our wilderness, Geoff Law OA:

Dear Mr Jacobi

**REQUEST FOR COPIES OF RESERVE ACTIVITY ASSESSMENTS
FOR CERTAIN DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE TASMANIAN
RESERVE ESTATE.**

I am writing to request copies of the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) for each of the following proposed developments within the Tasmanian public reserve estate, including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area:

He asks for five RAAs, the one that relates to the Maydena bike park proposal, the Halls Island-Lake Malbena proposal - I remind the House, a copy of which was leaked to the Tasmanian Greens because some people in Government are so concerned about this corrupted process - helicopter landing sites, Mr Law has asked for. The RAA on the South East Cape walk, and it is worth stopping here for a moment.

The South East Cape, Tasmania's southern wild coastline, is one of the last great wild coastlines on the planet. We do not find places like that anymore. They are unique. They are treasures. They are part of our global heritage. This Government fiddled a management plan to allow Ian Johnstone to build seven huts on the South Coast Track, one of the last great coastal wildernesses in the world. Not only did they do that, I think they threw in about \$2 million to help him make it happen. I think they call that corporate welfare.

Mr Law also asked for the RAA on the Cradle Base Camp Experience. He also sought copies of the reasons for the decisions determining the level for each RAA, and copies of the conditions that have been applied to those developments that have been approved. What did he get back from Government? A big fat bagel, after a very long period of time. His response, after trying to get this information which should be made publicly available, was expressed in a recent letter to the editor of the *Tasmanian Mercury*. Mr Law says -

Eighteen months ago I asked the Government for information about tourism development in the World Heritage Area. I saw copies of environmental assessments that had supposedly cleared the way for buildings and infrastructure.

I tried to find the boundaries and conditions that applied to private leases for developments. My request was duckshoved from one department to another until I was told to submit a formal right-to-information request. That request has been in the Ombudsman's in-tray for nearly a year.

There is another request that has been in the Ombudsman's in-tray for nearly five years, and that one was lodged by Nick McKim, the then member for Franklin, in relation to the fiddle over this document. His right to information request was rejected, and it is still sitting in the Ombudsman's in-tray. That is pretty convenient for the Government, isn't it? I continue with Mr Law's letter -

My requests pertain to public land set aside for conservation. In my opinion, the public has a right to know about environmental impacts. The public has a right to know boundaries, extent and public access restrictions that apply to private leases and parks. Many of these developments have been subsidised by the taxpayer. Government's secrecy on development in national parks makes the forestry industry seem like a beacon of transparency. A takeover of publicly owned conservation reserves by private developers is occurring through stealth. Meanwhile, our taxpayer-funded members are advantaged by large political donations from some of these same developers. The system is corrupt.

So says Mr Geoff Law of Dynnyrne, and who can argue with that?

If we go to everyday Tasmanians, people who for generations have been enjoying Tasmania's wilderness and other public protected areas: the letters pages of the *Mercury*, as I said, have been full of these people. These are the people that Mr Tucker in here earlier had the hide to call 'elites'. They are everyday Tasmanians. The elites will be flying in to Lake Malbena on one of the 200 or more chopper flights and landings, into Lake Malbena/Halls Island in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. This EOI process is about catering to elites. That is what it is about. It is about bringing the money in. It provides no benefit to rural and regional towns because you are plonking these developments inside the wilderness, degrading wilderness values, and then you get fly-in, fly-out elites coming in for exclusive access to our Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Here is an everyday Tasmanian, Brett Smith. He wrote to the Leader of the Opposition, Ms White, and he says this -

I am writing to you to highlight the plight of public Stakeholders across Tasmania. The Lake Malbena development and the State government's corrupt and secretive EOI process is setting a precedent where OUR public land can be secretly leased without our knowledge, forcing developments and privatisation on public wilderness that belongs to all.

I might pause for a moment to let the House know that Brett Smith is not a greenie. He is very firm about that. He is a Labor man. He is concerned about it. I will wind up with a little of what he said here -

As a spokesperson of a lobby group representing Fishers and Walkers, we plead with your Party to help us. This is a process designed to escape scrutiny, take away our beloved recreations and crush our spirit.

We are well aware that your party -

That is, the Labor Party -

... has distanced yourselves from this issue and are concerned about associating with Greens policy as mentioned at your state conference. This is not a Greens issue. This is an issue of decency, public rights, a social licence and our right to have our public land stay in public hands.

The Hodgman Government could, at a whim tomorrow, take the Western Lakes Wilderness fishery away from us hardworking Tasmanians, who love our recreations out there, and give it to a handful of private developers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the depth of community concern about the expressions of interest process grows by the day, in people from all points of the compass in Tasmania, all walks of life, all voting persuasions. They have had five years to have a look at this process and to them it has manifestly failed the 'sniff test'. They see it for what it is: a corrupted process designed to enable huts, lodges and helicopters to degrade the wilderness. They see it for exactly what it is.

Even if people were supportive at some level of more commercial development inside protected areas, they find the process, the secrecy, lack of transparency, the absolute stitch-ups, disgusting and repellent. A whole new wave of people who are opposed to the EOI process is coming on board once they have smelt the stink around the expressions of interest process.

I am aware that other members will want to have a say, but I want to go back to the heart of our notice of motion, which deals with the absence of a proper statutory process for any development inside protected areas. We look at the Lake Malbena decision. Clause 29.3.1 A1 of the Central Highlands Interim Planning Scheme of 2015 requires a project to comply with the relevant management plan. In the case of Lake Malbena, this is the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan of 2016. The Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT) determined that a proper interpretation of Clause 29.3.1 A1 of the scheme only requires that (a), a relevant management plan exists; and (b), a Reserve Activity Assessment has been approved up to and including Step 7.

As such, RMPAT has determined that it cannot assess whether or not a project is compliant with a management plan. When you look at the decision of RMPAT and the grounds on which the Central Highlands Council rejected the Lake Malbena proposal, it was because on multiple levels it was non-compliant, not only with the planning scheme, but with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan of 2016, as weak as that plan is.

We know a Reserve Activity Assessment cannot be appealed; it does not call for submissions unless it is at level 4. There is no legal framework that determines when a level 4 must take place, so the reserve activity assessments are determined internally by the Parks and Wildlife Service. As we saw from our leaked copy of the RAA for Lake Malbena, they are pretty much written by the developer. That is what we got, pretty much written by the developer, and even though the proposal was not compliant with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan of 2016, this RAA, which was lodged with the Commonwealth at level 3, pretends that the proposal is compliant and we know it is not.

We know it is not compliant with even the standing camp policy. So what does the Government do when it is clear it is not compliant with standing camp policy? They announce a review of the standing camp policy. Despite the Lake Malbena proposal being of significant public interest, it

was not assessed as a level 4. Despite its impacts on wilderness values, Parks determined it would not be lodged as a level 4, and therefore there would be no mandatory requirement for public consultation. This is a problem because the Government can, and has, stitched up a result through the Reserve Activity Assessment process, as it did with Lake Malbena.

The Lake Malbena proposal, in the words of the proponent, is for the very top end of the tourism market, 'seeking privileged access to Tasmania's wilderness'. That is, the actual elites. The visitors are flown in, provided with heating, power showers, toilets, a barbecue, a guide for each three people and, by the looks of it, food. Visitors are in no way, shape or form self-reliant, experienced or committed to this type of zone. The zoning that is in the stitched-up 2016 plan makes it clear that visitors must exhibit a higher level of experience and commitment in this type of zone.

That is not what is going to happen with the Lake Malbena proposal. They are going to be flown in and flown out and pity the poor fly-fisher in the area who has to listen to those helicopters go back and forth. That instantly undermines the wilderness values of that area.

The 2016 TWWHA management plan only allows standing camps in the self-reliant recreation zone but the accommodation facilities proposed are described in the plans as a type C standing camp. Type C standing camps are only allowed where the site has already been degraded or hardened to such an extent that rehabilitation to its natural state is unlikely or where access is exceptionally remote or difficult. Neither of those conditions were met by Wild Drake Pty Ltd in its proposal to privatise and allow for exclusive access to Halls Island in Lake Malbena inside the exquisite Walls of Jerusalem National Park. The proponent has posed no argument justifying the use of a type C standing camp. The standing camp policy requires that the walls and roofs of structures will be made mostly of tent style material. The policy describes the experience in the following way:

In a standing camp, visitors can feel the wind as it flaps the sides of the tent and hear the surf as they lie down at night.

This is the point of difference for standing camps. This type of intimate experience cannot be gained by staying in hut or lodge-style accommodation with four solid walls and modern conveniences. The Lake Malbena buildings will be principally constructed of flat fibreglass, reinforced plastic panels. There is nothing compliant with the standing camp policy or the 2016 management plan about this permanent, hard, luxury camp.

We have a situation here where a government has changed management plans to facilitate private developments as the vehicle for driving this developer feeding frenzy in our protected areas. The Lake Malbena developer still wanted to go further than the revised dodgy management plan allowed so the Government stitched up the Reserve Activity Assessment to say it was compliant even though it was manifestly not.

We are now in a situation where the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal says they can only assess whether a management plan exists. Well, yes, okay, a management plan exists and an RAA has been approved. Well of course it has been approved because it was another stitch up. They cannot assess compliance with a management plan. The Government in more public spin is claiming this as a 'robust process' and a project that has been ticked off by the independent umpire when the reality is that the independent umpire has said they have no power, no jurisdiction to assess this project, to assess whether or not it is compliant.

Just before I wind up, I want to go to the heart of some of the secrecy around this expressions of interest process. For stage one of the process at least you saw what the proposals kind of were. At least you had a sense of what was being put on the table in terms of seeking exclusive use rights in protected areas in Tasmania. At least you got that. But what did we get out of the new Parks minister at Estimates this year? Stage two, no sorry, it was all a bit troublesome and inconvenient to have to deal with public concern around proposals in stage one. As the Coordinator-General said in response to my question when I asked why he was not releasing any details of any of the proposals that have come under stage two, to paraphrase him, he said that the proponents or developers had found the stage one process a bit awkward, a bit uncomfortable. So, what did the Government do? Just changed it straight away.

It does not matter that thousands and thousands of Tasmanians are highly uncomfortable about the Expressions of Interest process. That has not changed anything but a handful of developers who do not like scrutiny have a bit of a grumble about the process and hey presto, the process is changed overnight. That is utterly disgraceful.

We have a right to know. These lands do not belong to the Liberals. They belong to the people of Tasmania, they belong to Aboriginal Tasmanians, they belong to the world. But we have this corrupted process where under stage two, which is now an open-ended process, proponents have to sign a legal agreement prohibiting them from talking about the proposal.

The Government hides under commercial-in-confidence and makes proponents say nothing and you wonder why people are so distrustful? Mr Gutwein got up here the other day and said, trust me. Trust me with the World Heritage Area and this process. Well, no we will not. We do not trust you because you are manifestly not worthy of trust.

We lodged a right to information request to find out what we could about the South Coast Track. Here is another classic. We lodged an RTI for any information regarding DPIPWE's expenses or requested investment relating to the South Coast Track or Ian Johnstone from March 2014 to present. The answer comes back, 'A search of DPIPWE's records located a total of 84 pages of information relevant to your application'. Guess what, the delegated officer decided that 75 pages of the 84 that were relevant to the request were withheld in full, six pages were partly withheld - so partly exempt - but we had three pages back. Three pages disclosed in full and that is insulting to the people of Tasmania. It is insulting to all rational people and it is insulting to the public's right to know.

At every step of the way, we have been fobbed off. We have been lied to. Every step of the way there has been secrecy. The only reason anyone saw the Reserve Activity Assessment for Lake Malbena is because it was leaked and still there is this secrecy. If Mr Gutwein tries to mislead the House again and tells us that the process is exactly the same as it was under previous governments I want the House to be very clear that that is a lie. It is a complete and utter fabrication. The evidence speaks for itself.

This Government came into office and decided to unleash a developer free-for-all in our protected areas. It has tried to do so without reference back to the people of Tasmania. It has designed a system that explicitly shuts out the people of Tasmania. For example, previously the World Heritage Area was actually protected, in large part, by the provisions within the 1999 World Heritage Area management plan. There are no protections in this. There are no protections in this document and that was finally proved when RMPAT overturned the Central Highlands Council's

decision on Lake Malbena. This is a destructive document. It is the foundation for the degrading of Tasmania's wilderness, one of the most precious, beautiful places on earth. It started here.

We need a proper statutory process for any development that happens inside public protected areas and the wilderness. Tasmanians have a right to know and they have a right to have a say because for decades and generations they have been using, loving and treasuring our shared common wealth, our protected areas, not Peter Gutwein's protected areas.

I commend the motion to the House.

[5.40 p.m.]

Ms STANDEN (Franklin) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I note that the Leader of the Greens has not left much time for debate. It has become a bit of a pattern in this House that they introduce motions and then grandstand for a good portion of the time, pretending to want to know what other parties think about the ideas they are putting forward but then spend the majority of the time speaking to themselves and patting themselves on the back, taking the high moral ground and generally sitting in the position of judge and jury.

Ms O'Connor - Are you talking about us, Ms Standen?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. You have already had your time for contribution. Please let the member speak in peace and quiet.

Ms STANDEN - Tasmanian Labor believes in a robust planning system and it puts community consultation front and centre. Substantially, Tasmanian Labor is happy with the motion but we will propose a minor amendment. The reason is we agree that with nearly 50 per cent of Tasmania in national parks and other reserves, it is a significant issue to look at, not only the EOI process but also the Reserve Activity Assessment process and the broader context of resourcing for national parks. We are on record in flagging some reservations about the existing EOI process.

It is important to balance the visitor experience with natural and cultural values, with brand, with visitor economy but also with resources in order to balance visitor experience with expectations.

The improvements we would like to see go to the very important aspect around improving public understanding of the process for assessing activities of which EOIs, in the way the Leader of the Greens has described, is only one activity within national parks and reserves.

Improve public understanding of what activities ought to be undertaken within that public land and remove the perception of special deals of secrecy, therefore improving transparency. We believe in the principles of improved consultation and appeal rights for the public to have a say over public land but we also believe in the need for improved processes for industry so they have certainty over the processes. There is no better example of that than the Hacketts who have been through the process around the Lake Malbena proposal. Who could blame them for being angry at being hung out to dry through a long process?

Ms O'Connor - They were begging for it. Give us a break. He has got Halls Island. Not a bad reward.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor. Ms Standen was quiet during your contribution. I ask for the same courtesy, please.

Ms STANDEN - Hung out to dry! Stuck between the Government's EOI process and those expectations of the public around consultation and appeal rights.

Labor has always supported Lake Malbena going through the council planning process and we note the decision of RMPAT to overturn that decision of the Central Highlands Council and that many parties are now considering the implications of that ruling.

We note that the opponents of the project are considering further avenues of appeal, and that is their right. Unlike the Greens, we are not seeking to prejudge this process and we will respect the final outcome.

It is important to differentiate these planning processes from the Liberal Government's EOI process that preceded the lodgement of the development application in that case and we have long been on the record arguing that transparency of the EOI process must be improved. Most developments in Tasmania's national parks and reserves will still require a planning permit from the relevant local council and Labor is committed to preserving the role of local government in that process. Labor will continue to engage and consult with the tourism industry, anglers, walkers and local communities, about development in Tasmania's world heritage areas. We need to see this in the context of a broader context as well.

In relation to the RAA - the Reserve Activity Assessment review process - the amendments I will table note that process has stalled and that it has been stalled for around 18 months, so far as I can see. It is not clear what progress has been made, if any, and it is clear that there is a need for improved consultation, consideration of appeal rights, the definition of the RAA within relation to the other planning legislation, in particular.

I note that the Government has cut significant resources from Parks and Wildlife Services. This is the agency that is responsible for delivering the visitor experience. In 2015, some \$2.5 million, or 10 per cent of the budget, was cut. At that time, the Tasmanian National Parks Association president, Nick Sawyer, said Parks and Wildlife Services were, and I quote, 'stretched to breaking point'. This year, a further \$1.61 million, or the equivalent to 24 rangers has been cut. That is without consideration of further cuts to be factored in.

According to this year's Budget papers, there has been no material improvement in funding resources to Parks and Wildlife. The Budget figures show that in four years' time the resources available to that agency will be lower than it is today, even before the additional \$20 million of savings as part of the Government's broader \$450 million savings target is factored in, which will be equivalent to almost 300 rangers, particularly against the context of the need for improved maintenance within our national parks and reserves, the additional strains in relation to bushfire and so on, as well as ongoing maintenance. This is a significant concern. We would like to see a commitment to increased resources for PWS. In view of the time, I might table my amendments and share them also.

I move the following amendments to the motion:

Labor proposes that paragraphs (1) through to (6) are retained. The first amendment is to omit paragraph (7) and insert instead:

- (7) Notes the failure of the Government to review the Reserve Activity Assessment process that was commenced in early 2018 and promised to be completed by end 2018.

Amendment two is to insert a new paragraph (8) with three parts, that is:

- (8) Calls on the Government to -
- (a) release the key outcomes of the Reserve Activity Assessment review to date and commit to a timeframe for completion of the review;
 - (b) review and update management plans for Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves; and
 - (c) commit to appropriate resourcing to enable the Parks and Wildlife Service to fulfil their responsibilities in overseeing Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves.

Ms O'Connor - Good god, what a disastrous amendment. You trust the Government to re-write all the management plans?

Ms STANDEN - In relation to management plans, I am not sure specifically what the Greens' motion is referring to. I am advised that of the 19 national parks, not all national parks even have management plans in place.

Ms O'Connor - That is right, but there are provisions.

Ms STANDEN - I encourage the minister to advise how many are in place and how many of those are out of date. I spoke with a constituent just last week about the Douglas-Apsley management plan which I am advised was written in 1993 and not reviewed since. This is despite the department's own best management guidelines showing that there should be a review of those management plans every five years.

Ms O'Connor - So you trust the Government that has already corrupted management plans to re-write new ones?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order.

Ms STANDEN - Why are they not reviewing those management plans? Because they are so stretched doing everything else. There needs to be appropriate resourcing to enable those management plans to be properly reviewed and updated as well as those other aspects that I have outlined around the Reserve Activity Assessment review, which is the broader context for this motion. I will leave it at that.

[5.49 p.m.]

Mr GUTWEIN (Bass - Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage) - Madam Deputy speaker, the member for Clark was nothing but predictable. I have to say that. Ms Standen was again nothing but predictable in that Labor once again was not able to find a position on anything.

To be clear, from the Government's point of view, we will not be supporting the Greens' motion. I do want to take the short period of time I have to put some facts on the table. What is important to understand first and foremost is that the EOI process is not a part of the planning process or the Reserve Activity Assessment process conducted within Parks. What the EOI process enables people to do is bring forward an idea, to have their intellectual property protected while that is assessed as to whether it may be suitable to proceed, and if it is then green-lighted, it then goes into the same planning process that existed when the member for Clark was in government.

Ms O'Connor - You are lying again.

Mr GUTWEIN - I am not lying.

Ms O'Connor - You people stitched up management plans.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr GUTWEIN - The member should withdraw that because I am not lying. The process undertaken, whether it be through LUPAA, or whether it be a Reserve Activity Assessment, occurred under Labor and the Greens and it is occurring under us.

In terms of the TWWHA management plan, as the member is well aware, the amendments were all subject to consultation. That is legislated in the act. There are management plans in place for 16 of the 19 national parks in Tasmania; 65 per cent of protected land is covered by management plans. Importantly, in terms of the management plan, the Government accepted all the recommendations that were made by the Reactive Monitoring mission back in 2015, and the Government then accepted in full, and in the main, most of those recommendations have been met or are underway.

Let us talk about Halls Island for a moment. Halls Island was under licence prior to this process that we are engaged in. Halls Island had a hut built on it. It was not wilderness, and it was not deemed to be a wilderness area, which was why, as the member today raised the point that it does not carry that mantle, the reason was that it had been built on, and it had significant human activity.

In terms of the proposal that the Hacketts have brought forward, and the access arrangements, my understanding is that the access plan that has been presented will actually provide for an increased level of access from the public, over and above what occurred in the past; that will provide them with an increased level of access. More visitation is expected and, importantly, as part of the access plan, my understanding is that visitors to the island will be able to utilise the facilities that the Hacketts will provide in terms of toileting, rather than having to carry their waste out. To me that sounds like a win-win.

In terms of the claims of secrecy and corrupt process, we have engaged and implemented an additional process over and above what occurred when you were in government, and when the previous Labor government was there. The only time people understood when a lease or licence was agreed to by the government, either under yourselves or the previous Labor government, was after that deal was done.

Those arrangements included the Maria Island Walk, the Cradle Mountain huts, Pumphouse Point - all enabled under previous governments, entered into without the level of public notice, consultation, and input available that we enabled through the EOI process.

Once a proposal has been deemed acceptable to be green-lighted, that is whether or not it broadly meets the requirements of the management plan, whether or not the proponents have the capacity and capability to conduct such an operation and, importantly, whether or not the operation will be financially or economically viable. They are the decisions and considerations through the EOI process. Should a proposal be deemed to be acceptable against those criteria, then it is made public before lease and licence negotiations occur.

The member for Clark is smiling because she knows full well under her government leases and licences were entered into with no process, without the public being aware of what was being negotiated -

Ms O'Connor - You are engaged in a fire sale of protected areas.

Mr GUTWEIN - what the proposals that were being considered were.

Ms O'Connor - Maybe you want to tell us what -

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order, Ms O'Connor.

I will just make the point that this side of the House, as much as that side of the House, and even yours included, we absolutely value the Tasmanian wilderness. I make the point that the former member for Franklin, Mr McKim, monetised parks by being paid as a guide for a walking company.

Ms O'Connor - Are you serious? You are desperate.

Mr GUTWEIN - Let us be clear. You came into this place and you raised John Zeckendorf. What a fantastic Tasmanian. He has accomplished an enormous number of things, including Mount Everest. How did he get to the top of Mount Everest? With a paid guide in company. Let us be clear.

Ms O'Connor - Is there a lodge on the top of Mount Everest?

Dr Woodruff - Is it a World Heritage Wilderness area?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff. I do not think you want to be asked to go before the next few minutes, so I ask you to just -

Ms O'Connor - Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr GUTWEIN - In terms of Halls Island, I want to again come back to the process that went through. Obviously that proposal was subject to rigorous assessment by the Commonwealth, including consideration of over several hundred public and expert submissions. They determined that the proposal was not a controlled action. The Commonwealth in doing so considered 900 submissions that were made, including I might say around 800 that were campaign submissions.

We make no apologies for our EOI process. It adds an additional level of transparency. Under previous governments, and the member knows this is a fact, lease and licence arrangements were entered into without the public knowing what was even being discussed. In terms of the EOI process, both stage one and stage two, all of those proposals that have progressed to the point where

we are going to negotiate a lease or a licence, or they are going to enter the planning process, are made public, and they are currently on the website as you full well know. That is a level of transparency that you never provided.

In terms of the TWWHA management, that has followed a statutory process. It followed a statutory process in which, as I have said, when the monitoring mission raised a range of recommendations, the Government immediately agreed to those recommendations.

Ms O'Connor - Not to log and mine the TWWHA.

Mr GUTWEIN - Agreed to those recommendations, and we should be appalled at some of the behaviours and some of the things that have been said against people like the Hacketts, who have taken the opportunity to be prepared to showcase to Tasmanians, and to the world, parts of this state that many people would never get the opportunity to see, and in the same way provide improved access and facilities for those who want to visit the island through their access plan.

All that we see though is the self-righteous moralising of the member for Clark and the member for Franklin as they continue to push for what they think is a -

Time expired.

Ms OGILVIE - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, to clarify, are you on the ALP amendment, because there are two?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Yes, that is the only amendment to motion we have before us at the moment.

Ms OGILVIE - Are we voting as a caucus on those or separately?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Yes, the Labor opposition's amendments to the motion is the question before us.

The question is that the amendments to the motion be agreed to.

The House divided -

AYES 8

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow (Teller)
Ms Haddad
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Standen
Ms White

NOES 14

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Hickey
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Ms O'Connor
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah (Teller)
Mr Shelton

Mr Tucker
Dr Woodruff

PAIR

Ms Houston

Ms Courtney

Amendments negatived.

Question - That the motion be agreed to -

The House divided -

AYES 2

NOES 20

Ms O'Connor
Dr Woodruff (Teller)

Ms Archer
Mr Barnett
Dr Broad
Ms Butler (Teller)
Ms Dow
Mr Ferguson
Mr Gutwein
Ms Haddad
Ms Hickey
Mr Hodgman
Mr Jaensch
Mr O'Byrne
Ms O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Rockliff
Mrs Rylah
Mr Shelton
Ms Standen
Mr Tucker
Ms White

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Lyndon Bolton - Tribute

[6.10 p.m.]

Ms O'BYRNE (Bass) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to pay my respects to a legend of the George Town and Pipers River community, Mr Lyndon Bolton, or 'Bolts'. Lyndon passed away on Sunday after a short and vicious battle with pancreatic cancer. As many members would know, and I can see it is a surprise to some, Lyndon was the president of the RSL in George Town for many years, a passionate person who was utterly dedicated to the club during its most difficult years and bore both those struggles very bravely.

Because Lyndon was born on 30 November in 1946, he had his birthday during the conscription ballot. The son of a veteran, he was very proud to serve when he was conscripted in 1968. He was a rifleman in the infantry in Vietnam and he served 12 months in the 9th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. Lyndon later attended when they finally recognised Vietnam veterans in Sydney and also received the RSL Life Membership Award.

He is remembered for many things and I will return to some of his RSL work. He was also remembered for being an incredible sportsperson. He was the NTFA under 19 best and fairest winner in his day, and when City South first moved from York Park to Youngtown he had the honour of kicking the first goal for the seniors at their new home. He was a very dedicated and committed sportsperson and that was taken up by his wonderful children.

Lyndon absolutely loved his RSL, he gave loyal and exemplary service and if we look at the many things that he did there and one that stands out that will remain a permanent physical legacy for us all to remember Lyndon is the re-establishment of the soldiers' trees at Lefroy. He was in the pub one day talking to a veteran who mentioned that there had once been an avenue of trees for the people from Lefroy who had gone and not come home. He became very passionate about that and he and other members of the RSL researched it and when they discovered that there was a lost avenue of honour, they worked tirelessly to re-establish the soldiers' trees at Lefroy. That will remain a physical legacy that his family can be proud of for many years.

Lyndon was someone I dealt with a lot over the years. He was someone I considered a dear friend. I respected him and honour him. In life, you sometimes need people who are truly good human beings and Lyndon Bolton was absolutely a good human being. My heart goes out his family, to Di, Jeanna, Brendan and the grandchildren, and his brother, Wayne. The whole family is having a pretty rough time at the moment, but what an amazing life well lived and what a wonderful human being. If I can join with many of the people who have commented, rest easy, soldier.

St Helens Hospital - Repurpose Deloraine Ambulance Station

[6.13 p.m.]

Ms WHITE (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I raise the issue of the old St Helens Hospital. The minister is in the Chamber tonight, which I appreciate because the Department of Communities Tasmania, which is a responsibility under Mr Roger Jaensch's portfolio, is now tasked with the responsibility of deciding what to do with that building. This has been ongoing for a number of months. The community was consulted about this in July this year. They were asked for their feedback with respect to how they would like to see that building repurposed or what use they would like it to take in the future.

From my conversations with people in St Helens, I know they have a number of really terrific ideas of how that building might be repurposed. I have written to the minister about this. The community has asked questions about this. I note with interest the story in *The Examiner* newspaper today, in which the minister says, in referring to the consultation, that -

A significant number of ideas were suggested through this session, ranging from community based activities, arts and music through to commercial activities.

These options are now, being considered and will be progressed as appropriate with ongoing consultation with the community.

My question is how long will that take, because it has already been ongoing for a number of months with that site sitting vacant. I notice a caretaker/manager who looks after the property, but there are so many terrific uses the community have identified the site could be turned into to accommodate respite, community gym amongst the other uses the minister identified in his comments through the media today.

I would like for the minister if he can to provide an update on what the process is from here. The community has been asked their views, the department is considering those views, so how much longer will that take and will there be a short list of options that might go back to the community for consideration or will there be a final decision? Is the Government going to maintain ownership or will you sell that building?

I have a number of questions the community share and I would hope the Government would be a little bit more transparent with the community about what is going to happen with the former St Helens Hospital site.

I also want to raise the issue of the Deloraine Ambulance Station and members would be clear with respect to my views on this supporting the community, particularly the volunteers, raising concerns about the Government's intention to change that station to a double branch station. I have met with the volunteers in Deloraine. I have spoken to a number of people in the community. In fact, 1000 signatories have been put forward on a petition calling on the Government to halt any decision about changes to the Deloraine Ambulance Station, until they have properly discussed it with the community, particularly with the volunteers.

I note the minister had a meeting on 22 October in Deloraine where she met with some of the volunteers and community members to discuss their concerns. However, my concern remains the Government is going to push ahead and make changes to the Deloraine Ambulance Station that could have quite significant negative impacts for the community. Already, that ambulance is frequently out of Deloraine. It is responding to cases in Latrobe or Launceston, or even further away than that and as a consequence gets ramped at the hospital. Once it is ramped at the hospital and if those patients have been cared for at the hospital, it gets a dispatch to go to another job because there are no other ambulances available in the region, remembering there are only four ambulances in Launceston. We have seen lots of photos of more than four ambulances being ramped at the hospital at one time.

That means the community of Deloraine is left vulnerable without a local ambulance response. The community and the volunteers at the Deloraine Ambulance Station are simply raising the concern the Government is trying to plug the holes in the health system with their local ambulance rather than properly resourcing the ambulance system to respond to the demand at the source, making sure Devonport, Latrobe, Launceston have adequate resources so Deloraine's ambulance is not continually being drawn out of the community.

They welcome more paramedics, of course they do, but they want them to be put where they are needed and not what I expect will happen. They are put in Deloraine and continually be drawn to respond in those major city centres leaving country areas without a local ambulance response.

I, again, call on the minister to respect the views of those volunteers who for some it has been a 10-year dedicated service to their local community and have extraordinary knowledge about the

types of calls they are receiving and the way they are spending their day frequently responding and supporting Launceston, Devonport and Latrobe, which takes them out of their local area. By putting another paramedic in their town, it will not increase the service and it will not double the ambulance response.

Converting it to a double branch station will not do anything to improve or increase coverage for the Deloraine town or that community. It does not put more ambulances on at that one time. It is making sure the roster is adequately staffed. That is a very noble aim, but the problem is they will continue to be called in to Launceston and Devonport to cover for the shortages there. I hope the minister heard what the volunteers had to say, because they have stated very clearly the work pressure they are being put under will force them to the unfortunate position of having no other option but to resign.

If they are volunteering day and night, taken out of their community and then coming home and having to care for their families, perform their paid work obligations, their caring obligations, they are becoming so incredibly fatigued and exhausted, that they are not going to be able to continue to volunteer to support the ambulance service in Deloraine, which is something they dearly want to be able to continue doing.

I do not think the Government has this one right. I call on them to rethink what they are doing in Deloraine. It is quite a unique situation given the proximity of that town to the major city centres, which does mean that ambulance gets drawn in. I hope that the minister respects the views of those knowledgeable people.

Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 - Redactions

[6.20 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon - Minister for Disability Services and Community Development) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to make further comment regarding the partial redaction of the Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 - Custody Inspection Report, tabled by me on 17 October, which has attracted some interest in this place and now in the media, I am advised.

The document tabled by me was provided to me by the Office of the Custodial Inspector. I cannot, and have not, directed the independent Custodial Inspector to make redactions. To suggest otherwise is highly inappropriate and offensive. The Custodial Inspector is an independent statutory officer appointed by the Governor. When performing his functions, the inspector must act independently, impartially and in the public interest.

As is usual in this process, prior to the publication of the report, the Custodial Inspector consulted with the Department of Communities Tasmania, which provided responses to the recommendations. The Department of Communities Tasmania identified potentially security sensitive information in the report. The department raised these concerns directly with the Custodial Inspector. The Custodial Inspector acknowledged these concerns, and it was therefore agreed that a redacted version of the report would be tabled in parliament and made publicly available on the Custodial Inspector's website. The Custodial Inspector then wrote to me and asked that I consider tabling a redacted version in parliament.

In support of these comments I will now read into the *Hansard* a letter from the Custodial Inspector, Richard Connock, to me on 15 August 2019.

Dear Minister,

Pursuant to section 15 of the *Custodial Inspection Act 2016*, I deliver to you a copy of the Custody Inspection Report for your consideration and tabling in both Houses of Parliament at the expiration of the 30 day period stipulated in section 15(5).

Communities Tasmania has raised concerns regarding potentially security-sensitive information in the report being made public upon tabling and publishing. Acknowledging these concerns, I am happy to publish a redacted version on my website. I ask also that you consider tabling a redacted version in Parliament.

My staff are currently working with Communities Tasmania to determine the information to be redacted. I will provide a copy of the redacted report as soon as possible, and well before the 30-day period expires.

Please advise me of the date the report is to be tabled so I can ensure the redacted inspection report is made publicly available on my website.

Should you wish to respond to the report before it is tabled, or to discuss any of its contents, please do not hesitate to contact me.

On 20 August 2019 the custodial inspector again wrote to me:

Dear Minister,

I refer to my letter of 15 August 2019 and now enclose a copy of the redacted version of the Custody Inspection Report for tabling in both Houses of Parliament.

As previously indicated, I ask that you consider tabling this redacted version acknowledging that Communities Tasmania has concerns regarding potentially security-sensitive information in the unredacted version of the report, delivered to you on 15 August 2019.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to respond to the report before it is tabled, or to discuss the report's content.

I also want to read into *Hansard* an extract from a letter from Ginna Webster, then secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania, to the Custodial Inspector on 2 August - predating the previous two letters - and the line relating to the identification of matters for redaction. It is as follows:

I would like to explore with you further, information in the report relating to security matters at AYDC being made public when the report is finalised. Maintaining the integrity of AYDC security is part of Communities Tasmania's

duty of care to its workforce and client group. My concern is that this may be undermined if there is any public disclosure of how this security is undertaken. I would ask that we discuss the possibilities around the public release of detail around AYDC security.

I am reluctant to bring correspondence of this nature and the names of officers and public servants into this place in debate, but in the interests of transparency and public interest in this matter, I am happy to bring these statements and also to table the three letters I have referred to.

Dr WOODRUFF - Point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, can I seek clarification. Did the minister seek to table those letters?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER - Ministers do not need to have leave.

Dr Woodruff - So he does not need to? Thank you.

Hazel Elaine Bushby - Tribute

[6.26 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass - Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) - Madam Deputy Speaker, tonight I honour a truly wonderful woman, Hazel Elaine Bushby, known as Elaine, who passed just over one week ago.

Elaine was born in 1934 in Hobart in the middle of the Great Depression. She spent her early years in a Salvation Army orphanage until she was adopted at the age of four by a single mother, Margaret Morris, prior to the start of World War II. She enjoyed a loving relationship with her mum until her death in 1992 at the age of nearly 102.

Elaine grew up in North Hobart and Sandy Bay, attending Albuera Street Primary School and then Hobart High School. Her working career commenced as a trainee draftsman's tracer at the Hydro-Electric Commission before she decided to train as a nurse at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

When Elaine was 16, she met Maxwell Holmes Bushby at an ambassador's Easter Christian camp, whom she married on 6 November 1954 and moved to Launceston. She was soon kept busy with the birth of five children, Peter, Michael, Wendy, David and Helen. She looked after the children and ran the house while Max was heavily involved in running the family real estate business.

That name should be familiar to members of this House. In 1961, Max stood for election to this House and was voted in as the Liberal member for Bass and later speaker of the House, indeed, the chair in which you are sitting in now, Madam Deputy Speaker. Throughout Max's very successful 25-year political career - which is amazing when you think about it, in any time period, to serve this House for so long - Elaine did a wonderful job supporting Max and juggling her home and family duties with her other church and community service activities.

Elaine was a stalwart and a life member of the National Council of Women. She sat on the Launceston City Mission Board for 15 years. She was active in the Royal Commonwealth Society and had a true passion for Christian Endeavour, the Bible Society, WEC and many other Christian organisations. She was a deacon and then an elder in the Newstead Baptist Church.

Elaine was a dedicated member of the Liberal Party in her own right and Elaine is an important person in my own political journey. She authorised my first Liberal campaign for parliament in 2004.

Elaine's dedication was such that she was greatly loved, for her work but more importantly for her character, and she was appreciated by everyone who knew her. Elaine's dedication and work in all of these areas was recognised in 2001 when she was awarded the Centenary of Federation medal for contributing to the care of people and improving the role of women in society. In 2017 she was inducted into Tasmania's Honour Roll of Women.

When Max passed away in 1994, Elaine became even more involved in the organisations and causes that she felt passionate about. Unfortunately, Max did not live to see his son David and recently, daughter Wendy, each become Liberal senators representing our state. Elaine was most proud of them, as she was equally proud of Peter, a noted real estate agent, Michael, noted in public service and in infrastructure, and Helen, who followed in her mum's footsteps becoming a respected nurse.

Elaine had suspected that she had been adopted by Margaret but did not have it confirmed until she needed her original birth certificate. She then set about discovering her birth family and discovered that her birth mum had passed away in 1950 but she also discovered that she had a sister and a niece, both of whom she got to know and quickly grew close to.

As a keen traveller and photographer, I am informed that she took so many photos that she had gold VIP status at the local photo store. Elaine was also renowned for her artwork and her famous Sunday roasts.

In all, Elaine has left behind five children, 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Her death will, I know, leave a gaping hole in their lives and also in the community which she willingly served. What a legacy, what a loving woman, what a respected figure and what a gift she and the late Max each and both made of their lives for the people of our state and for this House.

On a personal note, I am saddened that I was not able to attend her funeral. As colleagues in this House would know, with the funeral on just this last Monday and the parliamentary schedule being what it is, it meant that I was unable to attend her funeral to honour her life, but I add my voice to those of many other people who held Elaine in such affection as to now miss her deeply and to thank God for her life. Elaine has now heard the words of 'Well done, our good and faithful servant' and after 25 years is now reunited with Max in glory.

I know many here will agree as members of the House of Assembly with which the Bushby family had such an enduring connection, vale Elaine Bushby.

Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 - Redactions

[6.31 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to make comments tonight on the adjournment and they do touch on what the Minister for Human Services spoke about a few moments ago. As members of the House would be well aware, the Custodial Inspector, Mr Richard Connock, who is also the Ombudsman of Tasmania and wears many other hats, took an unusual

and unprecedented step today of putting out a public statement regarding commentary about the redaction of sections of the Inspection of Youth Custodial Services Tasmania 2018 report.

This statement concerns me greatly because it adds to the long list of examples of the lack of transparency and the lack of commitment to transparency that we have seen from this Government since its election.

We have had countless examples of reports hidden or denied in the health system and across other areas of government. We have seen, for example, the Ombudsman's office starved of resources to the point where there are people waiting for years to have reviews finalised in that office and many reviews are languishing in that office waiting for release. This Government has hit the go-slow on performing any tangible changes to improve Tasmania's terrible electoral donation laws, the worst in the country.

Today we see again some serious questions raised about alleged potential interference by the Government in the redaction of that inspection report. I will read into the *Hansard* that statement from the Custodial Inspector who said three hours ago -

On completion of the custody inspection report relating to Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018, my office presented the report to the Department of Communities Tasmania and Minister Jaensch with no parts of the report redacted.

At the request of Communities Tasmania in response to concerns about information contained in the report, specifically communicating security concerns, parts of the Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 were redacted.

The redacted version as requested by Communities Tasmania was then presented to Minister Jaensch for tabling.

As a result of events, the Inspectorate will be taking a strong stance in relation to future redactions of reports. No redactions will be made unless the information is considered by the Inspector to be a significant security risk.

I stress that the Custodial Inspector is here to ensure accountability and scrutiny of Tasmanian prisons and the Ashley Detention Centre and will always ensure the Inspectorate performs its functions with the utmost integrity.

It is unprecedented to see this kind of public statement made in this way. That second-last paragraph causes me great concern - '... the Inspectorate will be taking a strong stance in relation to future redactions of reports', and 'No redactions will be made unless the information is considered by the Inspector to be a significant security risk'.

We heard the minister say on the adjournment just now that he did not instruct redactions. If that is the case, who did? If the minister did not ask for these redactions, who did? The spirit of the Right to Information Act is to release information. It is not to hide information. It is to release, not redact. That is the spirit of the Right to Information Act, as was the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act that preceded it. The public has the right to know. The public has the right to have government information publicly released and in their hands. It is right for some information to be

redacted from time to time, but the implication in this statement, in my reading, is that more was redacted potentially than needed to be.

It is comforting to know that there will be a strong stance in the future in relation to redactions of reports. No redactions will be made unless the information is considered to be of a significant security risk. That implies to me that there is information in that report that need not have been redacted and, indeed, the spirit of the act is to release public information, not to hide it from the public.

Labor calls tonight on the Government to conduct a full independent investigation into any potential interference by the Government in the redaction of that report. It must be taken seriously and it must be investigated urgently. There must be a full and independent investigation conducted immediately into any potential interference in or influence on that office to redact the report in the way it was tabled here.

Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 - Redactions

[6.37 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Clark - Leader of the Greens) - Madam Deputy Speaker, I also rise tonight to respond to the minister's clarification about the heavily redacted independent Custodial Inspector's report. I have before me the statement from Mr Connock from today, and I am also going to read it into the *Hansard* because each contribution is a stand-alone contribution.

I am deeply concerned about the implicit suggestion within this statement from Mr Connock that there was some pressure placed on him to redact large parts of his independent Custodial Inspector's report into Ashley.

On completion of the custody inspection report relating to Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018, my office presented the report to the Department of Communities Tasmania and Minister Jaensch with no parts of the report redacted.

At the request of Communities Tasmania in response to concerns about information contained in the report, specifically communicating security concerns, parts of the Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 were redacted.

The redacted version as requested by Communities Tasmania was then presented to Minister Jaensch for tabling.

As a result of events, the Inspectorate will be taking a strong stance in relation to future redactions of reports. No redactions will be made unless the information is considered by the Inspector to be a significant security risk.

I stress that the Custodial Inspector is here to ensure accountability and scrutiny of Tasmanian prisons and the Ashley Youth Detention Centre and will always ensure the Inspectorate performs its functions with the utmost integrity.

There is a strong suggestion within Mr Connock's statement notwithstanding the correspondence that the minister read into the *Hansard*. There is a strong suggestion that the

Department of Communities Tasmania placed a measure of pressure on Mr Connock to redact parts of the report. In a Westminster system that means again that the buck stops with the minister. I know the minister feels aggrieved about the way this has all played out, but let us just go back a bit.

He tabled a redacted report, did not explain the redactions to the House, could not explain the redactions to the media. There were two weeks within which the minister had an opportunity to clear the air and did not. Two weeks the minister let himself be hung out to dry - comes back in, cops it this week. We have the extraordinary situation of Mr Connock, the Ombudsman and Custodial Inspector, feeling he has to make a further clarifying statement to justify the redactions. To be honest, with the greatest of respect to the terrific people in Communities Tasmania, this does look like an exercise - and I will use a colloquial term - in arse-covering. We have here redactions on things like, page 35 -

'the Inspector notes that there is' -

And we can see it in the unsuccessfully blacked out wording, that there is -

'a lack of staff drug and alcohol testing'.

That is a failure on the part of Government and the department. It is not a security issue.

Ms Haddad - It is not a security risk.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is not. That sort of redaction tells you this was a political exercise. It was designed to conceal, in part at least, how poorly managed Ashley Youth Detention Centre is from a security point of view, and a staff management point of view. The stuff that is not redacted in this report about the lack of a therapeutic response to those children is as damning as the redactions.

I know that minister Jaensch feels hurt. He has asked me to apologise for allegedly smearing him. No. We did not do that. We did exactly what Opposition parties have a responsibility to do in the Westminster system, and that is hold government to account; to seek transparency and accountability.

In my 11 years in this place I have never seen something like that dropped on the table. I have never seen an annual report with so much blacking out. We know that the minister received the unredacted report in August, so the agency under the direction of the minister has had at least six weeks to get its act together around security at Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

How hard can it be to have a system in place where you are checking contractors who come onsite? How hard can it be to make sure that cars that come onsite are security checked? There is a whole range of issues here that point to clumsy management of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. In the Westminster system, whether minister Jaensch, who is a very nice man, likes it or not, the buck stops with him.

I will not be apologising, because there are still problems here. There are still significant problems here. I believe Mr Connock feels perhaps regretful that he so readily acceded to Communities Tasmania's requests for redactions. It is pretty clear to me from his statement today that he has been surprised by the public response and the political response to the redacted report. I think he would be feeling regretful about so easily allowing Communities Tasmania, under whose

direction I do not know, if any, to have that report so thoroughly made the poorer and more secretive through those redactions.

The House adjourned at 6.43 p.m.