



**PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT OF DEBATES**

**Tuesday 8 August 2023**

**REVISED EDITION**



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**Tuesday 8 August 2023**

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

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

**Division of Clark - Resignation of Cassy O'Connor**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I advise the House that I have received the following correspondence from Her Excellency, the Governor, Government House, Hobart, Tasmania.

13 July 2023

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

Dear Mr Speaker

I have received a letter dated 13 July 2023 from Ms Cassy O'Connor MP, tendering her resignation as a Member for Clark in the House of Assembly.

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

Yours sincerely

Barbara Baker  
Governor

**Division of Clark - Election of Vica Bayley**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I advise the House of the following further communication I have received from Her Excellency, the Governor, Government House, Hobart, Tasmania.

1 August 2013

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

Dear Mr Speaker

I send herewith a Certificate of the Electoral Commissioner stating that a recount has been held under the provisions of Part 9 of the Electoral Act 2004 to fill the vacancy in the Division of Clark caused by the resignation of Ms Cassy O'Connor MP.

Following the recount of the resigned member's ballot papers, Vica Bayley has been elected to fill the vacancy. The election takes effect from today.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Baker  
Governor

### **MEMBER SWORN**

#### **Vica Bayley - Member for Clark**

[10.03 a.m.]

Vica Bayley, Member for the Division of Clark, was sworn and declared that he had subscribed to the Code of Conduct.

### **STATEMENTS BY SPEAKER**

#### **Appointment of Mr Benjamin Foxe - Clerk-Assistant and Sergeant-at-Arms**

[10.04 a.m.]

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I inform the House that, on my recommendation, Her Excellency the Governor has appointed Benjamin Foxe as Clerk Assistant and Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Assembly effective from 2 August 2023.

I know you will all make Ben very welcome in the Chamber and seek his advice and guidance.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

#### **Division Bells - Malfunction**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, I also advise that the division bells, as you might have already worked out this morning, have malfunctioned in some areas of the building. I can assure the House that all resources have been directed to addressing the matter. Until the issue is rectified I propose the House adopt procedures previously used in a similar circumstance which would require that, in the event a division or a quorum is called, I would leave the Chair until the Clerk reported to me that all members are present in the case of a division, or a quorum is present.

I have requested that the Leader of the House move the relevant motion to establish this during Other Formal Business. I will advise the House when the division bells are restored.

## **STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER**

### **Ministerial Appointments**

[10.06 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, on 20 July I made the following appointments of ministers of the Crown:

In addition to Premier, I hold the responsibilities as Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic; Minister for Tourism and Hospitality; and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Mr Michael Ferguson MP is Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; and Minister for Planning.

Ms Elise Archer MP is Attorney-General; Minister for Justice; Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation; Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs; and Minister for the Arts.

Mr Guy Barnett MP is Minister for Health; Minister for Energy and Renewables; and Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Felix Ellis MP is Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management; Minister for Skills, Training and Workforce Growth; Minister for Resources; and Minister for Racing.

Mr Roger Jaensch MP is Minister for Education, Children and Youth; Minister for Environment and Climate Change; Minister for Parks; and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Ms Madeleine Ogilvie MP is Minister for Small Business; Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries; Minister for Science and Technology; Minister for Heritage; and Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence.

Ms Jo Palmer MLC is Minister for Primary Industries and Water; Minister for Community Services and Development; and Minister for Disability Services.

Mr Nic Street MP is Minister for Housing and Construction; Minister for Local Government; Minister for Sport and Recreation; and Minister for Stadia and Events. Mr Street also remains Leader of the House.

## **STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE GREENS**

### **Resignation of Cassy O'Connor**

[10.07 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin- Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, following Cassy O'Connor's resignation as the member for Clark and the election of Vica Bayley as the new member for Clark, I advise the House that I am the Leader of the Tasmanian Greens.

I know that most of us will miss Cassy O'Connor's parliamentary contributions. I will say more about that on the adjournment tonight and her legacy as leader.

I also seek the leave of the House to table an updated list of the Greens' revised shadow spokesperson portfolio roles. I have circulated that to all members.

**Leave granted.**

## **RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, before we get into question time I welcome the grade 9 students from Hutchins School to the Gallery.

**Members** - Hear, hear.

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Housing and Homelessness**

**Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.09 a.m.]

Premier, welcome back - you made it. Over the break, you admitted that your Government has completely lost its way and pledged a so-called reset. As a part of this, you sacked your Minister for Housing who had overseen substantial increases in the housing waitlist, soaring rents, declining building approvals and falling home ownership.

In the Chamber today are Krista and Adam, two faces of your failure. Two months ago we raised the fact that they are facing homelessness because their rent was so unaffordable they were rationing food and Krista was rationing her medication for multiple sclerosis and anxiety just to make rental payments. They were told to keep working with Housing Connect but after almost four years on the priority housing waitlist, their support worker has since said that he would be closing their file as there was nothing more he could do to help them.

Do you think that this is acceptable, Premier? What will you do to make sure that Krista and Adam have somewhere to live? Besides replacing the name on the door of the ministerial office, can you explain how your so-called reset is actually going to help Krista and Adam?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I acknowledge the presence of Krista and Adam in the Chamber today, and others who are, or have, experienced homelessness.

It is important to remember that this week is Homelessness Week. It is a time when it is important that we gather together and remember Tasmanians who do not have a roof over their heads. It was a poignant moment on a very chilly morning when we gathered this morning with service providers Vinnies, Bethlehem House, people with lived experience and volunteers in our community who support people experiencing homelessness.

We will always strive to do better. We have come some way in more recent years when it comes to the importance and the aim of not only reducing but eliminating homelessness. It is a collective responsibility of all of us, not only this Chamber but the federal government, the state Government and local government as well when it comes to tackling this very serious issue.

The theme of Homelessness Week is 'It's time to end homelessness' so that we do not have people with lived experience such as Krista and Adam, who have borne the brunt of the many challenges when it comes to housing in our community.

We are responding to the challenge. We have a very clear target and investment of \$1.5 billion over the course of the next 10 years and 10 000 homes. That is why our Government provides \$38 million to Homes Tasmania to invest in specialist homelessness services. This investment helps fund 18 homeless shelters around our state and provides crisis, transitional and emergency accommodation. In addition, \$7 million in annual funding has been allocated specifically for our Safe Spaces and connected support services. In the last financial year Homes Tasmania supported the delivery of 758 new social housing homes and units of supported accommodation around the state.

Mr Speaker, if you will permit me to go through a number of aspects of that investment and commitment, not only from our Government but also all the dedicated service providers that support and partner with Homes Tasmania and government as well -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, interjections will cease.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There is a 50-unit integrated aged care facility in Bellerive that is being used to house people aged over 50 from the housing register; a 21-unit complex in Moonah for women aged 55 and over; a 20-unit expansion of the Launceston Youth2Independence facility, growing this site of 50 beds; an eight-bed youth at risk centre in Launceston; 15 new units at the Launceston Women's Shelter, more than doubling their capacity to help women in need; three new Youth2Independence cluster homes facilities in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport; and three units in New Town to be added to the Hobart Women's Shelter transitional housing portfolio.

Homes Tasmania is delivering even more supported and homelessness accommodation for a range of developments, including the 50-bed crisis and transitional accommodation facility which I have mentioned.

**Mr Winter** - They are actually here and listening to this answer.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, member for Franklin.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have acknowledged that, Mr Winter, thank you very much. Since the commencement of the Affordable Housing Strategy, Homes Tasmania and its partners have completed more than 2900 new homes, lots of land and new places in supported homelessness accommodation.

This week is about recognising the lived experience of Adam and Krista and too many other Tasmanians and Australians who are experiencing homelessness.

**Mr Winter** - What are you doing about it?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - What we are doing is very clear in terms of our considered action, target and investment.

Homelessness Week is about an opportunity to raise the issues that have affected people such as Adam and Krista and the hugely important issue of all three levels of government working together to solve what is a considerable challenge for all governments across Australia, not just Tasmania.

I know, and recognise, that we need to do more. We have come a long way with record houses in June this year - over 300. I highlight the CommSec report where one of the many points that I can point to Tasmania doing very well is, once again, leading the nation when it comes to dwelling approvals. I say that to Krista and Adam and all people experiencing homelessness: we need to and we will do more. We have come a long way, with this Government focusing on the things that matter.

### **Ambulance Ramping - Action in Wake of Deaths**

#### **Ms WHITE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.17 a.m.]

On that matter, the first thing you could do is commit to opening their file again. Help them.

As part of your so-called reset you also finally sacked yourself as the Health minister. In doing so you admitted what everyone else could see: the health system has gone from bad to worse on your watch.

Last week, we saw the most tragic example of your failure when it was revealed that Mrs Anne Pedler died after being ramped at the Launceston General Hospital for more than eight hours. The Coroner found that she had received substandard care and said her chances of survival would have been significantly increased had she received the care she needed.

Staff at the Launceston General Hospital are doing their best under incredible pressure, as are our paramedics. However, this was the ninth coronial finding that has been made against the Launceston General Hospital in the past six years, including two cases involving the deaths of infants.

Given you failed to act after all these other devastating deaths and coronial inquiries, what assurances can you give to Tasmanians that this time you will take action to address the root causes of ambulance ramping and this latest damning Coroner's report?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Lyons for her question. Any unexpected death is a tragedy. I offer my condolences to the loved ones of any Tasmanian affected by deaths, particularly while under our care.

We are all committed to improving - continuing to invest. We have come a long way when it comes to investing in our ambulance and paramedic resources: more paramedics; better facilities across Tasmania, rural and regional Tasmania, which our paramedics work within; and more 24/7 paramedics in Huonville and Sorell, which we have announced over the course of the last 12 months. We have maintained or strengthened our commitment in many respects to the 48 extra paramedics we committed to rural and regional Tasmania at the last election.

We are not only investing, but also improving and innovating in how we deliver services. I point to the PACER initiative, and the secondary triage, which are important when it comes to that access and flow within our hospital system - right from a triple 000 call through to discharge.

I am interested in supporting good ideas coming forward, and positive discussion. We have come a long way in employing more paramedics, being innovative and reforming, and detailing projections of demand over the next 10 years. As the Minister for Health, I tabled a report during Budget Estimates that highlighted the need to support more investment into the future - which of course we will do. We have already committed, in the Budget, an additional 97 paramedics, who were made permanent. I am also interested in ensuring that we continue to have discussion in the community.

I am very interested in Dr Woodruff's motion - indeed, setting up a parliamentary inquiry into matters of transfer-of-care delays. That needs to also look at the whole system, because while we are investing in our acute care system and our paramedics, we also have to look at that whole area of access and flow, from pre-triple 000 - and what I am talking about there is primary care and GP services which are federal government responsibilities, but also beyond discharge, when it comes to finding beds and places and suitable accommodation for aged care and people with disability - NDIS and aged care. These are federal government responsibilities. The federal government needs to step up here.

I am willing to wear constructive criticism - I wish it was - of those within the Labor Party who have no solutions, but there is no doubt that to alleviate our acute care challenges, we need to invest in primary care. That is a federal government responsibility, which this state Government continues to reach in and take the space of in some respects. We have good examples of support and partnerships with our urgent care centres and our single-employer funding model. However, we also need action at the other end as well, on access and flow, when it comes to ensuring people -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - who are in our hospital system and ready for medical discharge can actually find a bed in an aged care home or an appropriate disability setting. That is the responsibility of the federal government. Of course we are willing to work with them on that.

That is why I am interested in Dr Woodruff's motion, which we are willing to look favourably at supporting. We might make some amendments that will ensure it covers the whole spectrum of primary care -

**Mr SPEAKER** - If you could wind up, please, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - right through to beyond hospital discharge.

To the question at hand, Mr Speaker, I again offer my condolences to anyone who has -

**Ms White** - Nine coronial inquiries to the LGH.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I offer my condolences to the loved ones of any Tasmanian who has sadly passed away, particularly while under our care.

### **Government Priorities**

#### **Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.24 a.m.]

During the winter break, you told Tasmanians your Government was resetting its focus. Apart from moving around a few ministerial positions and bringing in a highly paid spin doctor from a lobbying firm, it is clear nothing has changed. So many Tasmanians are suffering. Thousands of people every day are skipping meals, not filling up with fuel, without a home at all - or, if they are lucky, living in an unheated one. Ramping is the worst it has ever been, and there is still no plan to turn things around. Every day highly endangered and threatened species are being pushed further towards extinction by your Government's policies.

We are in a critical climate heating emergency and you are strengthening the push to log and burn native forest carbon stores. Despite your expensive PR, Tasmanians see through you. They see a premier who has lost touch with the issues that matter to them, who spends his entire time in the job focusing on building an unnecessary billion-dollar stadium.

Will you focus, Premier, on the things that matter to Tasmania, and leave expensive, optional expenditure such as the stadium behind?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank Dr Woodruff for the question, and congratulate her on her acting Leader position.

**Dr Woodruff** - Leader. It is not acting now.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Leader. It is official now?

**Dr Woodruff** - It is official. That is what I just declared.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Congratulations on being Leader of the Greens. That is fantastic.

Dr Woodruff, I do not make light of your question at all. This is a Government whose priorities are indeed tackling the cost of living, supporting Tasmanians into their own homes - which I have spoken about today - and providing the best possible healthcare system, which Tasmanians deserve, and also keeping our economy strong, jobs growth strong, improving educational outcomes, and ensuring Tasmania is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

That is exactly what our focus will be. We can build other infrastructure as well - enabling infrastructure. The Bridgewater bridge is bouncing out of the ground, as I have said many times - congratulations to those project managers and all the trades working on that - and of course the enabling infrastructure of the stadium, to which I am committed. I recognised on the weekend that it is not everyone's cup of tea, but it is important when it comes to jobs, economic growth, and Tasmania participating in the \$8 billion stadia economy that other states have a share in. Of course, with the precinct and that development comes jobs, growth, and the economy, so it can fund these essential services that I do not doubt you care about, we all care about, and we particularly care about when it comes to investing in our healthcare. You cannot deny -

**Dr Woodruff** - Where is your commitment? Where is the money?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You raised health. You cannot deny elective surgery waiting lists have decreased as a result of our continued and increased investment by up to 30 per cent in the last two years - to around to \$7900, where it peaked at \$12 200. That is testimony to not only our investment, but more particularly the hard work of our health professionals and clinicians across Tasmania. That is why we have our \$200 million investment in elective surgery. That is why we committed \$38 million additional for endoscopies, to get those waiting lists down as well. They are the priorities: health, education, housing - not only in Homelessness Week, but every single day of the week, and every single week of the year.

We are a Government that is getting on with the job, committed to doing what matters for all Tasmanians. We can have it all, Mr Speaker.

I do not despair much, but what I despair about is the constant negativity, particularly of the Labor Party. Every opportunity, talking Tasmania down. I hear it day in, day out. People are disappointed in you because Tasmanians are proud of their state. Every night on the television - and you are the worst offender, Mr Winter - talking Tasmania down -

**Ms White** - Because your Government is so bad.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - when what this is all about is confidence, Mr Speaker. Confidence is king. That is why we are driving jobs growth, investing in our economy, so we can fund our essential services that we should, and we do, all care about.

## **Liberal Government's Long-Term Plan**

### **Mr WOOD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.30 a.m.]

Can you outline to the House why Tasmania does better when there is a Liberal government with a long-term plan that delivers what matters for most Tasmanians -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr WOOD** - including tackling the cost of living, keeping our economy strong and creating jobs?

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order; the Premier has the call. No-one else should be speaking or interjecting.

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank Mr Wood for the question. Yes, I can talk about the Liberal Government's long-term plan that has delivered 56 000 additional jobs since 2014. I highlight the fact that in the previous four years we lost 10 000 jobs in Tasmania. We have the second-lowest debt per capita in the country and we have seen Tasmania ranked Australia's number-one economy for 12 of the previous 14 quarters by CommSec.

The reason we are in a strong position when it comes to our economy and our low unemployment is that we are sticking to our long-term plan and focusing on those things that matter to Tasmanians: reducing and tackling the cost of living; supporting more Tasmanians into their own homes; ensuring that Tasmanians get the best health care that they utterly deserve; investing in and growing our economy; supporting jobs; improving educational outcomes; and as I have said before, making Tasmania the best place to live, work and raise a family and be positive about the place, not negative like you over there. We will not lose sight of those priorities. After nine years of Liberal government, Tasmania's economy is leading the pack. You cannot deny that - it is leading the pack, loud and clear, because we are backing economic growth and jobs creation.

In addition to the CommSec report, the ABS has confirmed that our unemployment rate is again at a record low of just 3.8 per cent, and we have achieved this while still having the lowest debt in the nation, the second-lowest debt per capita and the lowest taxes of any state.

Over the past few weeks we have made a number of important announcements. We have listened and ended the fear and uncertainty over local government reform - no forced local government amalgamations -

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. There is simply too much interjection. People watching from home and in the Gallery will be wondering what is going on and, of course, as politicians we do not have that great a reputation. This is the place where we can improve that reputation, so please, there are other questions to come; allow the Premier to answer this question and then we will have some more.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There will be no forced amalgamations. Communities and their councils will decide their own future.

We have moved decisively to take the politics out of planning. We will introduce legislation to allow some planning decisions to be made by independent expert panels. This will not change Tasmania's planning rules but will enable councillors to separate their decision-making and advocacy roles.

Our Liberal Government has also announced the Tasmania First Energy Guarantee. This is about securing Tasmanian energy for Tasmanians. The first step is to secure the future of the Marinus Link project on terms that put Tasmania first. We will strongly back Marinus Link for the right price, which does not mean any price. I am interested to know the views of those opposite on Marinus Link, particularly you. You want us to walk away but you will not say anything; you are too scared to say anything. We back the project but we back it at the right price, not any price.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. I ask the House to come to order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Over the weekend I announced the second step. Our Government will deliver millions of dollars in energy bill relief to Tasmanians with our new Renewable Energy Dividend. Hydro was built by Tasmanians for Tasmanians and now Tasmanians will rightly reap the rewards of this Tasmanian success story. This innovative cost-of-living measure will help every single Tasmanian household with their energy bills. That is around 254 000 households, including those who receive concessions, who we have supported during these volatile energy price hike times.

Put simply, when Hydro makes money Tasmanians will save money. This Liberal Government has kept power prices to among the lowest in the country, and all those opposite might try and deny it or forget it, but when they were last in power with a Labor-Greens power-sharing arrangement, there was a 65 per cent increase in power prices. Not only did they send 10 000 people to the dole queues but their energy bills went up 65 per cent and Tasmanians will not forget it. Now Tasmanians will receive a renewable energy dividend credit on their bill when Hydro's dividend exceeds \$100 million.

**Ms Dow** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Deputy Leader of the Opposition, order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Those opposite criticise and talk Tasmania down. Those opposite invest in and spend on deceptive, glossy brochures around Tasmanian households, which is an absolute disgrace. What we are about is getting on with the job and focusing on the things that matter when it comes to Tasmanians.

## **Fire and Emergency Services - Restructure**

### **Mr O'BYRNE question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS**

[10.37 a.m.]

Despite reports to the contrary, you actually have achieved one thing during your time as minister: you have brought career firefighters, volunteer firefighters, SES and other emergency services together. They stand together united against you and your Government's botched implementation of the controversial Fire Service's restructure. They are angry because you have not listened to a word they have said. They are angry because you have effectively compelled a highly respected fire chief to resign. They are angry at you for doing untold damage to morale across Tasmania's emergency services. Firefighters and emergency service workers have taken rare protest action right across the state in an attempt to get you to listen.

**Mr Ferguson** - This from the man who sacked 108 police.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - You keep going back to that. Just focus on the job at hand, mate.

Minister, instead of using taxpayer money to fund prime-time television advertising and social media in an attempt to dupe Tasmanians into thinking this restructure is going well, why will you not listen to emergency service workers?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member who sacked 108 first responders when he had the responsibility for Police, Fire and Emergency Management. That shows, can I say, contempt when it comes to the vital service that they provide.

On this side of the House, we are keen to back our first responders to make sure they have the tools they need to save lives in Tasmania, because ultimately this House will have a choice: we can either play petty politics or we can get on with the job of reforms that will save lives in our community.

Our Fire and Emergency Services in Tasmania have been shown to be put in a framework that does not work. It is a failed governance model. It is a funding model that is unfair, complex, unsustainable and does not provide the resources that our first responders need to save lives in this bushfire-prone part of the world. Indeed, we are one of the most bushfire-prone places on Earth. We have had three one-in-100-year floods in the last 10 years and review after review after review has shown the need for change.

I know the United Firefighters Union, for example, is supportive of a fair, simple and sustainable funding model. I know our volunteers are keen to make sure they have the resources they need such as equipment and trucks so that they can protect their communities. Even more than that, we have a duty to make sure that they are safe when they are doing so. Our reforms, which we will bring into this place, will provide a common operating platform for Fire and Emergency Services. Our reforms will fix the failed governance model by providing a stronger, clearer chain of command with a new commissioner of the Tasmanian Fire and Emergency Services reporting directly to the minister of the day. Our reforms will

provide a fair, simple, sustainable funding model so that our fire and emergency services finally have the funding framework that they need so that they can save lives.

This parliament will have a choice: we can either play politics and put our head in the sand or we can act. That is ultimately the choice that will be before this House. I know that our community in their time of need when they need it, whether it is fire, flood, storms or others, ask our volunteers and career staff from fire and emergency services to step up, to run towards the danger as others are turning away. We can either say that reform is too hard, that 10 years of reviews that have shown that the framework does not work are irrelevant or, we can step up and make a choice and make sure that our community is safe for the future, that our people are able to save lives and that we can protect them in the process.

### **Racing - Need for Inquiry Across All Codes**

#### **Ms JOHNSTON question to MINISTER for RACING, Mr ELLIS**

[10.41 a.m.]

For over a year I have been pressing your predecessor with evidence of a lack of integrity and poor animal welfare in the industry, and calling for her to act. She did not. Now you have responsibility to an industry across all three codes that is riddled with allegations of race fixing, live baiting, blatant disregard for racing regulations, bullying and poor animal welfare.

At the centre of all this is the Office of Racing Integrity. Your watchdog has presided over this shambles. In the last few weeks we have seen more revelations where ORI has botched things again: complainants have had their identities and details of their complaints disclosed by ORI to the person involved in the complaint; ABC right-to-information documents reveal an inappropriate closeness of relationship between ORI and industry participants; and, most disturbingly, there has been evidence of live baiting and terrible living conditions for greyhounds at a property ORI claimed to have regularly inspected. They must have had their blinkers on at the time.

Will you call an immediate full and independent inquiry into all aspects of the racing industry across all three racing codes?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Clark for her question. The greyhound video she is referring to was referred to the Office of Racing Integrity as soon as Tasracing became aware of its existence. My office further engaged with the Office of Racing Integrity, the Department of Natural Resources Tasmania, to ensure that all appropriate referrals have been made and that action has been undertaken to commence an investigation, including any referrals to the RSPCA.

Let me be clear: there is no room for animal cruelty in racing. Our Government takes the welfare of animals in the racing community very seriously. I know my predecessor, Ms Ogilvie, did outstanding work in this space. The Office of Racing Integrity has initiated an inquiry and suspended the licence of the individual. Any breaches that are found in the process of that inquiry will be dealt with appropriately. I am not going to make any further comment on a matter that is subject to an inquiry.

While I am on my feet, as the new Minister for Racing, let me lay out a few markers in terms of my approach over the next little while.

The racing community is absolutely essential for Tasmania. It is a sport, yes; it is an industry, absolutely. It is a community and a way of life in Tasmania. It is an industry that has supported Tasmanians for more than 100 years. It brings together people from right across our community and all walks of life so that they can enjoy this special part of the Tasmanian way of life.

In the first couple of weeks I have been in this job I have met with racing clubs on King Island, at Devonport, and Elwick in your community, Ms Johnston, and there are some fantastic people in that industry. I am very keen to work with people who want to see the best possible future for the racing industry. However, I will not accept this industry being shut down. We do not want to be in that situation because this is an outstanding industry, full of outstanding people who love their animals, who want the best for racing, for their animals and want to be able to pass on this piece of the Tasmanian way of life to the next generation, just as it was passed on to them.

Let me say clearly and unequivocally: we support the outstanding people who are in the racing industry. We will make sure that it has a bright future with the reforms we are progressing, and the reviews we have and will listen to, will be about setting this industry up for the generation to come so that they can enjoy this special piece of the Tasmanian way of life.

Animal cruelty makes my blood boil and integrity issues in the racing industry are not acceptable. Punters, the public and participants should all have confidence that racing is fair. We will make sure that we deliver those things and we will work constructively with all people who want to see a bright future for the racing community.

### **Launceston General Hospital - Slowness of Redevelopment**

#### **Ms DOW question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[10.45 a.m.]

Anne Pedler's daughter has bravely chosen to speak out about her mother's death in the hope it might finally bring about some changes at the Launceston General Hospital. As she said: 'It is a place that you go to be healed and treated and it is letting you down so badly that people are dying from preventable things.' She highlighted the lack of 24-hour pathology, the chronic problem with understaffing and the lack of beds as three areas that need urgent attention. In response, your new Health minister went on radio and admitted it would be 10 more years before Tasmanians see the \$580 million development you promised at the Launceston General Hospital.

How are you going to fix these critical issues if you delay the LGH development, your signature promise at the 2021 state election, for another decade?

## ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question and repeat my condolences to Mrs Pedler's family for their heartache as a result of the coronial inquiry and the subject of the coronial inquiry. Once again, I offer my condolences to the loved ones of any Tasmanian who have lost or been affected by the passing away under our care.

The subject of the question was the Launceston General Hospital redevelopment, a \$580 million development. The member would realise that it was probably 18 months ago that we released the 10-year masterplan for the LGH redevelopment.

I commend all those who work so hard within the Launceston General Hospital, the health professionals who do their utmost best every single day to support and care for Tasmanians.

We are getting on with the job of delivering our significant investment to upgrade the Launceston General Hospital. In this year's Budget alone, \$115 million is being invested in projects at the LGH. This will see a new purpose-built mental health precinct and an expanded acute care zone, a surgical short-stay and day procedure unit, and urology, respiratory and infusion services.

More recently, along with the Deputy Premier and the member for Bass, Mr Wood, we celebrated the Budget announcement of the Launceston General Hospital helipad. There are significant investments moving forward when it comes to the LGH masterplan. We are building on a number of significant and exciting new developments through a staged program of works, with new facilities to benefit the community and support the delivery of contemporary care. These projects are in line with our LGH masterplan, which we developed with community, staff and partner organisations to ensure that the redeveloped LGH will be best placed to meet the future needs and increased demands on our health system.

I do not appreciate the negativity of those opposite who talk down the staff and those working within the Launceston General Hospital - the health professionals who work so hard every single day.

**Ms DOW** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask the Premier to withdraw the comment that we talk down the staff. We always stand side by side with the staff. They are working incredibly hard under extreme pressure. It is not a reflection on the staff: it is a reflection on this Government.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is not a point of order to stand up and make a statement. You are not making a point of order. If there has been personal offence, then you need to state that and the Premier will withdraw.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If the member, Ms Dow, is personally offended, then I withdraw; but, remember, when you come in here and talk down the Launceston General Hospital, it does affect the staff. It does affect the staff, to not have that feedback directly. I have just demonstrated that we are getting on with the job.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In 2018, our Government announced a major redevelopment of Launceston General Hospital and committed \$87 million for stage one projects. Last year we officially opened the tunapri mapali Building, which means lots of knowledge in palawa kani. Following a complete refurbishment, it is now home to the Anne O'Byrne Education Centre, which includes a state-of-the-art interdisciplinary simulation laboratory and a new home for the Launceston General Hospital Nursing Education Unit as a hub for learning and collaboration.

We are continuing to invest and sticking to our 10-year masterplan, which the community is excited about. The community was consulted, the staff were consulted on the draft of the masterplan and a \$580 million investment that is thoroughly welcomed by northern Tasmanians and all Tasmanians who will be cared for by the highly professional staff at the Launceston General Hospital.

### **Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 - Proposed Amendments**

**Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, Mr JAENSCH**

[10.52 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the Tasmanian Government's proposed amendments to the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr Young, member for Franklin, for his interest in this matter. This Government recognises that connection to Country and the responsibility to care for it is central to Aboriginal culture and identity. The passing of the Aboriginal Lands Act by a Liberal government in 1995 was a historically important development in the recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and Aboriginal land in Tasmania. The legislation was developed to facilitate the return of crown land to traditional owners in a legal context where, due to Tasmania's unique and tragic history, native title is unable to be established.

This Liberal Government is committed to returning more land to Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The review of the model for returning land, which aimed to identify the barriers to returning land and options to improve the land return process, was an integral step in this process. There has been extensive consultation throughout the review, including through a consultation papers seeking feedback on the operation of the Aboriginal Lands Act 1995 and the Government's proposals for changes to improve the model for returning land.

From the feedback, it is clear that the current arrangements for land return do not work well for all Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Some feel excluded from the process of electing the body that is meant to hold title for Aboriginal land on behalf of all Aboriginal people. Others report having been excluded from Aboriginal land itself.

I have had conversations with Aboriginal people across the state who have a deep interest in using and caring for areas of land that are significant to them but who do not want to pursue these interests through the existing legislation that was created specifically for this purpose.

The Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty Report, released in November 2021 by Professors Warner and McCormack, promotes the need to progress land return and joint land management as a matter of priority, and includes recommendations relevant to the act, including how the Aboriginal Land Council election process can be improved.

While the existing act provides a power for the minister to declare parcels of Crown land to be Aboriginal land, it provides no guidance or mechanism by which such parcels are to be identified, assessed, consulted and presented to parliament for approval. It is clear that a new approach is necessary if land returns are to play a constructive part of further reconciliation with Aboriginal Tasmanians.

Today I am pleased to release the exposure draft of the Aboriginal Lands Amendment Bill 2023, which, if passed by this parliament, will amend the Aboriginal Lands Act to deliver a range of improvements to the model for returning land to Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

The substantive policy positions delivered by the amendments are:

- clarification of the scope and intent of the act;
- revision of the Aboriginal Land Council election process to remove the objection clause, and introduce a requirement for all applicants to meet the three-part test, making it less adversarial, more consistent and fairer for all Aboriginal people seeking to join the Aboriginal Land Council elector roll;
- establishing a more transparent and consistent process for proposing, consulting and assessing parcels of crown land for parliament to approve for return, by way of a disallowable instrument, avoiding the need to amend the act each and every time a parcel of land is returned;
- strengthening opportunities for local Aboriginal groups to be involved in the management of Aboriginal land;
- clarification of the rights of Aboriginal people to access Aboriginal land; and
- improving processes and accountability around how Aboriginal land is managed for the benefit of all Aboriginal people.

Mr Speaker, following the release of the draft bill, the Department of Premier and Cabinet will contact Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders with an interest to invite their participation in the final consultation process, including through face-to-face meetings and briefings to discuss the proposed changes. The consultation period will run for six weeks, with submissions due by Tuesday 19 September this year. Feedback from the consultation will inform the final version of the bill, which will be introduced to parliament for debate later this year.

I look forward to receiving feedback on these draft amendments, and to the return of more land to Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

## Electricity Price Rises

### Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.57 a.m.]

One of your biggest failures has been the massive rise in power prices Tasmanians have suffered as a result of your failed energy policy. In little over a year, Tasmanians have endured price hikes averaging nearly \$500 per household. Many contractor businesses are seeing the costs of their energy contracts doubled, or even tripled. Now, as part of your so-called reset, you have rushed out a new policy to hand back a fraction of your price hikes as a so-called dividend.

Do you think Tasmanians will believe they are getting a good deal when you charged them an extra \$500 in one hand, and then give them back, maybe, \$100 with the other? Would it not be better for Tasmanians if you did not rip them off in the first place?

### ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. Our Government clearly, by its actions, recognises the volatility in energy prices across the nation over the last 24 months in particular. That is why we have responded with increasing concessions to alleviate the challenges of the cost-of-living increase on Tasmanians. There was the Winter Bill Buster payment last year. We partnered with the federal government - joining forces, if you like - for a total of \$90 million in concessions supporting vulnerable Tasmanians, with a \$45 million contribution from the state Government and \$45 million from the federal government.

We are also, of course, again supporting small businesses, and the businesses that have come off contract, with measures to alleviate that cost-of-living anxiety.

I recognise that energy prices are one of the challenges when it comes to the cost of living, which is why, as a government, we are focused on it.

The main cost-of-living challenge for many Australians and Tasmanians is interest rates. With the average mortgage in Tasmania, as I understand it, people are having to find an additional \$13 000 a year to support their mortgage. Interest rates are beyond the control of the Tasmanian Government, but we are there helping with other cost-of-living measures, including some \$400 million worth of concessions. I do not hear those opposite talk about interest rates much. They are obviously too scared to stand up for Tasmanians who are battling with their mortgages -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - because it is a federal Labor government, and know full well that the federal Labor Party controls the Tasmanian Labor Party.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, the House will come to order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is why we are all fascinated with the machinations of the Labor Party at this present time, and the honourable member who is deliberately looking away -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. The House will come to order. If members on my left do not wish to listen to the answer and continue to interject, then they will be asked to do that from outside the Chamber, so please listen to the answer.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I ask that you draw the Premier's attention to the question that was asked, which was about energy prices.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have been focused on the impact of increased energy prices and the volatility that the country has experienced. I recognise the increase in energy prices in Tasmania. The last increase was 9.5 per cent. Other states of Australia have seen an increase of up to 13 per cent. This is of course ignored by the member opposite who asked the question and who, no doubt, is party to the very deceptive pamphlet scaring Tasmanians - scamming Tasmanians, effectively. Scaring and scamming Tasmanians - is what you are about.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not only do you talk the place down, but you are into deception, scaring and scamming Tasmanians. That is what you are about. That is why the federal Labor executive wants this bloke back in your team. That is the real subject of today within the Labor Party. Will Mr O'Byrne - who is knowingly and deliberately looking away at this present time - be back in your team, in which, once again, World War III has started? It does not take much for the war to start again, does it?

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. Would you please wind up, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mr McGregor was on the radio today backing Mr O'Byrne. Robbie Moore was backing Mr O'Byrne yesterday. It does not take much to rattle you, does it? When you scratch the surface of negativity, Mr Speaker, what you have is untold division amongst the Labor Party.

### **Dorset Council - Investigation by Director of Local Government**

**Mrs ALEXANDER question to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Mr STREET**

[11.04 a.m.]

On 26 July, you issued a media statement saying that an investigation conducted by the Director of Local Government into the Dorset Council has found allegations of systematic and widespread statutory non-compliance and failings of good governance. I understand the investigation covered the period from August 2020 to August 2022.

Interestingly, in August 2022, the Government held a regional meeting in Scottsdale. At the meeting with the Dorset councillors, the Premier praised them for their work and achievements in the community. I know this because I was there, sitting next to the Premier. Surely, minister, you would have informed the Premier that an almost two-year inquiry was in progress. Keeping in mind that 14 July is the date when the mayor and three other councillors who were members of the Liberal north-east branch walked away, how long have you been aware of the findings from this report and did you receive any departmental advice, reports or communication in relation to the Dorset Council inquiry before 14 July?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, the member is correct that a board of inquiry has been launched into the Dorset Council. I need to be careful what I say in relation to report of the Director of Local Government because that will be the first piece of evidence that the board of inquiry considers.

I understand the timeline that you are referring to as well, Mrs Alexander, but as you correctly point out, this in an investigation that was started well before I became the Minister for Local Government. I categorically reject that there is any political retribution or action that is part of this investigation.

The Dorset Council received the Director of Local Government's report in February of this year and was given a certain amount of time to respond. They asked for that to be extended, which it was. I received the report and made the decision to launch the board of inquiry. I believe it was the only sensible and prudent thing I could do as Minister for Local Government, given the allegations that were raised in the Director of Local Government's report. I was advised by the Director of Local Government to give those sitting members of Dorset Council 48 hours to respond to my decision to launch the board of inquiry, which I did. I then made the decision to suspend those councillors. It is an incredibly difficult and serious decision, maybe the most serious decision I have had to make as a minister, but I felt that given the allegations in the Director of Local Government's report and investigation about governance issues at the council, it was not prudent to leave that governance structure in place whilst the inquiry took place.

I have suspended the councillors to give the board of inquiry the clear air they need to allow this investigation to occur and to allow the councillors, the staff and any members of the public who would like to make a representation to that board of inquiry to do so. I also made clear when I suspended the councillors that it is not a finding of guilt: it is simply the most prudent decision I could make as minister to allow this board of inquiry to fulfil its work over the next seven months. I look forward to the report in February. I will make decisions following that report being received by me.

## **Greyhound Racing - Suspension of Trainer**

### **Dr WOODRUFF question to MINISTER for RACING, Mr ELLIS**

[11.08 a.m.]

Tasmanians were appalled by the footage of greyhound trainer Anthony Bullock's property released by Animal Liberation Tasmania last week. The footage shows dozens of dogs forced to endure freezing temperatures and sleep on bare dirt or concrete slabs. It showed

gruesome piles of animal carcasses and horses severely malnourished. We welcome Mr Bullock's suspension but have no confidence in the Office of Racing Integrity to conduct a fair investigation.

ORI's failings have been the subject of repeated debate in this place this year and industry participants and animal advocates have raised concerns about the cosy relationship between the head of ORI and Mr Bullock. It took a caring member of the community to publish drone footage of Bullock's property before ORI would take a proper look at the trainer. It is obvious from their repeated failures that they are in a compromised position.

You said before that integrity in the racing industry is essential. Do you recognise the legitimate lack of confidence the community has in ORI to do this work, and will you immediately act to take the investigation out of ORI's hands and bring in someone with genuine animal welfare credentials who has no connections to the racing industry to undertake the investigation?

#### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I spoke about his before. There is an investigation under way. We take these allegations very seriously and I refer the member to my previous answer.

### **Dorset Council - Actions of Minister for Local Government**

#### **Mr TUCKER question to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Mr STREET**

[11.10 a.m.]

In your media statement on 26 July you said that you effectively gave councillors two days to respond. You also said that under the Local Government Act you can suspend the councillors and you will consider their responses before deciding; however, two working days later you suspended them. One can only conclude that a minister with a busy schedule, a minister who has just taken on the portfolio of Housing, must have been speed reading the response provided by the nine councillors at Dorset. I take my hat off to you for such a speedy resolution. One can only hope that you have now set a trend for resolving all the problems across all of your portfolios with the same gusto.

If the councillors had performed so badly, how come six out of the nine councillors were re-elected in this year's elections? You have accused the Dorset councillors of failing good governance but it seems laughable for you to talk about good governance when in your rush to execute the dissenters from the Liberal Party, you did not care about the three councillors who had only just been elected in 2023 and had nothing to do with the inquiry. You did not care about due process. Your mind was already made up on 26 July.

Was the real reason you decided to set the dogs on the council nothing more than retaliation for the resignation on 14 July from the north-east branch of the Liberal Party of the Dorset Mayor and three other Dorset councillors, noting that the north-east branch was one of, if not the strongest, Liberal branch in the whole state and the resignations were a vote of no confidence in the Liberal Party and the Government? Also, minister, should the Clarence Mayor, Brendan Blomeley be concerned?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Lyons, I cannot allow you to keep making statements.

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I categorically reject the allegation contained within Mr Tucker's question. I will take the compliment about the speed with which I work through issues in my portfolio; however, giving 48 hours' notice was legal advice I was given in terms of the time that I gave counsellors to respond. I categorically reject the assertion that I had completely made up my mind to suspend the council when I issued the media release and did the media conference around the board of inquiry.

There was nothing in the responses that I received from the councillors that was able to convince me it was not a prudent decision to suspend the council for the duration of the board of inquiry, which I believe is the prudent decision to take as Local Government minister. The only factor relevant to me in making the decision was what was the prudent decision for the Local Government minister to make with the evidence I had in front of me from the Director of Local Government's investigation into Dorset Council.

**Health Services**

**Mr WOOD question to MINISTER for HEALTH, Mr BARNETT**

[11.13 a.m.]

Can you update the House on how the Rockliff Liberal Government is delivering better health services sooner for the people of Tasmania?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Bass for his question and his special interest in health. What an honour it has been to be appointed Minister for Health. I thank the Premier for his confidence and look forward to delivering on the momentum that has been built by the Premier with that record funding to deliver increased numbers in our workforce to help more Tasmanians and to build better health services for Tasmanians.

The last two weeks have been 14 days on the job meeting frontline workers, patients and listening and learning in that role. In that time, the Government has expended \$116.2 million with record funding of \$8.3 million per day, more than \$12 billion over the forward Estimates. That is all about employing more people, helping more Tasmanians and building better healthcare services.

It is an absolute honour. With what I have seen of those on the frontline - the doctors, the nurses, the ambos, the orderlies, the cleaners, across the board, all the allied healthcare workers and, in particular, the volunteers - I pay tribute to them and thank them for their service. The level of professionalism and the level of care is fantastic. It is an honour to stand side by side and to say thanks to them for their service.

Today we can celebrate the special milestone in the opening of our upgraded \$13.8 endoscopy unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital. This is a new unit that will enhance

Tasmania's ability to diagnose, prevent and treat a range of gastrointestinal conditions including bowel cancer, the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Tasmania.

It is a state-of-the-art facility. It will boost the number of endoscopies up to 25 per cent, making those procedures available to more Tasmanians than ever. The new endoscopy suite includes admissions and waiting areas, pre-procedure bays, four endoscopy procedure rooms and a recovery area. The four new procedure rooms contain state-of-the-art digital operating theatre equipment connected into the larger operating theatre network across K Block, which I visited last week with the health workers, and which also provides a greater level of integration of services.

Over the last two years, the health services delivered more than 23 000 endoscopies. The endoscopy waiting list has been significantly reduced. It is all part of the Government's successful plan that we are building on thanks to the Premier and former minister for health. The elective surgery four-year plan is delivering. We have committed an additional \$38 million to deliver a new four-year endoscopy plan, which will bring down the endoscopy waiting list even further.

The redevelopment of this unit, with increased capacity and upgraded facilities, will play an important part in delivering on this plan by equipping those hardworking doctors and nurses and those in the healthcare workforce. Again, I pay tribute to them and thank them for their service.

In terms of delivering outcomes, maintaining active, healthy lifestyles and a healthy diet goes a long way to helping drive improved health outcomes for Tasmanians and keep the pressure down, driving down that chronic disease that is prevalent in our state.

Mr Speaker, I encourage all Tasmanians to keep up to date with recommended screenings, to pick up those problems early so that they can be treated as soon as possible.

I congratulate all those involved in the delivery of this endoscopy unit for Tasmanians. We are on about delivering record funding, increasing the number in our workforce, improving healthcare services for all Tasmanians and building better healthcare services.

## **Electricity Price Capping**

### **Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.19 a.m.]

Do you understand that the \$160 million super profit you were talking about Hydro Tasmania making would come from Tasmanian households and businesses that are being hurt by your broken promise to cap power prices? Those 254 000 households you were talking about helping are paying an average of almost \$500 more per year thanks to your broken promise. That is a total of almost \$130 million ripped out of Tasmanian families this year. Can you explain how it is fair that you will rip \$130 million from Tasmanian households and then give each one maybe \$100? Are you really trying to tell Tasmanians that the more you rip them off, the better off they will be?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. When Hydro makes money, Tasmanians will save money under our Renewable Energy Dividend. Tasmanians will have nothing of your deception and your lame attempt, in many respects, to scam and scare Tasmanians by your expensive, no doubt federal Labor-funded glossy brochure. That is not the way prospective governments should operate. Governments of Tasmania should not be in the business of scaring Tasmanians and talking Tasmania down like you do day in, day out.

We have seen a 30 per cent increase in mainland energy prices, and up to 30 per cent increase in other states. We recognise that the 9.5 per cent increase announced a month or two ago is a challenge for many Tasmanians. That is why we are reaching in and supporting Tasmanians, vulnerable Tasmanians in particular, with concessions and energy bill relief, as we have demonstrated over the course of the last 12 months.

The Renewable Energy Dividend is all about ensuring that the Hydro, which was built by Tasmanians for Tasmanians, is able to support Tasmanians when it comes to power price relief, so that when Hydro makes money, Tasmanians save money unlike your poorly thought-through price cap, which would send retailers to the wall.

We will always be in the corner of Tasmanians when it comes to cost-of-living measures, not only when it comes to energy price relief but also important measures including food relief and food security, and all the many areas we are investing in as part of our \$400 million investment to support Tasmanians, particularly vulnerable Tasmanians, in need.

### **Power Prices - Price Cap**

#### **Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.22 a.m.]

Despite your reset, your three votes against a cap on power prices, and the so-called energy dividend, your election promise to cap power prices is still on your website as of this morning. The Premier says that it is ill-thought-out. It is still on his website. It says:

In the event of future volatility, we retain the ability to reintroduce one or both of these schemes, one of those being the price cap, in order to protect Tasmanian households and business from future price hikes.

Why not do what you promised and cap power prices, instead of ripping off Tasmanians?

## **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for his question. We are committed to our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee, which supports Tasmanians by ensuring that when Hydro makes money, Tasmanians save money unlike your thought bubble, which will cost retailers millions of dollars. I have no doubt that the thing you are obsessed with mentions the 65 per cent power price increase when you were last in government between 2010 and 2014. Remember that, that power-sharing government -

**Ms White** - What does it say on the front page? What does this bit say?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Leader of the Opposition, I am warning you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - that power-sharing government between Labor and the Greens which sent 10 000 people to the dole queues and power prices went up some 65 per cent?

When it comes to energy price volatility, we are not experiencing the extremities of the mainland, with up to 30 per cent power price increases. With the price increases, we are supporting particularly vulnerable Tasmanians, not only with the partnership between federal and state government with \$90 million of support, but also our other concessions around small business and other people affected by the price volatility.

The member can never walk away from the fact that when his mob were last in power, power sharing with the Greens between 2010 and 2014, power prices increased by some 65 per cent and Tasmanians will never forget it.

### **Marinus Link - Size of Tasmania's Contribution**

**Mr WINTER question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF**

[11.25 a.m.]

Your Government has repeatedly said that the reason Tasmanians had to suffer massive power price hikes was so that you could build Project Marinus. They have suffered through the cold winter and now you have announced you might not build it anyway. Here are some simple questions Tasmanians want to know.

How much is Marinus now estimated to cost? Where is your so-called line in the sand for Tasmania's contribution? Is it not true that Tasmania's share is still the same as it was when you negotiated the deal nine months ago? Will you release the letter you sent to the Prime Minister so that Tasmanians can see what you have been up to?

### **ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, there are many benefits of Marinus: growing the economy and jobs, some 1400 jobs during construction; downward pressure on power prices - prices will be lower with Marinus compared to a world without Marinus; energy security, a two-way flow of energy; emissions reductions; and telecommunications.

Generations of Tasmanians have benefited and contributed to the development of our world-class hydro-generation assets, of which, as a state, we can and should be immensely proud. It has placed us at the forefront of renewable energy development in the country. However, we are still facing challenges as we grow as a state. That is why Marinus and investment in it are critical.

The Government has a firm position when it comes to Marinus. Tasmania has a power supply challenge. Hydro has been a wonderful resource in giving Tasmanians energy security. It is ageing and is costly to maintain, and capacity is limited. The truth is we are facing a real challenge and we must build energy capacity to grow our state. We must push forward with

new investment in wind and solar and we must push forward with landing the Marinus Link as well, on our terms.

We are continuing discussions with the federal government and have had very good discussions with the federal government. What the challenge for the Labor Party is, is where do you stand?

**Opposition members** - Where do you stand?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We support Marinus. We are working with the federal government. Where do you lot stand? The Leader of the Opposition wants to walk away from it. You will not say anything. I am waiting to see what your future leader, Mr O'Byrne, says on Marinus as well.

**Mr WINTER** - Mr Speaker, point of order, standing order 45, relevance. I ask you to draw the Premier's attention back to the question. One of them was: 'Will you release the letter you sent to the Prime Minister so that Tasmanians can see what you have been up to?'

**Mr SPEAKER** - I take your point of order. It is not an opportunity to restate the question. I remind the Premier of relevance.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. The Premier has the call. If you do not wish to listen to the answer, you can leave now without me throwing you out, or you will sit there in silence.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are believers in Marinus. Tasmanians know where we stand. We have said, though, not at any price. They do not know where the Labor Party stands on these matters. We are working constructively with the federal Labor government to resolve matters concerning to Tasmania and we will continue those positive discussions.

### **Bridgewater Bridge - Progress of Construction**

**Mr YOUNG question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr FERGUSON**

[11.30 a.m.]

Can you update the House on the progress with Tasmania's biggest land transport project, the Bridgewater bridge, and advise when Tasmanians can expect to be driving on the new structure?

**ANSWER**

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about Tasmania's largest transport infrastructure project - and we are getting it done as a government. Previous governments talked about the bridge and previous governments had money for the bridge, but they spent it. We are building it and we are very proud to be delivering what was repeatedly promised but not even started.

Those of us who regularly use the existing causeway and the bridge, around 20 000 vehicles every day, will have been seeing the progress on each side of the Derwent and it is fantastic to see all those jobs, all those men and women working on that exciting project. At \$786 million, this project was our first to use the new major projects assessment process that this Government pioneered and it has been an undoubted success.

I am pleased to advise the new bridge will feature a four-lane standalone structure and a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists. It will include grade-separated interchanges on each side of the river, enhancing traffic efficiency and safety. The project is also proving a huge boost to our local economy, supporting 1000 direct and indirect jobs, 250 new jobs and a minimum of 25 per cent of those new roles to be recruited from the local areas of Brighton, Derwent Valley and Glenorchy municipalities, driving that local boost to the economy. It is being appreciated.

I am pleased to advise the member and the House that we expect Tasmanians to be driving on the new structure by the end of next year, with additional work through 2025, completing the interchanges at each end of the project. It is good news. Construction on the project officially commenced in October last year with works on both sides of the river. There is a temporary bridge structure, which I know has got a lot of people talking. It is great to see that innovation in methodology. The project reached a major milestone last month with the purpose-built precast concrete facility, two massive sheds, producing the first of what will be 1082 concrete bridge segments that will make up the 1.2 kilometre-long bridge deck. That facility on its own is employing around 90 men and women.

A further milestone was reached last week with the construction of the first of 42 piers that will support the bridge deck. Works planned through to September of this year include the erection of the first precast bridge segment, pouring the new piers, building the bridge abutments on both sides of the river, earthworks for the new on- and off-ramps between the Midland Highway and Old Main Road at Bridgewater, the upgrade of that road and the ongoing major earthworks on the southern side.

We thank the travelling public for their patience because there is disruption to the network. Work has been designed to minimise that by keeping the existing bridge open to traffic, with construction largely taking place behind concrete traffic barriers. This is really good news for our state and something that all Tasmanians can be very grateful for and proud of, as it is our people who are in fact doing that work.

To cheer up Ms White, I am going to make a few comments about the previous government under Mr O'Byrne. Last financial year our Government invested a record \$568 million in roads and bridges. That is four times Mr O'Byrne's effort in their final full year of office, at just \$129 million. Maybe Ms White might be able to use that at their national conference.

Mr O'Byrne's legacy as Infrastructure minister was to spend that money set aside for that Bridgewater bridge and set that project back a decade. Even the mayor at the time, Tony Foster, said he did not think it would ever be built in his lifetime and that is exactly what is happening.

In respect of Mr O'Byrne, he is coming back for the Leader of the Opposition's job. He is on the march with his staged media program. He has his unions out. He has Mr McGregor out. I think he has even taken Ms White's union off her and he is taking the fight to their

national conference. It is very clear that Ms White has lost her grip on leadership because she has now conceded that despite not wanting him, if he is preselected by those union bosses, she will just have to accept him, so it is very clear that wishy-washy White has lost her grip on power and Mr O'Byrne is coming back and he wants your job.

**Time expired.**

## **TABLED PAPERS**

### **Proposed Stadium at Macquarie Point**

[11.35 a.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, prior to the winter parliamentary recess, I presented to the House a list of documents that have cabinet-in-confidence privilege that otherwise would be considered within the scope of Motion 125.

This information was the result of a document search by DPAC as the Cabinet Secretariat indicated that I would have agencies conduct a further search of records in order to identify any additional cabinet-in-confidence documents held in other agencies such as State Growth, and Treasury and Finance.

I now present a letter from the secretary of DPAC containing, I am advised, a complete record of relevant departmental documents as committed to for the information of the House.

I am pleased to table the production of cabinet documents report to Parliament. In addition to tabling, I will today write to all members of the House seeking their feedback on this report so we can look at the appropriate pathway forward, to enable time for members to consider and respond to the report, and for Government to also consider the report. I intend to outline further steps, proceeding members feedback, beginning of the sitting week commencing September 5<sup>th</sup>.

As for the question the member for Franklin who asked me the question, I table the letter written to the Prime Minister and Minister for Energy regarding Marinus Link.

### **Response to Petition**

#### **Rental Housing Crisis**

**Mr Ferguson** tabled the response to a petition tabled by Ms O'Connor on 23 May 2023.

- Petition No. 3 of 2023 - See Appendix 1 on page 115.

## **Public Works Committee - Reports**

**Mr Tucker** presented reports of the Public Works Committee on the following references:

- West Tamar Highway Duplication;
- Royal Hobart Hospital Pharmacy Expansion Project;
- Launceston General Hospital elevated helicopter landing site; and
- Major Redevelopment of Cambridge Primary School,

together with evidence received and transcripts of evidence.

**Reports received and printed.**

**CORRECTIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2022 (No. 51)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1) 2023 (No. 9)**

**APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2) 2023 (No. 10)**

**TAXATION AND MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS BILL 2023 (No. 11)**

**Bills returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.**

**VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AMENDMENT BILL 2023 (No. 15)**

**First Reading**

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

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

**Move Motion - Division Bells**

[11.44 a.m.]

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

That so much of Standing Orders be suspended concerning the ringing of the division bells in relation to divisions, quorum calls and the resumption of proceedings following a suspension and that until the bells system is restored, the following temporary arrangements be made.

- (a) having made the call that a division or that a quorum is required, the Speaker leave the Chair (unless all Members are present); and

- (b) once the Clerk of the House has reported to the Speaker that all Members are present in the case of a division (excepting any Pair arrangements) or that a quorum is present, the Speaker would resume the Chair and proceed in the usual way, that is, by locking the doors in the case of a division, and resuming proceedings once a quorum is present.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

### **Sessional Orders**

[11.45 a.m.]

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

That so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent a debate on the adoption of sessional orders forthwith.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

That the following sessional orders be adopted for the remainder of this Session:

- (1) In Standing Order 42, leave out all the words after “Unless otherwise ordered,” and insert instead:-
- (a) *Private Members’ Business will have priority from 12 noon till 6.00 p.m. on Wednesdays.*
  - (b) *Private Members’ Business which has been on the Notice Paper for the period required by the Standing Orders may be called on by the Member or a Member of the group which has been allocated time pursuant to the following weekly rotations: -*

#### **WEEK ONE**

*12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Lyons*

*2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Greens Members*

*3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Opposition Members*

*5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Government Private Members*

**WEEK TWO**

*12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Clark*

*2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Government Private Members*

*3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Opposition Members*

*5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Greens Members*

**WEEK THREE**

*12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Franklin*

*2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Greens Members*

*3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Opposition Members*

*5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Government Private Members*

**WEEK FOUR**

*12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Bass*

*2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Government Private Members*

*3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Opposition Members*

*5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. Greens Members*

- (d) *the Member calling on an item in Private Members' Business may, in doing so, state that at the conclusion of that time for the debate on that day, the matter be voted upon.*
  - (e) *at the commencement of the time allocated for a Member or a group's Private Members' Business, the Whip, the Member, or any other Member of that group, may indicate to the Speaker that its time be waived, in which case, the House shall immediately proceed with Government Business for that allocation of time.*
- (2) In Standing Order 76, leave out paragraph (4), and insert instead the following paragraph:
- (4) *On Tuesdays and Wednesdays priority shall be given to the Opposition to raise a Matter of Public Importance and*

*on Thursdays priority shall be given pursuant to the following rotation:*

<b>WEEK A</b>	Independent Members
<b>WEEK B</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK C</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK D</b>	Government Members
<b>WEEK E</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK F</b>	Greens Members

(3) After Sessional Order 48A, insert the following Sessional Order:

***48B Maximum time for Questions and answers***

- 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 48, the Speaker shall ensure the time taken to ask a Question does not exceed one minute, and the time taken to answer a Question does not exceed four minutes.***
- 2. If a Point of Order is taken during a Question or during an answer, the Speaker has discretion to order that the timing on the clock be paused.***

(4) In Standing Order 324, leave out "three" and insert instead "five".

Thank you to everybody who has provided feedback when we reached out about this. We have opened the sessional orders, basically, to make an accommodation for Independent members in relation to private members' time on a Wednesday. Now, rather than being every second week, or every two weeks out of four, private members' time will now start at 12 o'clock every Wednesday on a four-week rotation, to accommodate the four Independent members.

While doing that, we have also altered the schedule for the MPI, to allow the Independent members access to the MPI as well. We have also instituted, with the agreement of the House, a one-minute time limit for the asking of questions, and a four-minute time limit for the answering of questions.

We now have 17 questions in each question time to get through, so five minutes per question and answer - and hopefully, a little less on some occasions - will sharpen everybody up, and see us closer to the hour, than to the 90 minutes as we have been, for question time as well.

[11.47 a.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of Government Business for providing a copy of this ahead of time. We have discussed it and are happy with what is proposed. The substantive change for us is the time limit on questions and on answers.

It is important that the spirit of this be acknowledged and understood. That is, we expect questions to be answered more quickly than they have been - but the way to do that is probably by actually answering them; that is my suggestion. We hear a lot of waffle from ministers

when they are answering these questions. It does not need to take six minutes to answer a question. We are missing Ms O'Connor's timely advice about the amount of time ministers are taking to answer them.

Most, in fact all, of the questions can be answered within four minutes. I do accept that sometimes questions from the opposition can be longer. I did time some questions this morning and found some were a little over one minute; others were not. It appears to be something we can accept. I hope the spirit of this is acknowledged by the Government. We do expect to have an answer provided within that four minutes.

The adjustments to the amount of time for private members does not impact the Opposition. I will be interested to hear the views of the crossbench and Greens regarding the changes proposed here, although I do not think the Greens have proposed to have anything changed.

All in all, it appears to be a reflection of the fact that we now have a minority Government. They are slowly accepting that they cannot have everything they want, and that they need to acknowledge the circumstances they have placed themselves in. This is not a Government that has been knocked off course by anything other than itself and its own decisions. They have lost so much support with their warped priorities that they have needed to reset.

The cause of these changes to the sessional orders is the Premier's behaviour and his leadership. We are happy that these changes in sessional orders appear to acknowledge the fact that we have an extended crossbench, and that all members need to have the opportunity for private members' time. I look forward to hearing what other members have to say.

[11.49 a.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin- Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, I thank the Leader of Government Business for the cordial conversations we had about this. There was quite a lot of to and fro and I believe where we have landed shows that the Government understands the benefits of working collaboratively in what is clearly a power-sharing parliament that has not been created through an election but by the Government's own internal behaviours and management of communications, which was ostensibly the main reason.

It is great to see that it is recognising the reality that we now have multiple and diverse voices in parliament. The Greens welcome this and also welcome the changes to the Standing Orders because it will mean there is clarification and formalisation of the role of Independent members and the Greens in private members' time schedules and matters of public importance. It is a recognition that Tasmania is changing for the better. It is going to be a better democracy when we all are doing our best, as the community wants us to, to work together. They want to see us working together as collaboratively as possible on the serious issues confronting Tasmania.

I want to make a comment about the changes to the maximum time for questions and answers. This is something we have passionately pushed for and I want to thank the Government for coming onboard with this. Obviously, as we are standing here, it is 10 to 12 and we have not got past Other Formal Business. Clearly, the new member for Clark's swearing in was part of that, but we had a very long question time today and there has been a history of blathering and not answering questions. That time-wasting is time that should be spent on the business of the day.

I did not run the clock today. I was going to take up Cassy O'Connor's role and I would have been running the clock, but I knew this was coming so I chose in good spirit to see this come in. I look forward, Mr Speaker, to your bringing us to time on the questions as well as the answers.

I also suggest that one of the problems the Greens have had is when points of order are called on a question, it is concerning to see ministers taking the opportunity to run away from standing and listening to the point of order and continuing to respond. That is nothing that can be written into the Standing Orders. It is really a matter for the Speaker to use discretion, but recognising that the clock will be stopped on the time limit for answering questions when valid points of order are called and where there is obvious clear failure for the minister to go anywhere near to the question, it is fair to have a point of order called on that matter and for the minister to remain and respond again.

I also welcome the changes to Standing Order 324, which will reflect the increasing diversity of the democracy by giving more voices to the Standing Orders Committee; that is really important. There is a range of views, even more than before in this Chamber, and it is reflected better now in the Standing Orders.

There is a move to appoint the new member for Clark, Mr Bayley, to the Committee of Privileges and Conduct and - we are not moving that?

**Mr Street** - No, we're not doing that. This is just the sessional orders.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Okay. Mr Speaker, I want to move an amendment to the motion in connection with Sessional Orders. I believe I circulated it to the Clerk. I move -

That the motion be amended by inserting after clause 3 the following clause:

In Standing Order 115, leave out subparagraph (v) of paragraph (1) and insert instead the following subparagraphs:

(v) the leader of a Party other than the Government or the Opposition, or if absent or waive the right under this proviso, another Member of that Party nominated by the Leader to the Speaker for the purpose in respect of the bill, Motion, Question or Matter being then considered by the House; and

(vi) an independent member.'

The amendment seeks to change the practice in this place whereby members of the Greens and now other Independent members are not able to ask more than two questions in the Committee stage of the House on a clause of the bill. This is a problem because there are some bills that come before us - and I can remember a number that I have had - where a bill might be 80 pages and 50 pages of that bill is one clause that contains within it a substantial addition of material - this happens often in planning bills - and that needs to be spoken to comprehensively, given it is 50 pages of the bill.

The Greens have used many approaches to try to deal with this inability of a person who is not the Leader of the party who has carriage for the bill to be able to speak more than twice on a clause. When we cannot speak more than twice on a clause we cannot do justice to the issues that are being raised, other than through moving an amendment. I think it is time, and with the number of Independents in the House, we should all be able to agree that there is an advantage if we can use an opportunity to speak in the Committee stage of a bill within each clause more than two times if it is required.

I do not know if the Government is concerned about members taking more time than is required to speak to a bill, but some of the issues we have before us, the bills that come to this House, are important. This afternoon I am looking at the public guardianship bill, and that is just one. It is really important that we provide all members of this House, if they are responsible on a bill, to speak more than twice.

[11.58 p.m.]

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, the Government will not be supporting the Greens amendment. We believe that the speaking limits are fine as is. We do not believe that the Greens deserve any more speaking rights than the other Independent members of this place. The provision is for 40 minutes for the Opposition spokesperson or the Opposition Leader and the minister responsible for a bill plus unlimited contributions. It is the Government's belief that that is the appropriate format, so we will not be supporting the Greens motion. In the interests of being open, it was discussed as part of all of this as well and we made it clear that we would not be supporting it in those discussions.

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

**The House divided -**

**AYES 3**

Mr Bayley (Teller)  
Ms Johnston  
Dr Woodruff

**NOES 21**

Mrs Alexander  
Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Dr Broad  
Ms Butler  
Ms Dow  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Mr Jaensch  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Byrne  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Shelton  
Mr Street  
Mr Tucker  
Ms White  
Mr Winter

Mr Wood (Teller)  
Mr Young

**Amendment negatived.**

[12.07 p.m.]

**Mr TUCKER** (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I would like to move an amendment to the Sessional Orders motion. I move -

That the motion be amended by -

- (1) in paragraph 1, following 'Week Two', by leaving out the words '12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Clark'.
- (2) in paragraph (1), in the section titled 'Week Two', by leaving out 'Greens Members' and inserting instead 'the Independent Member for Clark'.
- (3) in paragraph (1), following 'Week Four', by leaving out the words '12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. The Independent Member for Bass'.
- (4) in paragraph (1), in the section titled 'Week Four', by leaving out the words 'Greens Members; and inserting instead 'the Independent Member for Bass'.
- (5) in paragraph (4), by leaving out the Table and inserting instead:

<b>WEEK A</b>	Independent Member for Bass
<b>WEEK B</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK C</b>	Independent Member for Franklin
<b>WEEK D</b>	Government Members
<b>WEEK E</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK F</b>	Independent Member for Lyons

Mr Speaker, we are doing this because as Independents we believe that we have just as much right with our transparency on the Government as the Greens. There are two Greens members and there are actually four Independent members. We think this will create more transparency in the Government and allow the Independents more of a voice with what we want to say and what we want to get out to the community on the issues that matter to us. We hope that the parliament will support us with this amendment and I will leave it at that. Thank you.

[12.09 p.m.]

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I have not seen a printed copy but, having heard Mr Tucker's contribution, I am comfortable with the motion as was circulated originally. The Government will not be supporting Mr Tucker's amendments.

[12.09 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to share a few thoughts. Looking at paragraph (4) first, I can see what the Independent member for Lyons is

trying to achieve, which is to fairly share the allocation for use of that time for matters of public importance across all Independent members, Greens members and Government members. On the face of it, that looks reasonably fair, particularly given the makeup of our parliament now, with the large number of Independent members.

The others amendments, paragraph 1 under Week Two, would leave out 'Greens Members' and insert instead 'The Independent Member for Clark'. I am interested to know if the Independent member for Clark supports that.

**Mr Tucker** - Yes.

**Ms WHITE** - That would mean that you are not on from 12 noon to 1 p.m. but instead from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.?

**Ms Johnston** - That is my understanding.

**Ms WHITE** - Okay. That would mean that the 12 noon to 1 p.m. time would be used for Government business instead?

**Mr Tucker** - Sorry?

**Ms WHITE** - Your first amendment is to leave out 'Greens Members' and instead have 'The Independent Member for Clark'. That is in Week Two, leave out the first line. Instead of having 12 noon to 1 p.m. for your private members' time, you would have it from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Are you are happy with that?

**Mr Tucker** - Yes.

**Ms WHITE** - Under Week Four, leave out the first line. The Independent member for Bass has that time instead allocated from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Week Four. Mrs Alexander, is my interpretation correct and are you comfortable with that?

**Mrs Alexander** - Your amendment needs to say that.

**Ms WHITE** - It would be helpful for us, in considering these amendments, to have the members who are named in the motion provide that clarity for us in this discussion.

Generally, given the nature of the numbers in this House now, there is an important opportunity for us to share time more fairly, respecting that there are two Greens members and four Independent members. My understanding is that in order for any political party to be recognised as a party in this House, it needs a minimum of three members. Therefore, the allocation of speaking time so heavily weighted to the Greens, particularly in Standing Order 76, appears out of kilter with what is now presented to us in terms of the makeup of the members in this House.

I will wait to hear from the members who are named in this motion to be clear how they feel about that. However, on face value this amendment appears sensible.

[12.13 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I will be supporting the amendment. When I came into this place back in 2021, the makeup of this House was very different. There were a lot of different faces from what we have now. We have new faces here. I was very proud to join the crossbench. There were only three of us on the crossbench - two Greens and me as an Independent - the only Independent elected to this place at that time.

We are a very different-looking parliament in August 2023. We have a very diverse crossbench, which I think is a welcome addition to the parliament, with different voices and a diversity of views. The Sessional Orders need to move with the times to reflect the differences we have in our parliament now.

I was more than happy working with the Greens around the private members' time and also with the allocation of the MPIs for the period that it was just the three of us on the crossbench. I note that we made some changes because Mr O'Byrne joined the crossbench as well. However, we have a different set of circumstances now where we have two members of a political party plus four Independent members, effectively six on the crossbench.

This morning, in speaking with Mrs Alexander about this, she raised a very interesting point that, as four Independent members, we serve different electorates; therefore, we are bringing to the parliament different views on behalf of our electorates. Those electorates deserve to have time allocated to the Independent members to speak, particularly on matters of public importance, and to ensure that those members have private members' time as well to deal with important matters.

We need to be a bit more flexible in relation to how we progress, noting that our parliament does seem to be constantly changing. We do not know what next week will bring, I am sure, but it is important to allow those Independent members and the crossbench adequate time to reflect the views of their electorate, noting that we represent very different electorates, often with very different concerns. I encourage members of this House to see this as a dynamic document where we are looking to reflect what the community expects in terms of representation in this House.

[12.15 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, my first comment is that I have not seen the motion Mr Tucker has put; I have only seen part of it. We reject this. The Tasmanian Electoral Commission recognises the Tasmanian Greens as an official party. We have a large and vibrant membership and we have been in this place for 40 years. The only reason under our Standing Orders we are not identified as a party - which we are - is that the Liberal and Labor parties together make sure that they do everything they can to shut down our voice.

It is obviously the case that this is something the Labor Party is comfortable with. It is also the case that compared to the Labor Party and anyone else in this House, including the Government, we have more bills on the books than any other Independent or party in this place. The Greens do the work. We are a large collection of Tasmanians who have a voice and it is expressed and has always been as a party in this place by the members who are here. At the moment there are two members, but at many times in the past we have had five members in this place. I am very confident there will be more members of the Greens in the next parliament.

It would be very convenient for this House to shut down opportunities for the Greens to have a say. There is no doubt, from the media over the last week, that we are speaking about the issues Tasmanians care about - animal welfare, climate change, decriminalising drugs for personal use, and the ramping crisis. What else have we been in the news about just in the last week?

We have not seen this motion. It is something that the Independents have put together. They did not dignify us with a conversation about it but I am not surprised. I am also not surprised but very disappointed that the Labor Party is so clearly excited about the idea of jumping in to shut down opportunities for us to speak.

The point is that we work in good faith with members in this parliament and we will take every opportunity we can to raise issues and use every opportunity that the Standing Orders provide to speak for people who want a voice, because there is no doubt the way the Labor Party is operating is almost identical to the Liberals on most issues. Who is speaking for Tasmanians who care about the climate emergency? Who is speaking for Tasmanians who care about the ramping crisis? Who is speaking for Tasmanians who want changes to housing laws so that people can -

**Mr Winter** - Are you trying to convince us to support you, because it's not very good?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - You have already shown us that you are not interested, Mr Winter. You have already made your position quite clear.

**Mr Winter** - You're debating - you should try to encourage some of their support, not attack them.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. This is not a two-way conversation.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - We will keep talking about the issues for people who are in a housing crisis. When there are things on the table that can be done, the Government and the Labor Party - and I have yet to hear from the Independent members on this matter - are not picking up the issues that can be taken today. We strongly reject this amendment. The previous amendment we had that would have benefited the voice of Independents was not even adopted by the majority of them. I am not sure what games are being played here, but it is pretty clear that the Greens are an effective voice for so many Tasmanians, and regardless of what happens to our opportunities for speaking, we will continue to be a strong voice.

[12.20 p.m.]

**Mrs ALEXANDER** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I also would like to add my words to the amendment that is being proposed. One of the things for me is that considering into the future we are moving to a 35-member House and potentially the Greens will increase or Independents will increase - we do not know - but setting it up more in a representation as far as the Independents are concerned and a representation for constituents and electorates, is a reflection of giving the Independent members a bit more of a capacity to bring up specific issues in their electorates.

It is looking into the future as well as taking into account that we currently have some strong issues we want to bring forward in the House. That, for me, is the principle. I apologise that there was not enough time to discuss this with everyone but it is something that, as we have become aware at the last minute, we tried to work with making the suggested arrangements.

Having said that, just to get things a bit more interesting, I would also like to make an amendment to the amendment, and one amendment relates to Week Two. The original motion was, under Week Two in the fourth line, to leave out 'Greens Members' and insert instead 'The Independent Member for Clark'. My amendment to Week Two is to leave 'The Independent Member for Clark' as is in that allocated time slot, which was the original time slot the Government proposed, from 12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m., and instead remove the last line, which is 5.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. rather than swap them around, which is what was proposed in the amendment the Independent member for Lyons put forward.

My other amendment to the amendment is that a similar thing occur in Week Four, which is to maintain the 12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m. line as -

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Mrs Alexander, are you moving a separate amendment?

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Yes.

**Dr Woodruff** - Where is the amendment?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Okay. Can you circulate your amendment? No-one has copies of it.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Sure. Sorry, I am not familiar with this so I am just seeking some guidance. If I am to move an amendment to the amendment, do I get the opportunity to speak again or do I have to circulate it first?

**Ms O'Byrne** - You can speak on the substantive amendment and you get to speak on your new amendment as well, but you have to table it.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Okay. All right.

**Mr SPEAKER** - You are speaking on the amendment now?

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Yes.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Once you have moved your amendment, you can then speak to that and then -

**Ms O'Byrne** - And then we vote for that, then the original amendment and then the substantive.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Depending on the results. Then everybody else gets another go on your amendment.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - All right. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for clarifying that. Yes, I have spoken then on the original amendment and I will subsequently seek to speak on the proposed amendment to the amendment. Thank you.

**Mr Street** - Which you need to move now - you need to write it and move it.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Right. Yes, okay.

**Mr SPEAKER** - You need to formally move your amendment and circulate the documentation that goes along with that.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - I will have to write it and formally circulate it then.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I would love to be able to say you can do that but you cannot. Unless you have the paperwork done and ready to circulate we cannot hold up the parliament.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - I understand. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for clarifying that.

**Ms O'Byrne** - I think it would be better if we just adjourned the debate and everybody got their ducks in a row so we knew what we were voting on.

[12.24 p.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I guess we are hearing that there is an amendment proposed. It is difficult to deal with that at this point but perhaps another member might want to move it.

Just to respond to Dr Woodruff, I understand that she is upset. I understand that the Greens do not agree with that and that is fine. It is perfectly acceptable that they have that position, but what they need to understand is that it is not about how many newspaper articles they are in or how many times they talk about something, it is actually about how many people they have in this place. The Greens have two members out of 25 -

**Dr Woodruff** - We are a party, Mr Winter, uncomfortable as it is for you.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr WINTER** - Mr Speaker, the Sessional Orders need to represent the make-up of this place. The points have been made, by Independents in particular, that they are flexing a muscle here, because they are saying they now have four members on the crossbench, so they want to have a set of sessional orders and private members' time that reflects a fair and equitable expression of the number of people -

**Dr Woodruff** - Why do you not bring the Labor Party into that? Let us talk about every member here. Let us readjust it so it is fair in question time.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, member for Franklin.

**Dr Woodruff** - That would not work out well for you.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Leader of the Greens, order.

**Mr WINTER** - The point is, the Greens have two members out of 25 members of the House, and they have been extremely well served by the Sessional Orders and Standing Orders over time.

The point I am hearing today from the Independents is that there are four of them. There are only two Greens, so the argument they are making is totally illogical. The argument from the Leader of the Greens was not a very compelling one. If I am trying to convince someone to vote with me, I usually try to do that rather than insult and attack them. I did not find it a compelling reason to support the Greens with what she said today, and that is something she can maybe reflect on in the future.

**Dr Woodruff** - You have already made your position clear.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr WINTER** - The amendment is a little bit messy. I note that in 1(a) it said:

Private Members' Business will have priority from 12 noon till 6 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Some of the amendments now appear to make out that this would not actually occur. There is a conflict here within the motion, unless it has been resolved and I have not noticed that amendment. On the face of it, as the Leader of the Opposition said, in principle we support what has been attempted to do here.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Everybody has made a contribution. I now put the amendment as it is.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Mr Speaker, before you make the call, I suggest that the most effective thing to do - because the House is in some confusion about the amendments before the House and what they mean - would be to perhaps adjourn this debate for a period of time to allow people to tidy it up. There has been a genuine attempt to work out what might be going wrong with the amendment and fix it. It would be great if we were able to do that, and then go on in a more collaborative manner, but that is, of course, a decision for others in the House.

**Mr SPEAKER** - At this stage there is no motion before me except for the amendment I need to put.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr SPEAKER** - This is where we are at. There has been a vote on the amendment. The amendment was lost; I called that. There was no division required or called, so we are back on the motion. If there is nobody else to speak on the original motion, then the minister has -

**Mr Street** - I completely understand -

**Mr SPEAKER** - I know the Leader of the House is standing, but we will finish the debate on the motion itself.

[12.30 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, can I confirm we are now debating the motion?

**Mr SPEAKER** - Yes, the original motion.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Mr Speaker, can I please move an amendment of a substantive motion, that -

In paragraph (4), leave out the table.

Insert instead -

<b>WEEK A</b>	Independent Member for Bass
<b>WEEK B</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK C</b>	Independent Member for Franklin
<b>WEEK D</b>	Government Members
<b>WEEK E</b>	Greens Members
<b>WEEK F</b>	Independent Member for Lyons
<b>WEEK G</b>	Independent Member for Clark

Just to avoid confusion, that is on the previous amendment circulated.

**Mr SPEAKER** - You need to circulate that motion.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Mr Speaker, we are having trouble printing and photocopying, so I will keep talking to the amendment.

Again, what we are trying to do is reflect the diversity on the crossbench when it comes to allocation of the MPIs. Previously the situation, if I am correct, Mr Street, was two crossbench, then Government the third week on the Thursday - but obviously the make-up of the crossbench in the parliament is vastly different now to when we initially set this particular sessional order, back in early last year, I think. We now have a very different crossbench.

We have six members in the crossbench, recognising that two of those are in a political party, but we do have six voices on the crossbench. That needs to be reflected, remembering that the MPI is an important opportunity to raise particular views and issues of concern of the day.

As I said in my contribution earlier, the crossbench represents the entire five different electorates. We have Independent members across four different electorates, and of course the Greens have one each from Franklin and Clark. It is important that there is an opportunity for those electorates to have their voices heard.

I think this is a sensible amendment. I gather there was not much concern, from the previous debate around the reallocation of the MPI time, given that we do have a very different-looking parliament.

I accept, as we discussed before, that there were concerns over the allocation of private members' time, but I think the MPI is a short debate that we have every day. It is an opportunity for Tasmanian voices - and the diversity of those voices - to be heard by the crossbench.

[12.32 p.m.]

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Mr Speaker, I did not have the opportunity to speak before on the amendment because I had already spoken on Mr Tucker's original amendment.

The Government will not be supporting any amendments to this schedule today. The reason all of this was done before we came in here is to try to avoid this situation. That is why I have tried to be as collegial as possible. He will hate me pointing it out, but Tim from my office, who is now in the adviser's reserve, tries to work with the Independents, with Mr Winter, with Dr Woodruff, to try to resolve these issues before we get here, as best we can. Therefore, the Government will not be agreeing to any amendments on the fly today.

I am hoping that when this amendment fails - as it will, with the Government and Greens members voting together - that the motion as circulated this morning, will pass. I am willing to have a conversation with everybody we spoke to in the lead-up to this, to see whether there is a different way forward that is the will of the majority of this House. I hope that is acceptable.

As Leader of the House, I have genuinely tried to work across the Chamber to resolve these issues before we get here, so that we do not need to have people trying to write amendments while they are standing there talking, and have Clerks trying to photocopy scrap pieces of paper.

Sometimes it is unavoidable. I believe on this occasion it could have been avoided if we had just had a more in-depth conversation about any dissatisfaction with the motion that was circulated, because my belief was that the motion that circulated had full support of the House.

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

**The House divided -**

**AYES 12**

Mrs Alexander  
Dr Broad  
Ms Butler  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad (Teller)  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Byrne  
Mr Tucker  
Ms White  
Mr Winter

**NOES 12**

Ms Archer  
Mr Barnett  
Mr Bayley  
Mr Ellis  
Mr Ferguson  
Mr Jaensch  
Ms Ogilvie  
Mr Rockliff  
Mr Street  
Mr Wood (Teller)  
Dr Woodruff  
Mr Young

**Mr SPEAKER** - The results of the division being Ayes 12 and Noes 12, in accordance with Standing Order 167 I cast my vote with the Noes.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Motion agreed to.**

## MOTION

### Committee Membership

[12.40 p.m.]

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

- (1) Mr Wood and Mr Bayley and be appointed to serve on the Standing Orders Committee in accordance with Standing Order 324.
- (2) Mr Bayley be appointed to serve on the Committee of Privileges and Conduct in accordance with Standing Order 325.
- (3) Dr Woodruff be appointed to serve on the Joint Sessional Committee on Workplace Culture Oversight.

Briefly, that would be to include Mr Wood and Mr Bayley on the Standing Orders Committee. The Greens made a request to the Government that they have a member on the Standing Orders Committee which we agreed to, but to maintain both the Government representation on the committee and the uneven numbers, we are going to put Mr Wood on there as well. Mr Bayley is replacing Ms O'Connor on the Privileges Committee and Dr Woodruff is replacing Ms O'Connor on the Workplace Culture Oversight Committee.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MOTION

### Leave to Move Motion without Notice

[12.41 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I seek leave to move -

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended to debate the following motion.

That this House censures the Honourable Guy Barnett MP for the following reasons:

- (a) deliberately and callously overseeing a 22.5 per cent electricity price increase for Tasmanian households and small businesses;
- (b) doing nothing tangible to support larger businesses that link electricity price increases of more than 50 per cent;
- (c) breaking his 2018 promise to delink from the National Electricity Market;

- (d) breaking his 2021 promise to cap power prices if there was high volatility in the National Electricity Market;
- (e) saying he could not implement a price cap because it would jeopardise Project Marinus;
- (f) signing an agreement with the Australian Government on 19 October last year to fund Marinus Link, saying Tasmanians will only pay their fair share before announcing nine months later, that same agreement means Tasmania is not getting a fair deal;
- (g) refusing to be honest and transparent with Tasmanians about the current estimated cost of Marinus Link;
- (h) refusing to be honest and transparent with Tasmanians about the share of the cost of Marinus Link that the Tasmanian Government is planning to contribute;
- (i) bringing four of Tasmania's largest energy companies to Tasmania to manufacture hydrogen and then telling them there was no power or water available to actually do it; and
- (j) overseeing an energy drought whereby our largest energy users are being told they cannot access additional electricity to create new jobs.

It is obvious to everybody that this Government has failed on energy policy, it has broken its promises and it is hurting households and businesses. Not only did the reset that the Premier announced only a few weeks ago not change the Minister for Energy and Renewables, it has not changed their approach to energy policy. This is one of the biggest failings and broken promises of this Government, all overseen by this Minister for Energy and Renewables, Guy Barnett.

This is a serious motion, but there are very serious issues that are contained within it that are impacting on Tasmanians every single day. I reflect on the policy that was taken by the Liberal Government to produce the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation. They said they would break away from mainland electricity pricing to force down power prices by 7 per cent to 10 per cent - a broken promise. They said they would deliver the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation by 2022 - another broken promise.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, Ms White, I remind all the speakers on this that we are talking on the seeking of leave and not the substantive motion. In order to be efficient, when you have said enough on that, I would appreciate that we move on and move through the process of seeking leave. So keep your contributions to the reasons this is so important that we have to upset the day's blue.

**Ms WHITE** - Mr Speaker, I believe, and the Labor Party believes, that there is nothing more important than dealing with the cost-of-living crisis confronting Tasmanians. One of the biggest contributors to that is the broken promises of the Energy minister about power prices.

This is a government that has broken its promises on energy. This is a minister who continues to pretend that they are doing something when every announcement they have made has amounted to very little improvement in the lives of Tasmanian households or businesses. A number of the schemes this Government has announced are barely accessible for the businesses they purport to be helping. The last update from the minister about one of their small business schemes demonstrated that just 10 customers in Tasmania could actually access it.

This is an urgent motion that censures the minister because there is no more important issue than the cost of electricity in a cost-of-living crisis gripping Tasmanian families. This is a government that has refused to be honest with Tasmanians about some of the biggest challenges facing our state when it comes to energy security, energy supply and projects like Project Marinus, which they have failed to explain, which they seem to be walking away from, despite very strong language just a couple of months ago from this Energy minister. This is a censure motion in the minister for Energy because, despite the reset, he was not demoted. He was not sent out of this portfolio that is impacting on Tasmanian households and businesses. It is not the reset the Tasmanian community needed when the Premier decided what he was going to do.

This motion talks about the 22.5 per cent electricity increase Tasmanian households and businesses face, justified by this minister because he wants to build Project Marinus. That has been his justification for walking away from their promise to cap electricity prices. Despite that, he has not been able to tell Tasmanians how much Project Marinus is now estimated to cost. The lack of transparency here is just another example of the hollow words from this Premier, who said he was going to lead a government of integrity. It has not been transparent about one of the most significant investments the Tasmanian community is going to be asked to make, if it proceeds. They have also failed to be honest and transparent with Tasmanians about the share of the costs of Marinus and the cost for the Tasmanian taxpayer, not to mention the impact that their failed energy policy is having on existing business customers in this state.

We have talked about the contracted prices of 50 per cent facing customers, sometimes tripling their energy contracts but what about our major industrials, some of the largest job providers in our state performing very important roles, not just in stabilising the energy network but also providing jobs for people right across our state? They are telling us that they cannot access more energy to grow jobs in Tasmania because there is not enough energy available. This is a government that has overseen an energy drought in our state. This is incredibly serious. Not only have they broken their promises, hurting the hip pocket of every Tasmanian family with their broken promises, they cannot explain or justify Marinus Link and its cost and they have not been able to tell Tasmanian businesses how they are going to benefit from 100 years of investment in hydro power that should be benefiting Tasmanians but, right now, is not. There is no competitive advantage for those businesses accessing clean, cheap, reliable power in Tasmania, which is why they were set up here in the first place.

This is a minister very big on hollow rhetoric and catchphrases and very poor on delivering improvements to the wellbeing of Tasmanian households and businesses, who deserve to pay a Tasmanian price for Tasmanian power but, under this Government, have failed to be able to do that because they have broken their promises.

This is a censure motion that has been a long time coming, in a minister who has failed and continues to deliberately deceive and break promises, and continues to not be transparent

with Tasmanians about one of the single biggest investments the Tasmanian public is going to be expected to make, in Marinus Link.

**Time expired.**

[12.50 p.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I am very happy to speak if the Government is not going to put someone up to defend itself. The times should be suiting Tasmanians when it comes to energy but they are not. This morning we had an admission for the first time from the Government, through the Premier, that we do not have enough power in Tasmania.

We are here in Tasmania, after 100 years of investment in building renewable hydro-electric, a business organisation, Hydro Tasmania, and here we are in 2023, where there is not enough power. That ought to be enough to censure this minister on its own. For 10 years this Government has overseen the Energy portfolio. They tried to black out the state in 2016. They promised Tasmanians that they would cap power prices in 2018, and did, with the support of Labor. Now, here we are in 2023 where they say that the idea of capping power prices will not work. Well, guess what? It did in 2018, it is still on their website and it would work right now.

This minister's approach to energy now is to say that if he takes enough money from Tasmanian households and businesses, around \$130 million, then he might give them about \$100 once every two years,. That is his new policy. His policy on the website says he will cap power prices if there is high volatility. What is he saying, or what he told his state council at the weekend, is that he might give Tasmanians \$100 every two years. That is this Government's energy policy.

They have been talking about building Project Marinus as an export mechanism for 10 years. They have been saying that they need to build Project Marinus because they want to build more renewable energy here and export it to the mainland. What we heard today from the Premier is that, actually, why they want to build Project Marinus is so that they can import power because they have not been able to build any generation in 10 years. They ran the dams down in 2016, nearly blacked out the state, talked about building wind farms, talked about 200 per cent, and they are not even at 100 per cent. Under this minister and this Premier, this Government's approach to energy is that we are actually getting further and further behind 100 per cent.

All the while, this minister, the minister for strategies and plans but not for actually doing anything, is telling Tasmanians that they have to pay more for their power because he wants to build Project Marinus, but also that he might not build Project Marinus after 10 years.

Energy policy under this Government, under this Premier and this minister, is a mess and that is why this House should debate this today. The House should censure this minister today because of all the portfolio reshuffles and resetting that this Premier did, the main thing he missed out was this minister for Energy, who has failed on every single measure. We do not have enough power. We are paying too much for the amount of power we have and his plan is in tatters.

This is a minister who told organisations like Woodside, Fortescue and Origin to come to Tasmania to build hydrogen. It is farcical. He did not have power and he did not have water, and he attracted some of Australia's largest energy businesses to Tasmania, to Bell Bay, before

telling them, 'By the way, we do not have any power'. There are only two things you need to make hydrogen: power and water. He did not have any but that did not stop him because he just talked about it, talked about it, talked about it for years. The rhetoric, just keep talking about it but do not actually do anything. That is what this minister does.

He should be censured today because of his appalling performance in this portfolio, because of his broken promises. This is the minister who promised Tasmanians that he would delink from the National Electricity Market and that would take their power prices down by 10 per cent. This is a minister who said that we would have the lowest power prices in the nation and then later on just changed the rhetoric and said 'or amongst the lowest'.

We are a state now of renewable energy during what should be a boom time for renewable energy, where we are now paying more for our power than Victorians thanks to this minister. We have a Premier who goes on social media and tries to tell Victorians to come to Tasmania for the lower power prices. We pay more than Victorians do. That is what the latest energy report says. This Government has energy policy so drastically wrong. They use Hydro Tasmania as a cash cow for their budget rather than the strategic asset it should be for our state. Hydro Tasmania should be the number one driving force of Tasmania's economy. It should be iconic, it should be loved, it should be supported and should remain public but this is a Government, like their predecessors from 1998, that does not value it, does not understand it and wanted to sell it back in 1998 - and now they want to run it into the ground. Hydro Tasmania is our most valuable economic asset. It is an asset that was built by Tasmanians, owned by Tasmanians, and should be used to provide power to Tasmanians at Tasmanian prices - not at mainland prices, like this minister is desperate for us to do.

The announcement on the weekend was the moment of 'enough is enough' - the most ridiculous policy approach: the most ridiculous announcement to try to tell Tasmanians that the more profit Hydro Tasmania rips from their household budgets, rips from Tasmanian business, they will give them \$100 back. What a joke.

They cannot do what is on their website. Why? I assume it is because we are saying they should. Is that why? Is that why Tasmanians are paying another 10 per cent more on their power bills, on top of the 12 per cent last year? Over the last two years, it has been a 22.5 per cent increase - almost \$500 for the average household. They announce that because of the amount of money they are ripping from Tasmanian households - almost \$500 - they might, every two years, give them \$100 back, \$50 on average. That is the Government's actual energy policy.

If you took that to a state council - I do not know who told him that was a good idea. We know it was not the Energy minister, because during Estimates it turned out ReCFIT had nothing to do with this energy reset. It was actually Treasury; maybe it is the Deputy Premier, Mr Ferguson.

What we know is that their energy policy is a mess. This Government has driven Hydro into the ground. It does not value it, does not appreciate it, and the only way Tasmanians are going to get Tasmanian prices is if we have a price cap.

Mr Speaker, twice this Government has voted against a price cap that was still their policy on their own website. That is what they should do. How they can protect Tasmanian

households and small businesses is by capping prices, as they promised Tasmanians they would do. Tasmanians should pay Tasmanian prices for Tasmanian power.

Tasmanians believe it, Tasmanians know it. It is time this Government woke up to the fact that this is what Tasmanians expect.

[12.57 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, here is just another stunt by the Labor Party, who clearly do not want to be here. Ms White, the Leader of the Opposition, did not expect to be here today, and that clearly shows. Firstly, she stood up with this motion and did not even get it right. You got it wrong. You did not even know which motion you were moving.

Secondly, Mr Winter was asleep at the wheel. He could not even get up and ask a question. He fell asleep at the wheel in question time. They did not expect to be back here - but we are here doing what matters for all Tasmanians, including supporting Tasmanians with cost of living and energy price relief.

You talk of mainland prices, Mr Winter. There are examples of going up 30 per cent. We recognise our latest figures are up 9.5 per cent. We are supporting Tasmanians with energy bill relief - not coming up with some pathetic stunt to distract yourself from a delay on the project of state significance bill. That is what it is all about. It is about a delay on the POSS bill. They are running scared. Today is the day they have to make the call, and they are doing everything they can to avoid it. They did not expect to be here.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Their heart is not in it. Ms White did not want to be here. She got the motion wrong. Mr Winter was asleep at the wheel. He could not even stand up to ask a question in question time. They are lazy. They are a lazy Opposition full of stunts. Tasmanians are sick of the negativity of the Labor Party day in, day out, talking Tasmania down, scaring Tasmanians, scamming Tasmanians with the pathetic propaganda they send out in letterboxes.

Tasmanians can see right through you, Mr Winter. You have absolutely no substance and no policy backbone. What we are about as a government is energy security, downward pressure on electricity prices, and bringing investment to Tasmania in renewables, wind and solar, of hydro, building our capacity.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - These are the matters this Government has been focused on, not silly pathetic stunts, when clearly you have not got your heart in it. It is one of the first times I have ever seen any person fall asleep at the wheel like Mr Winter has done today in question time, right in the middle of question time. He could not even be bothered to get up and ask a question.

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

## MOTION

### Leave to Move Motion without Notice

**Resumed from above.**

[2.30 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Speaker, prior to lunch I was reminding Tasmanians why we are here with this stunt motion. It is simply because Labor are too scared to put a position on record about the Project of State Significance - delaying the debate for their political purposes to avoid the TV news tonight, where Tasmanians will clearly know and understand where they stand.

I say again that I totally reject the motion out of hand. If we were debating this motion right now, I would be saying it is a motion that is factually incorrect by a multiplier of a thousand. Mr Barnett is a very competent minister for Energy, a very competent Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and a very competent Minister for Health. It is a big task being Minister for Health, as I well know, and indeed, Mr Ferguson knows as well. Mr Barnett clearly has the energy and hit the ground running today with a huge investment in the endoscopy suite, which again we can be very proud of as a government, in upgrading infrastructure and supporting new infrastructure for Tasmanians.

The arrogance of the Labor Party - they do not want to be here. Today they did not think they were going to be here, as evidenced by the Leader of the Opposition's first utterances following the recent winter recess, where she clearly said she did not expect to be here. Clearly, they do not want to be here, because today Tasmanians will understand where they stand on projects of state significance, and the stadium, which they are trying to avoid - so we have wishy-wishy White over here. We have wakey-wakey Winter over here as well, because he fell asleep in question time -

**Ms O'BYRNE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. It is funny you can hear me when I interject, but never when I stand. Mr Speaker, can I ask you to remind the Premier that he must refer to members of his House in an appropriate tone? I am sure you just missed him saying those things.

**Mr SPEAKER** - I remind the Premier that he should be using the appropriate language.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Mr Speaker, for reminding me of that. For the remainder of this debate I will not use that terminology again, except now for everyone, because it is true.

In the Labor Party's arrogance, not only did they think we would not be here, but they do not want to be here today. They do not want to be here standing up for Tasmanians, as this Government is, constantly, day in, day out, addressing those issues of cost of living, making sure we have an increasing supply of housing, ensuring Tasmanians are delivered the best possible health care, ensuring we are growing the economy, creating jobs, investing and improving in education, and ensuring Tasmania is the best place to live, to work and to raise a family. That is what motivates our team.

What motivates those opposite is clearly the politics of the day, as demonstrated by their lacklustre performance today, which they did not expect to have to make anyway, because in their arrogance they thought we would not be returning to parliament.

**Mr Winter** - So did your media team, by the sound of it. They tried to walk out -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You are only goading me because you had a snooze in question time. No wonder the federal executive of the Labor Party, HACSU and other grassroots Labor members want Mr O'Byrne as the leader, or indeed within the team.

**Time expired.**

[2.34 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, we support the seeking of leave on this. Why would we not? The minister has so much to answer for, and such serious questions hanging over Tasmania, about what he, on behalf of the Government, is doing behind closed doors with our money. We have been on the record for years now, incredibly concerned at the minister's failure to answer questions in question time, Estimates, in public places about what he is doing on Project Marinus.

It is pretty clear from what has been made publicly available in the last couple of weeks, that why the Government has responded the way it did - with the Premier sounding as though he is backing down and walking away from the Marinus situation - is only because it has been called out. People in Tasmania have wanted to know for years the true cost of the Marinus project, and all we have ever had was 'back of the envelope' estimates - even under hours of drilling in Budget Estimates scrutiny.

This minister has brought it all on himself. He is on the record as being dishonest. He is slippery with the truth. His standard process is to obfuscate and to go to repeated talking points, rather than responding to genuine questions.

Why would Tasmanians not be concerned at the prospect of another massive debt from this Liberal Government? Why would we not be anxious and deeply concerned at the possibility that Mr Barnett has, in secret, allowed the signing of contracts for cables that would lock us into payments of billions of dollars, prior to a federal decision being made about an integrated system process approval that is not meant to happen until the end of next year?

Why would we not be concerned when we have not heard a commitment from the minister that this has not happened? We have not heard that. We have asked him the direct questions. The money that he would be signing us up to - if that is what he has done - comes at the cost of money that should be going to people who are desperately struggling with the cost of living, every day. One in four Tasmanians skipped a meal at some time today, and the cost of heating houses is another bill that many people cannot afford.

The Government's response with renewable energy, their PR exercise, is essentially another way of talking about capping energy prices, which they should have done years ago. It was a promise. They have broken the promise, and now they have been dishonest about the fact they have broken the promise - and so this minister repeatedly pretends it was not a policy commitment that his Government made at the last election when, in fact, it is there in writing, in black and white.

It is bad enough that people are concerned about how the Government is spending their taxpayer money, but it is another thing altogether to be gaslit, on a regular basis, by this minister. He does have a responsibility to apologise to Tasmanians for his lack of honesty; to promise and to demonstrate that he is prepared to answer their serious questions about the cost of Marinus - about the long-term commitments he is making that could see Tasmania taking on upwards of \$5.5 billion debt on a cable, when we do not know where the money is coming from, and we do not know what the integrated service plan agreement with the Commonwealth Government would require us to pay.

When we talk about 'us', let us be clear. We are talking about Tasmanian taxpayers. We are talking about people - a large proportion of whom are struggling just to pay a power bill, let alone to pay off Marinus, which has been the Liberals' constant campaign friend every year since 2016. At every single federal, state and Legislative Council election opportunity since then, they have had Malcolm Turnbull, Scott Morrison and every other Liberal leader coming down to Tasmania to take photos with hard hats and blokes in suits - the latest being this minister.

That is what this minister is committed to, instead of delivering power price relief to Tasmanians today.

There is a lot more detail to go into than we can give any justice to in seven minutes. I have pages and pages of questions that people have written to me of concern about the whole process of Marinus Link and the fact that the minister appears to be only interested in talking points and pictures for the media, instead of actually grappling with the big energy issues for our future. We are in a desperate race to bring down emissions. We are all committed to wanting to do that. It is just how we do that in the most efficient way possible and how we make sure that people who are already struggling every single day do not bear the brunt of bad investment decisions.

We support this motion to censure the minister and we want to hear him talk about the actual figures and would appreciate a bit of honesty. Has the contract for a pre-purchase for a cable been signed? Will he commit to not signing any contract prior to the investment decision at the end of next year? He has to be honest. If we defaulted on a contract payment worth \$1 billion, the people of Tasmania would be paying for that default. He owes it to Tasmanians to be straight and we would like him to come up and talk today about how he is going to change his ways.

**Time expired.**

**Leave granted.**

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

### **Move Motion of Censure - Minister for Energy and Renewables - Motion Negatived**

[2.42 p.m.]

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

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent debate on the following the motion:

That this House censures the Honourable Guy Barnett MP for the following reasons:

- (a) deliberately and callously overseeing a 22.5 per cent electricity price increase for Tasmanian households and small businesses;
- (b) doing nothing tangible to support larger businesses that link electricity price increases of more than 50 per cent;
- (c) breaking his 2018 promise to delink from the National Electricity Market;
- (d) breaking his 2021 promise to cap power prices if there was high volatility in the National Electricity Market;
- (e) saying he could not implement a price cap because it would jeopardise Project Marinus;
- (f) signing an agreement with the Australian Government on 19 October last year to fund Marinus Link, saying Tasmanians will only pay their fair share before announcing nine months later, that same agreement means Tasmania is not getting a fair deal;
- (g) refusing to be honest and transparent with Tasmanians about the current estimated cost of Marinus Link;
- (h) refusing to be honest and transparent with Tasmanians about the share of the cost of Marinus Link that the Tasmanian Government is planning to contribute;
- (i) bringing four of Tasmania's largest energy companies to Tasmania to manufacture hydrogen and then telling them there was no power or water available to actually do it; and
- (j) overseeing an energy drought whereby our largest energy users are being told they cannot access additional electricity to create new jobs.

In seeking to suspend Standing Orders to have this debate, we ask the Government to allow sufficient time. This is a serious motion and I suspect what has just occurred is that the Government did not want to lose another vote on the Floor of the House so they have just quietly drifted along, hoping no-one notices that had they actually called a division just then, I suspect they would have lost and we would have been having this debate, as I currently am progressing, and making the case that we need to have sufficient time to prosecute these points in this motion around the censure of the minister, Guy Barnett.

The suspension of Standing Orders will enable the Government to allocate an amount of time for this debate, which we would welcome. What we do not welcome is the Government

shutting down debate, which I suspect will be their response to this as we have seen so many times in the past. They will use the two-thirds majority rule to their advantage to protect the minister from appropriate scrutiny of his handling - mishandling, I would argue - of his Energy portfolio.

That is the likely outcome from this, which is a real shame, given I think the majority of members of this parliament would like to be able to debate the elements of this motion before the House today, because it goes to really fundamentally important things for Tasmanians who are dealing with a cost-of-living crisis. They have issues of whether they can trust this Government when it says it is going to do something, when promises are made, whether they will be fulfilled or whether, like this minister has done, they will be broken and broken on a premise that they cannot continue with their policy to cap energy prices because to do so would be problematic to build their pet project, Marinus, a project they are now walking away from. That is made very clear by the letter that was tabled today in the parliament which was written by the acting Premier, Michael Ferguson, and co-signed by the Minister for Energy and Renewables, Guy Barnett. I am not quite sure where the Premier was on 12 July but he certainly was not doing his job and it enabled the Treasurer and acting Premier to sign a letter which says:

We are concerned that the project may not remain in the long-term interest of Tasmanian consumers or the state and as such, the Tasmanian Government is not in a position to continue to take this project forward.

If that is not walking away from Project Marinus and completely undermining the same words and rhetoric the Premier has used today claiming to support it, I do not know what is. Maybe he did not know what the acting Premier signed in that letter, but it is certainly very different to what he said in the parliament today when he was still very effusive of his support for the Marinus Link project - very different from what is in black and white, written to the Prime Minister of this country, signed by the minister for Energy, undermining his Premier, and at what cost?

This is the lack of transparency from this Government at a time when we have had the Premier come to this place and repeatedly argue that he is leading a government of integrity and transparency and yet failing to tell Tasmanians the cost estimate to build Project Marinus. It is blacked out, it is redacted in the letter that has been tabled for parliament to see today, hidden from Tasmanians, kept secret the true cost for building Project Marinus, but the Tasmanian Government, or the Premier at the very least, continues to say it is something they want to continue to invest in.

What does the Energy minister think? It looks like that letter tells us he is refusing to build it now, which makes a mockery of the argument for not capping power prices and helping Tasmanian households and businesses with the rising cost of living, because that was his only excuse. 'I can't keep my promise', he told Tasmanians, 'to keep your power prices low because it would undermine our ability to build Project Marinus'. Is that still true?

That is why this motion is before the House today. There has to be a debate because it is not only about those things, it is about everything else that is happening in the Energy space under the responsibility of this minister. It is about breaking a promise in 2018, breaking a promise in 2021, making it impossible for Tasmanian businesses to grow and create jobs in this state because they cannot access energy.

Who would have thought in Tasmania that we, the renewable energy state, a proud state having spent 100 years investing in Hydro, would now be saying to the same businesses that we enticed here because we have cheap renewable power, 'Sorry, there is no power for you to grow and provide jobs for Tasmanians at the moment because for the last 10 years of this Liberal Government we haven't built anything, we haven't grown our energy supply on this island'. Hydro has not done anything at the direction of this Government to increase generation capacity.

That is the truth and yet the minister has been out there spruiking Tasmania as a place of investment for hydrogen developers. He has told four big companies to come to Tasmania, but when they arrive here they are told there is no power at any price and there is no water, the two components that are needed to generate hydrogen.

We are energy constrained in Tasmania. There is a shortage of energy in our state that is limiting the potential for our businesses to grow and to create jobs. Prices are going up under this minister, households are feeling the pain and he has refused to cap power prices, he has broken his promise and this motion needs to be debated because there is nothing more important to Tasmanians right now than the cost of living.

It is hurting people and the Minister for Energy and Renewables is refusing to do everything within his power to make their lives easier. He has concocted some convoluted renewable energy dividend that effectively means that the more he rips out of the pockets of the households and businesses of Tasmania, maybe they will get a few crumbs back and he is pretending to think that is a good policy for the Liberal minority Government. It is a dishonest and deceptive policy. It is clawing money out of people who cannot afford to give it to this Government to waste, which is exactly what they are doing.

**Time expired.**

[2.49 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Deputy Premier) - Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this motion. The Government will not be supporting this suspension motion because we want to help Ms White and her Opposition face their darkest fears, which is to vote on the State Policies and Projects Amendment Bill later today. Ms White is so desperate to delay the inevitable but destiny is calling you, Ms White, and you will be called to account on the blue today. That is our first order of business. We ought to have already been onto it by now, but you are scared of it because you do not want to take a position. You are sitting on the fence and you are toying with Tasmanians.

**Ms White** - You took forever to bring it on.

**Mr FERGUSON** - What you are doing is saying to the No Stadium people, 'We will do everything in our power to stop this stadium'. We know you are also saying to the 'Yes, stadium' supporters: 'Look, we are going to give it a chance. We are at least going to let it be a step', which is exactly what the Government's bill is about today, but you are delaying the inevitable and we can see you coming.

One of the other reasons we are not supporting the suspension motion today is because, Ms White, you ought to know that you are fully empowered to bring on this motion tomorrow during your private members' time. My question is, will you? If the motion before the House

right now is not supported and we get back to normal government business and the bill you are so terrified about, do you still so strongly believe in your censure motion against my colleague that you will list it when you have private members' time tomorrow? That is not your track record when you have brought your stunts. I was told today, 'How do you know it is parliament? Because there is a stunt motion from Ms White.' How do you know it is a parliament sitting day today? Because there is another stunt motion. Your history would suggest that you will not do that tomorrow because you do not really believe in the motion. You are doing it today because you need your daily stunt. Also, you need your distraction because you do not want to vote and be called to account on the State Policies and Projects Amendment Bill because if you vote for this legislation, you are enabling the next step along the way to build that stadium.

I also point out that the letter that Ms White selectively read from that was signed by myself as Deputy Premier and the Minister for Energy and Renewables to our Prime Minister and federal Energy minister made it clear that we did want to continue working with the Australian Government on a pathway forward for Marinus. For the member to suggest that somehow the Government has dumped the project shows that you need to read and be more careful with your flippant statements with all that is going on in the Labor Party, which is in civil war even as we speak.

The new round of civil war was triggered by Mr O'Byrne yesterday morning when he strategically made his exclusive interview with Mr Compton, which funnily enough led to interviews from the HACSU representative, Mr Moore. The former president of the Labor Party was also unable to stay out of the fray. A range of unions are speaking up and they are coming for you, Ms White, and they want your job. I think you know that it is not compatible for you to be leader of the Labor Party and for Mr O'Byrne to be a preselected candidate for the Labor Party. You have a problem on your hands not dissimilar to your dilemma on the stadium.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr FERGUSON** - One of the other things that Mr Winter and Ms White seem incapable of understanding is that the Government does not set retail electricity prices, as the member should know. It is independently assessed by the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, not Victoria, not New South Wales, not the federal government, not even Tasmanian energy businesses.

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order. You will listen to the member in silence.

**Mr FERGUSON** - They are set not by me, not by the minister and not by you, Ms White. They are set by the Tasmanian Economic Regulator, based on a fair assessment of the offer prices, the costs to Hydro and the costs to Aurora to be a retail provider, which are then applied not just to Aurora but to any retailer as maximum standing offers, as required under the legislation. The Labor Party seems unaware of this and it surprises me because I thought they would have been saying that when, under Labor and the Greens, those prices were racked up by 65 per cent under their prevailing policies during that time. Who could forget Lin Thorp in the 2010 election campaign promising that Labor would cap retail electricity prices? What happened? Ms White, you were there. It was a 5 per cent cap and you did not honour it because you realised that those prices are not set by politicians; they are set by the independent

Tasmanian Economic Regulator. Just as well it is because if our prices were set by New South Wales and Victoria our prices would be racked up to 20 per cent to 30 per cent. They are not because our cost base is different for the very reason that we proudly own our assets.

We have renewable energy assets but they are not nil cost. Ms White would correctly point out the pride that we, as Tasmanians, have in our Hydro. Many of those Hydro assets are undergoing major refurbishment right now to extend their lives long into the future and improve their generation capability. This is under Mr Barnett. When prices went down, as the independent regulator did on a number of occasions during the period of our Government, you did not turn out and praise Mr Barnett then.

This motion is a nasty, unkind, desperate stunt because, Ms White, this is what you are so desperately afraid of: you do not want to have a vote today on the State Policies and Projects amendment because you would rather sit on the fence. Labor wants to grow a backbone. You want to actually take a position on that stadium. Stop telling the No people you are with them and the Yes people you are with them. Take a position.

[2.57 p.m.]

**Mr TUCKER** (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I will be supporting the debate on this matter but I will not be supporting the censure motion.

Energy policy is a matter of vital importance for every Tasmanian. The people will ultimately have to pay the bill. The Government's performance on energy policy has been inconsistent, expensive for power users and far from convincing. The Liberal Party went to the 2018 election with a commitment to a Tasmania-first energy policy which guaranteed that Tasmanians would delink from the National Electricity Market and that Tasmanians would pay Tasmanian prices for power. They came with a Government assurance that power bills would be \$200 cheaper on average. As soon as this was no longer convenient, the Government rejoined the national market, ditched the Tasmania-first energy policy and did so on the quiet. There was no similar fanfare to the one around the introduction of the Tasmania-first, and no wonder. What we have seen since is a succession of power bill increases far and away above the rate of inflation.

At a time when people everywhere are battling with the cost of living, the Government has ramped up power bills by more than 22 per cent in two years, adding to the average family's problems rather than helping them. The result has been more pain all round, as TasCOSS pointed out in its 2023 Budget briefing. There has been a 22 per cent increase in the number of households in energy debt and 47 000 Tasmanian households are living in energy poverty.

The Independent member for Bass and I have been calling for a change of direction on Marinus Link and associated developments because of the threat they pose of even higher energy bills. While the minister and the Government have been maintaining the fiction that they will bring downward pressure on power bills, it has been obvious to anyone who has had a look that that fairytale vision is removed from the real world. The Government's announcement last week that the cost had blown out and it was rethinking its position on Marinus was the first sign of a return to energy sanity that we have seen in a very long time. However, it is still nowhere near enough.

What was notable from last week's announcement was a revelation of the extent of the cost blowout or any disclosure of the impact that might have on the economics of the project.

In other words, the Government continues to run its secret state agenda where it runs around trying to stitch up secret deals behind closed doors, and taxpayers and energy users are treated as useful idiots to pick up the bill.

That is why we must be adamant that Marinus Link, like the Macquarie Point stadium, must be subject to independent assessment under parliamentary oversight through the Projects of State Significance process. There are billions of dollars of public money at stake in these projects and we cannot afford to have the Government running around doing secret deals without any opportunity for scrutiny of what is being committed.

What will be the cost? What are the benefits and what are the risks? The AFL deal was a shocker but at least we are on the way to independent scrutiny through the POSS process on that and we hope that we will get proper scrutiny, unlike with the Treasurer's comments that he trusted the Premier on that.

Marinus has the potential to be even more of a risk to taxpayers and to the family budget. We will not accept anything less than full independent scrutiny of Marinus and associated power developments by the parliament through the POSS process. As a number of analyses have pointed out, the inability of Basslink to provide a commercial rate of return does not bode well for the very much larger and more expensive Marinus. While the early indications of a change of direction by the Government are promising, its performance on energy policy would not earn a pass mark in primary school, in my opinion. It needs to be a lot better and above all it needs to open the books so Tasmanians can see for themselves what is actually at stake.

The Premier or the minister could start with a detailed statement to the House, warts and all, on the current position of the Marinus project, including the extent of the cost blowouts and what it might mean for Tasmanian power users and taxpayers.

The Government's change of direction also should include another look at its recommitment to the Tasmania First energy policy. The current version seems to amount to charging people at mainland rates, in direct contravention to the 2018 policy commitment, and then handing them back a few dollars once Hydro or the Government have pocketed a fortune. Tasmanians are asking why. When we built the Hydro to provide affordable, renewable, reliable power for Tasmanians, can we not get it at the price it costs to deliver? The current situation where Treasury effectively is hovering to clip the ticket on every power bill is incomprehensible to people struggling to pay the mortgage, rent and food bills.

It is interesting to read the letter of 12 July that was disclosed this morning and I will read from the second last paragraph of the letter:

Given the above, under clause 38 of the letter of intent, we are concerned that the project may not remain in the long-term interests of Tasmanian consumers or the state and, as such, the Tasmanian Government is not in a position to continue to take this project forward and is seeking your further engagements regarding alternative pathways to deliver the project.

I hope that the minister responds to what he said there with the Treasurer to the federal counterparts on this Marinus Link project.

[3.03 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Energy and Renewables) - Mr Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share some remarks on this stunt motion by state Labor. I will make a few remarks specifically on that.

This is a foil to distract the parliament and the people's attention from the Projects of State Significance debate later this afternoon, where the Leader of the state Labor Party will have to make a decision as to whether she is for it, against it or whether she is going to do a backflip, or better described, a 'Bec-flip' rather than a backflip. What is it going to be?

We know that Mr O'Byrne supports the stadium. We know that the state Labor has been saying to the community, 'We oppose the stadium' and yet, this afternoon, the debate is on. The destiny of your party is coming and you have to make a decision. I put it to you: you are likewise avoiding the debate. Mr O'Byrne is not watching me; he has his head down. He is coming. He is back and he wants the Leader's job. That is a question for not just Ms White. That is a question for each member of state Labor. Do you support Mr O'Byrne coming back or not? That is what this debate is about. You are distracting the parliament. This is a smokescreen, Mr Speaker.

**Members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order, the minister should be the only one heard in the Chamber.

**Mr BARNETT** - Having said that, they do not like the truth. The Tasmania First Energy Guarantee has been made very clear by the Premier and me last week with respect to Marinus Link on Friday. It was very comprehensive. We answered lots of questions. It was very clear that we are going to do what is best for Tasmania. There is a line in the sand and we will not cross that line. We are here to protect the Tasmanian people.

We are talking about national infrastructure and the federal government has a role to play. I say thank you to the federal Labor Government for their constructive and collaborative approach with respect to engaging with the state Liberal Government on Marinus Link to ensure that yes, there are benefits to the National Electricity Market but we are putting Tasmania first. This is our Tasmania First Energy Guarantee and we are backing it.

Second, we are backing the Renewable Energy Dividend. As Hydro improves and grows its profits, Tasmanians save money. It is as simple as that. As that Renewable Energy Dividend increases, Tasmanians will save on their power bills. We have made that clear. The Premier announced that on the weekend. It cannot be any clearer but it has been flippantly criticised by state Labor and been described as a lousy \$100 from my shadow, Mr Winter. One hundred dollars is very important. Cost of living is a priority for our Government; it is front and centre.

These are just playthings for state Labor. They are just mucking around and using this as a political stunt. They are trying to come up with slogans. What we are about is growing our renewable energy future. We are planning for the future, to grow our economy, create more jobs. We are builders, not blockers. When it comes to state Labor's plans for a power price cap -

**Ms Butler** - Another PR line. A combination of spin after spin, this speech.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Lyons, order.

**Mr BARNETT** - we know it is flawed. We know that their plans will put retailers to the wall. There will be jobs lost and it will have unintended consequences. We know that and they know that. This is an easy slogan for state Labor. As for the scamming that is going on by state Labor, you should be ashamed of yourself; it is reprehensible. In terms of your scamming the Tasmanian people, you are scamming and scaring the Tasmanian public when it comes to your fake invoices that have been sent to the Tasmanian people. Shame on state Labor for what they have done. That is despicable and you will be called to account for that. You will have to stand and answer why you are scamming the Tasmanian people, why you are putting them in distress unfairly and causing anxiety with scaremongering. You will stand accountable.

**Ms Butler** - Ripping off Tasmanians, Mr Barnett. You're the shareholder minister too.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Member for Lyons, order.

**Mr BARNETT** - We are ensuring that we can grow the economy. We know there is a power supply challenge which is why we are growing our renewable energy future. That is why we have plans for Marinus Link. Labor's plans are to restrict the economy.

Let us be clear. What did the Leader for the Labor Party say on WIN News on the weekend? She wanted to walk away from Marinus.

**Ms White** - What?

**Mr BARNETT** - That is what you said. It is quoted in the WIN News.

**Ms White** - I never said that.

**Mr BARNETT** - You are quoted on ABC. You want to walk away. The Premier mentioned it this morning.

**Ms White** - You make things up.

**Mr BARNETT** - You come up here and disclose your position with respect to Marinus, because we want to grow our renewable energy future. We want to build our economy and create more jobs.

**Ms WHITE** - Point of order, Mr Speaker. I did not do any television media on the weekend. I believe the minister should check his notes and stop misleading the House.

**Mr SPEAKER** - It is not a point of order. You know there are processes if you disagree with what is being said. However, the minister might want to clarify.

**Mr BARNETT** - No, there is no need to clarify because it is clearly noted on the news. It is on the ABC and you are quoted as saying 'walk away from Marinus'. That is the quote. You can come in here and clarify your position. Come up to the despatch box and clarify -

**Opposition members** interjecting.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Order.

**Mr BARNETT** - state Labor's position on Marinus. We want to grow our economy, create more jobs, build a renewable energy future, put downward pressure on prices, and you want to walk away. Stand up, declare your position on Marinus, and whether you support it or do not support it. We know the Greens' position - it is very clear; that is fine, no problem at all.

As for Mr Winter's earlier comment saying this Government has driven Hydro into the ground, that is a disgrace. That is an appalling statement. You should likewise be called to account. You have made all sorts of baseless allegations. It is not acceptable and you need to be called to account.

Mr Speaker, we will stand tall, growing the economy, creating more jobs, putting downward pressure on prices and ensuring energy security for Tasmania.

[3.11 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Speaker, this minister is very fond of talking about working in Tasmania's best interests. We have heard this repeatedly over the last couple of years - and that is really why we are here today. We have no faith that he is working in our interests, and we would like him to explain to us what he thinks our interests are.

Every time we ask a direct question about how much money he is committing Tasmanians to paying into the future for Marinus Link and other large energy investment projects, he says 'We will be working in Tasmania's best interests'. It is deeply concerning when he is talking about committing us to \$3.8 billion worth of debt - which is what it was two months ago.

Two months ago, when I asked the minister this question about how much the Marinus Link project was going to cost, I finally got a very direct answer from him, which was that it would be \$3.8 billion - but just last week, we heard the Government's estimate is \$5.5 billion. We are talking here about a \$1.7 billion difference. That is utterly concerning for Tasmanians.

Let us put this into perspective. Tasmanians are absolutely outraged at - and there is majority opposition - spending between \$750 million and \$1.5 billion on a stadium that we do not need and that the majority of Tasmanians do not want.

Imagine, once Tasmanians actually get to internalise that this Government has been working on a project in secret for years, they have established a whole body called Marinus Link, paid them a fortune - we do not know how much, but obviously highly paid consultants have been working for years -

**Mr Jaensch** - You do not know how much, but you know it is a fortune?

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Well, Mr Jaensch, we would like to hear the minister tell us how much because we have asked the question and he has now answered. We have been paying a group of people an enormous amount for years and all the minister can tell us - two months ago - is that it will be \$3.8 billion, but last week we hear it is more like \$5.5 billion.

How can there be a \$1.7 billion underestimate in their calculations? The difference is more than half. The project costs have increased by more than half in two months. They could not even foreshadow, at that point, that they were concerned about the prices going up - so whose interests are they working in?

It really feels like the only interest Mr Barnett is working in is his own, and the Liberals'. It is about political security. It is about staying in there and trying to hide the reality of the real costs.

The other question we asked is what the annual running cost would be. We have heard speculation there is a pre-commitment being made to buy a cable put at \$1 billion to \$2 billion - we would like to know the answer to that - as a down-payment on a cable, because of the long chain-of-supply issues, and the fear that Marinus Link is signing up Tasmanians for a huge amount of money before a federal decision has been made on whether Marinus Link would be a regulated asset.

In light of that, you would think it would be reasonable - given the minister is acting in Tasmanians' best interests - for us to understand what the annual running cost would be, and what it means in real money.

The answer to that was from Mr Voss - who answered it on behalf of the minister - that it is still to be determined. Obviously, he said, it has not gone through a regulatory process as yet.

Bingo - Mr Voss said it perfectly. That is exactly true. It has not gone through a regulated process. The Treasurer was dishonest with Tasmanians when he said to us last year that a deal had been signed with the federal government, that the regulated assessment process had been sorted. We asked what it was, and he has not told us. Obviously he has not told us, because it does not exist. It clearly has not been signed yet. We know it has not been signed, because the Victorian government has not made a statement about it being signed.

It clearly has not, yet what we are talking about in that agreement between the Commonwealth and Tasmanian and Victorian governments is about billions of dollars of debt - and who will pay for it.

We have no confidence in the minister when he says he is acting in our best interest. We do not believe him. We have not believed him for years - and every time we ask him another question in Estimates, he gives us more reasons not to believe him.

We, and the majority of Tasmanians, are deeply concerned about the money that the Government intends - or would like - to spend on a stadium, when it should be spent on housing infrastructure and on new hospital beds. These are critical issues for us today and they are absolutely related because we have an overshoot of \$1.7 billion in two months on a project Tasmanians know nothing about.

Why would we not be concerned with how else that money should be spent if we are going to go into more billions of dollars of debt? The Greens have never had a problem with taking on state debt for publicly owned infrastructure when it is used in a crisis situation and when Tasmanians are part of the conversation.

That is the point here. The Liberals have, for years, been using Marinus Link as a campaigning tool to bring out at election times. What we need to know is whether this minister is capable of being honest about anything at all, and we do not have confidence in that.

We think he should be censured, and we think Tasmanians deserve to know about every dollar that they have paid for renewable energy and whether it is going to be well spent.

**Mr SPEAKER**- The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided -**

**AYES 14**

Mrs Alexander  
Mr Bayley  
Dr Broad  
Ms Butler (Teller)  
Ms Dow  
Ms Finlay  
Ms Haddad  
Ms Johnston  
Mr O'Byrne  
Ms O'Byrne  
Mr Tucker  
Ms White  
Mr Winter  
Dr Woodruff

**NOES 10**

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

**Mr SPEAKER** - Honourable members, this motion requires a two-thirds majority to be agreed to, so the question therefore passes in the negative.

**Motion negatived.**

**MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Tasmania's Housing Crisis**

[3.23 p.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, I move -

That the House take note of the following matter: Tasmania's housing crisis.

As members would be very well aware, this is Homelessness Week 2023. It is meant to be a chance for people who might not often think about the issue of homelessness to reflect on the reality of homelessness. For many Tasmanians, every week is Homelessness Week because the extent of the crisis is at such a point that it is touching nearly every family in Tasmania in one way or another, through friends, family, colleagues, or people in our community. The reality of the housing and rental crisis in Tasmania is stark for anyone to see.

The theme of this week is Housing Ends Homelessness. It is a very straightforward theme. It sounds like it should be easy to achieve. Roofs over people's heads means less people sleeping rough, less people couch-surfing, less people living in insecure housing arrangements, less people living in overcrowded housing arrangements and less people remaining in violent relationships, unable to leave a family violence situation because of a lack of housing. We know that is a primary issue for many people in relationships with family violence. It is one of the primary reasons that people are unable to leave or that people return to a violent relationship.

All of those numbers are going in the wrong direction in Tasmania and we have to ask ourselves why. When the Liberal Government came to power in 2014 the waitlist was about 2200; it hovered around that rate. That is too many people waiting, but that waitlist has more than doubled and there are now more than 4600 families waiting. The wait time for people to be housed through government and social housing has risen from 21 weeks, still a long time to be waiting, to an average time now of 80 weeks. It has quadrupled under this Government's watch. I strongly point out that our constituents who joined us in the Chamber today, Krista Lindsay and her partner Adam Lindsay, are still waiting after four years on the housing waitlist, so 80 weeks is indeed only an average wait time and there are many people who are waiting far longer than that.

Building approvals remain at a six-year low. Approvals at the moment are down on recent figures by about 20 per cent on the same time last year. There are too many handbrakes on increasing housing supply. There are shortages of housing in every single area of the housing market. There is a shortage in social and government housing. There is a shortage in affordable housing, both through the social housing sector and affordable private rentals. There is a shortage of private rentals across the board and homes for sale as well.

The key is to increase supply. There are lots of other things that need to improve as well, including access to support services that allow people the opportunity to maintain their leases. I met a woman last night who is now housed through Homes Tasmania and she feels very grateful for that, but she should not have to feel grateful; she should receive the services that she requires for herself and her family. She also feels that now the lease is in place, all the other supports she needs - and they are significant - have dropped away. People who are working in the housing and homelessness sector are some of the hardest-working Tasmanians facing one of the most difficult industries to work in. People I know working in the social housing sector are feeling the very real effects of burnout because of the stress of working in a sector that is under enormous strain and pressure.

The reality that we feel as MPs advocating for constituents in our communities and being unable to get them a result - and Krista and Adam are just one example of many people we advocate for - feels incredibly defeating. That is how people working in the housing and homelessness sector are feeling these days as well. They are feeling that anguish almost as strongly as the people they are supporting.

Labor has put forward a range of policies that are targeted specifically at increasing housing supply. There are lots of things that need to improve in the housing and homelessness sector but the key to getting more roofs over people's heads is supply across the board - social and government housing, affordable housing, homes for private rent and sale. The theme of this year's Homelessness Week is Housing Ends Homelessness and we need housing at every level to achieve that end.

Our build-to-rent policy that we released during Rebecca White's budget reply would see 1000 more private rentals enter the market within the first five years of the scheme and stay in the private rental market for 30 years, including affordable private rentals. There is an increasing number of people who do not qualify for social housing but cannot afford private rentals. Nationally that has been called the 'missing middle'. Sometimes they are working families, sometimes with two incomes, but they are unable to afford private rentals because their incomes are low but not so low that they qualify for social housing. They are knocked out for social housing because of income or perhaps a small amount of assets, but they cannot get a mortgage and they cannot afford private rents. This policy would inject another 1000 rental properties, including affordable private rental properties, into the market within five years.

The other policy that Rebecca White and I spoke about this week is addressing some of the barriers to unlocking more land for housing developments, social housing as well as private housing development. The first move is a penalty where, at the moment, if there is a range of developers putting in applications to build houses, the company that goes first has to pay all of the upfront costs, which can range from \$200 000 up to \$1 million or more to put in the water, sewerage and power infrastructure. That is not a fair system. We are talking about spreading that evenly across the developers who are going to be putting in housing so that everybody pays their fair share. There are projects that have been held up for as much as 10 years because of that first mover penalty and we would be acting on that to increase housing supply.

[3.30 p.m.]

**Mr STREET** (Franklin - Minister for Housing and Construction) - Mr Speaker, it is a genuine pleasure to speak today on this matter of public importance, my first MPI as the Housing and Construction minister. Addressing housing and homelessness is a complex matter and one that needs all levels of government, the community and the not-for-profit sector to come together to seek solutions with compassion and sensitivity. I was fortunate enough to meet the Homes Tasmania board only a couple of days after coming into the portfolio. One of the things the board impressed on me is that this is a whole-of-sector issue. This is not just about social and affordable housing; this is about private rentals and private home ownership as well. My focus as minister will not just be on building more social and affordable homes but how we assist people to get into the private rental market and into home ownership as well, so that they can start to feel the security that comes with home ownership.

As the new Minister for Housing and Construction, I am proud to take on this important portfolio. I was fortunate enough to speak this morning at the St Vincent de Paul breakfast for Homelessness Week. I made the point at that breakfast that I am acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with all of my portfolios, but particularly with this one, which has such a tangible benefit when it is done well for people right across the state.

I pay tribute to Guy Barnett, my predecessor in the Housing and Construction portfolio. He did a fantastic job, committed to the job. A number of reforms he undertook have set up the Housing and Construction portfolio for success in the future. I thank him for the work he did.

I have done my best in the limited time I have been in the portfolio to try to hit the ground running. I have managed to meet with a number of key organisations, stakeholders and businesses in the sector. I am the first to admit that I have met only a very small minority of businesses and organisations in the sector, but I look forward to meeting more in the very near

future. I am grateful for the good-faith conversations and offers of assistance that I have had from many individuals and stakeholders since I became minister. My inbox has been flooded with ideas and suggestions on things that we can double down on and we can do differently in this space to make a difference for Tasmanians.

I have one clear and concise aim as the minister: I want to help more Tasmanians. Some Tasmanians are doing it tough and there is more to do but, as the federal Minister for Housing and for Homelessness, Julie Collins, has said herself, there is no silver bullet. That comment alone is an indication that, while we know that increasing supply in the market is key, it is not the only thing that we need to be doing. Our Government is able to leverage our strong economy and deliver on our commitment to invest in housing, increasing supply, and addressing the needs of vulnerable people by providing safe and secure accommodation for Tasmanians. We have a strong long-term plan backed by a \$1.5 billion commitment to build 10 000 social and affordable homes by 2032. Our plan is underpinned by the principle that supply, as I keep saying, is critical to addressing our housing challenges, including affordability. This approach is supported by the housing and homelessness community sector and industry experts.

We are delivering on our plan with a record 276 homes delivered in June to those Tasmanians who need them most. Not only are we getting more homes built for those in need, but Homes Tasmania is working hard to develop Tasmania's first housing strategy. The Tasmanian Housing Strategy will be a 20-year blueprint that will guide the way we deliver housing, ensuring we target the communities and cohorts that need them most. The strategy and the supporting action plan are on track to be delivered later this year and I look forward to launching them.

In addition to the strategy and action plan, we are also delivering a suite of programs tailored to support the housing needs of all Tasmanians, from those looking to get into the private rental market or own their own home to those looking to access social and affordable housing.

Not only are we delivering on our long-term plan but we are providing support to Tasmanians who need it right now. Our Government invests over \$38 million annually in wrap-around services to ensure those Tasmanians receive the support they need. Our support includes funding of 18 specialist homelessness services, including Housing Connect Front Door and support, as well as crisis shelters and accommodation.

I was pleased to gain a better understanding about Housing Connect services during my recent visit to Colony 47. What a phenomenal organisation they are, led ably by their CEO, Di Underwood, whose passion not only for the organisation but for the sector filled the room we met in. Her enthusiasm for thinking outside the box and for doing things differently was the thing that struck me most in that meeting. The staff do an incredible job supporting those in our communities link in with our housing providers and other services tailored to their individual needs.

I heard Ms Haddad talk about the value of those supports not just for people who are looking for housing but once they get into housing as well. I am looking forward to visiting homeless services that we offer across the state and meeting with the staff who provide frontline support, support which is making a real difference to the lives of vulnerable Tasmanians.

As I said, I spoke at the breakfast this morning indicating that Homelessness Week 2023 is under way and is a reminder for all of us that homelessness can affect anybody. When I say anybody I do mean anybody - our friends, family or colleagues - all because of a change to circumstances. One of the things I stressed in the Community Services and Development portfolio was that all of us are only one or two changes in circumstances and pieces of bad luck away from needing access to those services. We need to invest in them to make sure Tasmanians feel supported when they are most in need. This time is the time to recognise and say thank you to those people who work tirelessly with and for our most vulnerable people, who help them find housing and connect them to jobs, education and the community.

Last financial year, Homes Tasmania supported the delivery of 758 new social housing homes and units of supported and homelessness accommodation across the state: a 50-unit integrated aged-care facility in Bellerive; a 21-unit complex in Moonah for women aged 55 and over; a 20-unit expansion of the Launceston Youth2Independence facility, growing the site to a total of 50 beds; an eight-bed youth at risk centre in Launceston; 15 new units at the Launceston Women's Shelter; three new Youth2Independence cluster home facilities at Hobart, Launceston and Devonport; and three new units in New Town to be added to the Hobart Women's Transitional Housing portfolio.

I am looking forward to taking part in more events that are happening across the state this week and, as I said, meeting with more organisations in the near future as we look to end homelessness in Tasmania.

[3.34 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I thank Ms Haddad, our member for Clark, for bringing on this motion. It is one of the things we get so very wrong as a parliament. With the greatest respect to the minister who just sat down, who I like and respect, you are the fifth Housing minister under this Government. Your Government has presided over an absolute diminishing of the provision of housing in Tasmania.

We are in Housing Week. The Premier could not even tell us what the theme of Housing Week was today. The reality is that it is not Housing Week for the people who are homeless this week, to the people who are impacted by this. This is every single day of their lives. In the gallery today we had two people who had been on the list for four years who are going into homelessness, who are being absolutely failed by this Government. I really like Mr Street and am glad that you are excited. The last four ministers were excited too. I am glad that you care about this issue because the last four ministers apparently did too. It concerns me that you are only just going to go and visit all of these services because I know that most members of parliament visit them regularly and have an idea of how difficult things are.

**Mr Street** - I mean as minister.

**Ms O'BYRNE** - If your track record in this space is anything to go by, there were great plaudits for this Government which said that they were going to do an indexation top-up. There was some disappointment that that did not cover the full CPI. However, what we have now is not indexation into the future. We have indexation for many of those emergency services and support services organisations that you just gave praise to whose contracts are not showing that beyond one year. They are not showing that that is ongoing funding so it is impossible for them to plan for the future to deal with a need that they have now. Add into that that almost every one of those organisations is chronically underfunded.

While I am very pleased that Mrs Petrusma did five-year funding agreements, it has taken over a year for those things to come into place. It was announced before Estimates last year, and announced in the Budget again this year. Finally, contracts are being put out there but it is not enough money to fund the base of work that needs to be done now. Organisations are looking at their work and saying, 'What do we need to stop doing in order to be able to live within our means?'. That is what is happening to our most vulnerable people in this state.

I am pleased that this minister has this portfolio and I am hoping to see a greater engagement in it because, frankly, I am sick to death of ministers standing up here and saying how much they care about people not being able to find homes. I tell you that the two people who sat in this Gallery today and had their issue raised did not think that the Premier listing all the investments he had made and how good the economy was going was actually ever going to do anything for them. They have been on the list for four years. Their support worker can no longer do anything for them. They will be homeless and nobody from the Government stood up and said in parliament, 'We will make sure - that is obviously an error, that could not be our intent and we will work with this family to make sure they are supported'. No-one said that. Everyone just got up and talked about how well they have done. Let us have a little talk about what that means.

When we left government the waiting list was not great. We were not proud of the waiting list. There were around 2200 families on the waiting list and that was horrific. There are now around 4600 families on the waitlist. That is what caring, understanding, 'I'm excited about it' ministers have delivered for us over the last nearly 10 years.

If we look at the wait times, the average of 21 weeks when we left government was way too long to be waiting, but it is now over 80 weeks. Ms Haddad mentioned that when we use those figures we are talking about the average. Every one of us who deals with constituents on a day-to-day basis would know there are people who have been waiting far in excess of 80 weeks. This Government keeps talking about all the work they are doing but we have the fastest growing rate of homelessness: a 45 per cent increase in people experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2021. More than 50 per cent more children are homeless than in the last Census and there are 569 homeless children under 18. That is what it means.

When ministers stand here and say, 'I am really excited, I really care', frankly, I have listened to ministers Petrusma, Jaensch, Ferguson and Barnett and I hope it will change under minister Street. What I hear are fantastic words. What I do not see are people being housed.

I have done this job for a long time and it has only been the last five or so years that I have not been able to make sure that people who came to my office were supported. We were always able to find them some kind of brokered accommodation so they could be housed safely until we could find them something permanent. People regularly leave my office now knowing that they are going to sleep in their car and they are told by government officials and departments and our new Housing Tasmania, 'Well, at least you have a car, isn't that great'.

I remember the first time somebody was given a swag and we were in government and the horror and the outrage. Swags are normal now; that is what we do for people every single day. I have a woman living in a regional community who lives in a tent. She works full-time and she and her children live in a tent. She gets her kids to school every day. I honestly do not know how she does that, living in those kinds of circumstances.

I lose all hope with this Government and particularly because we also know that in Bass, in my electorate, at the time of the most recently available data provided in an answer to a question on notice by the last minister, there were 57 social housing properties, including Aboriginal housing, public housing and community housing, which were vacant, and 18 of those had been offline for more than 18 months. I have spoken to families who have said, 'We do not mind, we are so desperate, let us move into this house. We will do the work to get it fixed. Please house us'.

I go back to the comments that were made by the former premier when he was treasurer saying that the growing pains of housing and homelessness were a side-effect of a strong economy. He said it again when he was premier. It was backed in by Michael Ferguson when he was minister. I am sick to death of this Government talking about people's lives as if they are just a number in the economy. The economy is made up of people. It is not okay to say five years ago that there are growing pains and still to have done nothing about it. You can announce everything you want, but day by day by day you fail the most vulnerable people in our community, and not just those people who historically we might see as more vulnerable.

The largest group of homeless people growing in the nation is women over the age of 50. You are failing people who have jobs. You are failing people who do not have jobs. You are failing people every single day.

**Time expired.**

[3.45 p.m.]

**Mr BAYLEY** (Clark) - Mr Speaker, it is national Homelessness Week. As we know, housing is a basic human right. It was welcomed to see the new minister acknowledge this in the newspapers this week. Delivering on this for Tasmania is going to take more than simple statements and selective repeat quoting of inadequate budget figures.

Early this morning the apparent temperature was 2.7 degrees on the streets in Hobart, probably even colder if you were sleeping rough in a concrete stairwell. Tasmania has gone from the state with the lowest level of homelessness to the fourth highest, with skyrocketing rents and plunging rental availability that may have only marginally started to turn a corner. The latest data from Homes Tasmania shows that priority applicants for housing through the government agency are waiting over 80 weeks for a home. Crisis accommodation is in crisis and it appears there is a long way to go before all Tasmanians can feel secure in a home and move on to living their best lives and truly enjoy all the benefits of living in lutruwita/Tasmania, the benefits that all of us in here enjoy.

Despite public acknowledgement, it seems that Government has a skewed focus when it comes to housing and homelessness. A Liberal government happy to deliver two rounds of land tax to property investors while critical services delivered by Homes Tasmania get inadequate investment and a willingness to overlook the true needs of the homeless with massive investments in pet projects like the stadium, Marinus and more demonstrates a lack of true commitment to the cause of ending homelessness and finding every Tasmanian a home. Establishing a new statutory entity alone will not solve the housing crisis and lift people from homelessness. Publishing a new strategy with a raft of motherhood statements and some welcome commitments will not do the job that is required. A government commitment to build 10 000 homes by 2032 is a welcome one, but one unwilling or unable to meet the investment required to deliver it is nothing but a fraud.

Given the gross underestimation of the costs of major projects - Marinus being a case in point - and the funding in this year's Budget, it is difficult to believe that they will get there. That means that Tasmanians will remain homeless. This Government has a credibility crisis on top of a housing crisis. Low to medium income earners and young Tasmanians can only dream to own their own home, a dream that was once attainable for ordinary Tasmanians.

There is a new Housing minister and as a new member with housing in my suite of responsibilities, I am willing to give him a go. The Greens will always work collaboratively across the parliament to get the best outcomes for Tasmanians. Housing needs in this state are urgent and something has to change. The Greens agenda can help solve the housing crisis by investing in growing the housing construction workforce and not distracting them with an unpopular, expensive and unnecessary monolith on the Hobart waterfront.

Right now we need emergency crisis accommodation, but in parallel, we need to address the stock of long-term rental availability. The Tasmanian Greens have a plan for this. We will regulate short-term accommodation to limit the number of whole properties able to be used as short stay in residential zones in tight rental markets. The regulations will exempt people listing a part of their principal residence, or those as listing their principal residence while they are temporarily absent. We will institute an immediate freeze on the new listings in areas of rental shortage and provide local government with powers to refuse to issue or renew permits when areas are under rental shortages. Determinations of rental shortages will be made by the Office of the State Demographer. This is policy that puts people first, not profits.

During Homelessness Week let us be real. Let us acknowledge the suffering, anxiety and disadvantage that not having a home presents to everyone in that situation. Let us acknowledge that it increasingly affects more women and children and that if we as a state are as good as we think we think we are, we must tackle this crisis head on with real credible commitments and investments. During Homelessness Week I pay tribute to the activists, the agencies and charities working daily to raise the alarm and deliver those services to everybody's needs - true heroes on the streets of Tasmania in the cold and dark of our long winter. I implore the Government to do more. I and the Greens stand ready to help.

[3.49 p.m.]

**Mr WOOD** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this motion today. Getting Tasmanians into safe and secure housing is a top priority for our Government and we are delivering on this every day. I had the recent opportunity to see this firsthand when I attended a key handover with Homes Tasmania and Centacare Evolve Housing in Launceston. These homes we are delivering are not only changing the lives of Tasmanians that they house, but the way we deliver social housing.

I am always very impressed at the craftsmanship, quality and attention to detail that goes into these new builds by our Tasmanian builders. These homes are designed to allow flexibility in design as they age, and can be easily modified to suit the needs of the occupants.

Our Government is committed to continuing to deliver positive outcomes for all Tasmanians in need. We have a strong long-term plan to deliver 10 000 new social and affordable homes for those who need them most. We also created Homes Tasmania to ensure we have a dedicated focus on building more homes faster.

Homes Tasmania is partnering with community service providers and industry to get the job done and make sure those Tasmanians who need support receive it. Tasmania is not alone in the current housing pressures that are being experienced within our community. We are seeing ongoing demand for homeless support services and accommodation, and supply is critical to reducing housing stress and incidences of homelessness.

In order to break the cycle of homelessness, we need to support all our cohorts, but particularly our youth. Our Government is committed to supporting our youth through our dedicated Youth2Independence program, and have dedicated \$2.9 million specifically towards youth housing initiatives. An \$8.9 million expansion of Thyne House Youth2 Independence facility in Launceston is underway, adding an extra 20 residential units, which I was fortunate enough to visit recently. The facility currently offers 30 residential units. In addition to providing extra units, the upgrade will also deliver a more functional reception area, living areas and an additional overnight staff unit.

The facility is managed by Anglicare Tasmania, which does a fantastic job to meet the needs of the young people they support, and focuses on empowering them so they can build better lives for themselves and achieve genuine independence. This program is one of many initiatives our Government has introduced that is having a real impact on the Tasmanians it supports.

Mr Speaker, this week is National Homelessness Week, and we acknowledge there are Tasmanians who need our support right now. That is why we are spending over \$38 million on wraparound services to ensure those who need support are indeed able to receive it.

Last financial year, Homes Tasmania supported the delivery of 758 new social housing homes and units of supported and homelessness accommodation right around the state. This included important initiatives in my electorate of Bass, including an eight-bed Youth at Risk Centre in Launceston, and 15 new units at the Launceston Women's Shelter - more than doubling their capacity to help women in need as well as three new Youth2Independence cluster home facilities in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport, each providing five studio units and access to shared amenities, with a sixth unit to house onsite support staff. A fourth cluster home site is currently under development in Burnie.

Homes Tasmania is delivering even more supported and homelessness accommodation, with a range of developments currently under construction.

Homelessness Week is also an opportunity to acknowledge and thank those workers on the front line, like Anglicare and Centacare Evolve, who do incredible work in this space every day. These services not only provide immediate assistance to Tasmanians in need, but support them with other needs including their mental health and financial services counselling.

I take this opportunity to thank those in our community who are always there to lend a helping hand to Tasmanians in need. I encourage Tasmanians to get involved in the range of events and activities that are taking place across the state during this Homelessness Week.

If anyone needs housing support or is at risk of homelessness, Housing Connect is there to provide assistance. They are available 24/7 on 1800 800 588.

**Time expired.**

[3.55 p.m.]

**Mrs ALEXANDER** (Bass) - Mr Speaker, I want to add brief words on the motion regarding the issues we have with our housing and homelessness situation in Tasmania, which everyone has highlighted.

From my personal perspective, having worked in this space for a while, I would have preferred some continuity of direction in terms of the minister. As much as minister Barnett has probably been criticised in the current situation, where we have a new Housing Tasmania body in October that was voted and acted upon, and effectively came online on 1 December, it would have probably been better to maintain the same minister just to provide more long-term guidance as Housing Tasmania is being established as an entity.

I know that ultimately the point is for Housing Tasmania to function, as much as possible, not directly linked to the minister on a day-to-day basis. It would probably have been a wiser move, in the current situation where we have housing, cost-of-living and community wraparound services, that they would have stayed with their respective ministers. That would have been a better and more reassuring position for the community.

Minister Street was very familiar with the issues community service organisations are facing, and their desires for help and requests for help. He was already familiar, rather than moving that portfolio of community services to a completely new minister.

As I said, my view is that community services works hand in hand with housing. In this instance, we have two brand-new ministers looking after two critical areas that are vitally important at this time in Tasmania, when housing and community services, wraparound services, support services, are really intertwined and impacted by the cost of living.

It was not a good move to allocate those two essential portfolios to two brand-new ministers, as much as they probably have their own individual skills. I believe it will delay even more some of the projects, especially in the housing space. It takes a lot to understand Housing Tasmania as an entity function. It takes a lot to understand the projects. Ultimately, it means the new minister will have to rely a lot more on advice received, rather than making his own judgment.

**Time expired.**

**Matter noted.**

## **STATE POLICIES AND PROJECTS AMENDMENT BILL 2023 (No. 14)**

### **Second Reading**

[3.59 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

This bill proposes to amend the State Policies and Projects Act 1993 to require a project of state significance that is proposed by the state government to be approved by both Houses

of parliament before any final approval becomes effective. The draft bill also proposes to amend the act to allow other projects of state significance to be returned to parliament for consideration prior to any final approval becoming effective.

While this bill does not change any aspect of the assessment process that the act requires, I think it is important to provide a summary of that so the proposed changes are seen in context.

Projects of state significance are assessed by the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission. That assessment can only begin if the minister administering the act, which is currently the Premier, recommends that the Governor makes an order declaring a specific proposal to be a project of state significance. That order is then tabled in both Houses of parliament for 15 sitting days to seek approval. The approval can be in the form of a positive motion or by the passage of those 15 days without a successful move to disallow it.

After the order is made by the Governor, but before it is approved by the parliament, the minister must give a written direction to the commission instructing it to conduct an integrated assessment of the project.

The legislation enables the commission to start work in preparation of the assessment even before the approval of the order by parliament.

The act provides that this direction can also require the commission to comply with any requirement regarding specific matters to be addressed in the assessment, the process to be followed in undertaking the assessment, or the time within which the integrated assessment must be completed.

Past project of state significance assessments have been triggered by directions that have indicated consideration of specific planning, environmental or social issues that the project is anticipated will be important. These are over and above the direction to conduct the legislated integrated assessment of the environmental, social, economic and community issues. They have also set time frames for the assessments to be completed.

The timing of the minister issuing a direction is so that the parliament is aware of the direction and its content before it has to determine the fate of the order. Parliament will be aware of the specific scope of issues that the commission will be asked to assess and can determine whether to approve the order based on that knowledge.

Once the direction is provided to the commission, its key task is to initially prepare guidelines which the proponent must address in its reports and documentation to the commission to facilitate its integrated assessment work.

The act specifically allows for the public exhibition of these guidelines before they are finalised, and I can advise the House that all previous projects of state significance have featured this public scoping of the relevant issues to be examined by the commission.

The commission is also bound to directly seek the views of a range of key bodies on the project, including the council of the area the project is in and state agencies, but also other bodies with an interest in it.

In consultation with these key bodies, the commission must prepare a draft integrated assessment report and exhibit that for at least 28 days. This is the stage that representations in relation to that draft report are made by any person. The commission is bound to consider these representations and can hold hearings to assist that process.

The independent commission can then revise its draft report and gives that to the minister, setting out its findings and recommending if it should proceed or not and, where appropriate, what conditions it should proceed under. The minister has 28 days to decide how to respond to the report.

There is no obligation for the minister to recommend to the Governor the making of an order to allow the project to proceed. Obviously, if the commission has recommended that it should not proceed, then not proceeding with an order should be an option for the minister.

Where the minister determines that the project should proceed in line with the report, they can recommend to the Governor to make a final order to allow the project to proceed. Currently, under this circumstance, parliament is not provided a further opportunity to approve or refuse the project of state significance.

Alternatively, if the minister wishes to vary any of the conditions set out in the commission's report or to recommend that it proceeds in contradiction to the advice of the commission, the minister can recommend to the Governor the making of an order that allows the project to proceed.

An order made by the Governor following this alternative process has no legal effect until approved by both Houses of parliament. This provides the parliament with a further opportunity to determine if the project can proceed, but only if the minister wishes to deviate from the commission's findings. The parliament provides a check against the decision of the Executive Government to act against the advice of the commission.

This bill proposes that the final approval order for projects proposed by government should always be returned to parliament for consideration and provides an additional optional pathway to allow for a case-by-case determination as to whether the final order for other projects is returned to parliament for approval. In both these scenarios, this is irrespective of the minister's acceptance, variation or rejection of the commission's recommendations.

Care must be taken when considering the need to return a final approval order to parliament as it may not be suitable for every project of state significance. It is important to be mindful of the risks of damaging Tasmania's reputation for private investment based on predictable, transparent assessment processes when exercising the rights provided under the bill in relation to projects not being proposed by government or government-owned businesses.

Mr Speaker, since the introduction of the State Policies and Projects Act 1993 there has been the introduction of other approval pathways for major projects. This includes the Major Infrastructure Development Approvals Act (MIDAA) and the recent major projects process in the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPAA), which was used to assess the new Bridgewater bridge. Both of these provide higher level assessment of significant regional projects. Major projects are assessed by independent regulators at arm's length from the government and the parliament.

Given the broader range of pathways now available, it is timely to review the details of the projects of state significance (POSS) process to ensure it provides a genuine alternative with different characteristics.

While the major projects process provides many benefits above the normal development assessment, it is limited to environmental, heritage, natural values and planning issues. It provides a coordinated assessment by the separate regulators of these matters. What the POSS process provides is an integrated assessment of environmental, economic, social and community matters. This is both broader in scope and enables the assessment to 'trade off' impacts and benefits across these matters.

When we are talking about government projects with significant economic, social and community impacts and benefits, the Government believes there should be a role for the parliament and not just experts. These are matters that, as elected representatives of the people, we should have a final say on where there is a clear public interest.

Mr Speaker, the introduction of this bill should not be seen in any way as diminishing the independent scrutiny and assessment of the commission. Whatever recommendations flow from the commission's work will obviously be 'front and centre' when the parliament decides the fate of a project which comes back to it for final approval but the Government believes that where 'trade-offs' involve economic, social and community interests, the representatives of the people should be involved.

Because of this, I also commit to progressing a more comprehensive review of the State Policies and Projects Act within the next 12 months. The act has been in effect for nearly 30 years with minimal amendment. With the unprecedented growth being experienced in Tasmania, it is important this review be undertaken now to ensure we have a suite of appropriately calibrated assessment pathways.

I also want to indicate to the House that the Government will be moving to ensure that the commission will be funded to carry out the assessment. While the current legislation provides for the making of regulations to cover the assessment costs, these have never been drafted. Indeed, one of the previous assessments failed to recoup the costs from the proponent, costing the Government over half a million dollars. Today I am giving notice of our intention to table regulations that will provide for the full cost recovery of the assessment.

Mr Speaker, the bill before the House today is very straightforward. It proposes that sections 18 and 26 of the act are amended to include additional provisions. These new provisions provide for the project declaration order made by the Governor under section 18 of the act to require that a project of state significance proposed by government must be returned to be approved by parliament. Other projects have the option to include a statement indicating that any final orders made by the Governor under section 26 of the act are of no effect until both Houses of parliament have approved the final order made by the Governor.

This bill gives effect to the principle that, given parliament must agree to start the process, then for government projects which have significant environmental, economic and social and community impacts and benefits, parliament should also have the final responsibility to approve the project, notwithstanding the independent assessment and recommendation.

The bill also allows parliament to approve or refuse a project where parliament considers it appropriate to do so for those projects of state significance which are not sponsored by the government but which the minister of the day agrees should proceed on the terms of the commission's final assessment report.

Mr Speaker, I commend the bill to the House.

[4.10 p.m.]

**Ms WHITE** (Lyons - Leader of the Opposition) - Mr Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on the State Policies and Projects Amendment Bill before the House today.

On the weekend, the Premier made remarks along the lines that his Government has been knocked off course. Nothing could be more true of the way this Government has operated over the last few months. I reflect on why we are here having this debate about this particular bill today. It is a very simple bill and the Premier spoke to that in his second reading speech. It is a simple planning amendment being made to the project of state significance legislation. It is a simple amendment that has been necessitated because the Premier apparently received very poor advice when he made a commitment on 20 May.

The Government was knocked off course on 12 May when the member for Lyons, Mr Tucker, and the member for Bass, Mrs Alexander, quit quite spectacularly, citing concerns about transparency and the Government losing its way. We have come to learn since then that, on 20 May, Mr Tucker and Mrs Alexander gave a commitment to provide support to the Government for a range of things around confidence and supply but there were conditions attached for the Government to continue to enjoy that support, primarily transparency. That is the only reason why we are debating this bill here today. The Government was knocked off course and it continues to be knocked around.

It is important to understand what this amendment bill does. It seemed to me today, with some of the excited interjections from members of the Government benches, that they do not understand what this debate is about. They seem to think it is about something else, primarily the stadium. It is unsurprising to me that the Government members think it is about the stadium. They seem to think everything is about the stadium. To this Government, the stadium is the most important thing that this state has to deal with right now. That is not the priority for the Labor Party and, I would argue, for the majority of our community but that is the prerogative of the Liberal minority Government. I can only assume that the excitement of ministers who were jumping up and down today talking about this bill and this debate is that they did not understand that it is not specifically about the stadium. In fact, the second reading speech does not mention a stadium once. The amendment bill before the Chair does not mention a stadium anywhere. In fact, it does not mention any project because it is not about a specific project. It is about changing the act to add an additional check, which is for the parliament to have another vote on any project that the Tasmanian Planning Commission might assess. That is what this amendment bill before the Chair will do.

There is no doubt that the Liberal Party is going to be talking about how this is a test about what the Labor Party thinks about the stadium. I have seen the tweets from the Premier. I am sure he did not write them himself, but I hope he knows what is going out in his own name. It is very disingenuous because that is not what we are debating here today. I have no doubt that the Premier thinks a lot about the stadium. He probably dreams about the stadium. It might be more like a nightmare. This is an administrative bill that does not mention the

stadium once and neither does the Premier's second reading speech. The only reason the Government is trying to make this about one project, the stadium, is that they still seem to think they are onto a winner with this one. It proves once again how this Government has lost its way.

We are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, a housing crisis. We heard today from Krista and Adam, who are terrified about facing homelessness. They cannot afford to pay their rent. They are skimping on food. They are cutting back on vital medication because the cost of housing is so difficult for them to manage. They have been on the public housing waiting list for four years as priority applicants. Their children live with them. Their case worker recently told them that they could no longer provide assistance to them and they would close their file.

It is completely unacceptable that we have Tasmanians who are sleeping rough, who are terrified about homelessness. I find it remarkable that during national Homelessness Week the first piece of legislation the Premier has chosen to bring to this parliament on our return after the winter recess is this bill, when we have serious shortage of housing supply and serious problems in the health system: nine coronial inquests into the Launceston General Hospital in the last six years, two of those into the deaths of infants. This is a state that is dealing with some very challenging and serious problems and the Government, whose ministers incite interjections, pretend that the most important thing is a stadium.

This bill is not about the stadium. It is simply an administrative change to the State Policies and Projects Act which has been brought about by the Government's own incompetence. I refer again to 20 May when the Premier stood with Mr Tucker and Mrs Alexander and declared that an agreement had been reached with conditions and that one of those conditions was that the project of state significance would be the preferred planning pathway rather than major projects for a stadium. That was primarily because the Premier understood it would allow for the parliament to have a vote at the beginning of the process and at the end of the process. That was wrong, which is why we now have this legislation before the House today. It was the Government's incompetence that led to this amendment bill being debated today.

It is also tied up with the Marinus project - a project that the Government, we now understand, seems to be walking away from - but they were the two projects that were discussed on 20 May that required greater oversight, scrutiny and transparency from this Government at a time when it had been incredibly secretive - and it still remains very secretive. When it comes to Marinus Link, the Government still will not tell the Tasmanian community how much it is estimated to cost. What is the total estimated cost for that project and what would the Tasmanian Government contribution need to be to fulfil the agreement, that MOU the Government signed just nine months ago? They were the two projects that were mentioned on 20 May, that fateful day earlier this year when the Government and the Premier thought that he had managed to corral his Government into some sort of minority government shape that would last the distance by making those commitments.

We then had the revelations in the subsequent days, on 22 May, when Mr Tucker undertook an interview with ABC Radio where he said that he had been assured that there would be a vote at the start, public consultation and then a vote and scrutiny at the end for those projects going through the State Policies and Projects Act. It was pointed out to the Premier at that time that the act does not actually facilitate that. What a stuff-up. Then we had members

of this House proposing to introduce bills that would give effect to the amendment that we are now dealing with because the Government realised after the fact that the act did not actually do what the Premier thought it did. It did not provide for that additional level of scrutiny and transparency. The incompetence here is quite staggering, and the rush to try to cobble something together to ensure supply and confidence means that we are now dealing with this bill. The only reason we are now dealing with this bill is that the Premier did not know how the project of state significance process works. Now he has read out his second reading speech, which has been heavily changed from the one that was originally circulated. On page 2 of that second reading speech, the Premier has repeated and made very clear - and I quote:

Where the minister determines that the project should proceed in line with the report, they can recommend to the Governor to make a final order to allow the project to proceed. Currently, under this circumstance, parliament is not provided a further opportunity to approve or refuse the project of state significance.

The second reading speech goes on to point to something else that has been raised as a concern by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI). The TCCI has raised this directly with the Government and also with members of the crossbench. They have written an opinion piece about it under the name of Michael Bailey, their CEO. The Premier has identified some of the concerns they have highlighted in his second reading speech in one of these paragraphs. I will read it out because the way that the bill is proposed to be amended does two things. It makes it a must for any projects proposed by the Government, any publicly funded projects, to be returned to the parliament for consideration. It also provides a 'may', an additional opportunity to allow for a case-by-case determination as to whether the final order for other projects, the privately funded projects, be returned to the parliament for approval.

The TCCI has raised concerns about this causing sovereign risk issues. The Premier's second reading speech goes on to say:

Care must be taken when considering the need to return a final approval order to parliament as it may not be suitable for every project of state significance. It is important to be mindful of the risks of damaging Tasmania's reputation for private investment based on predictable, transparent assessment processes when exercising the rights provided under the bill in relation to projects not being proposed by government or government-owned businesses.

That is a really serious point that this House needs to reflect on. I note that in an opinion piece published in the *Mercury* on Saturday 1 July by Mr Bailey, it says:

There is now a proposal before parliament to change the rules of the project of state significance assessment which would stack the odds against any project ever getting through. If parliament approves the proposed changes to the project of state significance framework it will inject even more politics into the process. These changes will remove any independent assessment and oversight and make every major project a political football.

The end result will be that investors would be mad to consider a major project in Tasmania, and any government would have a political death wish to even consider putting forward a bold vision for our state.

Pretty strong words, Mr Deputy Speaker. I know that the Government has heard representations from the business community about their concern that this could damage investor confidence and it might be prohibitive for privately funded major projects to proceed in this state. I have not seen, apart from this reference in the second reading speech, any care taken by the Government to try to address those concerns in the amendments that have been drafted and brought to the House today.

I also note, though, that I think the Government recognises some of the issues that it has with drafting amendments like this in the way it has. That is why there has been an inclusion of a review of the projects of state significance legislation that will apparently be comprehensive and done within the next 12 months. It is unclear from the second reading speech, and maybe the Premier can provide some more details when he sums up in his contribution, how this will be undertaken. Who will be responsible for undertaking this review? Who will be consulted and what will the outcome lead to? Is it likely to lead to a new act or amendments to this act?

That is really important because I think what we are seeing here is a bit of a fix-up job by the Government to deal with a problem that was created on 20 May when the Premier did not really know what he was committing to. That is what this bill is about. It is sensible for the Government to do a proper job and have a review to make sure that what parliament approves as the law of this state is fit for purpose.

I can say that we will always support increased transparency. The Labor Party has always been very clear about this and we will support the amendment to the projects of state significance approval process to improve transparency for publicly funded projects. We are talking now about something that is changing the projects of state significance approval process for the allowance of a second vote.

It is important to be clear that this amendment bill is only being brought forward due to the resignation of Mr Tucker and Mrs Alexander from the Liberal Party, who cited concerns about a lack of transparency from the Liberal Government.

This amendment inserts another vote for the parliament at the end of any process undertaken by the Tasmanian Planning Commission when it considers a project. It could be any project. The Government's deliberate misrepresentation of the amendment bill before the House today and what it actually does is pretty unsurprising given the chaos in their party and the desperation to deflect from criticism levelled at them over the weekend and by their own former members in this House today.

We still want to see more details from the Government about how they plan to progress their pet project to build a stadium at the Macquarie Point site, including an expectation that they provide Treasury advice and a fully developed precinct plan for the Macquarie Point site before the parliament is asked to consider any order.

It is very important to note that what is being debated today is not the order to establish a process to assess a stadium. It is an amendment to the projects of state significance legislation to make sure the parliament can have another vote for any project that might be considered by the TPC when that project is publicly funded.

I indicate that I will also be moving an amendment because it was noticed by us that there was no repeal clause in this bill, which is highly unusual, particularly given that the Government is going to be undertaking a comprehensive, as they call it, review over the next 12 months.

I move -

That new clause 6 be inserted after clause 5 of the amendment act, which is:  
6. Repeal of Act

The clauses of this act will be repealed and cease to have effect three years from the date on which the act receives royal assent.

This is largely to make sure that the concerns of the business and investment community can be properly dealt with, and I expect they will be under any review that the Government undertakes. I have circulated the amendment.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** - You have to move that in Committee, I have just been informed.

**Ms WHITE** - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will do that. That is to make sure that in the review process it is very clear a number of stakeholders need to be consulted. We agree that for any publicly funded projects this extra level of scrutiny and transparency is important and that is why we will be supporting the amendment bill that is before the House.

We also recognise the concerns that have been shared with us by the business community about what this might potentially mean for investment in Tasmania and confidence to invest in private projects if they are choosing to use this particular planning pathway.

They are serious concerns and we need to have a view about how to address them. This repeal clause provides an opportunity for the original act as set out already in law to be unambiguous with respect to how businesses might need to be able to use it if they choose to in the future, and hopefully gives the Government a hurry-on so their review process does not drag on for more than 12 months - but more importantly, that they are delivering implementation plans for how to give effect to any changes that come from that review process.

I indicate that we plan to go into Committee to be able to move that amendment. I have asked a couple of questions of the Premier regarding what a comprehensive review of the act might look like, who will be doing it, how it will be funded, and the expected outcome from that.

Generally speaking, the amendments before the House today are simple, as the Premier said in his second reading speech. They are rather administrative, but let us not be fooled into thinking it is more than that. It is because the Government misunderstood how this act worked in the first place, when they declared they were going to use it on 20 May, when they struck an agreement with members who had quit the Liberal Party and become Independent, in an attempt to shore up their support for supply and confidence. That is the only reason we are having this debate in this House today.

[4.31 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about the stadium. There has been a lot of hand-wringing about the stadium. There has not been a lot of clarity about where all members stand on the stadium. There have been different angles that the Government and the Opposition have taken in relation to this bill before us today. The Government is keen to, as they say, draw out the Labor Party's view about where it stands on the stadium.

We are concerned about the integrity of planning processes, and we are very concerned about the overwhelming majority view of Tasmanians that spending up to a likely \$1.5 billion on a stadium that we do not need, and that the majority of Tasmanians do not want, is a terrible spend of money.

This bill before us today is about resolving a planning matter and making better legislation. We support the amended bill that the Government has tabled.

We have an amendment that I will talk about in a moment. Fundamentally, this bill, if passed, would still be part of a process of walking Tasmanians down a road to building a stadium that we cannot afford, that is the wrong spend of money in a housing and hospital infrastructure crisis, and it would head us towards a process for approval or rejection of that decision.

We are here to say, if Tasmanians have not heard it clearly enough, we do not support it. We do not support being part of any part of a process to approve, potentially, a stadium.

The simple question for Tasmanians is not about this legislation. It is simply: can we afford a stadium? Is this how we want to spend a whole lot of money at the moment? Is it the best use of our money? Is it the right place to put a stadium? Should we even be considering a stadium in the first place, given we have every right - and have earned the right - to have an AFL licence in Tasmania?

The answer to us, and to the majority of Tasmanians when they have been surveyed on this matter - the only public available and the best and most credible surveys - is very clear. The majority of Tasmanians think it is a stink-bomb of an idea. They do not support spending government money, precious taxpayer money, in this way, when they know there are things they would rather spend it on.

We all need to come to a position of honesty with Tasmanians. People are sick to their back teeth of politicians who they feel are using matters of great public importance as political opportunities, as an opportunity for electioneering, as an opportunity to do down political opponents.

These are all things that just serve us badly as politicians in the eyes of people in the community. It serves our democracy badly when people think that members of parliament, who are elected to represent them, are not listening to what they are saying.

People are being really clear about this. They are being really clear in regional Tasmania. They have been really clear in Launceston, Devonport and Hobart that the majority view is that this stadium is not supported. As much as the Premier likes to pretend that it is and talk about

a reset and a focus, create a minister for stadia, and tack other events on the end as though that has got any part of it, just shows how much he is still refusing to listen.

Frankly, it is a sad day when the government of the day has to hang its hat on ignoring every single other issue Tasmanians are crying out for him to focus on as Premier, the most critical other issues - the ramping crisis, the terrible state of underspend on hospital infrastructure, and now we know the enormous under-commitment and actual dollar figure that is being spent on housing construction.

All the talk about building 10 000 houses is just talk, talk, talk. If it does not have a dollar figure attached to it in the Budget that is commensurate with building 10 000 homes, you can make anything up. They could be saying 100 000, 1000, 1 million. It is pointless, because unless there is money to back it - unless there is a commitment in the Budget and the forward Estimates - then we know it is not going to happen.

If the Government is so definite that by October 2028 they can build a stadium and put the money into doing that, then where was the money in this Budget to build those houses so we can see it? It is because they are not focusing on it. They are not committed to it.

Why is there no money to plan for an extension to the Royal Hobart Hospital? We do not have beds now, let alone in five years' time. This is where the big questions need to be focused and all the energy of the Government.

We know we cannot afford it because the little bit of information we have had from the Government - the Government's own business case - shows it does not stack up. Even their own business case has shown that it is not going to make money - it is going to lose money. As well as the fact it is an opportunity cost that we are not spending money on building houses, we will also be paying - not just in the debt we have to service to build it, but every year, year on year because, by the Government's own estimation, it will not be making any money.

It is a loss-making venture. Let us face it, Tasmania's history is littered with loss-making ventures that are all about the one big idea that is going to save us as a state. It is an uncomfortable truth that life is very complex, and there is not just one big idea that we can point to. It is a lot of different ideas. It is about diversity, and it is about fundamentally listening to the people who elect us all.

It is not okay to use the public's opposition as a political opportunity. We are calling on all members - especially Labor, who ostensibly at times have said that they do not support a stadium, but seem to be comfortable with this process where there may be approval of a stadium. They would sit with that after an election came. I can imagine the Leader of the Opposition if she was the Premier saying, 'Sorry everybody. We did not want to support this, but sovereign risk, you cannot do that'.

The clue is in the amendment that has been made to this bill. That amendment has nothing to do with giving confidence to the business community. It has everything to do with making sure that if there was a Labor Premier after the next election they would be able to do whatever they wanted on projects of state significance. They would not have to do the process they are expecting the Government of today to undertake, which is to bring a project of state significance back to the parliament.

That is not good enough, which is why we are here today. We are in this situation because a number of members of the Government's backbench have decided it is not good enough to hoodwink Tasmanians and to be secretive about these major infrastructure issues. They have decided that we all need a say and there has to be eyes on the planning processes. If you are going to have legislation like projects of state significance then they should come back to the parliament because it is a statewide matter and it has been declared by the parliament, therefore parliament needs to have the final say.

We support the changes and we support the team. We support the obvious response that the Premier should have made rather than being gutless and continuing with the position that Peter Gutwein took as premier, who folded in the face of the AFL bullies. He should have and could have resisted the pressure and said, especially as Health minister, 'I understand we have a right to this licence. I also understand Tasmanians do not deserve to be forced to spend money that no other state has spent when we cannot afford it'.

It would be great to do everything. We would all love to be able to do everything but Tasmanian taxpayers are not a magic pudding. You cannot keep taking billions of dollars out, hooking out \$1.5 billion for a stadium and another \$5.5 billion for a Marinus link without the reality of what is the right spend for our money.

I foreshadow that we have an amendment that seeks to deal with the fact that the order in the final report of the commission only requires approval from both Houses of parliament if it is a government or government-entity proponent for the project, or if the premier of the day elects to invoke that provision in relation to a proposal where the state is not a proponent.

That means that the final report of the commission would be mandatory for government projects but would only be discretionary for private projects. We are not happy with that. That is not good enough when it comes to a project of state significance because it has enormous impacts, which is why it has become a project of state significance. Public, private - it all matters to the Tasmanian community. If it is significant enough to be a project of state significance then whether it is public or private is not the most important issue. What is most important is that there is a comprehensive assessment of the impacts. Our amendment would cover developments that are not necessarily proposed by government but that would also involve the use of public land.

The Greens are concerned about the way governments choose public land as though it is Monopoly property to be distributed to big developers and vested interests without any accounting for the environmental and social impacts. We cannot accept a situation where public land is not considered to be as important and worthy of proper integrated assessment and the decision of both Houses of parliament after the commission's final decision.

Before we broke for the winter recess, we had a number of motions seeking information about the approvals process within the Government and within Cabinet for the stadium. We were on the cusp, before we left parliament, of the Government potentially losing a vote on a process that would have given parliament the opportunity to determine what were reasonably considered cabinet-in-confidence documents and which ones were not.

Our concern is that the Government has hidden the information from Tasmanians. According to the testimony of Kim Evans, when he made his submission to the Legislative Council PAC inquiry, that decision had been taken about the stadium by the Government much

earlier than the Premier had told Tasmanians. We want to know, as do most Tasmanians, what was the information before them and what did they base their decision on? What did they use to decide that Tasmania was going to be best served by a \$750 million, likely \$1.5 billion, stadium. What we finally got after a motion that the previous leader of the Greens, Cassy O'Connor, moved before we rose for the winter break was a shortlist of what had been to Cabinet. We do not have any confidence that the Premier has been honest with Tasmanians about whether those documents are valid cabinet-in-confidence or not.

Before we left, the Premier promised that today, Tuesday 8 August, he would table information about the process: a protocol for the establishment of cabinet-in-confidence documents. Labor's proposal was to establish a protocol for determining cabinet-in-confidence based on the ACT and the legislative government processes, which uses an independent member of the judiciary to make an assessment of whether a document should be classified as cabinet-in-confidence or not. It uses a third party.

Premier, you said that you did not want to make something that would be on the fly and you were concerned that any attempt that seeks to amend long-standing processes relating to cabinet-in-confidence and other Cabinet conventions on the run without Tasmania-specific advice was a concern to you. You flagged the potential to create additional complexities and inefficiencies that could lead to unforeseen consequences such as privacy matters, commercial-in-confidence and further administrative costs that could not be estimated.

You agreed that the House of Assembly had ordered the full set of papers and that you recognised the view that the House wants a process to govern the review of orders for papers. You made a statement that, in the interests of cooperation and ensuring confidence in transparency, you would task the Department of Premier and Cabinet with getting expert advice and conducting jurisdictional analysis and producing a report to inform a Tasmanian response. You said you would make that available to members of the House and bring forward a considered proposal by today to the parliament in the form of a motion which reflects advice contained within the report. I do not know if I was a bit preoccupied with Mr Bayley's first morning this morning but I believe that was not tabled.

**Mr Rockliff** - The report was tabled.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, but the process we are talking about. That is a separate matter. What was tabled this morning was the additional cabinet-in-confidence - you allege - documents that came from each agency about the stadium to Cabinet. You promised to table in parliament the process for determining whether a document in fact is cabinet-in-confidence or not.

Here we are, this is what happens when you take people on good faith. Let us say there was a lot of trust put in that commitment. You can shake your head now but I can stand here and say with absolute confidence that the conversations that were reported to me from Cassy O'Connor at the time were a commitment to looking at a protocol that would stand 'for all time'.

**Mr Rockliff** - And we committed to that.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Yes, and the commitment was made to deliver it today, so where is it?

**Mr Rockliff** interjecting.

**Dr WOODRUFF** - What do you mean? Does a date mean something or not? You have written it and you have signed it. The whole time this has been like pulling teeth. Honestly, you cannot be honest and we cannot take you at your word. You cannot say and promise to the House that you will deliver a protocol for a process for determining cabinet-in-confidence and then say the date does not mean anything. Why did you put your signature on there? Do not bother next time. Or, if every time you sign something, do we have to take it with a question mark hanging over it?

The point is, here we are today, where is the process? You tabled a whole lot of documents about the stadium from different agencies that went to the Cabinet. You allege they are cabinet-in-confidence. We maintain our right, the House maintains its right, to be deeply sceptical about that. We want to know whether they should be made available to Tasmanians. This is a huge issue. If you cannot be honest with Tasmanians, then they are going to ask questions about your capacity to govern at all.

We want to hear a statement from you about where that process is, or the only conclusion we can make is that you have no intention of being honest with Tasmanians about the process that you used to determine the approval of the stadium. It is probably because there was no process: there were no Treasury documents that went to Cabinet; Treasury did not give you any advice, and you made a decision to go ahead with spending one and a half billion dollars by today's estimates to build a stadium with nothing backing it and all the rest of the material has been developed after that decision was taken. At least that is what we can conclude from the secretary, Kim Evans's comments in the Public Accounts Committee and the fact that you are not making this information available. You have a choice to put this matter to rest. You promised to the House, to the members, that you would do that today. Here we are, Labor had a motion and they proposed a process and that is something that we want you to honour and make an explanation to the House about.

In terms of this rest of this bill before us we will go into Committee and listen to the Labor Party's amendment and we have our own amendment that I have already circulated to members. We will continue that debate shortly.

[4.56 p.m.]

**Mr FERGUSON** (Bass - Minister for Planning) - Mr Speaker, I support the bill as a member of this Government and as the Premier's Minister for Planning. There is a direct interface and relationship here in the common interest that the Government has to see the bill supported by this House and I will add my own comments to it.

Projects of state significance are not just large projects. They are also strategically important for our state. Often, they are expensive and can have large implications. That is why the assessment of projects of state significance is not just about planning considerations but covers a range of matters. I hope it has not been lost on the Greens that by definition the act requires an inaugurated assessment which is the consideration of environmental, social, economic and community issues relevant to that project.

This is a comprehensive assessment. This type of assessment is a balancing act. It involves considering a range of issues, perhaps even competing priorities. It will involve trade-offs, costs and benefits and examination of relative merits and judgment calls. The bill provides

that, for Government projects where the money of Tasmanians is at stake, the final decision on whether a project of state significance proceeds or not will fall to the parliament, to us, to elected representatives of the people of Tasmania.

It is important to note that these amendments do not undermine, in any way, the value and the respect the Government holds for the Tasmanian Planning Commission, who are the people charged that we should trust with undertaking that integrated assessment. Nor do they undermine the commission's assessment itself which, as with all assessments undertaken by the commission, will be done independently at arm's length from Government based on expert consideration of the proposal evidence provided along with it.

This is a rather simple bill in what its intent is to effect a change to the principal legislation. While simple, it is based on a principle. If parliament is responsible for declaring that a government-sponsored project is of state significance then, particularly given the discussions that have been held with the Independent members which have been productive, parliament can also have that final responsibility for determining whether that project should proceed. This is in respect of projects which have been to an order, a project that has been considered by the commission following an order but for which the planning commission did not make any changes to it which ordinarily would not be required to be returned to the parliament. We are proposing that MPs could have and would have a further final vote and decision on green lighting the project or red lighting, as the case may be.

The bill also provides the option for this additional final scrutiny where it is appropriate to do so at the declaration stage but that is not the main intent of the bill. This bill is another example of the Government's commitment, not just to economic development to progressing our ambitions as a state and really putting Tasmania on the national stage in respect of our sporting ambitions.

Others can speak for themselves. I know the Independents, including Mr O'Byrne who is the stalking horse for the Labor Party leadership at the moment - he can cluck his tongue as much as he likes but that is what he is doing this week. I have very good hearing, Mr O'Byrne. I am a teacher.

Some members of this House have said very clearly that they support this project. Mr O'Byrne is one of them. Some MPs have said they are dead against this project and they will do everything possible to stop it. I count the Greens in that. Some MPs have said, 'Not sure about this project but it has caused some concern in my electorate; I would like it to be assessed and I would like parliament to have two votes on it'. Mr Tucker is now nodding. Mr Tucker may one day have to take a position, yes or no, on the project. I can say this of Mr Tucker: at least on that point he is being consistent, that he leaves open the question of the merits of the stadium. Do I have it right so far?

**Mr Tucker** - That is correct.

**Mr FERGUSON** - The Liberal Party: we know our position. It is the Labor Party that is the problem. They are still sitting on the fence. In politics, when you are a politician who tries to have it both ways, you nearly always get exposed for it. Ms White has announced to this House during her speech, which only came after her media release, by the way - there was a bit of a staging and timing issue - that the Labor Party will be supporting this legislation. I could say thank you for supporting the legislation because, without it, the stadium is not going

ahead. Am I right? Mr Tucker is again nodding. I suspect in that scenario the first order would not have been approved. Interesting.

The Labor Party has said clearly and repeatedly on the public record that they will do everything they possibly can to stop the stadium and today is their first opportunity to put that commitment into effect. Many people expected Ms White to stand and say, 'I will oppose this bill because I know it is one of the critical steps along the critical path to build the Macquarie Point stadium and achieve our generations-long dream of an AFL team for Tasmania. Without this legislation, it cannot go ahead in practice'. Now the Labor Party has indicated that they will support this legislation. Does that not prove what a fence-sitter the Leader of the Opposition has become? What a spectacle.

It was bad enough that Ms White was absent from the grand public rallies with large numbers of people when they protested against the stadium. Many people wondered where Ms White was. The lead antagonist. Where is the Leader of the Opposition? Missing. It is wishy-washy and you cannot have it both ways.

I detect that Ms White wants the 90 000-plus people who have signed the petition supporting and believing in our team, and the stadium that is necessary to put that into effect, to believe that she might be getting a bit closer to them, that she might be trying to cosy up to the yes campaign on the stadium. I believe that is what is happening here today.

Are we just going to approve this legislation? I heard Ms White say it is a few administrative changes. It is a lot more than that. It is a critical step along the path and we might say thank you, Ms White, for your support. It seems like you are changing your position and, as the Premier has previously predicted, coming to support the stadium project. You are crab-walking but it is clearly not transparent for you. You are speaking out of both sides of your mouth. You are trying to say one thing to the yes group to make them pleased with you and trying to say other things to the no group to make them pleased with you. You will come unstuck. When you sit on the fence you come away with splinters. You are going to have to get off that fence.

You were called upon to make a clear position on this bill because yes to this bill means yes to the stadium going forward to its next stage. Those who have kept an open mind on the stadium will vote for this legislation, and its supporters as well. Those who have said, 'We will do everything we can to stop it', would have to vote no to this legislation because this is the opportunity for you to do it and that is what is on the public record, time and time again. It is beneath a party with any self-respect in this state that would put itself out there as a potential future government. It is beneath contempt that you try to have it both ways. If this is what you would be like as a premier, heaven help us. You cannot make a decision. Have a backbone; take a position and then be consistent about it. That is what you will be called upon to do yet again.

If this is a sign of things to come, Ms White and the Labor Party will vote for the order when it comes before the House and they will say, 'Look, it is just an assessment process. We will reserve our rights at the end of the process and maybe then we will stop it, because it is just administrative. We will let the Premier and the Government try their hand with the commission and see if they can get it supported by the commission during that Project of State Significance assessment process'. If today is a sign of what is to come, it is clear that the Labor

Party is caught in their internal civil war because this is not just about the stadium; it is about who leads the Labor Party today and tomorrow.

Mr O'Byrne, who is a public and vocal supporter of the stadium project, is stalking the leadership through the national conference that is yet to come in coming weeks. I felt it was important for this House, in the name of transparency -

**Mr O'Byrne** - The irony of this guy talking about stalking.

**Mr Tucker** - Some would say he is your teacher.

**Mr O'Byrne** - That is right. You just lost two numbers on your side. They walked over here, mate.

**Mr FERGUSON** - Yes, you can have your fun, Mr O'Byrne. Do not tell me that you have not spoken to the unionists and the former president of the Labor Party in the last few days. Do not tell me that you have not been ringing them up and getting them involved in the great unveiling of your next step. We all know you have and you have caught your state party leader.

What is happening here today is pretty contemptible from the point of view of the people of Tasmania because they were told that Labor opposed this project and they will do everything they can to stop it. That is not what is happening here today. If that time comes and an order approving the stadium is brought before this House, it will be fascinating to see what Labor does. By then, they will have had no choice but to get off the fence, pull out those hurtful self-inflicted splinters and show us their true colours. At that point Tasmania's AFL dream will truly be in their hands and there will be nowhere to hide while the Labor Party tries to have it both ways on this important subject and not being open with the community about their true intentions.

It now sits with the Leader of the Opposition, far from calling it an administrative bill or a transparency bill, to explain to Tasmanians who believed her when she said she would do everything she could to stop this stadium project, why the Labor Party supported this bill going through the House of Assembly, going through the parliament, which is a critical step along the path to build the project.

I thank the Premier for his work. I thank the State Planning Office, which also supports me, for their work in bringing forward the legislation, making sure that it is allowed and ready in time for consideration by this House. I wholeheartedly support the principles behind it and I support this bill before us today.

[5.09 p.m.]

**Mr O'BYRNE** (Franklin) - Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on the State Policies and Projects Amendment Bill 2023. I will be supporting the bill. I understand there are a number of amendments and I look forward to the debate on those amendments. I do not have a closed mind to either of them. I will listen to the debate and make a decision as we work through the Committee stage.

I thank the officials from the department for their briefing. Planners, at times, can be a much-maligned role in Tasmania. It is a controversial piece of the democratic process, where

planners do their best to give form to the aspirations of the community, not only how we live and how we operate, but how we cope with contentious political issues. A number of the department officials who briefed us I have known for many years and I have appreciated their sage-like advice at times and their views on various matters. The briefing I received was no different to that: it was very considered. From a planning perspective, this is a simple amendment bill.

It is a cog within a bigger wheel. This is not an amendment bill of the Government's wanting. The member who has just resumed his seat fled the Chamber because he was fearful of my retort, and I will give him one.

For Mr Ferguson, the Treasurer, who has left the Chamber, to get up and lecture other people about good process, saying, 'We are a competent government and we have a very clear position on this', you had an entire branch resign from your party. You have had massive issues inside your party about this issue. It is becoming the defining issue of this decade, and it could be of this generation, not only regarding people's AFL aspirations but a major proposal and development for Tasmania. It is the politics played by the Treasurer that undermine their ability to bring people along with them on this journey.

The aspirations for an AFL team are well known. It is supported by the vast majority of the community. We now have a proposal before us which needs to be dealt with that will deliver that team, which no-one believes is ideal in relation to its delivery. Everyone has a view regarding what it may or may not mean for the future of this state.

Planning issues and projects are by their essence divisive debates because people feel passionate about Tasmania. They are attached to it not only in a physical sense but in what it represents to the rest of the country and globally. That is how we should be looking at ideas, concepts and proposals such as this.

We are not here because you have chosen to come here; we have come here to debate this amendment bill because you have been dragged here. Stop the divisive politics. The noise between the various sides and the various Facebook groups and all the people lining up about this can sometimes be disrespectful of the people who do not get a chance to have a say in this place, who will be impacted significantly - negatively or positively - by these kinds of projects and these kinds of ideas, to the kids and the families who want to see a Tasmanian team running around.

These are very serious and important issues for this state to deal with. We need to deal with them respectfully. We need to acknowledge that not all people like this idea but we have to trust the Government, regardless of how we got here. The Government has fumbled this from day one when the then premier, Peter Gutwein, in his 'state of the state' address threw this concept, like a dead cat, on the table. It was nowhere near Macquarie Point, it was around the corner.

At various points since, despite the obvious goodwill around an AFL team and the concept of a new facility that could deliver for Tasmania, the way this Government has handled this has got us to the point where those things are at risk and they are questionable.

It does the Government no credit and it does them no good when the Treasurer gives speeches trying to wedge people, trying to be disrespectful of a process which Tasmanians

deserve. A debate such as this around an idea such as this deserves to be treated with respect. The irony of that bloke talking about awesome leadership. Goodness me. How many batons in his rucksack? Goodness me.

No government gets a blank cheque from me. I am not blindly supporting this. I believe that there is a real opportunity to deliver something special and something important for this state that will be a generational gift. I think there is an idea in this. There is hope in this, but if the Government continues to play the politics in the way it has, particularly by the contribution of the member who resumed his seat, it will not be anyone over this side who will be blamed or should take the responsibility.

If people disagree with it, I completely respect their views. I may not agree but I respect their views and how they conduct themselves. For the member who just resumed his seat, the Treasurer, to give that kind of contribution, taking no responsibility for why we are here debating this amendment bill and why this issue is so contentious, is disgraceful.

It compromises those people who want to support a good planning process, a good design process. That is a big part of the problem. When there is a vacuum of facts and information, people will only go on what they think they know or what they have heard or what is their view or their fears. It is the responsibility of the Government to work people through that. No project gets a blank cheque and nor should it. Conceptually, an idea does need to be followed through and does need to be solved. It does need to be explained. There are plenty of responsibilities here.

I was not going to talk that long on this but I got grumpy with Mr Ferguson. He did not need to do that. I am not going to give him gratuitous advice but if you want to get this stuff done, if you want to deliver on this, tell him to pull his head in.

I will support the amendment bill and I will consider the amendments as we argue through the phase of Committee. Thank you.

[5.18 p.m.]

**Ms JOHNSTON** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I will keep my comments brief. I do not normally comment or provide a view when I agree with a bill. I might try to keep things moving and make sure we move on to more contentious matters and provide my feedback then. I feel compelled to speak on this bill, despite the fact that I will be supporting it, because the way the debate has been framed today is disrespectful and regretful.

This bill is not about a stadium. This bill is about enhancing a process of planning approval for significant projects in this state. It has merits, whether we are talking about a stadium, Marinus Link or other major significant projects in this state. This bill has merits because the process that was initially established by the State Policies and Projects Act lacked the secondary oversight of the parliament when it came back for consideration.

It also lacks judicial review. That is an important aspect that I was disappointed not to see in this amendment bill because we have an opportunity to review how the process works and enhance that process. What the bill does not do, and I have read it a number of times, is mention 'stadium' or 'stadia'. The Premier, in his second reading speech, as far as I understand, did not mention the word 'stadium'. It is not a bill approving a process for a stadium. It is a bill approving a process for planning approval for significant projects, whatever they might be.

It may be used in the very near future to consider a stadium proposal but there will be other projects in the future that I am sure this state will be required to consider, which will need to use this mechanism so it is important we get it right.

I read this bill - and I am sure Tasmanians read this bill - in the context of enhancing a planning approvals process where the consequences of that particular project are significant across the state.

Let me be very clear: in supporting this bill, I am not saying yes to a stadium. I have been very clear about my opposition to a stadium. My constituents have been extremely clear about their opposition to a stadium.

My constituents are equally clear about wanting good, transparent planning processes, no matter what that project might be. They want good planning processes at local government level. They want good planning processes when things go to the TPC. They want good planning processes when we are dealing with major or significant processes and so when I stand today to speak on this bill, I am talking directly to their wish to improve planning processes.

As I said before, I would have liked to have seen the opportunity for judiciary reviews included. I have not had the opportunity to draft an amendment to the bill, but I understand that might be considered in the other place. I warmly welcome the fact that the Leader of the Greens has flagged an intention to make some amendments to enhance the coverage of when a matter needs to be reconsidered by parliament to include public land, and land in state vested in the council.

I recognise also the Leader of the Opposition's amendment to include a repeals clause, which I think was an oversight not to have. I think we can strengthen it. I always welcome strengthening our planning process to consider how we can have greater scrutiny and representation.

When we are considering projects of such significance, I firmly believe that it is the parliament - the voice of the people - that needs to have the final say. I take great offence at some of the commentary from the Government around today's debate on this bill, trying to conflate the issue of better enhanced planning processes with an approval for a stadium. It is not one and the same thing. They are separate matters.

I am very clear about how my constituents feel about this particular matter, and particularly how they want to see a better planning approvals process. I will be supporting this but I want to make it very clear, on the record, that I do not support a stadium. When it comes that the orders are laid on the table, I will be making my views known then, as I am sure other members of the House will as well, but I do support better planning approvals processes.

[5.23 p.m.]

**Mr TUCKER** (Lyons) - Mr Speaker, I will be supporting this bill, which unlocks parliamentary scrutiny and a decision by both Houses on the biggest projects confronting our state. This is giving the power back to the parliamentarians on the Floor to make a decision, which is what we are paid to do.

I will quickly cover the amendment that Ms White has flagged. Nice try on holding the Government accountable - and then slithering away if you happen to win the next election. In my neck of the woods we call people like this 'eels', because they are slipperier than snakes. This is a sunset clause, and you know exactly what you are doing.

This bill, which draws back the curtain on the secretive backroom dealings of the Rockliff Government, will enable two opportunities for each House of parliament to vote on the proposed AFL stadium at Macquarie Point. Despite attempts by the Government to limit its application, it will also enable parliamentary scrutiny of Marinus Link and associated developments proposed by government agencies.

This is a big part of the reason we took the extraordinary step of resigning from the Government and the Liberal Party on 12 May. As backbenchers we were powerless to influence the Government's determination to plough ahead with these projects, regardless of what cost. As Independents we can no longer be disregarded by out-of-touch ministers and empire builders in the wider government bureaucracy with a bee in their bonnet and little or no evident restraint in their readiness to commit public money.

The conservative side of politics once used to disparage the spending record of the Labor Party and the left. I will remind everyone to remember Margaret Thatcher's line:

The problem with socialism is eventually you run out of other people's money.

That seems to have been lost in the post-COVID spending splurge by the Liberal Government that has plunged Tasmania into record debt - just a few years after the Government bragged that we were now net debt free. However, there is a limit to everything. We can no longer spend simply for the sake of splurging, or for the sake of scoring political points for an energy transition to a renewable future that arrived in Tasmania years ago. In other words, we need a strict public interest test to be applied, particularly where massive projects are involved. To get to the test we need the disinfectant of sunlight, so that taxpayers - who, as the Treasurer has acknowledged, are ultimately responsible - can know and understand what is happening in their name.

We intend to use our balance of power to ensure the test that matters is whether or not there is a return for the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians who struggle every day to make ends meet in the face of the rapidly increasing cost of living. You will not find empire building and political legacy-making anywhere on our test score sheet because, apart from burnishing a few well-polished egos, those things do not help anyone. In fact, they usually leave behind a hell of a financial mess for the next administration to clean up.

We have seen some progress since we have started to rattle the Government's cage on these issues, a slow but steady erosion of the information blackout on the secret dealings with the AFL, on the new stadium that is a precondition for a licence for a Tasmanian AFL team, and a last-minute conversion on the road to Damascus about the threat of cost blowouts on Marinus and associated developments that were apparent to everyone else months ago.

It is nowhere near enough. There is more need than ever for parliament to take the lead in scrutinising and deciding whether or not these projects proceed.

The most fundamental demand the member for Bass and I laid down on 12 May was the need to end the secrecy, and bring huge projects like the AFL stadium and Marinus Link out into the open. The Government committed initially to greater transparency, but then backtracked and had to be dragged kicking and screaming every step of the way.

We still do not have all the information on the stadium, but we are far better informed than we were. We know the projects of state significance process will ensure independent assessment of economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects to inform an eventual decision by both Houses of parliament. So far so good, but once again not without very clear attempts by the Government to reimpose its blackout on other matters.

The amendments to the State Policies and Projects Act are designed to ensure all projects referred by the government or government agencies are subject to independent assessment and final approval by both Houses of parliament so every parliamentarian will get a vote. Yet the fact sheet on the amendment bill starts by suggesting that the changes are designed to allow approval or refusal of projects of state significance at Macquarie Point in Hobart.

Then, in the Premier's address to the state council of the Liberal Party, he says this:

Let's be clear about this. The State Policies and Projects Amendment Bill is only being brought forward in order to facilitate the independent assessment of the stadium proposal. It has no other purpose.

This is not what the member for Bass and I agreed, and this is not what we will be voting for. The Premier is well aware of our concerns about Marinus Link and associated power developments, and of our insistence that they be subject to the same independent assessment and parliamentary scrutiny and final decision as the AFL stadium. We will not accept any attempt by the Government to avoid scrutiny of Marinus and associated power projects. The same goes for the Labor Party with their amendment.

Scrutiny is more necessary than ever following the Premier's confirmation of what we all know: that the billion-dollar costs are blowing out. The problem with the Premier's announcement was that he gave no information about the extent of the blowout, or the latest cost estimates for Marinus. It would appear that he has happily shared that information with the Prime Minister and the federal Energy minister because he wants another Commonwealth hand-out, but will not provide the same level of detail to the Tasmanian taxpayers who, as Treasury has pointed out, ultimately carry the can.

This is unacceptable. We are talking about billions of dollars of investment with implications for Tasmania decades into the future. We cannot have a situation where Tasmanian taxpayers and power users are kept in the dark while the Premier and minister fly off to Canberra to negotiate a deal behind closed doors with the Prime Minister.

We saw what happened with the abominable process leading into the secretive deal with the AFL where the interests of the AFL came first, second and third and the interests of the locals appeared to be little more than an afterthought. Canberra and Victoria may have their own problems with firming capacity on their renewable energy grid but that is not our priority. Our priority is what works for Tasmania, particularly what will be the impact for Tasmanian power bills.

As John Lawrence has demonstrated in his forensic examination of Basslink, the evidence so far indicates that trading energy across Bass Strait is not a money-making proposition and the rest of the much larger Marinus project will need to be examined equally forensically before any decision to proceed.

The Premier needs to come clean on this as a matter of priority. He can start by making a full ministerial statement to the House with full disclosure of the latest cost estimates for Marinus and the transmission projects.

There are a lot of reasons the parliament needs to scrutinise this project. A couple of them were outlined by former MLCs Greg Hall and Ivan Dean in their submissions to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the stadium. I will run through some of what they had to say:

This has been one of the most disastrous own goals of Tasmanian political and sporting history. There was no public discussion of or demand for a new stadium until the issue was raised by the Taskforce as an aspiration for the longer term.

Premier Gutwein's commitment to the floating stadium at Regatta Point ... appears to have been a desperate grab for a last-minute legacy ahead of his retirement announcement in April. It certainly does not appear to have been based on any detailed examination of the costs or merits of the project.

To quote an ABC report on Freedom of Information documents provided to the State Opposition:

'Documents show that the first time costs were discussed was February 2022, when an internal government email - whose sender has been redacted - asked for feedback on a draft of "our" State of the State speech, saying in regards to the stadium that: "I think we will need to say when we think it will start and finish and I have said \$750 million!"

'The following day, Wednesday February 23, sports development agency Waypoint group provided some "very high level" advice on how much a stadium would cost, noting "there is no design no site information and no defined scope at this stage".

'The email reads:

"Using the above very high level guidance (I say that because there is no design, no site information and no defined scope at this stage) you could come up with the following cost ...

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

Add roof at say \$250,000,000

Total = \$575,000,000

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

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

Total = \$747,500,000

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

Where are they?

"I reiterate this is ballpark cost advice! I hope this helps."

'The email from Waypoint Group was sent at about 8:00pm on Wednesday night.

'A subsequent email to the head of State Growth, Kim Evans, from an unknown sender, sent at 9:23pm, said "in relation to a southern stadium it appears conceivable that it could be delivered for a cost that is in the vicinity of \$750 million, noting of course the significant factors of not yet having a design".

'Mr Evans then sent an email to an unknown recipient 25 minutes later, saying, "based on this reckon (redacted) words in the speech look fine."

So, no site information, no design and no defined scope and yet the Government committed to a huge and unnecessary stadium duplication project based on a figure plucked out of the air. That was the basis of the Gutwein announcement which was subsequently used by the AFL to deliver an ultimatum - No Stadium, No Deal.

The Government cannot continue to say that this stadium will cost around \$750 million. There is simply no way. Let us take a look at recent building estimates. Brighton High School, original estimate \$30 million; latest \$74 million. That is an increase of nearly 150 per cent. The numbers on the Cradle Mountain Cableway are even worse. Original estimate \$60 million; latest \$190 million. That is more than triple the original costing.

The trend is similar with recent stadium projects across the country. The Optus Stadium in Perth: original estimate \$1.1 billion; final cost \$1.8 billion. That is an increase of nearly two-thirds and it does not even have a roof. Then we go to Brisbane where the original estimate for rebuilding the Gabba for the Olympics was \$1 billion. It is now \$2.7 billion. Again, not even a roof.

That is the construction side of things. When it comes to financing, the picture gets even murkier. Of the \$715 million cost declared to date, the only contribution that categorically cannot be sheeted home to all Tasmanian taxpayers is a miserly \$15 million from the AFL. It appears we are on the hook for the rest plus all the cost blowouts.

The Government failed to secure a Commonwealth agreement to quarantine the Prime Minister's \$240 million, which means it will be paid for by reductions in GST transfers over three years. It is not just for the stadium anyway; it is for the whole Macquarie Point

development, which includes housing, a cultural park, a convention centre, rapid transport and a wharf upgrade.

To top it off, the state Government contribution will have to be borrowed because there is no money in the bank. That means interest payments will have to be added to the bill, on top of the annual payments to support the team and a \$60 million training centre.

The Government has acknowledged the absurdity of the Regatta Point proposal by crabwalking away at the first opportunity to shift the site to Macquarie Point. In the process, it trashed a decade of work by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, offending the Aboriginal community by driving a bulldozer through the MONA-inspired reconciliation park, creating a significant compensation liability by scuttling contracts for a \$100 million housing and retail development, and causing outrage among veterans by treating the hallowed Hobart Cenotaph as nothing more than a gateway to its proposed new shrine to the AFL.

I will be supporting this bill. This bill unlocks parliamentary scrutiny and a decision by both Houses on the biggest projects confronting this state. It is enormously important that every politician in this room votes on this.

[5.38 p.m.]

**Mr YOUNG** (Franklin) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise in support of the bill. As the Premier said, this bill proposes to amend the State Policies and Projects Act 1993 to require a project of state significance that is proposed by the state Government to be approved by both Houses of parliament before any final approval order becomes effective.

The draft bill also proposes to amend the act to allow other projects of state significance to be returned to parliament for consideration prior to any final approval becoming effective. In summary, the bill provides that the parliament always has the oversight of significant government-sponsored projects, which it can review with the benefit of the full integrated assessment and the consideration of social, economic and environmental matters carried out by an independent assessment process. It allows parliament the option to become the final arbiter on projects that have significant economic and social implications which are private proposals.

It is important to be mindful of the risks of damaging Tasmania's reputation for private investment based on predictable, creditable, transparent assessment. That is why there is a difference between how a government-proposed project is dealt with and how a non-government bill progresses under these amendments. Once these amendments become law, the legislation will allow for a case-by-case determination as to whether the final orders for non-government projects are returned to parliament for approval.

To date, six projects have been assessed as projects of state significance (POSS). These projects are: Copper Mines of Tasmania, west coast, 1995; Taiwan Pulp and Paper Corporation pulp mill, 1996; Oceanport, 1998; Basslink, 1999; Bell Bay pulp mill, 2008; and Ralphs Bay Lauderdale Quay, 2010. Of these, two were approved - Copper Mines and Basslink; two were refused based on the commission's recommendations - Oceanport and Ralphs Bay; and the other two were withdrawn.

Since the introduction of the State Policies and Projects Act 1993, other approval pathways for major projects have been introduced. These include the recent major projects process, which was used to assess the new Bridgewater bridge. Where the POSS process

differs is that it provides an integrated assessment of environmental, economic, social and community matters. The major projects assessment is largely a technical consideration that coordinates the assessment of environmental, planning, heritage and threatened species impacts and does not consider the broader social and economic costs and benefits. The normal regulators can individually then approve or refuse a major project. Because the assessment is not integrated in nature, it does not provide the opportunity to trade off social, economic and environmental impacts against each other like the project of state significance process. The decision on a major project is made by an independent expert panel.

Given the broader range of pathways now available since 1993, I am pleased to hear that there will be a review of the project of state significance process to ensure it provides a genuine alternative with different characteristics.

The act provides for the Tasmanian Planning Commission to undertake an integrated assessment of projects of state significance. Once a declaration order has been issued, the minister directs the commission to undertake an integrated assessment of the project. The direction can specify particular matters the minister would like the commission to consider in its assessment. A declaration order must then be approved by both Houses of parliament to be effective. This approval is sought after the minister has issued a direction to the commission to allow it to commence assessment. The act requires an integrated assessment to be undertaken and to take into consideration matters set out in representations received.

Following the receipt of the minister's direction, the commission prepares draft guidelines for the integrated assessment of the project. The draft guidelines are publicly exhibited and refined based on comments received, then finalised and published. Local councils and state agencies are specifically consulted on the preparation of these guidelines.

The proponent is required to prepare an integrated impact statement to demonstrate how the project of state significance addresses the matters raised in the commission's guidelines. The commission then assesses the information received from the proponent against the guidelines and prepares a draft integrated assessment report. The commission receives representations during the exhibition period and may hold hearings into the representations. The commission's final report makes a recommendation to the minister on whether or not the project should proceed and, if so, on what conditions.

As the Premier has outlined, this bill gives effect to the principle that given parliament must agree to start the process then for government projects which have significant environmental, economic and community impacts and benefits. Parliament should also have the final responsibility to approve the project notwithstanding the independent assessment and recommendation.

This bill allows parliament to approve or refuse a project where parliament considers it appropriate to do so for those projects of state significance that are not sponsored by the government but which the minister of the day agrees should proceed on the terms of the commission's final assessment report. I commend the bill to the House.

[5.44 p.m.]

**Mr ROCKLIFF** (Braddon - Premier) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank Mr Young for his contribution, outlining the history of the project of state significance process and the projects that have come under this legislation since 1993.

I thank members for their many and varied comments throughout the second reading debate. To put some context around the bill being debated now, it is to provide that immediate fix to an issue that has been identified with the project of state significance assessment process to make sure that any project of state significance proposed by a state government that involves significant capital expenditure, such as the Macquarie Point stadium, will ultimately be required to be considered by parliament before it can proceed.

Dealing with the matter now provides more certainty to the general public as to how the stadium assessment process will run and who will make the final decision on the project. This certainty will be in place before the order for the stadium is considered by parliament, rather than changing the goalposts during the process.

I will speak more broadly about members' contributions prior to us going into Committee, although the Committee process will be very short this evening as adjournment is fast approaching. I thank members for their contributions. They were many and varied. As I understand it, there will be an amendment from the Leader of the Opposition around a sunset clause, effectively, and an amendment from Dr Woodruff on which I will reserve my comments largely when we discuss those amendments during the Committee stage.

There was discussion around potential risk to private investment in Tasmania, with parliament potentially having the final say on the project of state significance. The bill allows the parliament the discretion to choose what private project of state significance it may want to have final input into as part of a democratic process, rather than a technical and merit-based assessment. If private investors are nervous about the possibility of their project being caught up in the politics of the day, the major project pathway under LUPAA provides for a process that provides an expert panel assessment without any political or parliamentary engagement.

I note Ms Johnston's contribution, particularly pertaining to the judicial review. That is not within the scope of the bill we are debating today. It is a bigger issue that would require full consideration, including the legal implications of providing additional review of a parliamentary process. As I flagged in the second reading speech, the State Policies and Projects Act we are speaking about today is 30 years old, from 1993. It is time to review that act, making amendments to it today. Potentially, after the review, after full consultation with the community, there may be other matters where we can modernise the project of state significance act and improve processes. Ms Johnston's judicial review proposal would be better addressed in the review of the act that we have previously committed to. I will leave those comments there.

On the repeal clause, the Government considers that parliament should always have an oversight of a decision whenever the government or a state agency is the proponent of a project which is of state significance and subject to the type of integrated assessment that can result in trading off social, community, economic and environmental matters. When the POSS process is for a government project, then there should be a capacity for the parliament to consider what is, in effect, the social licence of the project.

These amendments should also be seen in the context of more recent additional assessment pathways that provide for independent assessment of major projects, without any political influence or determination, such as the major projects I mentioned before.

Dr Woodruff will be moving an amendment. I can flag that while the intention of requiring the additional vote for projects that involve large or significant portions of public land is understood, there would be unintended consequences should the amendment pass as drafted; I can go further into that as we proceed through the Committee stage.

I thank members for their contribution. I will keep my comments limited to the bill at hand. I am more than happy, as members well realise, to speak of the stadium project - the Macquarie Point Precinct Urban Renewal process and project, and the securing of an AFL and AFLW licence.

I believe it has been the most scrutinised deal in my 21 years in parliament. It is a deal I very much believe in. I believe the project is far more than just about AFL and AFLW, and securing our own team. It is about opportunity. It is about aspiration. It is about Tasmania not only securing the 19th licence, but also the economic opportunity that associated infrastructure will bring for Tasmanians, and particularly young Tasmanians. My motivation for working across the parliament, noting the situation we are in today, is to think about our young people and their hopes and dreams, and ensuring that we can secure not only an AFL team in Tasmania, but also the economic and enabling infrastructure that goes along with that as well as the urban renewal of Macquarie Point, which for many decades - but in most recent times, since the first investment to remediate the site in 2012 with a \$50 million Commonwealth contribution - now is the time to make the call, to seize the opportunity and ensure that we can move Tasmania forward.

I thank members for their support for the bill - albeit there will be some amendments that we will discuss in the Committee process.

**Bill read the second time.**

## **STATE POLICIES AND PROJECTS AMENDMENT BILL 2023 (No. 14)**

### **In Committee**

**Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.**

#### **Clause 4 -**

Section 18 amended (Declaration of project of State significance)

**Dr WOODRUFF** - Chair, I foreshadowed this amendment in the second reading debate. It seeks to make it clear that all proposals for a project of state significance - whether they have originated by the Crown, or by an entity within the meaning of the Financial Management Act, or whether they are from a private developer - would be subject to a requirement that both Houses of parliament vote on a resolution for an order to declare them a project of state significance.

This is important because, in our view, any matter that comes before parliament as a project of state significance, regardless of who is presenting it, what body is proposing it - whether it is a GBE, a state-owned corporation, a council or board, or some other entity that is managed by the government or a private developer - these are all matters of major significance

by definition of the fact that they would meet the criteria for being a project of state significance, or they are being proposed as a project of state significance.

All of those matters ought to be subjected to the vote of parliament. We do not accept that there are different orders of projects that should be assessed and other projects not assessed.

The second part of the amendment before us is in relation to where a project is being developed. The bill relates just to who is the originating developer or proponent, so what we are adding in under Part 2 is where the development is proposed to be undertaken.

I will read the amendment to the House. The amendment is -

Page four, clause 4, leave out everything after 'following' and insert instead

'subsection:

(3A) An order under subsection (2) in respect of a project of State significance -

(a) may include the requirement that an order made under section 26 in respect of the project is of no effect until the order under section 26 has been approved, under that section, by resolution of each House of Parliament; and

(b) must include the requirement referred to in paragraph (a) if -

(i) one or more of the persons proposing the project of State of significance is -

(A) the Crown in right of Tasmania including, but not limited to, an Agency within the meaning of the *Financial Management Act 2016*; or

(B) an entity within the meaning of the *Financial Management Act 2016*;

or

(ii) the project involves a proposed use or development on -

(A) public land, within the meaning of the *Public Land (Administration and Forests) Act 1991*; or

(B) land in the State vested in a council, within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 1993*.'

To summarise, what we are proposing is that the parliamentary approval of an order that reflects the final report of the commission be mandatory for government projects and also for private projects.

The proposed amendment also includes the requirement that parliamentary -

**Time expired.**

**Progress reported. Committee to sit again.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Women in Sport**

[6.01 p.m.]

**Ms O'BYRNE** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about women and sport.

The Australian women's cricket team, the Southern Stars, are the top team in all world rankings. The netball team, our Diamonds, just won the World Cup. The Hockeyroos are second in the world and the Matildas are rocking our world right now, which made me think about what is happening in women's sport and how things are changing.

Federal parliament in its 2004-07 committee inquiries on women's sport in the media found some disturbing things. Writing a response to submissions for the committee inquiry, journalist Greg Baum remarked:

Women's soccer is a joke, women's cricket is not much better, netball is okay sometimes when there is nothing else on, but women's basketball is not... Women runners, jumpers, throwers, cyclists and swimmers do their best, but it is, by definition, second-best.

On morning commercial television on the first day of the hearings, Mr John Mangos of Sky News said:

There's no way to say this nicely without sounding sexist, but the fact is blokes hit the ball further, kick the ball harder, go in harder, it's better to watch, end of story.

An analysis presented then in an illusory image highlighted how dominant were various stereotypes of women in media coverage. They were more often referred to as 'girls', likely to be shown in passive poses, more likely to be shown and posed in sometimes sexualised images and subjected to stereotypes of descriptions. One submission forwarded an example which showed a page of a newspaper which printed a story about female competitors in terms of their appearance and emotions while in the other story on the same page covering the same sport they reported news on the male counterparts were without any such language.

An ABC Online coverage of the 2000 Olympics found that while women and men athletes received relatively balanced amounts of coverage, the women were more likely than men to be infantilised and be described in emotive terms and there was limited breadth in the

coverage. The report recommended a number of strategies to increase broadcasting time to impact the way that women's sport is perceived.

A recent survey carried out by a pay television broadcaster revealed that nearly 70 per cent of Australians watch more women's sport now than they did before 2020. The study was carried out by YouGov and 72 per cent of male respondents said that they watch women's sport more, men making up two thirds of the overall viewership across the AFLW, the NRLW and the WBBL. Some 56 per cent of those who are watching more women's sport attributed their change in viewing behaviours to increased media coverage of female competitions, while 49 per cent credited increased dedicated broadcast coverage.

It comes at a time when the viewership of women's sport in Australia is trending upwards. The coverage of the Women's T20 World Cup between Australia and India in March 2020 was watched by a record 450 000 viewers as Australia defeated India. Greater exposure gives us more fans, more sponsorship and more attendance which strengthens the market for stronger revenue.

Let us look at how the FIFA Women's World Cup is going. By Friday 4 August, over 1 715 000 tickets had been sold, comfortably surpassing expectations. In Aotearoa New Zealand the record crowd for a football match in the country women's or men's was broken twice in 12 days. At the previous FIFA Women's World Cup in France, team matches across the entire tournament attracted 25 000 spectators. This year's group stage has already seen 21 matches each surpass the 25 000 mark.

The Matildas' final group game against Canada reached 4.71 million Australians to become the channel's most-watched program this year.

In Aotearoa New Zealand around 1.88 million, a third of the population, has been watching the tournament. Columbia's first group match tripled the highest television audience from previous records, at 2.84 million. China PR produced the highest audience for a single match anywhere in the world, with 53.9 million viewers watching their team take on England. In the United States more fans watched their team play against the Netherlands than ever before.

In the FIFA fan festivals where people are gathering, there was another first. Sites created in each of the nine host cities reported over 400 000 fans so far, with one day in Sydney having nearly 18 000 fans.

And yet, are things changing? In 2016, experts at Cambridge University Press analysed millions of words relating to men and women and how they are described in language in association with the Olympic Games. The result highlighted the different style of language and images that media and fans used to discuss men and women in sport. Words associated with male athletes were 'mastermind', 'battle', 'fastest', 'strong', 'dominate', 'real', 'great', 'win', 'male', 'beat', 'big', 'man'. Words associated with female athletes were 'unmarried', 'married', 'ladies', 'older', 'participate', 'women', 'pregnant', 'age', 'compete', 'strive', 'girls'.

Analysis by World Athletics of social media posts sent to athletes during the Tokyo games found that female athletes received 87 per cent of all abuse. A 2019 report by Plan International found that the abuse of women was significantly higher than that ever attached to men.

Has it changed, even with FIFA's great record? A Channel 7 commentator was criticised for one of his comments about fantastic midfielder Katrina Gorry when he said:

Certainly motherhood has not blunted her competitive instincts, that's for sure. She is one fighter for Australia and she won a significant tackle.

Viewers were also reminded more than once that several of the players on the field were mothers in contrast to a men's match, where viewers are very rarely likely to be told that many players are fathers. While the Matildas are getting some great coverage and the social media response to that kind of commentary was fast, overwhelming and strong in its condemnation, let us not forget that it is not all sports that get this. While the Matildas are getting that really good support, the Australian Diamonds won the netball World Cup for the 12th time in Cape Town, beating England 61 to 45. They have reclaimed the Commonwealth Games gold medal, the Constellation Cup trophy and now the Netball Cup world crown.

I quote the satirical website *The Betoota Advocate* as saying that even though the Australian netball side won a world cup they still made fewer headlines than they did in October last year when they politely turned down mining baron Gina Rinehart's sponsorship money. The most traction the Diamonds have got has come from the social media attributes posted by the Matilda athletes, who were wishing them well on their concurrent world cup journeys.

It is not the women who are the problem, it is not the sport that is the problem, it is the media, it is us and we have to do better. I will leave you with this thought: women's sport is like men's sport, only better.

### **York Park Funding - Facebook Post by Premier**

#### **Trout Fishing - Kids Go Fishing**

#### **Inland Fisheries Service - Budget**

[6.08 p.m.]

**Ms FINLAY** (Bass) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on a very important issue - honesty and integrity. I call on the Premier to enter the Chamber because I am talking about the Premier.

The Premier would be well aware that at around 3 p.m. on 19 July a comment was placed on my Facebook page from the Premier of Tasmania. The comment followed engagement on the AFL team in Tasmania. There was a screenshot placed in the feed of my Facebook. It was a snapshot of a statement that the Premier had made. The Premier wrote in a Facebook post -

Unfortunately, it is not just the team and the \$120 million yearly boost to our economy that the team brings that we'll lose. It is also the \$130 million for York Park gone.

I know that is not correct. As it was on my Facebook feed I replied to that post. I said:

'He is wrong to say that. The York Park money is separate. I am confident of this.'

What is extraordinary and unique is that the Premier himself then wrote on my feed. I am not aware that he has written on my feed before or has written on my feed since, but the Premier then wrote on my feed:

Really sad to see this, Janie.

He was aware he was talking to me on my feed personally:

Really sad to see this, Janie. Some things should be above politics. Needless to say, what you're claiming is incorrect and it's not even close. Are you really okay with killing the team? That's where you're heading but you know that. Tasmanians won't forget this.

Well, Premier, I will not forget this - you claiming on my page that something I said and knew to be true was incorrect. There is no doubt in Tasmania, Australia and across the world that honesty should be above everything in politics. To intentionally write something on my feed that is not correct and directly reflects on my integrity and my reputation, I will not have that.

I had the opportunity to personally confirm, face to face, with the federal member for Ballarat, Catherine King, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, that the \$65 million from the federal government is not at risk; those funds are secure and not tied to the Macquarie Point project. So, you are wrong, Premier, in what you stated on my feed, and I expect you to come in here and apologise, and correct the record.

Further, Premier, I expect you to correct the record that you know and I know and, in fact, the Deputy Speaker knows, that the \$65 million of state funding for York Park is not at risk. Those funds are secure; they were never tied to the Hobart stadium project because they were committed prior to any public discussions about a stadium in Hobart and they were committed unconditionally.

Premier, it is not okay, at any time on any issue, to intentionally mislead the Tasmanian people and intentionally tarnish someone's reputation. I ask you to come into the Chamber to apologise to me personally and the people of Tasmania and to correct the record, and to never repeat the statement that the funds for York Park are at risk.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak about an issue that I have had great joy in participating in. It is actually not an issue but it was an event on the weekend, on Saturday. It was the opening of the trout season. I had the opportunity over the weeks leading up to the opening of the season to meet with a number of anglers across Tasmania and to meet with Anglers Alliance Tasmania to hear more from their perspective about the importance of our inland fisheries. It was delightful to meet with the chair and vice-chair of Anglers Alliance Tasmania and to hear about the great work they do in their community.

Of particular interest to me was the work they do with young people in Tasmania and young anglers, and their Kids Go Fishing days. It is great to see their passion and interest, not just in catching a fish but all of the benefits associated with fishing in Tasmania. To hear the stories of people getting ready for the opening of the season and going out to take some time out from life to have some quiet time with family, with friends, to connect around the rivers and the lakes of Tasmania, was fantastic - the positives of that.

A small positive on opening day was that I did catch a fish, my first trout, which is exciting, on a fly, having had some lessons the day before but also having been out previously. It was a beauty. It was a small but colourful, beautiful trout.

**Mr Barnett** - Brown or rainbow?

**Ms FINLAY** - It was a rainbow trout. I am going to take that interjection because of my next comments. I was already intentionally going to transition from positive to concerning. The interjection I take is from the former minister for primary industries and water, Guy Barnett. The purpose of my contribution this afternoon is also to express concern about the investment this Government makes into our Inland Fisheries Service. The former minister would be aware that the Inland Fisheries Service budget has been frozen over a long period of time. In fact, there were six to seven years where there was not even any indexation for that. This has put the ability of Inland Fisheries to do field work under pressure.

Across tourism and fisheries, across our rural and regional communities, we delight in the world-class reputation of our inland fisheries but in order to maintain and sustain that, the inland fisheries must be appropriately funded by this Government.

### **Cassy O'Connor - Tribute**

[6.15 p.m.]

**Dr WOODRUFF** (Franklin- Leader of the Greens) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the former leader of the Tasmanian Greens, the member for Clark, Cassy O'Connor.

Cassy was first elected as the Tasmanian Greens member for Denison, as it was then, on a countback on 21 July 2008 following the resignation of previous Greens leader, Peg Putt. Cassy went on to top the polls in Denison at the 2010 state election and again in 2018. She remains the only MP in Tasmanian history to be sworn in outside of Hobart when she was sworn in during the 2008 regional sittings of parliament in Launceston, when this Chamber was being renovated.

After topping the polls in Denison at a 'Green-slide' election in 2010, Cassy became the first Greens female MP nationally to serve in a Cabinet position when she was made Cabinet secretary in the Labor-Greens power-sharing government. After a Cabinet reshuffle in 2011, Cassy then became the first Greens female minister in Australia when she was sworn in as minister for Human Services, Community Development, Aboriginal Affairs and Climate Change - a position she held until 2014.

With Cassy as minister, the public housing waiting list became the lowest in a decade; the notorious Stainforth Court was reborn as the new Queens Walk Apartments; and 9500 energy-efficiency upgrades were provided to low-income households.

Her staunch commitment to Tasmanians joining the NDIS saw an estimated 10 600 Tasmanians become eligible in the early round.

Cassy introduced Tasmania's first Working with Vulnerable People legislation, which she was particularly proud of.

She introduced lutruwita's dual naming policy and tried to return Rebecca Creek and larapuna to the original owners but was blocked by the other place, unfortunately.

Cassy commissioned Tasmania's first study into the value of the carbon held in this island's forest and she was a key driver of the Tasmanian Forest Agreement, which saw over 170 000 hectares added to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area - forests that are protected forever.

Most Tasmanians will know Cassy as a tenacious and strong champion for lutruwita and its people. She was a formidable parliamentary performer by anyone's standard and, as the Greens leader, respected across the community and across politics. It is that respect that helped her work across the Chamber to make real change for this island. She did that through the actions she showed as leader. We have amended the Births, Deaths and Marriages Act to recognise transgender and intersex people. She worked with now Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, to make Tasmania the first parliament in the country to recognise and support marriage equality. Following the national live baiting scandal, it was Cassy's inquiry into greyhound racing that forced through animal welfare reforms, which still need to be completed, ending the free-for-all killing of dogs, and unmuzzled rescue greyhounds.

Cassy continued the Greens' strong legislative campaign for voluntary assisted dying and the restoration of the House of Assembly to its original size. Both of these have now been passed thanks to her very substantial contributions.

She was catalytic in helping to expose the brutality of Ashley Youth Detention Centre long before the commission of inquiry process. She championed the importance of shining a light on children in detention. She was one of the first people to call for an inquiry into child sex abuse in state institutions. That went on to become the commission of inquiry which is just about to complete its findings.

Over her 15 years in the House of Assembly, Cassy has been a champion for climate action, for a fair society, for a prosperous low-carbon economy, and the protection of forests and wilderness. She came here on Valentine's Day 1989 and has given her heart to the island ever since.

As well as her activities as the Leader of the Greens, prior to that she worked in journalism and was a political adviser prior to entering government. She gave up journalism after having kids and after running for the Greens, but she always remained a story-teller and was amazing at weaving stories of people's experiences and their concerns.

It was when she walked into a community meeting about a Gold Coast-esque canal estate development in Ralphs Bay that she led the path to activism and ultimately into parliament. In 2004 she became the public face of Save Ralphs Bay. It was a community campaign that ultimately stopped Walker Corporation's planned development under a project of state significance, one of the only two that have been formally rejected under that process. It has forever protected the sand flats at Lauderdale as the Ralphs Bay Conservation Area, formally declared in 2010.

Cassy served the people of Clark and her beautiful electorate that sits between kunanyi/ Mt Wellington and timtumili minanya, the River Derwent, tirelessly. The Greens are

enormously proud to have had Cassy at the helm for the last eight years. She has been a strong, whip-smart and deeply empathetic leader.

Personally, it has been an incredible privilege to have sat beside her in parliament for the last eight years. It has been a great honour and continues to be an honour to call her one of my very dear friends. The future political aspirations of Cassy are on public record and whatever the future holds, I am very confident that lutruwita/Tasmania is a better place for having a still committed, wild green heart in Cassy O'Connor. I salute the legacy that she has given, not only the Greens, but the people of Tasmania.

**Mr Bayley** - Hear, hear.

## **Health Portfolio**

### **Matildas - FIFA Women's World Cup Competition**

#### **Diamonds Netball Team - World Cup**

[6.22 p.m.]

**Mr BARNETT** (Lyons - Minister for Health) - Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased and proud to stand here tonight with the great honour of being given responsibility for the Health portfolio. I have been in that role now for 14 days and I wanted to reflect on that great honour.

First, I thank the Premier for the confidence that he has in bestowing that honour to me and to say that I really look forward to the opportunities and the challenges in the months and years ahead as we roll out the health services that Tasmanians deserve.

I want to build on the momentum that Premier Rockliff has delivered to the people of Tasmania in delivering record funding of more than \$12 billion over the next four years, in fact \$8.3 million a day. It is true that I have been in the job for 14 days and that is more than \$116 million that has been spent in support of our health system since I was appointed. What we are on about is increasing the number of people supporting us in our health sector, in our workforce, improving health care services for all Tasmanians and building better health care services.

It means a great deal because I have had a passion for health for many decades and people who know me, know that to be true. I have Type 1 diabetes and I am ambassador and have been for many decades for Diabetes Australia. It is something I am honoured and proud to support Tasmanians with diabetes, Type 1, Type 2, and gestational diabetes, and their families and with the Diabetes Tasmania Pollie Pedal, which I started with Diabetes Tasmania back in 2006 and yes, 18 years this year. I look forward to raising funds and awareness for people with diabetes in Tasmania.

My dad died of Motor Neurone Disease and I have been ambassador for Motor Neurone Disease Australia for many years and now as a former ambassador. Mum died of cancer. These chronic diseases affect so many Tasmanians. I know people in this Chamber and across the state are touched in a special way.

Health is a priority for all Tasmanians. It will be a priority for me and this Government for each and every individual and their families and the communities. We need a health system

that Tasmanians deserve. It is there for us in our most challenging days and our darkest hours. Certainly, promoting healthy habits and a healthy active lifestyle will be a key ambition of mine as Health minister.

I say thank you to the frontline workers and the patients who I have met in the last 14 days. It has been a real honour and a pleasure to be out and about - whether it is with the doctors, the nurses, the ambos, the orderlies, the cleaners across the board, and the allied healthcare workers. In particular, I want to pay a tribute to the volunteers I have met over these last 14 days. It has been fantastic. All the people I have met in the healthcare sector have a profession, are professional but they have passion and they care; they have heart. I am banging my heart right now. They have heart. They care for their local community. They care for their fellow Tasmanians and it is an honour to stand shoulder to shoulder with them and to represent them and to advocate for the health care of Tasmanians.

I wanted to indicate that, within five hours of being sworn in as Health minister, I was at the Royal Hobart Hospital at the emergency department listening and learning. I thank those who helped me to listen and to learn. Now, of course, I have visited the Royal Hobart Hospital three times in those 14 days. The day before I was appointed I was with the Premier touring the New Norfolk District Hospital and had great insight into the importance of regional health care.

I have been to the Ambulance Tasmania headquarters in Hobart and indeed St Helens District Hospital and Community Care Centre; St Marys Hospital and Community Care Centre - I met with Dr Latt and the wonderful workers there; St Marys Ambulance Station; the Volunteer Ambulance Station at Curry on King Island; and the hospital and healthcare services on King Island; the Ambulance Tasmania headquarters in Launceston; the Launceston Health Hub; and the Mersey Community Hospital. It was great to be able to tour the ambulance station at Latrobe and to see the construction and the development of that renewed infrastructure and the upgrades that are happening right there. Likewise, at the North West Regional Hospital; and of course, the Launceston General Hospital. It has been so good to be able to listen and to learn, to get the feedback and to learn more about our fantastic frontline workers in the healthcare sector. I look forward to working with them.

Today, I was at the Royal Hobart Hospital with a \$13.8 million investment in the new Endoscopy Unit. Thank you to Nicola, Kristen, Stephen, Sarah and others who provided that tour. It is now open to patients. Of course, we are treating more and supporting more Tasmanians more often as a result of that commitment and the \$13.8 million commitment over the next four years for the services to roll that out.

In terms of our elective surgery plans, we have seen the waiting list cut by more than 30 per cent thanks to the backing of the Premier and our outstanding health team to deliver on that, and it is very exciting indeed.

I will relentlessly pursue every opportunity to deliver for the health system that Tasmanians need and deserve with that record funding, growing the health workforce, helping more Tasmanians and building a better healthcare sector for all Tasmanians.

I say congratulations and well done to the Matildas. I was shouting encouragement at the television last night and of course it worked, together with so many other Tasmanians and Australians getting the job done. I do not mind a bit of laughter, Mr Deputy Speaker. It was

an absolute ripper win - 2-nil to Denmark. I was thinking of Crown Princess Mary and how she would be feeling about that. I know that she would be pleased for Tasmania and Australia. It was a great job; well done.

In conclusion, congratulations likewise to the Diamonds Netball Team, our Australian team for their 12<sup>th</sup> World Cup win. It was an absolute ripper. I will certainly be looking forward to cheering on the Matildas this Saturday for their next round as much as I possibly can.

### **Prejudice-Related Crimes - Forum Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania - Fundraising**

[6.29 p.m.]

**Ms HADDAD** (Clark) - Mr Deputy Speaker, on the weekend just gone, I attended a forum that was co-hosted by the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, the Migrant Resource Centre and Faith Communities Tasmania. It was held at the Multicultural Hub in Hopkins Street in Moonah.

The topic of the forum was about the importance of people reporting prejudice-related crimes, that are otherwise sometimes referred to as hate crimes or targeted violence. Sadly, we know that far too many people experience not only discrimination and unfair treatments, but are also victims of crime and offences based on difference.

That is not okay. It is sad to know that while Tasmania's multicultural communities have continued to grow and get stronger, discrimination and even crimes and offences based on race, ethnic origin and religion still occur.

I commend the organisers of the forum and the speakers we heard from: Professor Nicole Asquith, the director of TILES at UTAS and a retired police officer, Scott, who had experienced working for Victoria Police on responses to these types of offences in Victoria; and to Aimen Jafri, the acting chair of MCOT and others involved with those three organisations who put the forum together.

They explained that it so important that people report targeted violence and incidents to Tasmania Police and to Equal Opportunities Tasmania. That should be the case even if people do not want to go further and press charges or take further action through EOT against the offender. Reporting the number and frequency of incidents that happen, like this in our community, is important data and it will inform future funding and actions that can be taken in the community and by government to stamp out crimes of violence against people based on difference, be it race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability or any other attribute.

The forum was about awareness-raising, but also about lobbying for legislative change that is required. Currently Tasmania's Sentencing Act can only deal with racial motivation as an aggravating factor for offending. It cannot deal with other forms of offending that might have been motivated by other forms of prejudice, such as disability, sexuality, gender and so on.

They have produced a resource, a small booklet. I encourage other MPs to contact the MRC or MCOT and get copies for your offices. There is also a small pocket version. I commend those three organisations for putting together a really useful forum for Tasmanians.

In June, I had the pleasure of attending a fundraising lunch hosted by Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania. One of its main fundraisers for the year is the 65 Roses Ladies Lunch. It is an annual event. It was a fantastic event led by Cystic Fibrosis CEO, Paula Wriedt, and her team, her board, and many volunteers who worked hard to put together a very large fundraising event.

More than 240 guests gathered on the Hobart waterfront to enjoy a great fun day with good company, fun activities and fundraising as well as great conversation and awareness-raising about the important issue of cystic fibrosis.

We listened to the inspirational story of guest speaker Simon Calvert, who lives with CF and who generously shared with the room his life and his family's journey throughout his treatment as a young boy and into his adult life as a teacher, a successful sportsman, a husband and father. Simon's speech was heartfelt, warm, funny and engaging and taught all of us a lot about what it is like to live with CF, which is an inherited, recessive genetic condition primarily affecting the lungs and digestive system.

Members might not know that Tasmania has the highest number of people who carry the CF gene in the country, and the second highest rate of carriers in the world. Estimates vary but even most conservative estimates suggest that around 1 in 20 Tasmanians carry the CF gene, with around 28 500 Tasmanians being symptomless carriers of the gene and 115 living with CF today.

Sadly, children born with CF 50 or 60 years ago lived very short lives. Since then, and with amazing advances in research and treatments, life expectancy has increased, with most people with CF living longer healthy lives well into their adult years. Each person's journey with CF is a different experience. Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania does amazing work not only supporting people with CF and their families, but also advocating for further medical research to continue those advancements in medical treatment and care, as well as raising awareness in the community about CF.

Congratulations to Paula and all the team at Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania who were involved with organising the 65 Roses Ladies Lunch. It raised a staggering \$43 169. That is a significant fundraiser by anyone's estimation. There was a heap of fun activities that led to everyone there reaching into their pockets and donating significant amounts throughout the day.

I remind members that is just one of the major fundraisers that Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania runs each year. There is still the CF Gala Ball coming up in September. Members can find information about that and book tickets on the CF website and Facebook page.

### **Tasmanian Racing Industry**

[6.35 p.m.]

**Mr WINTER** (Franklin) - I rise this evening to speak about racing. I want to pay some credit to the Premier for his reset and reshuffle. His decision to sack the former racing minister

and replace her was the right one for the industry, and I sincerely hope it ushers in some changes that are desperately needed within the industry.

It is a fantastic industry with a lot of potential to grow, be better and continue to support people, particularly Tasmanians in regional areas. It can do that, but it has been a very difficult past 12 months - even longer than that, particularly through the issues that have been associated with the Office of Racing Integrity in the former minister's, Ms Ogilvie's, time, and before that as well, it must be said.

The Monteith Review was supposed to be the point at which the Government got a handle on racing in Tasmania, and provided the structures it needed to go ahead and operate in a better way. That was handed down in the middle of last year. Here we are, more than 12 months later, without a single recommendation of that Monteith Review having been implemented.

That is extraordinary. Some of the recommendations do not require legislative change, they just require a relatively small change - but none of them has been implemented.

It took the former minister and the Government six months to respond to the recommendations in the Monteith Review, which slowed down the response. Since the response to the Monteith Review was unfortunately tabled at the exact same time as GBE scrutiny commenced last year, so that it could not be scrutinised, we have seen almost no outcome and no changes associated with that. They are desperately needed.

The biggest supporters of Tasmanian racing I speak to know there has to be change. There must be fundamental changes to the way the industry is operating. I want to reiterate that despite all of the challenges within the industry, it is not the industry on trial here, it is the regulator, in particular, who is on trial.

This morning, the Minister for Local Government, Mr Street, spoke about his response to the Dorset Council issue. Contrast that with the response by the former minister for racing, Ms Ogilvie, to the Office of Racing Integrity issues. On the one hand, Mr Street was talking about making the right decision to suspend the councillors so the independent investigation could take place properly, but when it came to the Office of Racing Integrity - and the investigation, basically, into the Office of Racing Integrity - the former minister and this Government and the Premier decided they would leave the Director of Racing in place while the independent investigation was going on. That was a big mistake.

I hope it does not continue to be a mistake, and I hope it does not appear to be a mistake when the independent review comes out. It is not appropriate that the Director of Racing, whose performance is effectively under investigation, continues to act in that role during this time.

It is a point we have made time and again, but the Government has stubbornly refused to deal with this, to the point where BOTRA, the peak body for the harness racing industry, has said it has no confidence in the Director of Racing. We have one of the three codes, through a motion of its members, directly saying it does not have confidence in the Director of Racing - and there is not much support across the other codes, either.

The RTI that was identified by the ABC last week again showed that these issues had been building and bubbling to the surface before the ABC's massive report earlier this year -

and then you had the CEO of Tasracing saying he feared this was about to 'go nuclear'. He was right. It did go nuclear and, again, we had the minister refusing to do anything about it - who stood in this place and said racing had never been in better shape. That was her response to having seen the allegations of massive animal welfare issues, of race fixing and huge integrity issues within the racing industry she was responsible for. She said it had never been in better shape. It was not true then, and it is still not true now. Racing needs to be in better shape.

I am pleased we have a new minister. I am also pleased the minister talked about the consultation he had done in actually meeting the race clubs earlier today. He was at the Bow Tie on Saturday night, and at Spreyton again on Sunday. That is a good start. We have a minister who is going to turn up. It is a fantastic start. It is a low bar with very small shoes to fill, but at least he has turned up for the industry.

There are massive issues that still need to be dealt with. Of course the video from Animal Liberation Tasmania, which has been appropriately investigated, needs to be investigated. Again, it highlights the fact that these issues have not been adequately dealt with in the past and, once again, the regulator has not done anything until issues get to the media. We need to deal with issues as soon as they come up, and we need to deal with them adequately. We also need to acknowledge that everyone is innocent until proven guilty, and that is the case here. It should always be the case with these matters.

The ongoing Murrihy investigation has been delayed by eight weeks, but comes out shortly. We are looking forward to seeing that report. We also now know that ORI is doing its own independent investigation. Again, there are some question marks about how ORI is operating, but I hope they do a good job with that.

Lastly I want to talk about the North West tracks fiasco. The North West tracks was an election commitment from this Government. This is a Government that effectively shut down - or allowed Tasracing to shut down - racing at Devonport for harness and greyhounds, and said they would build the industry a new track.

The industry has been going for almost 18 months now without a track. That means harness and greyhound trainers from the north-west are driving and spending a lot of time on the road with their animals and doing it tough. There is no sign of a new track.

We have now heard during Estimates that there is not enough money for this project. There needs to be adequate support for that project. That project must go ahead, because the Government promised it. They promised those great people on the north-west coast and they need to deliver it. Mr Ellis needs to deliver it.

**Time expired.**

### **Vietnam War Veterans Remembrance Service**

[6.42 p.m.]

**Ms BUTLER** - (Lyons) - Mr Deputy Speaker, last week, on 3 August, I was honoured to attend the Vietnam Veterans Vigil for a remembrance service at Cornelian Bay Cemetery, organised by the Veterans Motorcycle Club Tasmanian South Chapter.

The service of remembrance was held at every grave or commemorative plaque site across the nation and overseas for veterans killed in the Vietnam War, the first being a dawn

service held at the AVFNM in Canberra. Other services were held at 11 a.m. local time across Australia and in Malaysia.

The last service was held in Scotland at Birkhill Cemetery, where LCPL Robert Buchan was laid to rest with his mum and dad. The Veterans Motorcycle Club (VMC) Tasmanian South Chapter volunteered to visit the six graves located at Cornelian Bay, and conduct the remembrance service for the fallen men.

The event was also attended by minister, Guy Barnett, and Ella Haddad; Mr John Hardy, CEO of RSL Tasmania; Mr Terry Roe, JP, Vietnam Veterans' Association Australia state president, Tasmania Branch; Legatee Peter Hodge, President of Legacy Tasmania; Mr Graham Hilton OAM, TPI Federation Australia; Commander Mark Tandy, CSC and Bar, RAN Commanding Officer Navy HQ Tasmania; Lieutenant Colonel Neil Greirson, Senior ADF Officer Tasmania; Warrant Officer Steven Zantuck, representing Wing-Commander Andrew Johnson; Chaplain Chris Bowditch; WO2 Stuart Jeffrey AAB Tasmania; and also families of fallen service personnel.

During each service, wreaths were laid at the graves of those who lost their lives in Vietnam. A lunch was also hosted by the Premier in Parliament House, where Little Pattie addressed the group and talked about her time in Vietnam and reflections upon the Battle of Long Tan.

The way Vietnam veterans were received in Australia upon their return is still a moment of regret and shame by Australians. Our soldiers were only following orders. They were not to blame and we thank them for their service.

On 18 August, we will participate in a national commemorative service on Vietnam Veterans' Day. It will mark the 50th anniversary of the proclamation to end Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Many of those who served still walk among us. They also hold their experiences close to their chests and they should be honoured for their service.

At the Vietnam Veterans' vigil, I was honoured to give the introduction of the Ode, the Last Post and Rouse, and to lay a wreath on behalf of the Tasmanian Labor Party at the grave of Raymond Butterworth.

He passed away on 17 June 1968. He was only 18 when he made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. It struck me as I laid the wreath that my own son is 18 years old. He is very much a young man in a grown man's body. What an amazing sacrifice. Other wreaths were laid for Gary Cashion and Thomas Grose. The Ode was provided by Mr Peter Taylor, Vietnam veteran and member of the VMC. The farewell was by the president of the VMC Tasmania southern chapter, Mr Richard Smith, BM.

I thank the VMC Tasmania southern chapter for organising such a professional, beautiful and moving event. To quote from the words of the VMC president, Mr Richard Smith:

Goodbye Raymond Butterworth, Gary Cashion and Thomas Grose. Thank you for your service to your country. One day we might meet in the great beyond. Till then, rest in peace.

**The House adjourned at 6.47 p.m.**

## Appendix 1

# RESPONSE TO PETITION

## Petition No. 3 of 2023 House of Assembly

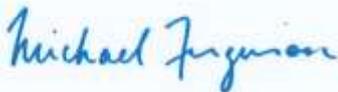
The petitioners draw to the attention of the House:

- Tasmanian rents are at crisis point and unaffordable for many, the Housing wait list continues to grow with little hope in sight for those most in need, and unchecked short-stay accommodation has ripped significant housing stock from the rental market.
- There simply are not enough homes to go around, but some are just being left empty. TasWater data shows there are more than 2 700 homes sitting empty across Hobart, Glenorchy and Launceston alone.
- The Tenant's Union of Tasmania and a collective of community sector organisations has called on the Rockliff Government to introduce a vacant property levy, as a way of encouraging owners to return empty homes to the rental market. This is tried and tested policy which would have zero impact on everyday Tasmanians.
- Thousands of Tasmanians are struggling to find a home or pay their rent. Any increase in available rental properties would deliver more homes and ease rental pressure.

The petitioners therefore request the House pass legislation to introduce a levy on vacant properties to increase the immediate supply of housing as governments have in Vancouver, Scotland, Ireland and Melbourne.

**GOVERNMENT POSITION:****RESPONSE:**

- The Government does not support a new tax on vacant residential properties in Tasmania.
- The Government is delivering a broad range of measures to boost housing supply, support home ownership and increase private rental opportunities, including:
  - building 10 000 new social and affordable homes by 2032;
  - promoting land supply through the Residential Land Rebate Scheme;
  - expanding the Private Rental Incentives program and extending the MyHome shared equity program;
  - providing land tax exemptions for properties converted from short-term visitor accommodation to long-term rentals and new homes used as long-term rentals;
  - providing stamp duty concessions for homes up to \$600 000 for Tasmanians buying their first home and pensioners downsizing to a new home; and
  - providing a \$30 000 First Home Owner Grant for Tasmanians to build their first home.



Hon Michael Ferguson MP  
Treasurer

Date: 6 July 2023