PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 23 September 2025

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Contents

TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2025 1

STATEMENT BY PREMIER 1

ABSENCE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MINISTERS AT QUESTION TIME 1

QUESTIONS 1

MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - PROJECT DELIVERY 1
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM PROJECT - MANAGEMENT 2
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM PROJECT - PRIVATE INVESTMENT OPTIONS 3
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 4
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES BUDGET 4
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 5
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - TABLING OF COST ESTIMATE 6
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 6
QANTASLINK REVIEW OF HOBART BASE OPERATIONS 7
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - OVERSIGHT 8
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 9
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO TPC REPORT 9
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 10
NURSES - WORKFORCE MAINTENANCE INTO THE FUTURE 11
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY 12
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - COST 12
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 14
SALMON INDUSTRY - USE OF FLORFENICOL IN EMERGENCY SITUATION 14
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 15
SALMON INDUSTRY - CHANGES 16
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 17
LONGFORD POLICE HOUSE - TRANSITION INTO NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE 18
SALMON INDUSTRY - MANAGEMENT 19
UTAS UNAUTHORISED HUMAN REMAINS - CORONIAL INVESTIGATION 20
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION 21
SIMON BEHRAKIS - REGISTERING AS LOBBYIST 21
REGIONAL ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES 22

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS 22

MOUNT ROAD-BASS HIGHWAY INTERSECTION - RED-LIGHT CAMERA 22
BRIDPORT - EZZY PARK FIRE STATION DEVELOPMENT 23
TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION TREATMENT IN TASMANIA 23
LAUNCESTON BENEVOLENCE SOCIETY 23
HOUSING WAIT LIST 24
DODGES FERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL - REDEVELOPMENT 24
PUBLIC RHEUMATOLOGISTS 24
WOOLMERS ESTATE - UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE 24

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICAL OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 51) 25

FIRST READING 25

POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 50) 25

FIRST READING 25

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER 25

AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS - ROYAL ASSENT 25

MOTION 25

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTEGRITY 25

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS 26

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER - INAUGURAL SPEECH - MR VERMEY 26
MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE 26
BACKING TASMANIAN JOBS 26
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 49) 35
SECOND READING 35
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 49) 43
THIRD READING 43
RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) BILL 2025 (NO. 40) 44
SECOND READING 44
RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) ACT 2025 (NO. 40) 51
SECOND READING 51
RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) BILL 2025 (NO. 40) 57
THIRD READING 57
DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 46) 57
SECOND READING 57
DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (NO. 46) 79
IN COMMITTEE 79
DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS ACT 2021 84
THIRD READING 84
JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (EXPLOSIVES OFFENCES) BILL 2025 (NO. 47) 84
SECOND READING 84
ADJOURNMENT 98
ANSWER TO QUESTION - LONGFORD POLICE STATION - NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE 98
SHELTER TASMANIA - 50TH ANNIVERSARY 99
HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI - 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF NUCLEAR BOMBINGS 100
PETER MURPHY - TRIBUTE 101
FORCED ADOPTIONS IN TASMANIA 103
JINGLES THE GREYHOUND - TASMANIAN GREYHOUND COMMUNITY 104
TASMANIA'S VISITOR ECONOMY 106
DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK 107
BUSHY PARK WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL 108
KING ISLAND - COMMON ISSUES 109
A TASMANIAN LIFELINE 110
ILLAWARRA ROAD, LONGFORD - LANDOWNERS 111
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMEMORATION OF TFS VOLUNTEERS 113
LANDFILL SITES - AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT INTO MANAGEMENT 114

Tuesday 23 September 2025

The Speaker, **Mrs Petrusma**, took the Chair at 10.00 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People, and read Prayers.

STATEMENT BY PREMIER

Absence of Legislative Council Ministers at Question Time

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the message from the House requesting leave for the Legislative Council businesses to attend Question Time in this place has not yet been considered. Therefore, Mr Duigan, Ms Palmer and Mr Vincent will be absent from the Chamber for Question Time today. In their absence, I will take questions on the ministers' portfolio areas.

QUESTIONS

Macquarie Point Stadium - Project Delivery

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.02 a.m.]

Labor supports the stadium, and we understand it is critical to securing the AFL and AFLW teams that Tasmania has fought for, for generations. We know it represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our state that must be realised. However, that doesn't mean that Tasmanians aren't deeply worried about your ability to manage major infrastructure projects after the *Spirit*s fiasco. We share those concerns. Your mismanagement of the stadium project from day one and failure to address the valid concerns of Tasmanians about the cost and delivery of the project has undermined public confidence. With your track record on financial mismanagement and infrastructure stuff-ups, what certainty can you give to Tasmanians that the project will be delivered on time and on budget?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for their question and for reinforcing their bipartisan support for the stadium yesterday. I expect all members of this House to keep our government accountable for its stated commitments on delivery.

We were very open and transparent last week, when it came to our response to the TPC's report, and the cost increase from $945 million to $1.13 billion. Our view is that this is very affordable for an infrastructure project that will bring jobs, growth and excitement to the Tasmanian economy. It will bring with it our Tasmanian Devils who are already established and already doing great work within our community.

When it comes to participation of Auskick, for example, up some 40 per cent so, we have more sport time, less screen time with our young people playing footy, not unlike young people's increasing participation in basketball.

This is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to the development of the project. I look forward to the discussion that we will have in this place where I have stated that parliamentarians will have the final say on this particular project.

This project simply must go ahead. We cannot afford not to proceed with the stadium infrastructure, and the sooner we do this the better. What I am concerned about is the enabling legislation in Queensland that allows significant infrastructure development, including a stadium required for the 2032 Olympics that might see Tasmanian workers sucked out of our state and into Queensland to build their stadium. I don't want that. They should be staying here, building our stadium - not only building our stadium, but our future as well.

I look forward to the member's continued support. I expect scrutiny on this project from all sides of parliament. I look forward to the day when we are enjoying the footy, watching our Tassie Devils in brand new infrastructure that will bring with it investment in hotels -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium Project - Management

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.06 a.m.]

Given your track record on major infrastructure delivery, what assurances can you give Tasmanians that the project will be delivered on time and on budget?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The Premier has the call. All interjections will cease.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I am very happy to talk about our track record, when it comes to new schools, when it comes to rebuilding the Royal Hobart Hospital -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, the Premier has the call. If you've asked a question, allow him to answer because none of us knows what he is about to say.

Mr ROCKLIFF - when it comes to the Mersey Community Hospital and the upgrades there, when it comes to the new antenatal facility in the Northwest Regional Hospital, when it comes to school upgrades right across Tasmania, and when it comes to health facility upgrades across Tasmania.

When it comes to key infrastructure projects, yes, there have been delays with some, and some could have been managed better. Since we intervened, however, and got the *Spirit*s project back on track - we have all the pylons -

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Macquarie Point Stadium Project - Private Investment Options

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.07 a.m.]

Tasmanians support the AFL teams and the vision, but they're deeply worried about the price tag associated with it and the debt your government is asking them to carry to see it built. The cost of the stadium has already ballooned from $715 million to $1.13 billion, and you previously promised to cap the state government contribution at $375 million.

The government previously said there was strong positive interest from consortiums, construction firms, and major investors to partner with the government on the stadium project, yet they have chosen to push ahead with the taxpayer-only model. Are you open to revisiting private investment options to shield Tasmanians from further financial risk?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, the Premier has the call.

Mr Rockliff - I thought you were pro-government investment.

The SPEAKER - Order. All interjections will cease. Premier, you are inciting interjections.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, which I take very seriously, of course. The greater the government investment in the stadia-enabling infrastructure is, the more control we will have over the project, its outcomes, and if you like, the 'clip of the ticket,' I suppose, when it's all in our hands.

Where the private investment will come in, Mr Willie, will be in the hotels, the hospitality venues - in which significant investment will be needed to provide for more bed nights for interstate people to come and experience the footy or entertainment or whatever the case may be, it's associated with the stadium infrastructure, as they do in other states of Australia. As I said the other day, they've managed to do this in Adelaide, Perth and Townsville, with enabling legislation to create the Olympic stadia infrastructure and surely we can do this in Tasmania and we will need to do it with strong bipartisan support, thank you very much.

My view is that this is enabling infrastructure, publicly funded, will attract private investment and with it, jobs. We need to maintain the momentum of our 3.7 per cent unemployment, which is the lowest ever on record, and 51,000 jobs have been created since 2014 -

Mr Willie - This is about the stadium price and you managing the costs.

Mr ROCKLIFF - so we need to keep that momentum going. We've got large infrastructure projects that have been built over the course of the last decade. We've had the Royal Hobart Hospital which is a $700 million-plus investment. We've had the Bridgewater Bridge, an almost $800 million investment. This will be a billion-dollar investment or more,

but a key project along the way. The Royal Hobart Hospital was completed, they got cracking with the Bridgewater Bridge and now we will get cracking with the stadium, all the way keeping people employed and attracting further investment for Tasmanians as well.

Mr WILLIE - People are worried about the costs, Premier, and your ability to manage the costs.

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Every major project will have to be managed -

The SPEAKER - The honourable Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - The Premier went nowhere near that previous question, which was: is he open to revisiting private investment to help manage the costs? That's what Tasmanians are worried about.

The SPEAKER - That does go back to the original question, Premier.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank the honourable member for his question and I believe I did answer it when I said that the government-funded enabling infrastructure will bring commercial opportunities from Macquarie Point. That is an opportunity to pay down some of that debt, but the private investment will come as a result of the enabling infrastructure, as it has done in other states of Australia.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Impact on Public Services Budget

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.12 a.m.]

The Tasmanian Planning Commission's recommendation about building the stadium was blindingly clear: it should not be built and would have an overall negative social and economic impact on Tasmania. The $2 billion the stadium would add to state debt means Tasmanians would be paying $50 million every year for 30 years to service it, all for a stadium that doesn't fit and we don't need. You promised not to increase taxes to pay for your stadium, so which services are you going to cut to cover the astronomical cost? Will you be straight with Tasmanians and upper House members and table your plan for service cuts before parliament debates the stadium order?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. We will not be raising taxes to fund the enabling infrastructure of the stadium and will not be cutting services to fund the stadium. We will be managing our budget within our means, stadium or no stadium.

I've been very open, honest and transparent around the size of the public service. We need the right size public service. I've mentioned a figure of 2500 positions that you could say need to be reduced over time to get our public service in a sustainable position. It has grown a lot over the course of the last few years, particularly through COVID, and has exceeded population growth, so it is sensible to have a measured approach to ensuring we have the right size public service to deliver the services that Tasmanians quite rightly deserve.

We will also invest in the stadium to create more economic growth and opportunity for all Tasmanians. When you have economic growth and opportunity and jobs, you are then enabled better to fund essential services that Tasmanians care about through the increase in land taxes and there is lot of hotel investment, so that supports the bottom line and then we can make key decisions about where we should be funding the essential services that I know you care about, as do I.

I thank the Planning Commission for its work, and the Planning Commission did say that the stadium is constructable. You've been asking me questions, quite rightly, about noise mitigation, traffic flow, safety and other matters and all those issues can be mitigated. That is what the report said.

Mr Abetz - All doable.

Mr ROCKLIFF - All doable, so that's good.

Dr Woodruff - That wasn't the question they were asked. They were asked if it was the right thing to do.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I thank them for their work. My view is it is the right thing to do for Tasmania.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier mentioned the 2500 State Service cuts and that goes to the heart of my question. Premier, can you provide a timeline for the cuts and the cuts by department, and whether you've issued any new instructions to department heads about those cuts and when they need to be achieved by?

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff, that's quite a broad question.

Dr WOODRUFF - Specifically, about when they're going to happen.

The SPEAKER - That is very broad. The honourable Premier might want to add further to his question because that is a very broad supplementary.

Mr ROCKLIFF - As I said previously, these are two separate issues. There is the issue of managing our budget within our means to ensure we can deliver the services that Tasmanians deserve and indeed need, and that will be our focus ensuring that Tasmanians have a sustainable budget. We're working through the budget now. It will be delivered in November. We have a multi-partisan matters budget panel to which you can contribute, and thanks very much to the Treasurer for leading that work and that engagement with the crossbench. There is still an open invitation to the Labor Party to attend that as well and not boycott the budget panel. We are open to ideas in terms of ensuring a good strong budget.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Tabling of Cost Estimate

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.18 a.m.]

The parliament unanimously passed a motion calling on your government to table the total estimated cost of the stadium, including any conditions before a vote. Will you respect the will of the parliament and release these costings before tabling a motion to approve your stadium? Do you commit to providing the total estimated cost of a 100 per cent designed stadium and all conditions?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. The answer is that we be providing the latest information about costs in line with the motion that was passed in the parliament, so our best estimate at the time will be presented to the parliament.

Supplementary Question

Ms JOHNSTON - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms JOHNSTON - In relation to the last part of that question, the Premier indicated in his response he'd be tabling the latest costs. Given that it's been indicated previously at 70 per cent designed, will you be tabling 100 per cent? Will you have the final design costed before tabling any motion for order for approval?

Mr ROCKLIFF - There is a 70 per cent design there now. It's a design and construct contract, so it will be difficult to have 100 per cent when it comes to design and construct, but, as I say, the latest estimates will be provided for the parliament to make a choice.

QantasLink Review of Hobart Base Operations

Mr O'BYRNE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.20 a.m.]

QantasLink has confirmed it's reviewing its Hobart flight crew base, putting about 30 local jobs at risk. Local pilots and cabin crew are understandably very worried about their future. Many of the Hobart-based crew have been long-term employees of the airline. They're either local Tasmanians or people who have moved here and established lives and families. If the base is closed and the current Hobart staff wish to continue working, they will need to either move interstate or commute to and from the mainland. This will not only impact these workers and their families but the wider local economy. It's clear this decision over the medium- to long-term will result in skilled workers leaving Tasmania. The reliability of QantasLink flights to and from Hobart, and the island itself, may also be impacted. What are you doing to go into bat for these hard-working Tasmanians, and how can we convince QantasLink not to go down this path?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I believe it was towards the end of last week when we started receiving emails from Qantas pilots and others. I wrote back to one gentleman almost straightaway in terms of understanding their concern and anxiety regarding the announcement to review operations at the Hobart base.

The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality and Events has written to the CEO of QantasLink regarding the announcement to review operations at the Hobart base, and a decision is yet to be made. We need to be in there fighting for local jobs, as is the point of your question.

It is the Tasmanian government's very firm position that Tasmanian families and jobs stay in our state through the continued operation of a Hobart base. A number of affected staff have advised me that discontinuing the Hobart base operations would likely mean that the 15 pilots and 15 crew members who call Tasmania home, the point of your question, would be required to relocate interstate. This would obviously have significant impact, not only on the local economy but importantly on those families as well. It's obviously a great concern to me and many other members in this place. I know there's been some engagement across the Chamber and interacting with people who have expressed their view and who are mainly affected.

It is reassuring that Qantas is appropriately consulting with the 30 staff members based in Hobart who would be affected by any decision. The minister has asked that, of course, he's regularly updated on the progress of this consultation. This is an island state, and access to our state is so critically important, in terms of capacity, in terms of the tourism industry and everything else but these matters that have been raised by local people affect local lives and we will be very strongly advocating, and the minister and I will be doing that, on behalf of employees of Qantas.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Oversight

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.23 a.m.]

We support the Tasmanian Football Club and a once in a generation opportunity to join the AFL, but Tasmanians don't have any confidence in your government's ability to deliver major projects. We've seen what you've done with the *Spirits* fiasco. Your government made a secret bailout payment to the Finnish shipbuilder to the tune of $80 million. The cost of the berth at Devonport is now $400 million over budget and there's a $500 million lost economic opportunity for every year the new ships are delayed from service. Tasmanians are worried the stadium could end up being a similar story. What specific project oversight measures will you put in place to ensure the stadium doesn't become a *Spirit* sequel?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for your question. I have a series of projects delivered since 2014 many in your electorate, Dr Broad which you should be very happy with -

Mr Willie - It is about project oversight.

The SPEAKER - Order, the honourable Premier has the call.

Mr ROCKLIFF - I am very happy to talk about the Mersey Hospital, the north-west Mercy hospital, Devonport High School, Latrobe High School, Parklands High School, Smithton High School, and the new Penguin High School - which Mr Jaensch oversaw as well and the child and family learning centres -

Mr Willie - Stop running down the clock and answer the question.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Well, I was -

Mr Willie - Answer the question.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order, the honourable Premier still has over two minutes. None of us knows what he is about to say. I do ask the interjections to stop so that the honourable Premier can answer the question please.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you. I will resist further inciting from the honourable member, Dr Broad. Significant oversight, including infrastructure, stage, gate, reviews and quality assurance will be key elements of the construction program. Of course, managing costs is a key concern for us because infrastructure projects right across the nation and indeed the world, of course, have challenges keeping within the original cost. Every day of delay causes increases in construction costs and so that's why we need to be very studious - if I could put it that way - in terms of getting the planning right, in terms of the project management, of course.

That is why we need the project to pass through the parliament. As soon as we have that, we can get on with the project and mitigate against any delays which does cost the Tasmanian taxpayers more.

Supplementary Question

Mr WILLIE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr WILLIE - Will the honourable Premier adopt a similar approach to the wharf at Devonport when it went off track with the governance arrangements and the oversight that was put around that project for the stadium at the start?

The SPEAKER - You did go and touch on a new area there, because the Premier did outline -

Mr WILLIE - I asked what specific - he didn't really -

The SPEAKER - Well, he indicated he was doing regular reviews and managing costs and why the project is important, so he did outline many measures in regard to it.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Government Response to TPC Report

Dr WOODRUFF question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

10.27 a.m.

Since the Tasmanian Planning Commission recommended against building the stadium, you have been pretending they did not consider all the benefits to Tasmanians. Let's set the record straight. You're the author of the stadium assessment process. You created the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) and chose their CEO and board. You decided to enact the Project of State Significance (POSS) process. Your government chose the TPC panel members. Your chosen panel took all the stadium's supposed social and economic benefits that the MPDC gave them and assessed them against the $945 million cost they said the stadium would cost to build.

The TPC resoundingly rejected it, saying that the stadium, 'Represents a fall in the collective economic welfare of Tasmanian residents.' Despite all that control, you still couldn't manufacture a process that ended in a recommendation of support for the stadium. Premier, when will you get the message? This would be a very, very bad move for Tasmania.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding is the honourable member David O'Byrne created the Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

Mr O'Byrne - Well, ultimately parliament did, but I was the minister, yes.

Mr ROCKLIFF - There you go. Well done. I commend Chair Kim Evans and Anne Beech, for their work. We just have to agree to disagree, honourable member. You have been very strident in your views, as has your team against the stadium -

Mr Bayley - As has the Planning Commission.

Mr ROCKLIFF - You have made it very, very clear. You made it very clear to Tasmanians both in the 2024 election and, particularly, the 2025 election where I saw a lot of green triangles that were not about saving the forests or no dams, but about no stadium. That was your focus, and you made very clear to the people of Tasmania that you detest the stadium and will never vote for it; made it very clear. However, the people voted, and you didn't get any more seats - slight swing towards you, maybe, I'd have to look at the figures - but as the majority of parliamentarians here went to the election on a pro-stadium agenda, parliament will have its say.

As I have said, I thank the TPC for their work. I was pleased to see that the report said that the stadium is constructible, for the reasons outlined before. I don't believe, however, that the benefits overlaying the contributions of $240 million from the federal government and $360 million from the AFL, or the social and economic benefits the Tasmania Devils will produce across the state were taken into account. The investment that will come from ensuring that we have the available bed nights for our visitor economy, wasn't taken into account of the overall economic benefit.

I have a right to disagree with the TPC's report, they did their work and I thank them very much for that, but ultimately, parliament will have it say. The POSS process wasn't one that I originally proposed, it was the Major Projects legislation or planning pathway that we chose. We went into minority government, and the POSS became the vehicle. I was worried about timelines, which is why we put forward the enabling legislation. We had an election, so the timelines converged and now we are back into the POSS process.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Dr WOODRUFF - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Dr WOODRUFF - The Premier talked about the fact that he will build it regardless, and that is his clear decision. Premier, will you stop pretending that there's something wrong with the Planning Commission's assessment? They did a thorough assessment and considered every single thing the proponent provided to them. Will you stop pretending and just be honest with Tasmanians that you will build the stadium regardless of the cost or the harms?

The SPEAKER - That supplementary question was quite broad. If the Premier has any further information he wants to add, he may. Your original question was broad as well, so the Premier is allowed a bit of latitude in his response.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thank you honourable Speaker. As I say, I have every right to disagree. I don't believe that the Greens have always supported the TPC's recommendations in

your time as well. We are elected members of parliament, we represent constituencies. You've represented yours very vigorously, as I have mine, albeit that there has been some discussion about the stadium, et cetera. Every step of the way, though, it's been about creating economic opportunity and aspiration for Tasmanians, including the AFL deal that required a stadium to bring the team we've fought for, for many decades. We want the team to be ongoing and sustainable. This is an investment, not just for the next 5 years, but for the next 50-plus years.

The SPEAKER - The Premier's time for answering the question has expired.

Nurses - Workforce Maintenance into the Future

Prof RAZAY question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[10.33 a.m.]

It has been reported recently that emergency departments and hospitals have up to 25 per cent fewer nurses on duty than is required. This raises concern about the impact on existing nursing staff as it can lead to increased burnout and sickness. According to a recent report, it is estimated that there will be a shortage of over 70,000 nurses in 2035, which will have a major impact on healthcare delivery. Can you please provide assurance to the House and to Tasmanians of what is being done about improving the supply, retention, and distribution of the nursing workforce to meet future healthcare demands?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I also want to sincerely thank all of our hardworking doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics and health professionals across the state, for their tremendous efforts in caring for Tasmanians.

Nursing is an important part of our healthcare system and the number of nurses in the system has increased by over 1954 FTE, an increase of 58 per cent since March 2025. There is no doubt, however, that there is pressure and more work to do. I assure you that I am committed to working through these issues and to listening to our healthcare professionals.

I had a round table with representatives and members of the Australian Nurses and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) on Friday at Launceston General Hospital. It was an extremely productive meeting and I value the information and all the different ideas those healthcare professionals provided me in that setting. I have committed to go away with all that information to see what we can do with those ideas.

I have also committed to undertaking that same process in the north-west and the south. We will come back to those healthcare professionals with some ideas on what we may be able to do in the short and medium term, as well as our long-term plans.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Parliamentary Scrutiny

Mr WILLIE question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[10.36 a.m.]

The stadium is a huge opportunity for Tasmanians to support our own football team, the Devils, on and off the field, but it doesn't come without risk. After the *Spirit*s fiasco, cost blowouts at Devonport, and secret bailouts, Tasmanians don't trust the government on major projects.

Today I will be tabling a motion that refers the Macquarie Point Stadium project to the Public Accounts Committee for ongoing scrutiny. Should it receive the approval it needs from this House, the parliament will keep a close eye on whether the project is staying on budget and schedule, how to keep costs down and whether the oversight is up to scratch for such a large project. Will you back Labor's motion to give Tasmanians proper accountability on the stadium project?

Dr Woodruff - Let's vote against it. It is such a terrible deal. Just stop it now. Sorry, that was to the leader of the Labor Party.

Members interjecting.

Mr Rockliff - My apologies. You didn't even support the POSS Process originally though, did you?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. Through the Chair please

ANSWER

I stand to be corrected, but I thought there was already a Parliamentary Accounts Committee -

Mr Willie - It's finished.

Mr ROCKLIFF - Right. Yes.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Cost

Mr BAYLEY question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[10.37 a.m.]

The Premier has now admitted stadium costs have risen to $1.13 billion. It's the fourth blowout since the promise to not spend a 'red cent more' than $375 million. Treasurer, your government has consistently misled Tasmanians about what this stadium will cost them. Both the Tasmanian Planning Commission report and the Treasury's Parliamentary Financial Outlook were clear, the cost estimates are optimistic and there's a significant risk of further blowouts.

Worse still, the $1.13 billion price tag doesn't include key elements, such as the uncosted conditions, including stormwater and onsite remediation; additional site works; improving footpaths; the car park; sound abatement for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra; and a transport system, including event buses. All before the plans have been finalised, the contracts have gone to tender, and a shovel has broken the ground. Meanwhile, construction costs are rising.

As Treasurer, how will you pay for it? With essential services already underfunded, how much is too much for another stadium in Tasmania?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question. Part of his question was about misleading, yet his question was misleading because what the Premier said, and it's very clear, is that there would be a $375 million contribution and then the shortfall would be met by borrowings.

Mr Bayley - Who borrows the money?

Members interjecting.

Mr ABETZ - That was clear in the business case, and to deliberately mislead the Tasmanian public -

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I ask that the Treasurer be allowed to provide his response, please. He still has another 2 minutes and 20 seconds. You can then ask a supplementary if it's relevant. Thank you.

Mr ABETZ - To then suggest that it was only going to cost $375 million, when we fully know that the federal Labor government is willing to contribute $240 million and the AFL is willing to contribute $15 million to the capital cost. When you deliberately take that out of the question, it indicates a desire to mislead, so please don't accuse my Premier of misleading the people of Tasmania.

One of the biggest costs this stadium will face is delays and the new figure, I would imagine, has embedded in it tens of millions, if not $100 million, because of the delays, so the quicker we can get this venture under way, the cheaper it will be, and that has to be something that we all recognise in this place. Delay means extra cost.

I also inform the honourable gentleman that there is a huge difference in budgetary matters between capital expenditure and operational expenditure, and to try to intermingle the two is, with respect, either highly ignorant, which I don't suspect from the Deputy Leader of the Greens, and that is why I will say it is misleading because the honourable gentleman does know the difference between capital expenditure and operational expenditure, and to suggest that somehow capital expenditure can be put into the operational budget and then be there day after day is simply not the case.

Dr Woodruff - The $50 million a year we have to pay on the debt is part of the operational?

The SPEAKER - Dr Woodruff.

Mr ABETZ - What the parliament and the people of Tasmania can be assured of is that we will deliver the stadium for the huge benefits it will provide to the people of Tasmania.

The SPEAKER - The honourable Treasurer's time has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr BAYLEY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr BAYLEY - The Treasurer talked about the $240 million from the federal government but that doesn't mention the stadium, and that's for urban renewal. Both the Pre-Election Financial Outlook (PEFO) and the Planning Commission raised significant questions about whether that money will be forthcoming and raise it as a budget risk. Have you sought assurances from the federal government that that money will come, even though there is no housing as part of your development and the Planning Commission is explicit that this is not an urban renewal development?

Dr Woodruff - Good question.

Mr ABETZ - Somebody had to say it was a good question, even if it was the Leader of the Greens. Can I say that the Prime Minister has been very clear in relation to this. He's been asked about this on a number of occasions on Tasmanian radio and interviews and he has said that the money federal Labor is making available is for the precinct, and, of course, the stadium is a fundamental part of the precinct.

Salmon Industry - Use of Florfenicol in Emergency Situation

Mr GEORGE question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[10.43 a.m.]

The salmon industry has declared an emergency intended to justify the use of a new antibiotic, florfenicol, in large quantities, rather than proceed through the normal approval channels with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and despite the introduction of a new vaccine. Will the minister inform the House just how long this so-called emergency will last in the salmon industry? What action has this government taken to monitor the use of the antibiotic and, crucially, its impact on wild fish, the marine environment, naturally occurring bacteria and the benthic health of our waterways and marine ecosystems, including whether a baseline survey will be conducted before the industry uses the new antibiotic?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and his continued interest in relation to the salmon industry.

Mr Winter - He gave you your policy, didn't he?

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable minister has the call.

Mr PEARCE - You mentioned the use of vaccines so I will start on that. Thirty years of collaboration with industry has seen that technology consistently evolves. It's encouraging to hear the industry has proactively vaccinated their fish in the south-eastern part of the state. It's a great example of continued improvement in that industry and, in fact, biosecurity management. Government will continue to work with industry on further improvements to ensure that best biosecurity practices and farming methodologies are maintained.

I applaud the industry in relation to what they've done to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to combating *Piscirickettsia salmonis* in our salmon farms. The Tasmanian salmonid industry, with support from government and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, has invested heavily in research to develop that vaccine in the industry. However, and I'm sure the honourable member will understand this, no vaccine can be regarded as completely protective when it comes to the number of factors that exist within those environments. Government will continue to work with industry on further vaccine improvements to ensure that the best possible biosecurity and fish health outcomes are maintained.

When it comes to the use of florfenicol, this has been identified as an important future tool in the disease management toolbox for salmon farming operators in the southern part of the state. This is based on information currently extant in relation to the current oxytetracycline use and the efficacy of that and off-label usage of florfenicol, which you mentioned in your question. When it comes to the approval of off-label therapeutants, that is a matter for the APVMA.

In respect to florfenicol, this approval process has been applied for by a company called Abbey Laboratories Proprietary Limited and that is a private matter. This is an independent federal body. Any decision relating to the ongoing need for the application is one for that organisation and not for myself. However, what I will say is that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment will continue to cooperate with the APVMA in terms of provision of advice relative to local context.

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Mr GEORGE - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GEORGE - Minister, I wonder if you wouldn't mind answering the question that I asked. How long will this emergency last and what action has the government taken to

monitor the use of the antibiotic and its impact on wild fish, the marine environment, naturally occurring bacteria and the benthic health of our waterways and marine systems?

Mr PEARCE - In relation to the supplementary question, I cannot predict the future. However, what I can do is ensure that that industry is armed with the therapeutants that they need to combat a mass mortality event in the future. That's my job. My job is to ensure that animal husbandry is maintained at all times and best practices are maintained by those agencies. I'm also required to maintain the thresholds from within respective levels of varying conditions within that growing environment.

When it comes to APVMA approvals, that is a federal independent authority and is not part of my control. I can't answer anything in relation to that. What I will say is that the role of government is to ensure that industry meets those biosecurity measures and those duties and we will respond in a timely manner if there's a subsequent occurrence.

The SPEAKER - The honourable minister's time for answering the question has expired.

Salmon Industry - Changes

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[10.49 a.m.]

Tasmanians are confused and I think perhaps people in this parliament are confused. Can you please specifically outline for Tasmanians the changes that are being made to the salmon industry, because it just doesn't stack up. It's like you - or maybe the Premier - have been telling the community, industry and the crossbench completely different things. Tasmanians want to know what the industry is and isn't allowed to do. Can they expand or not? Has anything actually changed? When will these vaccines take effect, and will the alternative antibiotic actually be here in time? There's a real concern. What actions will your government take, specifically if there are issues again this summer? Will you take the lead and be accountable for the government response, because last year the government's management of that event was a complete mess?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. In relation to the pause on expansion, which is the first part of your question that I will cover first part in the answer. The government's recent announcement to pause any spatial expansion of the industry while this study takes place demonstrates that we are listening to those in the community who do have concerns.

What does the pause mean, is the question. We've said that there will be a pause on any spatial expansion of the industry for the duration of the independent study. This is essentially providing that certainty and confidence around the continuing operation of sites in line with established regulations.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition can ask a supplementary. I ask that the minister is heard, please.

Mr PEARCE - The intent of the pause is that there will be no increase in the total lease area subject to salmon farming operations while the independent study is being undertaken. While the pause is in place, authorisation to farm salmon within dormant leases will not be granted unless a process was already being actively pursued under consideration.

Authorisation to deploy pens in the north of Storm Bay will not be granted. Consistent with our commitments to the Salmon Industry Plan 2023, government will continue the planning process to reclassify unoccupied marine-farming zones to remove finfish as a permitted species for culturing within those zones. The existing rights of lessees and the planning intent of proposals have already been granted in that planning approval process and will be honoured.

Industry operations and production is already subject to strict regulations. The government will not impose arbitrary limits on operations within existing sites, whether those operations relate to the number of pens, the number of fish that are contained within those pens, or overall production levels.

We will not interfere with the decision-making of the independent Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) when it comes to regulating production levels. That is the EPA's responsibility, and we will not interfere with that process.

We won't disregard the chief veterinary officer's advice when it comes to the regulation of biosecurity and stocking densities. We will not disregard the advice of regulators and direct farmers to slaughter -

The SPEAKER - The minister's time for answering the question has expired.

Supplementary Question

Ms FINLAY - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Ms FINLAY - I am going to ask a supplementary question because the minister's on a wind-up here. I'm going to ask him what has changed - to allow him to finish, because he didn't finish that answer. Specifically, the management of the event over summer was a complete mess by this government. I'm asking you to put on the record now: in the terrible event that there is another event this summer, will you take the lead and be accountable for the government's response?

The SPEAKER - That does relate to the original question.

Mr PEARCE - No one in this place, no Tasmanian, including me, including this side, including the community, including the industry, want to see another mass mortality event.

The focus on animal husbandry remains pivotal to that industry, and they recognise that. Their recent language around that and the use of more tools in their toolbox; that is, the

emergency use of off-label florfenicol as a therapeutic measure that they can possibly apply to reduce that or remove that risk from the environment, I welcome that. I welcome any move that will prevent a mass mortality event. That's what government is for: standing by industry and helping them so that they can farm through subsequent events, mitigating risk and providing support.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Longford Police House - Transition into Neighbourhood House

Ms BADGER question to TREASURER, Mr ABETZ

[1.55 a.m.]

There have been long running calls for the Northern Midlands Council to acquire the empty Longford Police House to transform it into a much-needed neighbourhood house. In Evandale the vacant police facilities could be used to expand stretched GP services, but instead of making these publicly owned buildings available for core community services, it appears they're going to be offered up to the highest private bidder.

You say you're not going to cut services or raise taxes to fund the stadium, so are you planning to flog off public land and publicly owned building assets? What do you say to regional communities who will miss out on essential services when you sell off this public infrastructure? Given the TPC couldn't consider these costs, will you table, by the end of the week, the list of all public buildings and public land parcels we understand Treasury have been asked to identify over the past 18 months to be sold off?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, in relation to the specifics of the honourable member's question, I will have to get some information on notice to her. Can I indicate that, as a matter of general business, it is usual for government to seek to sell police houses, teacher houses, et cetera, and then reinvest that money for new police houses and new teacher houses when and as required.

I'm not sure whether the specifics of what the honourable member is asking relates to such a situation, but what I will seek to do is come back later today and provide an answer to the honourable member.

Ms Badger - There was a second part to that question as well, thank you Treasurer. I will reread it. Will you table by the end of the week the list of all public buildings and public land parcels that we understand Treasury has been asked to identify over the past 18 months to be sold?

The SPEAKER - I believe the honourable Treasurer took that on notice, yes? The honourable Treasurer has taken it on notice.

Salmon Industry - Management

Ms FINLAY question to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and WATER, Mr PEARCE

[10.57 a.m.]

It doesn't stack up. What specifically are the terms of any and all agreements between you, between the Premier, between the government and Mr George and/or the Greens on the salmon industry? Tasmanians deserve a straight answer. What agreements have been made? What deals have been done? Have you had legal advice? Tasmanians need to know, and I remind you of your commitment to being open and transparent. Now is the time to tell the truth.

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. As I have previously stated in this place, and as I've previously stated in many crossbench and opposition briefings, the purpose for this study is to ensure viability and continued professionalism within that industry.

We will maintain our push on completing that study and providing advice to government on providing the regulation information that government needs to make our industry the very best industry that it can be, to ensure that when anybody picks up a piece up of Tasmanian produce anywhere in the world that they can be assured that piece of fish is farmed under the very best standards anywhere in the world, and that piece of fish is safe.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - Order. I cannot hear the honourable minister's response. I ask that the members allow the minister to respond in silence, please.

Mr PEARCE - We've been clear on the exact terms of the study. I detailed to you in some detail the exact timeline and regulations around the industry whilst that study is being conducted and what that spatial pause means. I've been clear -

Ms FINLAY - Point of order, Speaker, Standing Order 45, relevance. I'm not talking about the review, I am talking about the deals that this minister, the Premier, and the government have made with the crossbench, because it doesn't stack up. What deals, what are the details - the specific details of the deals that you have done.

The SPEAKER - Thank you, honourable deputy leader. That does go back to the original question.

Mr PEARCE - Thank you, honourable Speaker. I can speak on what we are doing as a government to protect our industry, to support that industry, to ensure that our industry is viable and that they meet standards. I cannot comment on a conspiracy theory. I really cannot, nor should I be expected to.

UTAS Unauthorised Human Remains - Coronial Investigation

Mr GARLAND question to ATTORNEY GENERAL, Mr BARNETT

[11.00 a.m.]

A few weeks ago, Coroner Simon Cooper handed down findings in a case known as the Coronial Project. Between 1966 and 1991 a medical museum at the University of Tasmania received and put on public display 177 unauthorised specimens from coronial autopsies. It was unauthorised because it was done without the knowledge or permission of the families of the deceased. To make this indignity worse, the families were only notified of this situation in January this year by a public advertisement placed in local newspapers. This appalling situation has left many of the impacted families traumatised and angry. While the coroner's report provides some answers, the families are left with many more questions. These families need answers, and they deserve an apology from the state. Are you aware of these concerns, some of which have been raised with your office, and will you undertake to investigate these concerns as a matter of urgency?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and his special interest in this matter. Yes, I have received feedback from families and other members of the public and indeed members of the parliament with respect to this matter. I have discussed this matter with the Minister for Health, of course, the Premier and other colleagues in this place and indeed my department.

I have taken advice with respect to this important matter and can indicate that the government is reviewing the coronial findings with respect to the University of Tasmania's R.A. Rodda Museum of Pathology and it's a high priority. I take it very seriously, so I appreciate your question and the motivation behind it on behalf of the families and others.

In February 2016, the R.A. Rodda Museum of Pathology at the University of Tasmania advised the coroner's office that the museum may have in its collection some individual specimens possibly retained following coronial autopsies carried out in the past, as you've indicated in your question. The coroner confirmed that between the 1950s and the early 1990s, 177 specimens of human remains were retained without lawful authority or consent. The coroner handed down those findings, as you know, on 8 September 2025.

The coroner found that

> The retention of human remains without family or coronial approval or even knowledge is a historic practice out of keeping with, and offensive to, contemporary standards and values.

The coroner also found that given current coronial and forensic procedures, it is highly unlikely that such practices will recur and, accordingly, no recommendations were required. I note that the review of the coroner's findings is a high priority for our government and that continues.

I also want to alert the honourable member and members of this parliament that in May this year I announced a review of the *Coroners Act 1995* to be conducted by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute. I take it very seriously and that act does need a review. The Tasmanian

Law Reform Institute has accepted that recommendation and request of the government. That act was developed in 1995, many decades ago.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the coroners for the important work they do and the continuing contribution they make to a fair, safe and just Tasmania. I and/or others in this place will have more to say in the not-too-distant future.

Supplementary Question

Mr GARLAND - A supplementary question, Speaker?

The SPEAKER - I will hear the supplementary question.

Mr GARLAND - When do you expect to have some answers for the families from this review? I met with a constituent the other day and he felt like his nose has been rubbed in the process again and he wants some answers quick smart. When do you expect that, minister?

Mr ROCKLIFF - Thanks for the supplementary question. As I have indicated on behalf of the government, we take this matter very seriously. We're looking at it as a high priority. We are reviewing the coronial findings and the report and recommendations that have flowed from that. As soon as we've been able to do that, we will respond as soon as possible. That's the commitment on behalf of the government.

Simon Behrakis - Registering as Lobbyist

Ms HADDAD question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

[11.04 a.m.]

Your government has an appalling track record when it comes to integrity. Two ongoing investigations, for example, reportedly into Tasmanian government MPs have dragged on since 2022 with no sign of resolution. It has more recently been revealed that your government spent more than $200,000 on legal fees for ministers last year alone. This week your former parliamentary secretary Simon Behrakis registered as a lobbyist. The lobbyist code of conduct states that people who retire from office as a minister or a parliamentary secretary shall not, for a period of 12 months after they cease to hold office, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter they have had official dealings with in the last 12 months of office. As parliamentary secretary to you as Premier and for Housing and Planning, Mr Behrakis would have had official dealings across a wide range of matters. How will you and your government manage any either real or perceived conflicts of interests when dealing with Mr Behrakis as a lobbyist?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. We will manage, as we should manage, any perceived or potential conflicts when it comes to lobbyists, as I'm sure you would as well on that side of the House. I look forward today, incidentally, to receiving the RTI review report from Professor Snell and Prof McCormack. It will be the first time that I've received the report, which we will make public in the interests of transparency. I thank the crossbench from the last parliament that put that on the table for the government to work through in terms of the RTI review, understanding the fact that the members of the crossbench

in the previous parliament are no longer in this parliament. We've come good on that commitment to ensure greater openness and transparency when it comes to RTI. I look forward to the report and receiving the recommendations and I thank Prof Snell and Prof McCormack for their work.

Regional Access to Health Services

Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

[11.07 a.m.]

Regional Tasmanians are struggling every day with lack of access to health services. The common answer I hear is you can't attract GPs and nurses to remote areas. This has been made clear with all the closures in the news over the last 20 years. What is the solution to ensure hardworking Tasmanians who support us through farming and agriculture have access to basic health?

ANSWER

Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and as a rural member myself, I share those concerns and I know they are concerns that are shared across Tasmania. That is why we have taken and will continue to take some of the actions around GP access, increasing the scope of practice for pharmacies and increasing nurse practitioners in communities like Ouse, for example. It is one of those areas where we are also asking the federal government to step up and play their part as well in relation to healthcare in Tasmania.

The state government has proactively stepped into this primary care space and will continue to do so because we understand the needs of Tasmanians, but we are calling on the federal government to step up and play their part so we can actively work together for the best interests of Tasmanians. There is more work to do. We made some of those commitments during the election around scope of practice and also new GP clinics and we will keep you informed as we continue to move forward with those plans.

Time expired.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Mount Road-Bass Highway Intersection - Red-Light Camera

Ms DOW question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[11.09 a.m.]

This question is from my constituent David in Burnie. He would like to know if the government has considered reviewing the Mount Road-Bass Highway intersection in Burnie and the installation of a red-light camera due to the high incidence of accidents at this site.

Bridport - Ezzy Park Fire Station Development

Ms ROSOL question to MINISTER for POLICE, FIRE and EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, Mr ELLIS

My question is on behalf of Bridport Innovations Inc. Ezzy Park is the site of an information bay built by several Bridport community groups 25 years ago and updated and upgraded by Bridport Innovations recently with the help of community donations of time and money. Ezzy Park is also the site of a planned fire department facility that will require the removal of the information boards and Bridport Innovations are exploring alternative locations for the signage. This relocation will require planning and coordination. Bridport Innovations have written seeking information about the timing of the Fire Department build several times in the last three years.

When does the Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) plan to build their new facility in Bridport and will the TFS accept responsibility for the management of this community asset during the build and commit to consulting with the Bridport community to allow for the smooth relocation of the information boards?

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Treatment in Tasmania

Ms JOHNSTON question to PREMIER, Mr ROCKLIFF

My constituent's son William has treatment resistant depression and relies on regular transcranial magnetic stimulation, an evidence-based treatment that allows him to live and work with some normality. Until this week, he received that care as an inpatient of the Hobart Clinic. With its closure and the earlier loss of St Helens, there are now no affordable inpatient TMS options in Tasmania. Outpatient treatment costs at least $600 every six weeks with no Medicare or private health rebate. Without regular TMS, patients risk relapse, hospitalisation and increased suicidal ideation. Two years after assurances from you and the then Health Minister, TMS is still not available at the Royal Hobart Hospital. When will this service be available in the public system? What support will be offered to Tasmanians like William who otherwise face going interstate or paying unaffordable costs?

Launceston Benevolence Society

Mr FAIRS question to MINISTER for COMMUNITY and MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS, Ms OGILVIE

The Launceston Benevolence Society (LBS) has operated as a not-for-profit since 1834 in northern Tasmania and today is the leading provider of basic necessities to those most in need in the community. Thanks to the many generous donors of white goods, furniture, et cetera, the LBS has run out of space and now has halted collections until a much larger and more suitable warehouse can be sourced. Their current warehouse is donated but they must find a new facility by December this year. What assistance can the minister provide the Launceston Benevolence Society to help secure a fit for purpose warehouse facility?

Housing Wait List

Ms HADDAD question to MINISTER for HOUSING and PLANNING, Mr VINCENT

My question comes from my Clark constituent, Jamie, who has been on the housing wait list for over four years. Jamie is one of the more than 5200 applicants waiting on the list, which has grown by more than 500 this same time last year. How much longer can people on the wait list, like Jamie, expect to wait to be safely housed? Jamie and others are tired of hearing year after year that they're missing out because demand is high. Why is your government failing so badly to provide urgent social and government housing for Tasmanians in need?

Dodges Ferry Primary School - Redevelopment

Mr SHELTON question to MINISTER for EDUCATION, Ms PALMER

We know that the Dodges Ferry Primary School will undergo a major redevelopment to provide additional contemporary learning environments, associated support spaces, and amenities. Students are looking forward to the changes coming to fruition. I note your recent announcement of the architect's appointment. When can the students at Dodges Ferry Primary School expect to see works commence?

Public Rheumatologists

Mr GARLAND question to MINISTER for HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING, Mrs ARCHER

My question is from Lester in Wynyard. There are several public rheumatologists in the south of the state, one private rheumatologist in Launceston, but no public rheumatologist north of Hobart. Last year, the department had funded for a public position in Launceston as promised in your 2023-24 State Budget, but the position was not filled. Lester wants to know: is there still funding for a public rheumatologist for the north? What steps are the government currently taking to ensure that patients in the north and north-west of Tasmania can access a local public rheumatologist? Will the minister commit to re-establishing and filling a public rheumatology position in the north or north-west so that patients are not left without timely specialist care?

Woolmers Estate - UNESCO World Heritage Site

Mr Di FALCO question to MINISTER for ARTS and HERITAGE, Ms OGILVIE

I raise urgent concern with Woolmers Estate, a UNESCO World Heritage listed Australian Convict site in the electorate of Lyons. Unlike others, Woolmers is not government-owned and yet both state and federal government are obliged under UNESCO to protect it. The Tasmanian government's claim of funding $470,000 since January 2024 was misleading. Most was for capital works, with only $160,000 for emergency operations. This long-term funding gap cannot be fixed with one-off grants. The federal government has committed $200 000 annually expecting a matching contribution from the state. Without this,

Woolmers faces closure, threatening the integrity of the entire World Heritage listing. Will the Tasmanian government now fulfil its -

Time expired.

EXPUNGEMENT OF HISTORICAL OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 51)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Barnett and read the first time.

POLICE OFFENCES AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 50)

First Reading

Bill presented by Mr Ellis and read the first time.

STATEMENT BY SPEAKER

Amendment to Standing Orders - Royal Assent

The SPEAKER - I have to advise the House that in accordance with the provisions of *The Constitution Act 1934*, I attended Government House on 17 September last to present for approval the amendment to the Standing Orders agreed to by the House on 9 September last and advise that Her Excellency, the Governor, gave her approval of the same.

MOTION

Joint Standing Committee on Integrity

[11.19 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) (by leave) - Honourable Speaker, I have two matters. First, I move -

> That the honourable member for Franklin, Mr George, be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Integrity in accordance with section 23(4) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* at 67.

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I will say a few words to thank the government for recognising that a shift needs to be made. I acknowledge Mr Street's work in that space and making it happen. We appreciate this motion and obviously support it. We appreciate Mr George putting his hand up on behalf of the crossbench as well.

Ms HADDAD (Clark - Leader of Opposition Business) - Honourable Speaker, I feel the need to add my support to the motion and to make it clear that we are supporting it. We appreciate the collaboration and the work of Mr Street in putting together the committee.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Thursday 25 September - Inaugural Speech - Mr Vermey

[11.20 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the honourable member for Clark, Mr Vermey, from making a statement to the House following the debate on a matter of public importance on Thursday 25 September 2025 for a period not exceeding 30 minutes.

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Backing Tasmanian Jobs

[11.21 a.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That the House take note of the following matter: backing Tasmanian jobs.

I rise this morning on the important public matter of supporting Tasmanian jobs. I expect that, in contributions across this place, there will be a lot of politics and many of us will focus on parliament and statistics. One of the things that worries me when we talk about backing Tassie jobs is that there are always attempts to cover the reality of Tasmanian experiences with statistics. The government will stand up and talk about their great statistics on employment and things, but I want to bring this conversation down to the people in our community, families, individuals, mums and dads, grandparents and kids, who need great Tasmanian jobs, who need security and confidence in this place and this government to not sell them out for their own personal protection.

I know people expect me to stand here and talk about the salmon and greyhound industries and the way this government has devastatingly ripped out the confidence of their livelihoods, and there's a reason for doing that. When you look at opportunities in Tasmania, it is not only the great workers in our regions, working on our farms or training our greyhounds, it's also the people who have been attracted to Tasmania from all around the world, because of the amazing things that we do here.

Our salmon industry has some of the best scientists in the world, and some of the best innovators doing things on this island that are then used right across the world. It is not okay

to undermine the credibility of those people in their reputations and their careers across the world. It's not good enough. We need to be caring for individuals and backing the jobs for Tasmanians.

The same goes for the greyhound industry. Just last week, the leader and I visited trainers in Mowbray at the track. We couldn't go 10 metres without people coming up to us and sharing the story of the impact of what's happened and the decision that this government has taken on themselves. Most importantly, some of the best conversations that I had were with grandparents about their kids' involvement in the sport and about their grandkids who have expected a pathway to establish themselves in a job, generationally: the work that they have done in and around our community; not only their jobs, but the jobs they create for others in our community through the work that they do.

When we stand here in this place and we talk about Tasmanians and we talk about jobs, I want us to remember community. There are so many clear messages that we could deliver today, but this morning I want to talk about the importance of a good job in Tasmania and the difference that makes to the lives of individuals and families.

In the last week, I had, in the same moment, the most heartwarming and heartbreaking experience showing the impact of a good job in Tasmania. On Friday, I attended the AGM of Starting Point Neighbourhood House. It's such a great event every year as people are awarded, recognised, and celebrated for the contributions they make to that local community. I spoke to a young lady who has been volunteering in the community. She has been finding her feet and is justly proud of the progress that she's made. She is now in a position where she is doing paid work in that local community off the back of volunteering and the environment that we've created have enabled her to enrol and do work at TAFE.

One of the things we need to remember in this place is that when you raise hope and expectation in a community by providing a small package of financial support to a neighbourhood house or other community organisation, to satisfy a political outcome or a feeling of being able to give, it has a real impact that on people when it's taken away. When you take away support for the salmon industry, support for greyhounds, support for community houses that are providing great opportunities for individuals, it has an effect on people.

A story that I heard only last night, and incredibly and interestingly, it was a story shared at a business dinner about an individual, about the differences that our child and family centres are making in our communities. A young father went with his child to a child and family centre and reached out for help to create an opportunity for his young one. What he wanted was to learn to read, so he could read with his son. In doing so, however, he was able to get a licence, and by getting a licence he was able to apply for a job. That has dramatically changed the circumstances for him and his son.

When we are in this place and we talk about jobs and backing Tasmanian jobs, yes, we can talk about statistics, yes, we can have an interplay across this parliament, but what matters is out in the real world. What matters is people in industry having certainty, people in industry not being sold out, people in communities having the care and understanding of what provides hope, what provides certainty and what creates a great outcome for Tasmanians.

[11.26 a.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to rise and speak about backing Tasmanian jobs. We've heard a lot of talk in this place about how wonderful the stadium will be for jobs in Tasmania. It's gone on and on and on, even this morning in Question Time, but it is a misrepresentation and a gross exaggeration of the benefit of the stadium to Tasmanians. It's a total disconnect from reality.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission has been crystal clear. Any economic benefits of the stadium are far and away outweighed by the disbenefits. The stadium represents a fall in the collective economic welfare of Tasmanian residents. A disbenefit is the polar opposite of a benefit. It's a cost. The stadium is going to cost Tasmanians and it will leave our state worse off.

Talk all you like about economic growth, as the Premier did in Question Time this morning, but the TPC sees no net economic growth as a result of the stadium. For every dollar spent, the stadium will result in a loss to the state of $0.50. The economic benefits of the stadium are less than half of the estimated costs.

What does this have to do with Tasmanian jobs? Two things. Tasmanians will not be in a better place as a result of the stadium. The economic position of the state will be weaker overall. Individual Tasmanians will be less healthy, less educated and worse off overall than they would have been without a stadium. This means that there are likely to be fewer job opportunities in the state and Tasmanians will have less capacity to participate in jobs. This has been demonstrated in rigorous economic studies that have consistently found that there's little to no positive impact on employment or overall economic growth when stadiums have been built in cities around the world.

I turn now to jobs in our public service. It's clear that Tasmania cannot afford this stadium with the economy the way it is at the moment. Building it will require either increased taxes or public service cuts.

The Premier again ruled out increasing taxes this morning and that leaves one option - cutting public services, and that means cutting jobs. It's a clear line from building the stadium through to service cuts, through to job losses in Tasmania. You can't cut services in our state without cutting jobs.

We haven't even started building the stadium and the government is working hard to cut 2500 jobs. That was confirmed this morning. This can only be the beginning and that number can only grow as the state goes further and further into debt to fund the stadium. There isn't any other way around this.

For all the crowing in here about how wonderful the stadium will be for jobs, it will be terrible for jobs in Tasmania. It will be terrible for our public service and terrible for the people who have jobs in the public service. There will be some short-term job creation during the construction phase, but we can't ignore the fact that overall the rest of Tasmania will suffer, and we will suffer into the long-term.

If we really want to back Tasmanian jobs, we have to ditch the stadium. We have to properly invest in public services that will benefit all Tasmanians. We need to put the people of Tasmania first before some so-called economic benefits that simply don't exist.

We must invest in public services, and that means more jobs in the public service. It means healthier Tasmanians. It means happier Tasmanians who will have what they need to live well. The stadium's not going to bring that. We can talk about it and imagine that it might, but it won't bring that. That's very clear.

What we need to be working towards is the genuine interests of Tasmanians, stopping with the foolish stadium plans that we have, the foolish stadium build, and investing in what we know will benefit Tasmanians overall: public services that will increase their education; public services that will help their health and help them to participate and live well.

[11.31 a.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Treasurer) - Honourable Speaker, jobs are fundamentally important for the well-being of any society. It's very important for individuals as well. If we get introduced to somebody, usually we say our name first and then the next question is what do you do? Jobs provide purpose, jobs provide identity, besides providing financial stability, besides providing the opportunity for personal development, social connections and of course, there is no doubt that employment is of great assistance to one's mental and physical health. That is why it is so fundamentally important that any government always has its eye to creating the right environment for job-creation.

I am very pleased as it was achieved by a latecomer to this Liberal government that over its term of some 10 years, 51,000 jobs have been created in Tasmania and that is after the legacy of a previous government, not of the Liberal persuasion, that oversaw 10,000 job losses. A stark turn around. How was that achieved? by seeking to create the right economic environment whereby confidence grew and as a result investment grew, as a result of which employment grew and the benefits for the people of Tasmania, I think, are there for all to see.

We were encouraged by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition not to look at the statistics. I wonder why that might be? The reason we shouldn't be looking at the statistics is a bit like the Lord Mayor of Hobart on another matter. When the statistics and information doesn't suit, we are told not to look at it. Well, 3.7 per cent is the current unemployment rate in this state, which is an historic low. The best figure ever. That's why the Labor Party don't want us to look at it.

Members interjecting.

Mr ABETZ - It was like the Lord Mayor up the road when she commissioned a report in relation to the stadium and the report inconveniently said, and especially for the Greens, that there would be, I think it was about $170 million per annum benefit to the Hobart municipal area.

What I would say to the Leader of the Opposition is that statistics are statistics. Sure, you can talk around them and analyse them, but I think we should all be celebrating the fact that in Tasmania today we have historically low unemployment.

In relation to jobs within Tasmania, one of the things I enjoy immensely is when I get the odd invite to awards dinners for various businesses and enterprises, be it from Nyrstar where they were celebrating people with 30 to 40 years in the workforce, or the other evening with the Australian Flexible Pavement Association - believe it or not - there is such an organisation, and they were celebrating achievement in their niche sector of our economy. We ought to be,

as a parliament and as a government, celebrating every single job that is created and all the opportunities that it provides. What I would say to the Greens in relation to their contribution, the stadium will be overwhelmingly jobs-positive, and it stands to reason that with all the economic analysis that's been undertaken, every single one of them differs. Economics is not an exact science, and one of the important factors which is nearly - well, it's impossible to accurately measure - is the confidence within the economy. If people get the whiff that Tasmania is unable to deliver a stadium, people who might be thinking of investing in Tasmania will make the determination it is too hard, too difficult, and the reputational damage that that will do for years and years to come will be a legacy that I frankly don't want to leave behind.

Jobs are fundamentally important, this government has been focused on job-creation and the statistics do speak for themselves.

Time expired.

[11.36 a.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to give my contribution on Labor's matter of public importance about backing in Tasmanian jobs. Pouring over $1 billion into a stadium when our people and communities lack the skills and support they need is not a jobs plan for the 21st century, it's a massive distraction. Big-ticket infrastructure projects sound like progress, but without the people and skills to power the economy, they're just expensive monuments. Buildings don't grow economies, people do.

In the century we're living in, the real job creators aren't stadiums, they're the workforce we build to tackle the challenges right in front of us, backing in jobs that make our communities safer, training Tasmanians to reduce bushfire and flood risks in our towns and rural areas. It's backing in jobs that cut our power bills and emission: building the skills-base for energy-efficient construction, renewable energy and climate-smart agriculture; backing in jobs that lift productivity; teaching digital and data skills so our small businesses, our public service and our industries can innovate instead of lagging.

It's about jobs that bring people in from the sidelines; investing in childcare, transport and mental health support so people with disability, chronic illness or carer responsibilities can actually take up work. That's what backing jobs in Tasmania in the 21st century looks like.

Economists explain sustainable growth through the three Ps: population, participation and productivity. We need to attract and retain people, especially young Tasmanians, by showing there's meaningful work here. We need to raise participation by removing the barriers that keep thousands locked out of decent work. We need to drive productivity not with bricks but with brains, education, training and innovation.

Every billion we spend on a stadium is a billion we are not spending on training, fire and flood mitigation crews, on energy efficiency apprenticeships, on digital skills for small businesses or on the supports that let parents and carers join the workforce. The opportunity cost is enormous.

Imagine a different future: a Tasmania where every town has trained local crews reducing disaster risk; where our trades people are leaders in energy efficient buildings; where aged care, disability and environmental jobs are seen as skilled, respected work; where instead of exporting our young people, we export our ideas and expertise.

Tasmanians aren't against infrastructure, but Tasmanians are against vanity projects with poor returns. Tasmanians need smart investment in housing, hospitals, classrooms and renewable energy, alongside investment in the people who will staff them.

Labor says it's backing in Tasmanian jobs, and if that's true, then back the people skills and support that create those jobs of the 21st century. Brains before bricks. People before stadiums. That's how we truly back in Tasmanian jobs. Thank you.

[11.39 a.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, members mightn't have caught up with the news that I heard last week that the Albanian Prime Minister has decided to nominate an AI minister to oversee corruption in Albania and to make sure corruption doesn't occur. Wouldn't it be interesting if we had an AI-generated minister overseeing our aquaculture industries and our environment protection, because when the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition talks about sustainable industries, I am confident that if you plugged into an AI generator the metrics of protecting the environment, having sustainable jobs that survive in the long term, where there is genuine support for people in regional communities, not fly in, fly out people, not the very few high-end people who are paid, increasingly in jobs that are being automated, actually generate a niche industry.

If you plugged in what sustainability means for the brand of Tasmania, what pristine actually means when you're talking about our waters, what our brand to the mainland means - when you put those measures in, I am really confident you would not end up with the system of rules and laws that enable international giant corporations to come to Tasmania and plunder our incredibly precious, beautiful marine environment that once was pristine and now unfortunately no longer is in most of our bays, estuaries, rivers and near ocean areas where fish farm companies are farming salmon at the moment. They're looking to move to kingfish and anything else they can.

Jobs are diminishing in regional areas. The quality of the jobs and the sustainability of the jobs is diminishing. That is not what a sustainable industry looks like. I'm really confident we'd have an incredibly different set of laws in front of us and there is a way to make the changes where you can walk towards a sustainable industry where you have regional jobs, you protect the environment and you get fish farming out of inshore waters, out of the areas which are so vulnerable, stopping the pollution which is going into the marine environment, that is generating the mess and the impacts on Long Bay, on the growth of algae and slime in shallow waters, as well as all of the problems we're having with drinking water quality for Hobart and other areas from upstream flow-through hatcheries.

These are all preventable, but this government and the Labor Party choose to allow the environment to be used, abused - and if we go the way of South Australia and we all hope that doesn't happen - fundamentally devastated by the impacts of over-pollution coming from fish farming. This is something we can prevent. It's something that the Greens took to the election and there's a lot of support in Tasmania for making real changes to the salmon industry.

When the honourable deputy leader talks about the devastating impacts on international corporations from what the government's announced, there's no change to business at the moment at all from what the Premier has announced, nothing. They're intensifying production in pens in farms in existing places. They're continuing with their plan to expand into north-east Storm Bay.

Nothing is stopping any fish farm company from putting in a new application to farm. There are no breaks on this industry. Meanwhile, the marine environment is the thing that's suffering. We've got a Minister for Primary Industries and Water who wants to allow the dumping of an antibiotic. Sustainability has to mean something and it's got to be about protecting the environment as well.

Time expired.

[11.44 a.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I find it really difficult to watch the Liberals stand up in this parliament and claim that they're backing jobs when they've basically thrown a billion-dollar industry under the bus with the dirty deal they've done with the Independents and the Greens. I'm talking specifically about the salmon industry.

Salmon is a billion-dollar-plus industry and it's very important to regional and rural communities. What the government has done by throwing this industry under the bus is basically validate all the largely unfounded attacks on the industry over a number of years. That has created huge uncertainty in the industry and put major investments on hold. Over the last summer we've also seen the industry attacked by the disease *Piscirickettsia salmonis* in a very bad incident that resulted in massive fish deaths.

There is a massive problem in the salmon industry. With the salmon industry you cannot control the environment because the ocean is not like a paddock where you can put a fence up to keep things out, so this disease is an issue in the industry worldwide, but we have seen the ingenuity of Tasmanians - the industry itself, as well as the scientists who back the industry - come up with solutions.

Over time amoebic gill disease was a massive issue for the Tasmanian industry and that has been largely solved through freshwater bathing and there have been massive investments from the salmon companies into their ships that can bathe the salmon in fresh water and kill the gill amoeba.

A few years ago, we saw an outbreak of another naturally occurring disease in the ocean, which was pilchard orthomyxovirus, POMV. We don't see that as a major issue anymore because the industry developed a vaccine, so just as with *Piscirickettsia salmonis*, the industry has developed a vaccine, and I'm really hoping that vaccine does the job and reduces the incidence of this disease. That's how you solve these issues, but what we see constantly, and we saw it when the POMV outbreak was happening in the south-east of Tasmania, is the Greens calling for the industry to be shut down - 'There's too much disease, you've got to shut it down' - so the scientists got on with the job and came up with a solution - the same, hopefully, with *Piscirickettsia salmonis*.

The industry is also trying to have another tool in their toolbox, another antibiotic that if there's an outbreak they could use, and that should be a success. The Greens should be calling for more treatment options to stop mass fish deaths in the future, because if the vaccine doesn't work you need other options and it appears that the current antimicrobial isn't working, so you go out and get another one and you try to use that, or would the Greens rather they use an antibacterial that doesn't work and we see more fish deaths?

What we see is the constant talking down of an industry which is facing challenges, absolutely. Like I said, there's going to be disease incidences and these are naturally occurring diseases, so what is the solution that the Greens and Independents are talking about? They want to shift it all on land, but those salmon will still be subject to those diseases because they have to suck seawater into the tanks and they would be very exposed, so that doesn't change the outcome.

We see the salmon industry treated much differently to other industries. With chickens, for example, half a million birds were slaughtered in Victoria because of bird flu. Did we hear the Greens and other naysayers ask for the chicken industry to be shut down? No. What about beef, when we had bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, and then later on foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom? Did the Greens in the United Kingdom ask for the beef industry to be shut down? No, they didn't.

The Greens talk down Macquarie Harbour but they don't talk about the good outcomes. The seabed non-compliance is nowhere near what it was; in fact, the seabed is remediated. Commencing in 2017, the EPA director cut finfish farming in Macquarie Harbour in half, so what we saw in Macquarie Harbour was there was no expansion. There is no expansion now. We're back to the levels pre-expansion, but what is happening is that the same biomass of salmon, because of the expansion, means that it could be done over a greater area, which is absolutely a good outcome. It's the same biomass now as before the expansion and it's farmed over a greater area. That is actually a very good outcome.

The Greens talk about an AI minister for monitoring salmon. All that AI would do is pick up all the Greens' nonsense and not be hearing from the government because the government is actually validating these attacks, so the AI would pick up that distortion because the government was doing its job.

[11.50 a.m.]

Mr Di FALCO (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Bass for bringing forward this important discussion on Tasmanian jobs. Shooters, Fishers and Farmers share the concern for creating and sustaining employment right across the state. The Tasmanian economy has strength in private production, tourism, hospitality, advanced manufacturing and renewable hydro-energy.

There is still too much red tape and too many missed opportunities holding back job growth, especially in our regional towns. We need to put local industries first, from forestry, farming to fishing and game-management. These are long standing Tasmanian employers. They deserve policy settings that encourage employment, not constant uncertainty. Infrastructure that unlocks work, roads, ports, digital connectivity is essential. Delay or neglect of these areas cost jobs today and tomorrow.

Protecting the environment is important, but blanket bans and moving goal posts drives investment and jobs elsewhere. We need to ensure that forestry workers and their families have certainty for the next generation. We need the government to cut approval delays for new businesses and expansions. Strengthen 'buy local' rules for government contracts and support small business with fair payroll tax thresholds and simpler compliance.

Tourism and hospitality remain critical employers from the west coast to the east coast. These businesses need clear, consistent policy, and practical migration settings to address staff

shortages and marketing supports: support that keeps Tasmania top of mind for visitors. We need to back practical, balanced measures that grow employment for our farms and forests to our workshops, hospitality and hospitality venues. Let's give Tasmanians the confidence that they can build their careers and raise their families right here at home.

[11.52 a.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand here today to talk about jobs, and I thank the honourable member for Bass for bringing up the issue of jobs. Now, it is actually fortuitous that I am last, and apart from Mr Di Falco there, talking about the regional jobs, and that sort of thing.

What hasn't happened today is nobody in this place has actually recognised what the Treasurer was saying, and that is that only last week the Bureau of Statistics announced that Tasmania had reached an all-time record low-unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent. We sit in this place, but Tasmania, through the good economic management of this government, has the unemployment rate down to the lowest it's ever been. This place has not acknowledged that other than members of the government.

We understand from an opposition point of view we don't want to go there, but it's a reality and it has not been achieved easily. It's a lot of hard work, and I congratulate the government and the ministers for the work that they have done to achieve that.

Of course, the nation's unemployment rate is 4.3 per cent. For most of my life, Tasmania has been at the bottom end of it. The worst unemployment rate in the nation. Here we are with 3.7 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate that we've ever seen. Since 2014, the numbers of Tasmanians in work have grown by nearly 51,000 people, a testament, again, to the Liberal government. The government's focus on economic growth and the resilience of Tasmanian businesses and community has helped achieve that outcome.

I want to acknowledge the Tasmanian business community which continues to work side by side with the Tasmanian government to grow our economy and keep it strong. We will continue working across business and industry sectors to keep the state moving forward. The figures also reveal Tasmania's highest participation rate in more than 18 months; that's 61.3 per cent.

Our government will continue to focus on and strengthen the economic situation, supporting businesses and investing in schools, training and infrastructure ensuring Tasmania remains the best place in the nation to live, work, and invest.

As you travel around the state at the moment, of course there are many businesses with vacant signs on the front door asking for people to walk in. What we used to have in previous times, particularly in my first tenure of 2010-14, were people running around chasing jobs. The unemployment rate was high. What we have now is in actual fact jobs looking for people. We have businesses that cannot fill their vacancy positions.

Time expired.

Matter noted.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 49)

Second Reading

[11.56 a.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill now be read the second time.

This bill is to amend the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970,* to increase the Public Accounts Committee's membership from six to eight, stipulate that at least one member of any political party that has three or more members in the House of Assembly is to be a member of the committee and increase the quorum requirement from four to six.

The Public Accounts Committee plays a very important role in the oversight of Tasmania's Public Sector finances. The committee completes important inquiries every year, hearing evidence, considering submissions and making findings and recommendations on topics of great importance to our state. However, the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970,* has not been substantively amended since 1997.

Recent changes, such as the expansion of the House of Assembly from 25 to 35 members in 2024, mean now is the right time to update the Act. The proposed amendment will ensure the Public Accounts Committee's membership reflects a diversity of views from across both Houses of parliament, enhancing the committee's ability to undertake its important work scrutinising government expenditure.

The bill proposes to amend the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970,* to increase the number of committee members from six to eight, to ensure greater representation from both Houses of parliament, and the bill would increase the number of members from both the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council from three to four.

The bill will also provide that the committee membership for the House of Assembly must include any political party that has three or more members. Based on the parliament's current composition, this will mean at least one member from the Liberal Party, one member from the Labor Party and one from the Greens.

The bill also proposes to increase the number of members who constitute a quorum of the committee from four to six. This is proportionate to the increase in the number of committee members and will ensure the committee does not meet without the majority of members present.

The Public Accounts Committee plays again an important role in the management of Tasmania's public sector finances. This bill delivers our commitment to ensuring the number of committee members is increased to ensure diversity of views from across both Houses of parliament.

I commend the bill to the House.

[11.59 a.m.]

Mr WILLIE (Clark - Leader of the Opposition) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this Public Accounts Committee Amendment Bill. I've been in this place for some time, both here and in the other House for collectively nearly 10 years. I never thought I'd see the day where the Liberal Party is now drafting legislation to appease the Greens. That is exactly what this does. I never thought I'd see that in my time here in nearly 10 years.

I spent six years on the Public Accounts Committee. It was a committee that I really enjoyed serving on. It is a powerful committee of the parliament. It needs to be agile. It needs to respond to issues quickly. If we increase the committee membership to eight, it's going to require a higher quorum. It's not going to be able to find it easy to meet, and it's not going to be able to respond to the issues.

I actually find it a little bit insulting to the Public Accounts Committee - having served on it and respecting it and the work that it does - that this government thinks that it needs to change the act because perhaps it's not serving Tasmania well.

I think there is another motivation here though. Part of it is about appeasing the Greens. Another part of it is to try and stymie it by making the committee larger, a larger quorum, making it more difficult to meet, putting the Greens on there who will have their own agenda. What is going on over there? What is going on over there, Liberal members? I never thought I would see this in my time in parliament. You're actually drafting legislation now to appease the Greens. What deals have you made over this bill? That's what I want to know. What conversations have happened behind closed doors for you to start doing this sort of thing in this place?

I reached out to the long-serving Chair of the committee, someone I respect -

Mr Abetz - Your former shadow treasurer, because you weren't good enough.

Mr WILLIE - You can talk about me all you like, Treasurer. You talk about me all you like.

Mr Abetz - You know I like you.

Mr WILLIE - I think you said we were mates on TV once. It was very embarrassing.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - You can continue.

Mr WILLIE - I reached out to the long-serving Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, who I think most members in this place respect, in both Houses. I said, 'Has there been any consultation with you, Chair, about this change?' She said, 'No, there has not.' Zero consultation with someone who knows this committee and how it operates. I know that she's not very enthused about this, not very enthused about this amendment because she knows that the Public Accounts Committee will become more difficult to manage in terms of the times that it meets and the time it takes in responding to issues. The fact that this government hasn't even asked her for an opinion speaks volumes.

This government has struck a deal behind closed doors. That's what this is about. This is what it's about.

Mr Mitchell - I bet they spoke to the Greens.

Mr WILLIE - Yeah, they probably have spoken to the Greens. To not ask the long-serving Chair for an opinion about how this would impact the committee is a very poor starting point. Very poor. I would actually like to see them do some consultation with the Chair, ask her about what this change would mean and what it means for resourcing.

I know that this House passed a number of committees last sitting, but the Legislative Council obviously has its own business to manage and its own affairs to manage. It sounds like there isn't a lot of conversation that's happening when these things are coming to this House, with the members that they're asking to serve on these committees.

This committee does form a very important function of the parliament. It's important that it's agile. It's important that it continues to operate in the way it does, providing oversight in financial matters. We used to have a saying that we followed the money. It's been on the front line of some of the most controversial issues this state has faced, whether it's the *Spirit*s fiasco, and this parliament and this House actually entrusted the committee to provide oversight of that debacle to try and help get it back on track. It did a very good job of that. It's looked into the stadium and the AFL agreement. There's a couple of examples. The COVID-19 response. There were a number of COVID-19 inquiries that were quite responsive. They responded in real time about the government spending measures and how it was responding to that crisis.

We need to think very carefully about changing the arrangements for the Public Accounts Committee. I question the motives behind this change, and I respect the Public Accounts Committee and its work. I don't see a need to change, but clearly there are some motives going on over there. I never thought I would see the day where the Liberal Party is specifically drafting legislation to appease the Greens. This will be detrimental to the oversight function of this committee and it's not something that the Labor Party can support.

[12.04 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give the Greens' contribution to the Public Accounts Committee Amendment Bill 2025 and say upfront that we support it strongly and it is overdue. It's well and truly a year overdue because this committee representation and amending this committee representation is really and simply a reflection of the expanded nature of this parliament. This parliament went from 45 to 50 members at the 2024 election and yet the Public Accounts Committee didn't change. That is 35 in this House and 15 in the other place and this is obviously a joint committee.

It is entirely appropriate that this committee expands. It does perform a really important role, it does perform a really important scrutiny role of the decisions of government and it has done good work over many years. However, that doesn't preclude it needing to represent in a more fulsome way, the nature of the parliament as it stands at the moment. With an expanded parliament and with an expanded crossbench, it's entirely appropriate that the Public Accounts Committee is itself expanded to reflect that new parliament.

This legislation is modelled on the Integrity Committee legislation and the makeup of the Integrity Committee, another very important committee of this House, which was something

that the Labor Party supported, honourable Leader of the Opposition. I simply do not understand why you wouldn't support this. Those two arguments about being nimble and responding to the issues is a completely straw-man argument. The committee membership is really important. It is important that it reflects the nature and the makeup of this parliament, because it is important that our scrutiny happens.

In 2024, in the wake of the election that restored this House to 35 members, we sought a position on the Public Accounts Committee. Under the legislation at the time, we sought to have a position there but were denied by the Liberal Party and the Labor Party teaming up to deny us that. Indeed, the Labor Party had two positions in 2024 up until now on that committee.

It's entirely appropriate that, in 2025, with an expanded parliament, with the political paradigm as it stands at the moment that this is now an eight-member committee with a quorum to increase from four to six, and explicit recognition of the role of the Greens or any other political party and that they do have a member there.

The political paradigm has changed. It hasn't only changed in relation to the makeup of this parliament, it's also changed in the context of the budget crisis. The budget crisis is deepening with every single year that the government is on those benches. It is incumbent upon us, the Opposition and the crossbench, to scrutinise government closely and the decisions it makes. That's why it's appropriate to make sure that the crossbench that sits in this House is actually reflected and represented on Public Accounts Committee.

This is not a disparagement of Public Accounts Committee and its work in the past. It has done good work. However, it's 10 years since there has been a Greens member on the Public Accounts Committee. It's 10 years since we've had someone from the crossbench in this House on the Public Accounts Committee, and it's actually important - imperative, in fact - that the Public Accounts Committee again is made better by having a Greens representation on it.

Nonetheless, it's really important and we welcome, the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I haven't read the motion yet, but we absolutely welcome the referral of the stadium to the Public Accounts Committee. We absolutely welcome it, but we question how much genuine scrutiny the Labor Party and the Labor members on the Public Accounts Committee is actually going to give that development given their co-signing a blank cheque for the stadium. It's really important with the crossbench almost united, with apologies to the honourable member for Franklin, Mr O'Byrne, the crossbench is absolutely united against the stadium, and it is critically important that this House has, for example, a seat on the Public Accounts Committee so that we can properly scrutinise the stadium project and the government's decisions in relation to it.

I ask: What are you afraid of Labor Party? This is a simple conspiracy theory around the representation and the establishment of the expansion of this committee to make sure that there's a Greens member on it, that this is a legislation that ensures that the Public Accounts Committee an incredibly powerful and incredibly important and incredibly valuable committee of scrutiny in this place that properly reflects our new parliament. That is why we welcome this amendment bill and, honourable Deputy Speaker, that is why we will support it.

[12.10 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I rise briefly to speak on this. What we see now is a Liberal government drafting legislation specifically to benefit the Greens. A wink and

a nod to the Greens is what we're seeing here. This is part of a dirty deal the Liberals have made with the Greens.

Let's be clear, if the Liberals wanted the Greens on the Public Accounts Committee, they could have given up one of their spots. Indeed, the Greens could have asked the Liberals for one of their spots. The Greens have been banging on about wanting a spot on PAC for years. In the past, they haven't been allowed, but what do we see now? The government is drafting legislation to give the Greens something that they have wanted for as long as I have been in parliament. What did it take to get the government to draft this legislation? The Premier, Mr Rockliff, being willing to do whatever it takes to maintain government. What we see now is the Greens tail wagging the Liberal dog.

What else has the Premier promised the Greens? This dirty deal is slowly unravelling in front of us. The Liberals have definitely not been upfront about what the dirty deal they made behind closed doors is. What we know is that the Greens managed to get the Chair of Committees - thank you, Deputy -

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Thanks for that vote of confidence.

Dr BROAD - First of all, that was the deal. I've called out the Greens in this place before because what I said to them was that they were banking the gains of the other independents as their own. What we saw was greyhounds - it was a massive coincidence, apparently that Ms Johnston supported the government subsequent to the announcement about shutting down the greyhound industry; not just removing the money from the greyhound industry, but shutting the industry down. Now we see the Premier going around regional communities trying to gaslight them that the greyhounds should shut down and he was never really a supporter. That's not what the industry thinks.

Also, the Greens banked the government throwing the salmon industry under the bus to get Mr George's support. The Greens were claiming those as their own, but now it's being slowly revealed that there was a little bit more done. There was a little bit more to this dirty deal that the Liberals have made with the Greens. It wasn't just the chair of committees, the deputy speaker role. It was also their much coveted position on PAC guaranteed. That's what it took to get the Greens over the line.

What else has the government promised the Greens? Is this it? Is this your line in the sand? Greens, was this all it took? Was this all it took, a seat on PAC and the deputy speaker role? Was that all it took for you to roll over and back this government? What we see now are the details of the dirty deeds slowly being revealed. As I have said, it's the Greens tail wagging the Liberal dog.

A member - Who wrote that speech?

Dr BROAD - I just did then.

[12.13. p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my contribution on this bill and I will make it brief. As much as I love a good conspiracy theory, there is no conspiracy here. All members of this place, particularly those from the crossbench and the opposition, will recognise that since the election there has been a number of discussions taking place about the

makeup of all our committees whether that's Government Committee A, B, the Integrity Committee, the committees in relation to the commission of inquiry, or any of a whole range of committees - the Reproductive Maternal Health Service Committee - we've all had negotiations to try to ensure that our committee structure reflects the will and the makeup of this House. We've been trying to ensure that there is a balance of voices to reflect how the Tasmanian community voted in the July election -

Members interjecting.

DEPUTY SPEAKER - Order. Can we hear the member please?

Ms JOHNSTON - to ensure that when we go into the important work that committees do, it reflects the makeup of this house and the way that Tasmanians have decided they want their parliament to work. We've done that and I have heard contributions from the Leader of Opposition Business, the Opposition Leader himself, from crossbench members, and from the government all congratulating each other on the way in which we are ensuring that our committees are representative of the House.

This bill is long overdue. It reflects an increase in membership of the PAC from three to four from both Chambers. That is, largely, a reflection of the fact that this House, in particular, has grown from 25 to 35 members. That has allowed for a greater diversity of voices across the parliament and also allows for more members of this place to have greater involvement in the committee process. I think this bill should have come in the previous parliamentary term, but I warmly welcome it coming early in this term to ensure that all our committees are representative of the parliament and the will of the Tasmanian people.

It does sound a lot like sour grapes when the Opposition complains about the makeup of this particular committee. Sour grapes. The reality is, honourable Deputy Speaker, that this parliament will continue to be a diverse parliament in the future. There will be governments and oppositions. There will be strong crossbench members. The Greens are here to stay whether the Opposition likes it or not. Our committee structure needs to represent the diversity of this parliament.

I urge Labor to get with the program, to stop dying on the strangest of hills when it comes to matters before this parliament.

Mr Willie - The Greens can get on it with no change. If the Liberals have cut a deal, they can put a Greens on the committee.

Ms JOHNSTON - The strangest of hills. If you want greater transparency, if you want the parliament to work and function well, then you will expect and respect this parliament's diversity and ensure that it's reflected in the committee makeup.

I warmly welcome this bill. It's an incredibly sensible change to reflect the change in size of this Chamber from 25 to 35 and the diversity in this parliament. If Labor were to oppose this bill, it would really be sticking their finger to the community who voted for the parliament and the makeup that we have today.

[12.17 p.m.]

Mr WINTER (Franklin) - Deputy Speaker, I'll start with that, 'Sticking your finger up to the people of Tasmania,' because we can see that PAC is working perfectly fine as it is.

Talking about sticking the finger up at someone what about the Chair of the current PAC, as the Leader of the Opposition stated? I mean, this bill has been concocted by government along with its grand coalition, obviously from some of the contributions we've heard, without a single piece of consultation with the current Chair of the Committee. You talk about consultation. What about with the actual Chair of the Committee? who I thought you respected?

A member - Or the upper House. It is half the Committee.

Mr WINTER - With the upper House. So, this has been concocted by the grand coalition - the Liberals, the Independents and the Greens have come together to concoct this.

The only reason we were given for it in the second reading speech - which is what, really, when I heard the Premier say this, - 'The bill also provides that committee membership for the House of Assembly must include any political party that has three or more members.' Then he bells the cat, 'Based on the parliament's current composition, this will mean that at least one member from the Liberal Party, one member from the Labor Party, and one member from the Greens.'

I hear the word 'transparency' from the Greens all the time. Yet, in his contribution, Mr Bayley, honourable member for Clark, did not say what conversations have been had. Perhaps through the Premier? Have there been direct conversations between the Liberal Party, this Premier, and the Greens about this position? Was this bill concocted by the Liberal Party and the Greens as part of a deal? We know Felix Ellis, a member for Braddon, said that 'accepting confidence would be a deal, a very big deal.' We know under their own definition of what a deal is, that a deal has been done. Our question is: what is in it?

We already know that the election of the officers on the day one was part of a deal. Now, we have a deal getting the Greens onto the Public Accounts Committee. That is the only conclusion we can draw. We haven't had a single skerrick of evidence from the Greens or the Independent member who spoke to the contrary of that.

My question to the Premier is: what conversations did you or your government have with the Greens about this bill? Isn't this bill simply about putting the Greens onto the Public Accounts Committee, the most powerful committee of this parliament, because they demanded it, because it was important to them and this is part of your dirty deal to expand the PAC and get the Greens onto that committee?

This is an important committee and the position put by the Leader of the Opposition is an important one from someone who's been on that committee for a very long period of time. This actually will detract from the PAC's work, will make it more difficult to get a quorum and this has not been properly consulted with the upper House or the current Chair. We oppose this bill because this is part of a deal. This will detract from the work of the Public Accounts Committee and it has not been properly consulted with the other place that should be respected much more than it has been.

[12.21 p.m.]

Mr ROCKLIFF (Braddon - Premier) - Deputy Speaker, I thank the honourable members for their contributions. The grapes, obviously, were tasting a little sour for those on the opposition benches, but thank you, nonetheless, for your contributions. I thank honourable members for their support of the bill.

It's important also to reflect on the increase in the size of parliament, for which I recall we did have unanimous support back in the previous parliament, which was good, because as soon as the reduction in the numbers of parliament happened back in 1998, at least privately, most members involved in that parliament - and I wasn't one until 2002, but I had heard - thought it was a mistake. Despite various calls for and, indeed, commitments to the idea for well over two decades to restore the number of members of parliament, it didn't happen. Now here we are, the people have spoken in the 2024 and 2025 elections and have elected their parliaments, and here we are with a greater diversity of knowledge and skills, backgrounds and lived experience when it comes to the people who were elected.

We started reforming the Standing Orders quite significantly back in 2024, recognising the minority government situation, and there's been significant improvements when it comes to the Standing Orders, which really are designed to improve accountability of the parliament and allow opposition members who don't form part of the executive government greater opportunity for scrutiny, but also greater opportunity to bring forward their ideas as well. We have expanded private members time to 90 minutes for Independents and crossbenchers, for example, which is a good thing to do.

We have changed the speaking limits to 20 minutes for the mover and 10 minutes for everyone else to allow more speakers on each motion, so more people are able to come forward and express their view on particular motions as well. The government has given up its matter of public importance debate in the rotation as well, as well as the Dorothy Dixers, which have been called to be abolished for as long as I've been here as well, but particularly since 2014. That's a commitment we've made also. We've offered to facilitate a conversation about using some government business time to debate private members' bills if necessary, and over the course of the last two parliaments, a number of changes to speaking limits on both bills and motions have been instituted to reflect the change from 25 to 35 members. This is another one of those changes.

In the honourable member for Clark, Mr Bayley's contribution, he mentioned the Integrity Committee and this is consistent with that, albeit with different numbers in the committee, but the clause giving a party an entitlement to a member on a committee already exists for the Integrity Committee and we are duplicating this for the Public Accounts Committee, as has been expressed by members.

As I said in my second reading speech, the *Public Accounts Committee Act* has not been substantively amended since 1997. Then in 1998 the parliament reduced in number and after the 2024 election, we increased the size of the House of Assembly from 25 to 35, so it appears appropriate that we update the act accordingly. More members on the committee means more voices, more opportunity to question and provides greater accountability on the matters before the committee of the day, which is good. One would assume that those who speak of accountability and transparency - and opposition members who are not supporting this bill often do - would welcome the opportunity for there to be greater accountability on matters before the Public Accounts Committee.

With those few words and summing up, I welcome the contributions to the debate and I thank honourable members for their support.

Mr Winter - What were the conversations? What conversation is that?

The Deputy SPEAKER - Order. The question is that bill be read the second time.

The House divided -

AYES 23	NOES 10
Mr Abetz	Dr Broad
Mrs Archer	Ms Brown
Ms Badger	Ms Butler
Mr Barnett	Ms Dow
Mr Bayley	Ms Finlay
Mr Di Falco	Mrs Greene
Mr Ellis	Ms Haddad (Teller)
Mr Fairs (Teller)	Mr Mitchell
Mr Ferguson	Mr Willie
Mr George	Mr Winter
Ms Howlett	
Mr Jaensch	
Ms Johnston	
Mr O'Byrne	
Ms Ogilvie	
Mr Pearce	
Mrs Petrusma	
Prof Razay	
Mr Rockliff	
Ms Rosol	
Mr Shelton	
Mr Vermey	
Dr Woodruff	

Bill read the second time.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 49)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) BILL 2025 (No. 40)

Second Reading

[12.33 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Deputy Speaker, I move -

> That the bill be now read the second time.

This bill amends the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* in relation to the keeping of pets in rental properties. As part of its first 100-day plan, the government committed to making amendments to the *Residential Tenancy Act* to allow renters to have a pet as a right. This bill fulfils this commitment.

Under the changes, tenants can apply to the owner of the property to keep one or more pets. Owners can only refuse the keeping of a pet on reasonable grounds. The grounds for determining reasonableness are set out in the bill, and an owner wanting to refuse permission must apply to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT), or the Tribunal, to endorse this refusal.

The bill provides for a permission-based model. This was the model considered and endorsed by the previous House of Assembly. If a tenant applies for permission and an owner does not respond within 14 days, they are deemed to have consented to the application, and the pet can be kept at the premises. In determining whether refusal of permission is reasonable, the tribunal may take into account whether keeping a pet would:

(i) cause a nuisance on the premises;

(ii) cause a nuisance on adjacent or adjoining premises or other nearby properties;

(iii) cause damage that is more than reasonable wear and tear to the premises;

(iv) pose an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person; and

(v) pose an unacceptable risk to the safety or welfare of the pet or another animal on the premises;

(vi) any other grounds that the Tribunal considers reasonable in the circumstances

The bill also provides an avenue for an owner to withdraw consent and to seek an order of TASCAT that a pet must be removed.

The bill includes a definition of 'pet' as:

> … a domesticated animal, or an animal that is dependent on a person for the provision of food or shelter, if that animal is not an exempt animal or an ineligible animal.

The term 'ineligible animal' is defined in the bill and covers:

(a) a dog that is more than 6 months of age, if the dog is not registered under section 8 of the *Dog Control Act 2000*;

(b) a cat that is more than 6 months of age, if the cat -

(i) is not microchipped as required under section 12(1) of the *Cat Management Act 2009* …

Ineligible animals are not pets under the act and tenants cannot keep ineligible animals on the premises.

Exempt animals under the bill are guide dogs and assistance animals. The bill reiterates that guide dogs are not pets. Users and trainers of guide dogs can continue to have them at their property. This aligns with anti-discrimination obligations already in place. The bill refers to the definition of 'assistance animal' in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. This act defines assistance animals as -

A dog or other animal:

(a) accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or

(b) accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph; or

(c) trained:

(i) to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; and

(ii) to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

If an owner disagrees that an animal fits the definition of assistance animal, they may apply to TASCAT and the tribunal will have the power under the amendments to make an order determining whether an animal is an assistance animal for the purposes of the residential tenancy pet provisions.

The bill does not undermine legal frameworks already in place in relation to pet or animal ownership.

The provisions do not override any pre-existing legal restriction or prohibition on the tenant having the pet. These may include council bylaws, strata title bylaws, or other legal provisions such as animal welfare legislation.

It also should be noted that if a tenant seeks permission to keep a declared dangerous dog on the premises, an owner may refuse permission without needing an order of the tribunal.

The *Residential Tenancy Act* continues to provide that a tenant has an obligation to return the property to the condition it was in at the beginning of the tenancy, other than reasonable wear and tear. Therefore, any damage caused by a pet will need to be rectified by the tenant at the end of the tenancy or otherwise the owner may make a claim against the bond.

The reforms will not affect the tenant's obligations under Section 53 of the act to rectify any damage caused during the tenancy and to return the premises to the condition the premises was in at the beginning of the tenancy, other than reasonable wear and tear.

In the development of this bill, the Department of Justice undertook targeted consultation with a wide range of stakeholder bodies as well as local government. The department received 16 submissions and these provided the invaluable perspective of a variety of sectors of our community. I thank those groups that provided feedback on the policy.

The government considers that the reforms contained in the bill balance the rights and safety of the tenants with the interests of the owner. The amendments commence on proclamation.

I commend the bill to the House.

[12.40 p.m.]

Dr BROAD (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my comments on behalf of the Labor Party about the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Bill, or as we just call it, 'Pets.'

We had already debated this bill in the House before the last election and what we see before us is basically the amended bill. The amendments that passed this House changed it from a notification model, where the tenant basically just had to notify the landlord that they were going to have a pet, now to a permission model, where the tenant actually has to seek permission before that pet comes onto the premises. I suppose the one thing I'm not clear about is what happens if the two weeks elapse - so if someone seeks permission and the landlord refuses permission, does that person have to keep the pet off the property until TASCAT has made a determination? That's probably the only thing I'm not clear about and that was something I didn't ask in the briefing that was offered to me. I thank both Consumer Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) and the Department of Justice for being present there and answering all my questions, of which there were only a few.

Changing from a notification to a permission model was a good change and that's implied in this bill. The other thing is that issues with strata titles is actually named up in this bill, so this bill does not change anything from the *Strata Titles Act*, so if, for example, a block of flats or a strata title says in their governing act or whatever that pets aren't allowed, this doesn't change that. That maintains the rights of people who live in buildings covered by strata titles. Also, this bill doesn't change the *Local Government Act* with respect to by-laws, et cetera.

Contained in the *Local Government Act* are things like the maximum number of dogs before you need a kennel licence and also the fact that cats need to be microchipped and desexed. If they're not microchipped and desexed I'm assuming they are not allowed, unless somebody has permission to have an un-desexed cat, or an 'entire cat', I think might be the term. In other words, it is one way of enforcing the microchipping and desexing of cats, so people in rentals will have to comply with that. That's an extra check. This parliament decided

a year or two ago that there should be compulsory microchipping and desexing of cats, so this bill actually enforces that on pets in rentals.

There's probably not really a lot more to say, apart from I think there are still some minor issues. For example, the definition of what constitutes a pet is very general. Basically, it's anything that relies on humans to be fed, I think. I understand why it has to be so general, because places of rental could include farms or small acreages where you could have a whole bunch of domestic animals as well as cows, pigs and sheep, but it doesn't actually rule anything out apart from a cat that's not microchipped or desexed or a dangerous dog. They're really the only things that aren't permitted by this.

I think there are provisions as well, so if you have a dangerous dog, you could actually get it over the line, and also a landlord really only has the bond to rely on, so if there's substantial damage to a property, if the bond doesn't cover it, they've got to take the tenant to court. I'd be very interested to see how this actually plays out once it gets into the community: how the courts treat this.

There has been anecdotal evidence in places like Canberra where this is in place that it can be a disincentive for people to rent their houses. I hope that isn't the case and I hope that when the tribunal or whoever takes the first tenant to task about damage to a property that we get some really good case law that makes it very clear what's acceptable and what's not, because basically at the moment we're just relying on fair wear and tear. I'm sure fair wear and tear has been tested in the court before, but we just need to get some good case law so everybody knows what their responsibilities are.

I would also note that the part that is missing from this bill - and no doubt the Greens will have something to say about this too - is the provision to make minor amendments to the property to stop cupboards tipping over from pets, so that's been completely removed from this. Perhaps the government plans to tackle that another way. Maybe they could tackle that when they do a wider amendment to the *Residential Tenancy Act,* which we desperately need. We've seen people fall through the cracks, such as people who are permanent residents in caravan parks, or permanent residents in places where they have relocatable homes, and we've seen some pretty outrageous behaviour from some managers of those properties and we really need that dealt with along with a few other issues, so a full review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* is long overdue and the government should really get on with that as a priority. They should have had that as a priority maybe in their first 100 days to kick off that review instead of next year. It should be started straight away because we see a number of people falling through the cracks and having their lives thrown into tumult because of the actions of a few, so I'd urge the government to get on with that.

We have debated this bill before. I think that it largely has the support of the parliament. Labor supports it. I would be really interested to see how this actually works when it gets out into the wild, as such, but people love their pets and obviously having a pet is something that is common. I've talked before about the pets we have at home. I've always had pets around me. I think it's reasonable.

The other side of it is the landlords. Basically, it will all come down to the nuisance provisions in this, so TASCAT determines what is a nuisance. We will need to see some determinations for us to actually understand what constitutes 'a nuisance' to neighbours in the community and the landlord so that we know how this is going to operate, because that is quite

general. 'Nuisance' is not really defined in this, so it will have to be defined by the courts. I hope that uncertainty is dealt with reasonably quickly so both landlords and tenants understand what they can and can't get away with when it comes to pets. Labor supports the bill and looks forward to seeing it pass this House.

[12.48 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my contribution to the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Bill 2025 and upfront say we welcome this bill and will support it. As Dr Broad has just said, we have already debated this. There are some changes in this bill, so I will keep my contribution relatively brief seeing as we've been here before, but I want to acknowledge the honourable Attorney-General for bringing this forward so quickly and welcome that fact. This is something the Greens have campaigned and worked on for a long, long time.

I note that the toppling furniture element of the previous bill we debated in here isn't as part of this, and I think the Attorney-General has made a commitment to re-table that, so if you could maybe confirm that and hopefully we will look forward to seeing that at the end of the week.

Of course, pets are incredibly valuable to so many people in our community and deliver so many benefits. Giving renters the rights to have pets in their rentals is a really important reform that many people have called for for a long time. They're part of the family and they're incredibly important tools, I suppose, to teach children the value of empathy and the need to care for non-human lives, and of course they make a massive contribution when it comes to our mental health in terms of loneliness of people. They are really important.

Animals, at the end of the day, can help make us healthier, happier, more balanced, and they're a really important part. In that context, we really welcome the ability for renters to have pets in their rentals. We acknowledge some of the advocacy we've had from some of the real estate group and indeed probably some landlords. On balance, we the Greens absolutely believe that this reform is critical, and it will deliver wide benefits across the community.

Of course, it's not the only reform that needs to happen when it comes to giving renters more rights. Renters have been subject to significant rent increases over many, many years and there is plenty of literature about the out-of-control rent. We do need to see controls over rent and rent increases. We do need to see improvements to minimum standards so that whether it be energy efficiency, whether it be insulation, whether it be the quality of a property and avoiding rising damp or mould impacts. We need to see some responsibilities put onto landlords to make sure that those minimum standards are put in place for our rentals.

Of course, we need to make sure that no-cause evictions are a thing of the past so that a lease or a tenant can't be evicted simply because their lease ends. There needs to be fairness and equity brought into the picture there so that evictions can only happen if a landlord either wants to move into the property or do major renovations. They are some reforms that need to happen, and we will continue to push for that.

As Dr Broad has said, the *Residential Tenancy Act* review is going to be a really important mechanism for that. It is slated for 2026, and I understand from the attorney that it's going to be brought forward to next year. Perhaps, Attorney-General, you could clarify in your summing up exactly what the timelines are on that. Of course, housing more broadly is a real problem

and whether it be short-stay accommodation, whether it be the amount of government investment in public and affordable or housing, we need to do more.

We have over 5200 people on the housing waitlist, we have got them waiting 80 plus weeks to be housed, and of that 5200 people, that's applications. It actually means there are more people, there are more, there are children, there are partners. There are more than 5200 individuals who are waiting longer on that waitlist and that waitlist continues to grow ever longer. Really important that we get reforms in other areas in terms of housing and renters rights.

To the bill, as I say, we strongly support this and have campaigned on this for a long time. I acknowledge civil society groups, organisations such as the Tenants' Union who have advocated for tenants' rights for many, many years. We finally saw the Liberals put this policy on the table in the lead up to the 2024 election, which was really welcome. When it was last debated here, we brought in some amendments in relation to assistance animals, in relation to dangerous animals, et cetera. It is good to see that they have been picked up and they are reflected in this bill as well. That's welcome.

When it comes to that toppling furniture element, which is important and I hope to see on the table later in the week, we had some failed amendments that were going to improve the ability for tenants to make minor modifications in relation to security, in relation to safety, in relation to disability access and other issues. We look forward to seeing that bill. Hopefully, the attorney will actually introduce a more fulsome bill in terms of some of those elements, but if they're not, we will be sure to be bringing them and moving amendments in relation to them.

Specifically, in terms of this bill. I only have one question, Attorney-General, in relation to clause 36S(4) and the question is real. This is regarding the owner of residential premises who may give conditional consent to a request made under clause 36R(2). Then, as specified in a written consent under (1); if those conditions are agreed to by the tenant.

One of the things we're unclear about is if the owner of the premises gives conditional consent, but the tenant doesn't agree with those conditions. What happens then? What actually happens in terms of the resolution of this issue if the tenant doesn't actually agree to the conditions that the owner of a residential premises builds into his or her consent?

With that, Attorney-General, we Greens support this, we welcome it, and we thank you for bringing it on so quickly in this parliamentary term and, again, acknowledge the many advocates who have pushed for this kind of reform and other reforms over many years. It's welcome and this will deliver benefits across our community.

[12.55 p.m.]

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Deputy Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Bill 2025. I thank other members for their contributions and I acknowledge my colleague Attorney-General, Guy Barnett, and other ministers who have had carriage of this bill through its development.

The bill implements a clear commitment from our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future, our 2030 Strong Plan for renters. It's about ensuring Tasmanian renters aren't forced to choose between having a roof over their head and keeping an animal they love that is part of their family. It is also about protecting Tasmanian property owners and their investments.

This bill gets that balance right. It provides certainty to renters, clarity to property owners, and a sensible, fair process for resolving disputes. Under this bill, tenants can apply to the owner for permission to keep a pet. If an owner does not respond within 14 days, permission is deemed to be granted. Owners who have legitimate reasons to refuse remain able to do so, but refusals must be reasonable and that refusal must be approved by TASCAT.

The bill also requires a property-owner to not unreasonably refuse an application on the basis that a renter is accompanied by a pet. I want to emphasise the balance built into this measure. Property-owners retain protections. The bill sets out objective grounds that TASCAT can consider when assessing whether a refusal is reasonable nuisance, damage beyond fair wear and tear, unacceptable safety risks to people or animals, and other sensible considerations. Owners can apply to the tribunal to withdraw consent and to have a pet removed if problems arise during a tenancy.

Tenants remain responsible for returning the premises in the same condition as at the start of their tenancy other than fair wear and tear and the normal bond provisions and claims processes remain in place. At the same time, the bill promotes responsible pet-ownership. It excludes as ineligible animals, those dogs not registered as required by the *Dog Control Act 2000* and cats over six months that are not microchipped as required by the *Cat Management Act 2009*.

The bill also expressly protects Guide Dogs and assistance animals. These animals are not to be treated as pets under the Act. Our obligations to people with disability remain absolute. Where there is a dispute about whether an animal is an assistance animal, the tribunal will be able to make a determination ensuring that legitimate cases are resolved fairly and promptly. This reform was not developed in a vacuum. The government consulted widely on this bill. The result is a bill that delivers fairness for tenants and confidence for owners.

It is also important to note that the reform supports animal welfare outcomes. Many animal rescue organisations and shelters face the heartbreaking reality of animals surrendered because owners can't find rental properties that accept them. By creating a clear pathway for tenants to keep animals responsibly, we reduce the pressure on those organisations and reduce the distress experienced by Tasmanians forced to surrender much-loved animals.

There are public health and wellbeing benefits, too. Companion animals reduce loneliness, encourage physical activity, and contribute to mental health. For people struggling with social isolation, a pet is often a source of routine and connection. We are bringing Tasmania's tenancy framework into line with contemporary expectations while preserving local safeguards. Other jurisdictions have adopted similar changes and we have considered them as we tailored our approach to Tasmania.

I also want to point out that this bill preserves existing legal frameworks. It does not override council bylaws, strata governance or animal welfare legislation. The bill is designed to operate within those pre-existing settings so local governments retain their lawful powers where they already exist. For example, as owner-occupiers must comply with the *Dog Control Act*, so too must a renter.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) ACT 2025 (No. 40)

Second Reading

Resumed from above.

Mr JAENSCH (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, this is legislation that demonstrates how we can be both compassionate and sensible. It recognises the place of pets in the lives of Tasmanians and the legitimate concerns of property owners. It provides a transparent, predictable process for resolving disputes and places responsibility squarely where it belongs. This is a good Liberal approach - respect for property rights, respect for individual responsibility and policies that strengthen community wellbeing without undermining legitimate ownership protections. The reforms before the House reflect those values and deliver real improvements for renters, property owners and animals.

In closing, this is a thoughtful reform that balances competing interests, and for these reasons I commend the bill to the House and congratulate and thank all who have participated in its development and its improvement through the process.

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to talk on the Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill. The tortuous journey of this bill through the parliament, the process that started almost 18 months ago now, clearly shows why reforms to the *Residential Tenancy Act* should not be done in a piecemeal fashion.

While I will be supporting this bill because it's a step in the right direction of tenants' rights, my concern is that there is nothing in this bill to stop a landlord from preferring the application of a tenant without a pet over a tenant with a pet. This is likely to result in applicants with pets not declaring their intention to have a pet at the time of their application.

A tenant might instead apply to have a pet once a tenancy has commenced, noting that a landlord cannot unreasonably refuse the application. The landlord might decide they don't want to go to TASCAT, so they agree to the pet. Instead, they can simply terminate the tenancy at the end of the 12-month lease. Landlords in Tasmania don't need to give reasons to terminate a tenancy. It is very much overstating what this bill achieves to say that it gives tenants the right to have a pet in a rental property. It is only when the ability to have a pet is paired with a ban on no-fault evictions that it can be claimed to be a right.

Minister, what is urgently required from your government is not piecemeal reform of this act, but a wholesale review and reform of the *Residential Tenancy Act*. This was recommended back in February 2020. The House of Assembly Select Committee on Housing Affordability recommended the Tasmanian government conduct a full review of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* and reform it to take into consideration the changes in the current market, with specific reference to the provisions relating to minimum standards and their enforcement, energy efficiency standards, security of tenure for tenants, rent controls, standard leases and applications, and pets.

In August 2023, Premier Jeremy Rockliff stood beside the Prime Minister as part of a National Cabinet commitment to implementing nine reforms set out in A Better Deal for Renters, to harmonise and strengthen renters' rights across Australia.

In November 2023, the government's own Tasmanian Housing Strategy promised that the needs of and protections for long-term and lifelong renters will be prioritised, focusing on affordability, stability and security, but the Tasmanian Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-27 less ambitiously committed to a review of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* to be completed by June 2027.

Housing service providers and the community service sector have been united in their increasingly urgent calls for a full review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* to be undertaken by your government. During the election campaign, Shelter Tasmania has called for an immediate review to strengthen, reform and modernise the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* and improve conditions in Tasmania's rental market.

TasCOSS similarly has called for urgently bringing forward the review of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*. Last month, after the election, TasCOSS wrote to all members of this House calling on us to support a comprehensive review of the RTA as a matter of urgency. Minister, why is this review not being prioritised when you know it is necessary? Why is reform to the *Residential Tenancy Act* being done in a piecemeal fashion?

[2.35 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Honourable Speaker, I thank all members who've made a contribution on this important bill before the House, and I acknowledge their motivation and support for the bill.

There has been a range of questions that have been asked. The honourable member for Braddon, Mr Garland, who's just sat down, has asked questions about the review and the merits of that and the timeliness of that and I would like to address that in my response as well.

There's a lot to cover off in in my summary and I will have time, in my view, to acknowledge the very many stakeholders I have had the opportunity to meet with and talk to and likewise gain the feedback from other members of parliament. I'd like to acknowledge that.

With respect to the review, it is my intention to bring forward that review with the start date of the review of the *Residential Tenancy Act* to begin at the start of next year. The department is in the early stages of preparing a discussion paper for release in early 2026. I've already had meetings with my department to identify the need for this to progress as soon as possible to address the points the honourable member has made with respect to a comprehensive wholesale review of the residential tenancy legislation.

We're making commitments and we're delivering on those commitments today in terms of pets in rentals and I want to foreshadow that.

With respect to toppling furniture, which is another amendment to the residential tenancy legislation, it is my intention to bring that forward as soon as possible and it's my expectation to introduce it this week. I hope that allows members of parliament to provide members of the public some solace with respect to the plans of the government. We take it very seriously. I do and we're getting on with the job.

It's not that easy for a department to respond so quickly and to progress so swiftly. That's why I want to say thank you to the Deputy Leader of the Greens, who has acknowledged the swift measures that have been taken to bring forward the bill today in terms of pets in rentals

and likewise the toppling furniture bill. When I was alerted to that in the crossbench briefing with others who asked questions about it, I responded swiftly and the department responded to my request swiftly to bring forward that toppling furniture bill. As I say, I'm looking forward to bringing that in as soon as possible and it's my intention to do that later this week.

Mr Bayley - Can I ask, by way of interjection, you are bringing forward the review starting next year, but are you bringing forward the conclusion of the review?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, thank you for the question. There will be a subsequent flow-on effect to bringing forward the review to the start of next year. I'm not going to put a date on the final conclusion, but we have to have the discussion paper, so we're now starting the development of the discussion paper for release as soon as possible and then get that review underway by the beginning of next year. There's a lot of work involved by the department in preparing that, getting feedback on that and then releasing it. Then following the release of the discussion paper, there's a lot more work to do by my department.

We will be giving the opportunity for stakeholders in the community to respond to the discussion paper. We will then prepare draft amendments to the legislation and release a draft bill for consultation before introducing such a bill in due course. To the point of the honourable member for Braddon who's just sat down, this is a very substantial piece of legislation that does need comprehensive review.

I acknowledge the National Cabinet decision of August 2023 where our Premier, together with other premiers and the Prime Minister, agreed in terms of the better outcome for renters. As a government, we've met seven of the nine commitments, those objectives, but there's more work to do, so that commitment was given.

With regard to the housing affordability or the housing strategy, the 20-year strategy that I released when I was minister for Housing back in November 2023, from memory, in relation to the 20-year housing strategy, I made a commitment for a review of the *Residential Tenancy Act*. Here we are, towards the back end of 2025, and the commitment from this government is to get on with the job, to progress that wholesale review of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

I cannot fix a date for the conclusion. However, I can fix a date for the beginning, which will be early next year: discussion paper, consultation, get a draft bill, get feedback on that. There's a commitment from the government to progress as soon as possible. It's my expectation that it will be concluded before the middle of 2027, which is the current set date for that. It will be before that. How much before that, I haven't got a fixed time other than the fact that commitment from our government to progress as soon as possible.

You've seen the goodwill expressed in recent weeks and since the election on the pets bill and the toppling furniture bill. You have seen the goodwill, you have seen the collaboration, you have seen the response from working with the crossbench and getting feedback and our expeditious responses, and I hope there's adequate commitment to deliver on that. There is a commitment to respond accordingly and I'm looking forward to doing that, working with my department and the relevant stakeholders.

In relation to this bill, I will highlight those relevant stakeholders whom I have met. The Real Estate Institute of Tasmania (REIT), and the Tenants' Union of Tasmania, whom I have met. I appreciate their feedback. They've interacted with my office directly and thank you to

both of them for the feedback and I look forward to continuing to work with them as we review this legislation and indeed many other stakeholders who have an interest in this place. There was a reference to TasCOSS as well by the honourable member who has just sat down, and look forward to meeting and working with TasCOSS in the months and years ahead as well, as I have in the past.

I want to address some of the responses. Dr Shane Broad, thank you for your response, and noting it's been introduced before and debated before, but we've improved the bill. We've actually improved the bill, in my view, to get a more balanced forward-looking approach, something that's more meaningful and useful for both tenants and landlords and for our community. This is an improved bill, and I acknowledge that.

Dr Broad asked: what happens between the application for refusal being lodged with TASCAT and the pet being brought into the property? The answer to that is that the pet cannot be brought into the property until TASCAT makes an order indicating the pet or pets that are allowed. I hope that answers the honourable member's question. I had a similar question to that in the last 24 hours, so that's the answer.

With respect to the honourable Vica Bayley, the Deputy Leader for the Greens, who asked about what would happen under the bill if an owner offered conditional consent to a tenant's application for a pet. Under the bill, an owner can only place conditions on consent with the agreement of the tenant. If the tenant does not agree to the conditions, the owner will need to apply to TASCAT accordingly. In effect, the owner would be applying to TASCAT, arguing that it is reasonable for them to refuse consent unless certain conditions were in place. We've got the balance right on that as well.

I note, because it's related to the busy and heavy workload of my department, regarding the review, as I've indicated and just to provide further evidence if it was ever needed, we're busy working on a bill regarding long-term residency in caravan parks. I know that's relevant to members for Bass. It's very relevant to the honourable Jo Palmer as well, who has raised these matters with me independently and separately. We need to work as fast as we can, but we have had an early election, we have had caretaker, and that's obviously had a flow-on effect.

In regard to long-term residency and caravan parks and related, it is my hope and desire to have a draft bill before the end of this year. There's a little bit of an update for colleagues in this place and hopefully in the public arena showing the determination of myself, my department and our government to progress accordingly.

In terms of this bill, it does fulfil our election commitment to give renters the right to keep a pet. I'll say a little bit more about that as well at the end. I want to address a couple of the questions that came up, which are relevant for not only us in this place, but for the other place when they get to it. This needs to be on the record as to when this bill gets proclaimed. If passed, the bill will commence on proclamation; it will allow time for any necessary administrative arrangements and preparations to be completed. For example, it will allow for TASCAT the necessary time to prepare for hearing disputes.

I make a point about TASCAT. This is one of the best reforms regarding access to justice in this state in the last decade. This is now flowing and working efficiently. I met with the president in the last few days. I'm so pleased with that reform. It is cutting the red tape. It's cutting green tape. It's making our legal system more efficient, fairer, more transparent, and

more timely. That is being delivered by TASCAT. I want to say a special congratulations and thanks for the hard work to the president and the members of TASCAT plus all the sessional members as well. They are doing a great job, under obviously difficult circumstances, but that's improving access to justice and our justice system.

In terms of that proclamation, it will allow TASCAT time to prepare for those disputes. It will also allow for the development and dissemination of educative materials so that those affected by the bill can better understand their rights and obligations. The final form of these laws will not be known until after they have passed parliament, so it's prudent to commence on proclamation. The other thing it will do is allow not just tenants and the Tenants Union to educate their members and their stakeholders alike, but likewise REIT, in terms of landlords and how they manage and educate their members and landlords across Tasmania.

You might ask: How many residential rental premises are there are in Tasmania, and how many allow pets? The advice I have is based on the number of bonds or security deposits lodged with MyBond. There are 48,746 active bonds in Tasmania in August 2025. This number is an in addition to the approximately 13,000 residential premises managed by Homes Tasmania. While we do not know the percentage of residential rental premises that allow pets in Tasmania, research conducted in 2021 in Queensland, prior to amendments to allow renters to keep pets in that jurisdiction, found that only a small proportion, estimated to be 15 per cent of rentals were pet friendly in Queensland. I thought that would be a helpful update. Likewise, in terms of conditions being placed on keeping a pet, which I touched on before, from the honourable Deputy Leader of the Greens, but to make it clear, the bill provides that owners are able to consent to a pet, subject to conditions. The conditions have to be agreed to by the tenant, can only relate to the keeping of the pet, must be reasonable in the circumstance, and must not contravene the act or any other act. The rest of the points that I made earlier apply.

Now, the nuisance factor, and this is a point that Dr Broad made in his contribution. In assessing whether a property owner's objection to a tenant's notification of their intention to keep a pet is reasonable, proposed section 36V directs the tribunal to consider several factors and these include nuisance. Nuisance is not defined in the act. However, the ordinary meaning of nuisance in law provides guidance as to what might constitute nuisance in relation to a pet. Legally, 'nuisance' is an unlawful and unreasonable interference with an occupier's use and enjoyment of land, or of some right over or in connection with it. For example, a pet that unreasonably interferes with a neighbour's use or enjoyment of land, or with another tenant's peace, comfort or privacy by causing excessive noise, may be considered to be causing a nuisance. There are also existing provisions in the act relating to nuisance and these will continue to apply in relation to pets.

As for damage more than reasonable wear and tear, under section 53 of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*, a tenant is obliged to return the premises to the same condition it was in the beginning of the tenancy, apart from reasonable wear and tear. I have mentioned the other criteria in my second reading speech.

I want to now address the matter of whether consent to keep a pet can be withdrawn, as it is a question that could easily be asked. Once an owner has consented or TASCAT has affirmed a tenant's right to have a pet, the bill provides a means for an owner to withdraw consent. Proposed section 36T provides that an owner must provide written notice of their intention to withdraw consent and the reasons for the withdrawal, and the tribunal must make

an order permitting the withdrawal. The withdrawal of consent by the owner must not be unreasonable.

Now, there have been questions about pet bonds. Other jurisdictions do and have pet bonds. They're not required under this legislation. The current bond amounts or security deposits under the Residential Tenancy act should be sufficient to cover any damage caused by a pet in most cases. I wanted to flag that with honourable members.

Will there be a significant increase in demand on TASCAT? That's a really good question. As I said, I have commended and congratulated TASCAT for its excellent work. While it's difficult to predict with certainty the number of applications to the tribunal that may be made by owners of residential premises or tenants that relate to keeping pets, we can make a broad estimate based on figures from Victoria scaled-down for Tasmania's population. It's expected that, annually, there will be approximately 28 applications to TASCAT, 1.5 tribunal hearings, and 180 requests for advice to the Residential Tenancy Commissioner, all relating to pets.

It should be noted that initial numbers may be higher and then settle down as owners and tenants develop their understanding of how TASCAT will interpret the provisions. That's my expectation. There will be an initial - I won't say surge - but increase in numbers for TASCAT to consider those matters. It will deliberate on those and then tenants and owners will get an understanding of what they think TASCAT will decide. There will be a landing point, and I suspect an improvement in those numbers or a reduction in those numbers.

In conclusion, through you, honourable Speaker, the bill fulfils an election commitment of the Rockliff Liberal government. It gives renters the right to keep a pet. It establishes a permission-based model. That was a point made by honourable Dr Broad in his contribution, for which I am grateful. It establishes a permission-based model; tenants apply to keep a pet; owners may only refuse a pet on reasonable grounds if TASCAT rules that they can refuse. If no response is given within 14 days, consent is deemed to be given.

The bill also requires that landlords will not be permitted to unreasonably rejecting applications from prospective tenants on the basis that they'll be accompanied by a pet. It provides a clear framework for when consent may be withdrawn and a pet ordered to be removed. It defines what is considered a pet. It includes rules on ineligible animals: unregistered dogs, un-microchipped cats, and this was made during the debate earlier today. Guide dogs and assistance animals are expressly recognised and protected.

The bill does not override existing laws, council by-laws, strata laws, animal welfare laws, et cetera. That's an important point to note. Tenants remain responsible for returning a property in original condition, other than reasonable wear and tear, and are liable for any pet-related damage. Reforms strike a balance between tenants' rights and owners' interest, and it is important that we get that balance right.

Here we are, in a collaborative parliament. We've had goodwill and collaboration and I want to again thank members from the opposite side, from the crossbench, from across this parliament, and my colleague, the honourable Roger Jaensch, for his comments. I want to particularly acknowledge and thank Madeleine Ogilvie for initially progressing this legislation; likewise, I thank Michael Ferguson, for progressing this legislation for a short time; and indeed Felix Ellis. It's my honour to continue the good work of those former ministers with respect to

this important legislation. I also thank the Premier and our government for making this commitment during the election and being able to now deliver on that election commitment.

I acknowledge the Department of Justice; Felicity Poulter and Bruce Newey are here today, and have been throughout this journey. It's been a long journey and the legislative team in my Department of Justice do an amazing job. There's lots of work already underway and more work coming your way - heads up. We know that.

I also want to thank Robyn Pearce and Brad Wagg from CBOS for their excellent work. They provide good support to me and my office, and I want to acknowledge that as well, from the Department of Justice. Again, I want to acknowledge the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania (REIT), for their constructive input. They put forward the industry's perspective. There's been no qualms about that. They've expressed their views, strong and fearless advice and they've shared that with me in my office directly. I look forward to continuing to work with them. I was their minister when I was appointed minister for Building and Construction back in mid-2016 for a number of years, so it's great to be back working with them and, likewise, with the Tenants Union of Tasmania, for representing the voice of renters. Likewise, local government and other stakeholder bodies who contributed valuable feedback through submissions.

In conclusion, these reforms are fair, they're balanced, they're practical and we've landed a good outcome. I'm delighted to have the support of this Chamber to be able to progress this bill. It certainly delivers on our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future. I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read the second time.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AMENDMENT (PETS) BILL 2025 (No. 40)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 46)

Second Reading

[2.59 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

> That the bill be now read the second time.

The amendments contained in this bill are the same as those that were included in the Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Amendment Bill 2025 that I introduced into parliament earlier this year, but which lapsed with the calling of the 2025 state election. This bill makes several amendments to the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021* about the making and operation of high-risk offenders' orders.

The act commenced in December 2021 providing for the Supreme Court to make dangerous criminal declarations or high-risk offender orders in relation to certain offenders following an application from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Dangerous criminal declarations have the effect of detaining an offender in custody indefinitely after all of their relevant custodial sentences have expired, subject to regular reviews by the court to determine if the declaration remains necessary. Dangerous criminal provisions were previously contained in the *Sentencing Act 1997* but were repealed so that updated and improved provisions could be included in the new standalone legislation.

The *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act* also introduced a second-tier scheme for high-risk offenders to provide for post-sentence supervision of serious sex or violent offenders in the community, subject to various conditions imposed through a high-risk offender order.

This second-tier scheme applies to serious offenders who do not meet the threshold for indefinite detention but nevertheless are considered to pose an unacceptable risk of committing another serious offence unless they are made subject to a high-risk offender order. A high-risk offender (HRO) order may also operate as a step-down mechanism for the court to consider when reviewing a dangerous criminal declaration.

A high-risk offender order may be made for a period of up to five years and it is possible for the DPP to apply for a further high-risk offender order to enable continued supervision beyond the period of an initial order.

An interim HRO order may be made in circumstances where the DPP has applied for an HRO order, but it appears to the court that the application will not be determined before the offender has been released from custody or made subject to an HRO order. An interim HRO order may not be less than three months or more than six months in duration, unless the court considers that a longer operational period is warranted.

The amendments in this bill only apply to the high-risk offender order provisions of the act and not to dangerous criminal declarations. I will now outline the key clauses in the bill.

Schedule 1 to the act lists those offences that are considered to be serious offences for purposes of the act. The term 'serious offence' is defined in section 3 and appears throughout part 3 of the act in relation to high-risk offender orders. In particular, the term is used in section 24 to define who is a relevant offender, who in turn determines whether an application for an HRO order can be made in relation to that person.

Clause 4 of the bill replaces the current definition of 'serious offence' with an expanded definition that includes an offence of attempting to commit an offence against the provision listed in Schedule 1. This means that where an offender has been convicted for attempting one of these crimes, they may be considered eligible for a high-risk offender order application by the DPP.

This amendment addresses the current gap where, for example, a person could be considered eligible for a high-risk offender order on the basis of having been convicted of murder, but not on the basis of having been convicted of attempted murder, where the intent to commit a violent act may be indistinguishable regardless of the outcome.

Another example would be where an offender has been convicted of multiple attempted rapes over a period of time, but because the sexual act was never completed in any of these attempts, the offender would not have committed a serious offence for the purposes of the act and could not be considered for a high-risk offender audit based on that offending alone.

While this amendment slightly broadens the range of offenders who may be considered for a high-risk offender order, it remains at the discretion of the DPP to decide whether to apply for an order in relation to any particular offender based on their individual circumstances and risk profile.

Honourable Speaker, clause 5 of the bill inserts a new subsection (4) into section 35 of the act to provide that when making an HRO order, the court may order that the offender is detained for a period of not more than seven days beyond the day on which they would cease to be in custody, if it is satisfied that such a period of time is required to make arrangements to give effect to the conditions imposed under the order.

Related amendments concerning the issue of a warrant of committal are also included through the insertion of new subsections (5) and (6) to ensure that any extended period of detention is properly authorised. These amendments mirror the existing provisions in section 37 of the act that apply to interim high-risk offender orders. As with section 37, the amendments are designed to facilitate the successful release from custody persons subject to high-risk offender orders so as to avoid a lack of suitable arrangements leading to a breach of conditions. It is important to note that this limited extension of the detention period may only be granted where the court considers it is necessary. It will not occur by default or simply as a matter of course.

I now turn to clause 6 of the bill which amends section 39 of the act. Under section 39, a high-risk offender order or an interim high-risk offender order is suspended when the offender who is subject to that order is in lawful custody - for example, if they are remanded in custody when charged with a crime or sentenced to a custodial term.

Suspension means that the order remains in place but the obligations under that order, such as reporting to a probation officer or residing at certain premises, are suspended. This ensures that an offender is not found in breach of the conditions of their order simply because they are physically unable to meet these conditions due to being held in custody. Interim high-risk offender orders are not normally made for a period of more than six months.

Section 39(5) provides that if an interim high-risk offender order is suspended for a period, the operational period is extended by the period. This means that if an offender subject to an interim high-risk offender order is placed in custody, time stops running for the order and then resumes again when the offender is released. This ensures that the relatively short duration of an interim high-risk offender order does not completely expire during any custodial period.

Subsection (5) is intentionally drafted to apply only to interim high-risk offender orders and not high-risk offender orders, which may have an operational period of up to five years. Where an offender subject to a high-risk offender order is placed in lawful custody, their obligations under the order are suspended, but the time period of the audit continues to run. Despite this deliberate drafting, questions were raised within my Department of Justice around the desirability of explicitly reflecting this intention in the act for the removal of any doubt.

Clause 6 of the bill inserts a new subsection into section 39 of the act to make this clear and unambiguous. I note that this is not a change of policy but rather confirms the policy intent when the act was originally passed by the parliament and reflects the distinction between high-risk offender orders and interim high-risk offender orders. The high-risk offender order provisions are premised on the court being able to satisfy itself in relation to the risk profile the offender at the time the court makes the order.

If section 39(5) were to apply to high-risk offender orders as well as interim high-risk offender orders, it could potentially extend the high-risk offender order's operational period and its obligations on the offender well beyond what the court considered appropriate at the time the order was made.

Finally, I turn to clause 7 of the bill, which expands the list of serious offences within Schedule 1 of the act to include 18 additional offences relating to children and young people. This will enable an offender who has been convicted of one or more of these offences to be considered for a risk assessment by the High-Risk Offenders Assessment Committee and for the DPP to apply for a high-risk offender order in relation to such offenders. This is provided that they meet the other requirements for being a relevant offender as set out in section 24 of the Act.

This change delivers on the Government's 2024 election commitment to ensure that child sex-offenders can be assessed for the risk that they pose to the community, and the need for monitoring through high-risk offender order. As with the expansion to the definition of a serious offence to include attempts, this reform will broaden the range of offenders who may potentially be made subject to a high-risk offender order. However, whether a risk assessment is undertaken in relation to a particular offender will remain for determination by the Risk Assessment Committee. Similarly, whether an application for a high-risk offender order is ultimately made in relation to a particular offender will remain at the discretion of the DPP.

It is also important to note that none of the amendments in this bill make any change to the statutory test that the Supreme Court applies under section 35(2) of the act in deciding whether to make a high-risk offender order. Nor do they change the matters that the Court, under section 36, must have regard to in making that decision.

I thank all of the stakeholders who provided feedback during the development of this bill and the public consultation process. That feedback is always considered carefully and is an important part of improving and updating Tasmania's legislation.

I commend the bill to the House.

[3.11 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to provide a contribution on this bill on behalf of the Labor Opposition, the Dangerous Criminals and High-Risk Offenders Amendment Bill of 2025. I note this mirrors a bill that was introduced in the last parliament that lapsed at the election. Like the honourable Attorney-General, I'm going to reflect a bit on the original legislation that set up this scheme. The original legislation made some important changes to the dangerous criminal declaration process. At the time before those amendments, that dangerous criminal declaration process had an unintended effect of effectively being able to mean indefinite detention for some offenders. The original legislation that introduced this scheme did make some important changes to that dangerous criminal

declaration process to ensure that it doesn't allow for indefinite detention anymore. I doubt very much that that was the original parliamentary intent.

When the parliament made those changes to the dangerous criminal declaration process it also introduced this new second category of high-risk offenders. This is quite extraordinary, and while other jurisdictions do have similar regimes in place, it's important that when parliaments make changes like this that we do it quite cautiously and with a recognition to the intent of the justice system.

What this high-risk offender's part of the new regime allows for is that the DPP can apply to the court for an offender to be determined or declared to be a high-risk offender. If the court applies that to that offender, then the DPP can apply for certain parole-like conditions, for want of a better description, of those conditions, to apply to that offender for a period of five years, after they have finished their sentence. That's the part where parliaments need to tread cautiously when we make changes like this. Usually, in most criminal law systems in democratic countries, when you do the crime, you serve the time, for a colloquial description of the system. A High-Risk Offender Order Regime like this one allows the courts, on application from the DPP, to apply conditions to someone's movements, to their rights in the community after they've served all of their time, when they've finished their sentence, and they have potentially had a parole period.

I think changes like this, when warranted, should be used expeditiously and narrowly. Some of the community consultation submissions to this bill spoke to that. They spoke to the fact that when systems like this are broadened, they still need to be done so in a way that recognises that this is something that should be used as infrequently as possible and only when expressly needed.

One of the things that would help the parliament and the community to absorb the reasons why the parliament made these changes in the first place is regular reports to the parliament on how often these orders are sought and how often they're granted or denied by the court, and indeed how often they've been extended. That won't be in effect just yet because the whole regime hasn't been in place for the full five years yet, but my understanding is that with new information after a five-year HRO period has expired that the DPP can apply for a further five years. I am sure the attorney will correct me if I am wrong in trying to remember what we debated with the original legislation.

Through the attorney, I thank his office and department for the briefing that I received on this bill where it was explained to me that there have been very few of these orders used. It does seem like the parliamentary intent is being served in that these are not being used frequently or in great number. That's important to note. Regarding the arguments that some might have in the community about an infringement on rights, having a picture for the parliament on how often these orders are used would be helpful.

I will go through the changes that the bill makes. As we heard from the attorney, it expands the definition of 'serious offence', only used for the high-risk offender regime, to include a conviction of 'attempting' to commit a serious offence. The offender would have to have been convicted for that attempt, as opposed to somebody who's been charged but not convicted. What that will mean, in practice, is where an offender has been convicted of attempting a particular crime set out in Schedule 1, they may be within scope of someone for whom the DPP could apply to the court for an HRO application.

We heard from the Attorney-General that addresses gaps where, for example, someone might have been convicted once or several times of attempted murder, attempted rape, attempting other crimes, but at the moment that pattern of offending can't be considered by the DPP or the court in seeking or applying one of these orders.

The bill also amends section 35, which outlines when making an HRO, the Supreme Court can detain the offender for a period of not more than seven days beyond the day on which they would cease to be in custody. This means that somebody is in prison, they've finished their sentence, but they can be detained for a period of up to seven days for the HRO order to be applied for and granted.

I am told that in cases where that kind of detention can be used for other kinds of orders that that seven days is rarely used. I want to put on the record some of the concerns that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service (TALS) raised with the government on the community consultation. I thank TALS for their very comprehensive comments on the bill.

It's clause 6 that makes this amendment, and what they said is that while they recognise the need to protect community safety, particularly in relation to children and vulnerable people, this expansion of authority might be viewed as a superfluous use of custodial settings and an infringement on someone's individual rights. They go on to say that:

> In practice, this amendment may disproportionately affect those with limited housing or no legal representation or minimal access to appropriate post-release supports.

They also say that:

> Historically, these are issues that are experienced at higher rates by Aboriginal people;

and that:

> These measures do run the risk of perpetuating existing disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people going through the justice system.

They also flag that there could be instances where the seven days post-sentence detention may not deliver on its intended purpose and they give a few examples. One is if there is a delay or an issue with assessing the offender for electronic monitoring, for example, then seven days may not be sufficient. They note that there's been recent reports by Tasmania Police that have extended their assessment times for electronic monitoring to 28 days. They flagged the potential risk that in situations where this assessment is unable to be completed, the extra 7 days in custody, they still need to be released regardless of that electronic monitoring not being complete, if that was indeed one of the conditions the DPP was seeking.

They make the quite fair recommendation or suggestion that the onus be placed on the Office of the DPP to ensure that an application is made within a pre-release timeframe that enables the application to be heard well before the end of the offender's sentence. In other words, the offender will know coming up to their release date whether or not there's been an application for an HRO order to be placed on them and whether that order has been granted.

I think that's a pretty reasonable suggestion from TALS and it would be great to have the minister's view on that, recognising of course that these aren't parole conditions. These are limitations on movements put on an offender once they have finished their sentence.

I also wanted to put on the record some of the comments TALS made generally in their submission about Aboriginal people going through the justice system. They said that they strongly support initiatives that promote community safety while maintaining fairness, respect and delivering just outcomes for all people in contact with the justice system. They said they recognise that Aboriginal peoples are grossly over-represented in the justice system, which is attributed to Aboriginal people's lived experience of disproportionate structural disadvantage, stereotyping and intergenerational trauma.

They say it is a fact on all standard indicators that Aboriginal people emerge as the most structurally, socially and economically deprived, making them the most disadvantaged and marginalised group in Australia. They say that the disproportionate incarceration rate and higher recidivism rate experienced by Aboriginal people can be attributed to the systemic discrimination that has long existed in public policies, practices and social structures. Systemic discrimination also contributes to Aboriginal peoples developing an increased mistrust of the justice system and community support mechanisms, which subsequently results in a range of unaddressed issues, perpetuating over-representation in the justice system.

I thought they were pretty powerful comments, and I wanted to take this opportunity to put them on the public record on behalf of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service.

Honourable Speaker, the Bar Association also made comments on the bill. They support the provisions and the dangerous criminals and high-risk offenders scheme, but they did make note of their concerns around funding for defences to these applications. In the minister's briefing I was told there are very few applications, so it's probably not a huge increased caseload for defence, but I did want to make the point that there are a lot in the legal community highlighting the underfunding of the community legal services and Legal Aid in particular, but also the pressure that that puts on private practice.

The Bar Association notes that the Office of the DPP has been allocated additional specific funding to deal with making these HRO applications, but they point out that there hasn't been a similar commitment made to Legal Aid or the community legal sector for them to mount defences, as is required.

On that note, I think it's important to note that when governments and parliaments are making changes to criminal laws, particularly governments like this one that like to talk about a 'tough on crime' agenda, making changes to the criminal law comes with a responsibility to adequately fund all aspects of the pathway through the justice system, from a charge from police and an investigation, through to prosecution and defence, to someone being sentenced, to spending time incarcerated, and then on their release and their post-release.

We know through years now of annual reports from both the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court that their criminal caseload backlog is very high and it's a real struggle for the courts to keep up with the work that is before them, and part of the reason for that is the inadequate funding of the community legal assistance sector across the board. Fewer and fewer private practitioners, for example, are taking on legally aided work because they simply can't afford to take on the hourly rate. That's not them being greedy or unreasonable, it's actually

about them doing what we expect of them as a parliament, which is being able to be a private practitioner who also takes on Tasmanian Legal Aid work.

That's extremely important in a range of circumstances, not just because we want to see people represented in courts, but also because there are conflicts of interest. For example, if one party to a matter is legally aided by Legal Aid, they can't represent the other party to that matter, which means they need to provide funding to the private sector to represent that other person, and when that funding is insufficient, it is a real access to justice barrier, particularly for people who are in vulnerable situations and going through the court system. I'm saying that broadly about people facing the courts at every level, not specific to these HRO orders, but broadly, people facing the justice system at the moment are often doing so in an unrepresented capacity because there just is not the capacity in the sector to represent people in the way they need to be.

Back to the bill, after my little side jaunt; thank you, Speaker, for allowing that. There is an avoidance of doubt clause in this bill in the amendment to section 39 to explicitly confirm that in contrast to an interim high-risk offender order, the operational period of a high-risk offender order is not extended when that order is suspended. My understanding is that that's not a change to the original intent of the parliament, it's not a change in application of the original legislation, but confirms that the original intent, when the original scheme was being debated in this place, was that that period doesn't extend when somebody is detained. I think that's right. I'm sure I will be corrected if not.

Finally, the bill expands the list of serious offences that sit in schedule 1 of the act to include 18 additional offences that relate to children and young people. That will enable an offender who has been convicted of one or more of these offences to be considered for a risk assessment by the High-Risk Offenders Assessment Committee and the DPP to apply for an HRO in relation to such offenders, provided that they also meet the other requirements of being a relevant offender under section 24 of the act, which has not changed.

I think I have made all of the contributions I needed to make. I particularly wanted to put on record those comments around the community legal assistance sector and the struggles that I know they are having in representing people, and the fact that the Bar Association has raised that specific concern around funding for defence when the DPP's office apparently has been funded for these orders. More importantly, I wanted to also put on the record all of those concerns raised by TALS because I think they make some fairly straightforward and reasonable suggestions not necessarily for further legislative change but maybe alterations in practice and policy. That is all I have to contribute, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the contributions.

[3.30 p.m.]

Dr WOODRUFF (Franklin - Leader of the Greens) - Honourable Speaker, the Greens will be supporting the majority of this bill. We have some things that we want to go through in the committee stage of the bill. We are concerned about one clause in particular.

We supported the original high-risk offenders legislation that went through this place. It is for people who are convicted of a serious offence and 9 months before the end of their sentence the DPP is able to lodge an application with the court to have a person registered as a high-risk offender. The court then makes a determination about whether a person is to be considered a high-risk offender and what post-release conditions that entails. These can be

similar to the sorts of things a person could get on a community correction order, including electronic monitoring of the person, curfews, reporting to a community corrections officer, and another range of inhibitions on their personal freedom and their movement to constrain what has been determined by the court to be a risk to community that needs to be monitored and managed.

We accept that in principle, notwithstanding that it is beyond the period of the original sentence. It is a process that allows the court to make a determination on the DPP's submission about the risk to the community of that person if they're released without any conditions. This bill, as has been noted, doesn't make any changes to the dangerous criminals provisions of the act, specifically in relation to high-risk offenders.

Clause 4, section 3 of the bill amends the definition of 'serious offence' to include attempting to commit any of the scheduled offences in schedule 1. We don't have a particular concern with this, but some questions. It isn't about being sentenced for an offence, but it provides similar conditions that a person on parole or community corrections would receive. It is about future risk and it can't be issued unless there is an unacceptable risk another serious offence being committed.

We have some questions in here that were outlined very clearly by TALS in their submission on this legislation. TALS is concerned that section 3 risks inconsistency, interpretive confusion, and unintended overreach. Using offence-based categorisations over individualised assessments may detach the legal process from the social, historical, and personal factors that influence offending behaviour. For Aboriginal people who are more likely to experience intergenerational trauma, systematic discrimination and early criminalisation, they believe that this approach may exacerbate the existing disparities that occur between Aboriginal people and other people in the community. They recommend that in relation to this section 3 change, there should be clear statutory principles enunciated to guide the application of circumstances where it would be appropriate, so that the law is able to be applied consistently across jurisdictions and within this jurisdiction. They say the principles should also account for the unique historical and social experiences that shape the patterns of criminal behaviour in Aboriginal communities.

I don't know whether the Attorney-General has considered the development of statutory principles to guide this amendment, because it does include redefining 'serious offence' to include an 'attempt' to commit an offence. A serious offence is a criminal matter and it's under the Criminal Code and attempting to commit an offence is in a different order to having been found to have committed an offence. What would the guidance be? What's the intention? Can you walk us through that process, please?

In relation to clause 5, which is section 35 of the act, this allows a court to detain a high-risk offender for up to 7 days after they are due to be released from prison, if it's necessary for the DPP to make arrangements for high-risk offender conditions. We're very concerned by this. On the face of it, this is overreach and it almost encourages lax administrative arrangements. As I said before, there are 9 months for the DPP to make a decision about starting a process for a high-risk offender application, so that the paperwork and the information will be available at the point of a person being released into the community because they've served their sentence. It's a gross social injustice to detain a person for up to a week, when the bureaucracy has had 9 months to get its act together.

It looks to me like it is walking us steadily towards, for want of a better term, a police-state approach, by not paying proper attention to the rights of people who are incarcerated. It says, once they're in the jail, they may as well stay there for another week whereas, were any of us to spend a week in one of Tasmania's prisons, I think we'd be counting every day as are those people who would be looking forward to the end of their release and making arrangements for that time to go back into the community, to see their family, and to get engaged in society. We're concerned about that. It is essentially the state's failure to lodge an application in a timely manner.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service are also quite concerned about this. They can see that it might be administratively convenient, but from a rights-based and cultural perspective, it represents an expansion of custodial authority that may be viewed as a 'superfluous use of custodial settings and impingement on an individual's rights.' They make a good point. A week in a jail costs money, that person takes up space, they have to be fed, cared for, and a whole system of imprisonment needs to continue because of an administrative failure. TALS goes on to say that this particular amendment could 'disproportionately affect people who have limited housing, no legal representation and minimal access to post-release support.'

Historically, as the evidence tells us again and again in Australia and in Tasmania, these issues are experienced overwhelmingly and disproportionately by Aboriginal people, and that a measure like this perpetuates an existing disadvantage. It does not try and repair it.

TALS agree with our view that an offender should not be disadvantaged by being made subject to post sentence detention, and that the onus should be placed on the DPP to make sure that an application is made with a pre-release timeframe that enables the application to be heard well enough before the end of an offender's sentence.

They propose that an additional subsection to the Act be included that outlines firm pre-release timeframes for -

(a) Serving the offender with an application.

(b) The lodgement of documentation with the court by the DPP that can mitigate the delays that this clause seeks to redress and remove entirely the need for post-sentence detention.

That means that if it's done in a timely way, the offender will have plenty of time to make any post-release arrangements and to seek legal advice. We support that and we will be speaking further to this in the Committee.

In relation to clause 7, Schedule 1 of the act, this adds the offences of stalking and bullying a child or young person to a range of offences that are already under the schedule in the act. These are Criminal Code offences, and they can involve serious conduct, there's no doubt about that. However, it is also the case that there are levels of seriousness in those types of conduct. The act as it stands doesn't directly require any regard to be given to the seriousness of the nature of offending when the Court is making a determination about whether to issue an HRO or not.

I would like some information from the Attorney-General, if you wouldn't mind. Who asked for these extra offences to be included? What was the motivation for including these particular two - stalking and bullying? What problem is it trying to solve that has been identified throughout the process of reviewing this legislation? Where did it come from? What are we seeking to resolve here? Is there enough guidance about the difference? because we're changing the definition in section 3 from the range of offences in the schedule 1 to also include 'attempting' to commit an offence? So, we will also include 'attempting to commit the offence of bullying' and 'attempting to commit the offence of stalking'?

I want to be clear. The Greens are not trying in any way to imply that children shouldn't be protected from abuse and exploitation and that stalking and bullying are very serious offences, but we would like to understand why they are there.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service have also asked that the High-Risk Offenders Order Assessment focuses on an individual's responsiveness to an intervention while they're incarcerated as well as their initial offending behaviour - that is, the reason that they were incarcerated in the first place.

The question I have, Attorney-General, is: what is the balance? I assume that in making a case for an HRO, the DPP is drawing on the behaviour of an offender whilst incarcerated. Is it their behaviour or is it the initial charge and the rationale for the sentence in the first place that the DPP makes an application on the basis of that? What happens if their behaviour has changed dramatically, substantially or not at all while they're in prison? How is that taken account of, if at all, by the DPP? Does it have to be assessed? Does it have to be included in what is provided to the Court when the DPP makes an application for an HRO? Is it something that the Court can seek information about if it's not provided by the DPP in an application? If a person has been incarcerated for an offence and there's no information provided about how they've behaved in jail, whether they've taken up - what their actions have been like in that period of time. Does the Court get access to that information if it's not provided by the DPP?

These are really important matters for Aboriginal people, and assessments, a treatment and reintegration plans for Aboriginal people from incarceration should be undertaken in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and leaders so that there can be culturally just and sensitive outcomes.

We are trying to close the gap in Tasmania, and that does involve a connection between the justice system and Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal elders, so that they can have an opportunity to work with offenders and help them reintegrate while, at the same time, having some say in the process of an HRO decision. How would TALS or another legal body represent a person, an offender, for whom an HRO was being prepared?

I will finish with some comments from the Aboriginal Legal Service in relation to high-risk offender applications in general. They recommend culturally informed risk assessments before any HRO order application that is developed in conjunction with Aboriginal organisations and does include trauma history, community obligations, systemic disadvantage.

Has there been any engagement between your department, Attorney-General, and Aboriginal organisations about that sort of relationship? Has there been any engagement with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service in that respect? Speaking of legal services, the Bar

Association, as the honourable Labor member for Clark, the shadow spokesperson on this for Labor - she's already mentioned the Bar's comments about funding, and they make the good point that the Office of the Director of Prosecutions, they say, has been allocated specific additional funding in respect to HRO applications, but there is no commensurate funding that's provided to legal services, TALS, or any other to represent people. Why not? That doesn't sound fair to people in the community. If there is an HRO application made and an amount of money is given to the DPP, why isn't there a similar proportionate amount of money given to Legal Aid or TALS to be able to represent offenders?

The Bar Association makes the point it's not just the application to pay the fees of legal professionals, there are also expert reports, particularly by clinical and forensic psychologists and psychiatrists, that would be necessary to garner in order to respond appropriately in court to an HRO application and act on behalf of an offender.

It would be really good to hear if there's a proposal in the Budget to add some more money into that area. The Greens would certainly welcome that. I thank the Attorney-General and their staff for the information we've got on this bill and, as I signalled, we will be going into Committee to discuss that particular section. I will finish by saying the Greens will be supporting the bill.

[3.50 p.m.]

Mr FERGUSON (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I totally support this legislation and I am grateful to the Attorney-General for bringing it back to our House. I would have liked to have seen it be law by now and if we hadn't had the unnecessary Winter election I dare say the Legislative Council would have also considered the legislation by now and it would have been in place right now.

Listening to the debate so far, it has a lot of support around the Chamber in broad terms for the objectives contained in this important legislation. I've got a few things on my heart to share and I will be saying them, representing the people of northern Tasmania in my electorate of Bass.

The *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders Act 2021* has been in effect now for approximately four years. From the outset I want to pay tribute and commend former attorney-general Elise Archer for this legislation. It was good legislation then and it's made our community safer. Elise Archer's work follows on from the exemplary work of previous attorneys-general including Matthew Groom, Will Hodgman, and especially Vanessa Goodwin, ensuring that the state is made safer under a Liberal government. We are unapologetically tough on crime.

The job is never actually completed. You always learn more about the legal environment and the way in which people are harming members of our community and need to be brought to account, and then you learn about things that you didn't know about in a previous debate or a previous parliament, which we need to reconsider and have another look at. That is exactly what Attorney-General Barnett has brought to the House today. I am in thorough agreement with it.

We need to make our state safer and we need to keep a close focus on the number-one priority for any legislation in this domain, which is about making our community as safe as it can possibly be. We know that individuals who break the law are harming the wellbeing,

happiness, and physical and mental enjoyment of members of the Tasmanian community. We never hear enough about victims in these debates. I am not even sure that the word has been used yet. It may have been, once or twice, since I've been listening to the debate. The victims have to be front and centre here, because for every crime there's a victim; somebody who has been hurt. Especially in view of the legislation we're looking at here, we're talking about Criminal Code offences of the most serious type involving physical and sexual violence, and in respect of HROs we're talking about quite a long list of serious offences, which the bill seeks to expand upon.

How many people are being hurt every year in Tasmania as a result of one of these criminal offences? One is too many, but, in fact, it is dozens and dozens of Tasmanians being harmed just by this narrow scope of offences being dealt with. I will always say that in a debate with some competing demands, community safety and the public interest must prevail. It has to win when there's a contest of competing values or priorities.

I will mention that in the 2021 legislation which came through our House in 2020, five years ago, there was a sense of an indefinite detention arrangement for dangerous criminals. Somebody in a previous contribution made the comment that that might have been an unintended artefact of history. I don't think it was unintended at all.

Ms Haddad - The indefinite detention wasn't unintended - really?

Mr FERGUSON - Yes, I would suggest that.

Ms Haddad - You really think a previous Tasmanian parliament wanted to legislate for indefinite detention?

The SPEAKER - Order.

Mr FERGUSON - That's precisely what I am saying, Ms Haddad.

Ms Haddad - Wow. I'm surprised.

Mr FERGUSON - It may show how relaxed some politicians can be about the most serious crimes.

Ms Haddad - We don't have a legal system that allows indefinite detention.

The SPEAKER - Order. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member has other forms of the House to make her contribution; on Adjournment or something else.

Mr FERGUSON - It obviously has got under Ms Haddad's skin because I'm making a point that she ought to actually agree with, that there has been a time in Tasmania's parliament where that's exactly what was intended.

Ms Butler - Where's your evidence?

Ms Haddad - That's not what former attorney-general Elise Archer said on the debate.

The SPEAKER - Order. The honourable member for Lyons and the honourable member for Clark can make contributions using other forms of the House.

Mr FERGUSON - The rudeness does rather give away the ignorance, because there have been plenty of times for hundreds of years where people have been locked up for life.

Ms Haddad - Yes, on a sentence that's for life. Elise Archer made it clear when she changed the law.

The SPEAKER - Ms Haddad, you've got a few more bills today. I don't want to have to give you warnings.

Ms Haddad - Elise Archer would not agree with you, I can tell you that.

Mr FERGUSON - So rude and it does belie the ignorance. It has not been an unintended consequence of previous parliaments, probably going back a very long time where that was specifically the objective, which was to lock them up for life. We moved past that a long time ago, so be careful what you're disagreeing with. I'll make the point again that it does need to be managed.

Ms Haddad - Someone sentenced to life, fine, that's the court's decision, but that's not what the law did.

Mr FERGUSON - Please, no. You're just being rude now.

The SPEAKER - Ms Haddad, that's your first warning.

Mr FERGUSON - It does need to be properly managed. It does need to be overseen by a court with evidence. It can't be for life, and it certainly can't be arbitrary. I don't think anybody's making that point. I ask the shadow attorney-general to get control of her behaviour.

Members interjecting.

Mr FERGUSON - This law has been successful for our state and I want to see it continue to be successful in keeping our state safe.

Under this law, which has been brought in by a Liberal government, the DPP has for those past four years been able to apply to the Supreme Court for a dangerous criminal declaration. or as a new innovation at the time, a high-risk offender order for serious offenders who pose a significant risk of committing further violent or sexual offences upon their release. This bill today makes some very significant and important amendments to that legislation, which I strongly support. Specifically, they are in relation to making and the operation of HRO orders so that we can have post-sentence supervision for seriously violent and serious sex offenders in the community for up to five years, making the offender subject to various conditions, some of which are mandatory and must be observed in all cases and some of which are optional for the court to impose. If there's time, I'll explore some of those optional orders that can be made, or elements that are optional for it to be included in an order, because I see great value in them and I'd like to see them being used more.

For a start, I think one of the most significant changes is the inclusion of attempted crimes. The existing range of crimes that are already against the law are illegal and have been for a long time, most of which are in the Criminal Code. They're very terrible crimes, including penetrative sexual abuse of a child, persistent sexual abuse of a child, procuring a child or a young person for abuse. Those awful offences go on; there's quite a list. Involving a person under the age of 18 years in the production of child exploitation material, or producing child exploitation material. Our hearts should all be dropping right now as we hear these crimes. Distributing child exploitation material; murder; manslaughter, causing death by dangerous driving, committing an unlawful act intended to cause bodily harm, persistent family violence; wounding, rape, kidnapping, aggravated armed robbery, and arson.

There are more under the *Sex Industry Offences Act*, including procuring or otherwise causing or permitting a child to provide sexual services, or receiving a fee or reward that a person knows is derived directly or indirectly from sexual services provided by a child. That is an extensively appalling list of crimes.

It's sad, isn't it, just what the human person is capable of doing. That's why we're here as parliamentarians to make laws to deal with the circumstances of a very unjust situation and to try to bring justice to it, and to try to bring justice first and foremost to the victim of those crimes but more broadly, of course, justice to our community and that ripple effect, not just that individual person, but his or her loved ones, their family, their school and their community. People who read about those crimes in the paper, the entire state: it's about ensuring that justice is attempted to be provided. It will never truly be provided to make reparation for such crime, but nonetheless, the justice system attempts to do that.

Second, to send a very clear message, significant crimes lead to significant punishments, and so to try to have a deterrent effect in the wider community. There would be plenty of people who would say they should be locked up for life. There would be plenty who would say so because, from the victim's point of view, I dare to believe that there's a path to recovery but I also know people who are living with the impact of crimes that have been committed against them for the entirety of their life. It's with them forever.

Bringing in now an almost mirror image of that list of offences by adding a provision to expand the list with 'attempting to commit' any of those crimes being added to the list of serious offences, I completely applaud and support.

It's been made clear to me that it nonetheless remains at the discretion of the prosecutor to decide whether to apply for an order at all. Then, quite naturally, it's up to the Court to decide if an HRO in those circumstances will be ordered. The serious crime definition already allows for orders to be made in cases where an offence has been committed outside Tasmania, so to take that into account, if they've occurred anywhere else in Australia, in other states, territories or under a Commonwealth law, and that will continue.

I will speak briefly on the inclusion of additional offences. It grieved my heart reading the bill for the first time. Again, a new list of offences are being added. I am so grateful that the government has adopted this approach. It grieves my heart because I wish it were not necessary for those additional 18 horrendous offences to now be added to schedule 1 in the act. I don't know the answer to the question as to why they weren't added in the first instance four or five years ago, but they weren't. That's not a criticism. It probably goes more to the point

I made earlier about as it's never a set-and-forget with law reform or justice legislation. You always learn that there's something that we may need to address.

It certainly is delivery of the government's commitment to ensure that child sexual offenders will be assessed for the risk that they pose to the community and the need for monitoring through an HRO order. The sections of the bill that expand the serious offences within schedule 1 include an additional 18 offences. They are relating to children and young persons. That may add some value to the question that Dr Woodruff posed. I will leave it entirely to the Attorney-General to answer those questions about stalking and bullying.

Can I make the point that stalking and bullying is a code offence. It's a code - C-O-D-E - it's a Criminal Code offence. It's a criminal offence. Perhaps to an outside listener, stalking and bullying may not seem like a code offence, but when you look at what constitutes a section 192 offence under the Code, it's very nasty. It's intended to really hurt a person. It's not primary school teasing. It's a very serious offence.

Briefly, we're talking about some horrendous offences that are being added as a result of the government's bill: an indecent act with or directed at a child by a person in a position of authority; an indecent assault of a child or a young person by a person in a position of authority; permitting penetrative sexual abuse of a child; indecent act with or directed at a child or a young person; procuring a child for an indecent act; grooming with intent to procure a child for sexual abuse; grooming with intent to expose a child to indecent material; indecent assault; procuring a child for penetrative sexual abuse by threats or fraud if the person against whom the offence is committed is a child or a young person; possessing child-exploitation material, child pornography, or accessing it; incest if the person against whom the offence is committed is a child or a young person; administering a drug with intent to facilitate the commission of an offence where it involves a child; performing female genital mutilation; abduction of a young person under the age of 17; abduction of a child, harbouring an abducted child and, of course, the one Dr Woodruff identified, stalking and bullying if the person against whom the offence is committed is a child or a young person.

I know that we're all deeply in agreement about how awful those crimes are, not just because they go against a law of the state, but they're against nature. They're against common decency. They're against what Rabbi Shimon Cowen would refer to as a basic universal ethic, regardless of whether or not you follow a religion or none.

They're against the law. Some of those things that I've described in the bill have not always been against the law, but they've always been wrong, the point I made in a different debate. It grieves my heart because, as I think about legislation of this kind and the character of the offences that are being brought in, I always think about the people who have had to live as a victim as a result of those offenders with those crimes. I always think about them.

I always think about how they've been hurt and maybe for many of those people, what kind of different and happier life they may have been able to enjoy had they not been hurt by the offender.

I'm in total support. It's legislation like this one that really brings it home for me about why I am an MP, why I am here representing my community of Bass and having a regard for the welfare of the people of all of this state, whether they live in Bass or elsewhere.

A couple of questions for the Attorney-General. The first is if I could get a sense of what data there may be about the number of offences, if there is such a thing as an average year, what sort of number of or proportion of offences are being added as a result of the extra range of new offences being added to the serious offences list? I'm referring there, of course, to the addition of 'attempted' in relation to existing list of serious offences and the new 18 offences being added.

The second question I have for the Attorney-General is if he would explain whether there's scope to revisit the current disparity between declaration of a dangerous criminal and a High-Risk Offender Order. On the one hand, dangerous criminal declaration can be made provided a person is at least 17 years old, but a high-risk offender at 18 years of age, and I'd be interested to know what is the reason, if there is a reason, for that disparity between those two ages, and whether that is an area that the Attorney-General feels we should further examine.

I ask these with a single motive. To make sure that we do live in a just society; to make sure that all of our Tasmanian community are kept safe, but with a special regard for the most vulnerable Tasmanians, our most precious Tasmanians, and that is Tasmanian children.

Attorney-General, congratulations for your work and for bringing this to our House and, like others, I support this legislation. Perhaps somewhat more than some others, I completely support this legislation and want to see more of it.

[4.10 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Deputy Speaker, first of all, I acknowledge all the speakers who made a contribution. Thank you very much and for your indication of support for the bill. I realise there is a range of questions, and I'll address them in turn throughout my summing-up opportunity.

I also acknowledge the former attorney-general, Elise Archer for her work in progressing this some years ago and, as my colleague, member for Bass Michael Ferguson, did, I acknowledge Will Hodgman, and the late Vanessa Goodwin as well. Also, Matt Groom and the many attorneys-general who've come before me. I'm certainly standing on the shoulders of giants today.

This legislation will keep our community safer. It will deliver improved safety to our community and it will deliver a fairer and better justice system. I am absolutely convinced of that as an attorney-general. It will give confidence and solace to victims of crime and we mustn't ever forget the victims of crime. We must consider their interests and their families, their communities and delivering on this bill will improve our justice system. That's what's driving me and our government and others in this place. They're supporting a better and improved justice system, delivering improved community safety, so we can all get on to help deliver a better Tasmania, and to achieve our full potential as individuals, as families, as communities, as small business people and the like. I am really pleased.

Again, I acknowledge my shadow, Ella Haddad, the Leader for the Greens, Rosalie Woodruff, Michael Ferguson, colleague and friend, member for Bass. I want to thank upfront the department for all of their efforts on this, Peter Davis, who is here today, and indeed the stakeholders, for their consultation and feedback on the bill. The Tasmanian Bar, reference to them. I appreciate having worked with them in my two years as an Attorney-General. it has been a pleasure. Likewise, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, I thank them for their

feedback and engagement, not only on this and a whole range of issues, and I thank them for their important advocacy.

I will go through some of the key issues that were raised in the second reading debate and respond to those, but personally, I think it is helpful to update this place and the other place, and indeed elsewhere, about how many HRO and interim HRO orders have been made since the act commenced. Since the Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offenders act commenced in December 2021, a total of 10 high-risk offender orders have been made. Two orders in the period 2022-23, four in the period 2023-24, and four in the period 2024-25. A total of four interim high-risk offender orders have been made and completed since the act commenced; two in the period 2022-23, one in the period 2023-24, and one in the period 2024-25.

How many offenders are currently subject to the HRO orders? As of 1 September 2025, only a few weeks back, Tasmania had 5 offenders living in the community subject to the HRO orders. One of those offenders has been stepped down to an HRO in December 2023 after the discharge of their dangerous criminal declaration. An additional five offenders subject to HRO orders were in custody as of 1 September 2025, as a result of alleged further offending or breaches of their order. The operational period of those HRO orders was, therefore, suspended in accordance with the act and will resume when they leave custody.

One further HRO order has not yet commenced as the offender is still in custody. That is the advice I've received. I think it's a helpful update for the Chamber and, indeed, the public.

As to the questions raised by the Shadow attorney-general and others, I can indicate that the advice I have is section 33 of the act already provides that the DPP may apply for an HRO order up to 9 months before the date on which the offender otherwise be released without conditions, and this timeframe is considered appropriate and sufficient. The capacity to conduct assessments of offenders, obtain reports and progress matters through the court system may vary considerably based on the individual offender and the complexity of their specific circumstances and background. Delays may be caused by the offender refusing to cooperate in the preparation of risk assessments and behavioural and management reports. The timing of proceedings may also be impacted by the general management of court business and availability of counsel on both sides. All these matters may be beyond the DPP's control.

Considering those variables, it would be inappropriate and unrealistic to burden the DPP with specific timeframes for service and lodgement within the nine-month period during which an application may be made. The government believes that in all the circumstances, an extension of up to 7 days of detention is not disproportionate or unreasonable, particularly considering that any offender who warrants the making of an HRO order is extremely likely to have been serving lengthy custodial sentences for committing serious offences. I think we have the balance right. The extension of 7 days is fair, reasonable, and appropriate. Given that the ability already exists for the Supreme Court to order such an extension for an interim HRO order, there is no logical or compelling reason to deny such a discretion in relation to non-interim HRO orders if the court is satisfied it is warranted.

On the issue of over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the justice system, the government is committed to engaging with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and has set out a number of priorities in Tasmania's Plan for Closing the Gap 2025-2028. This point was made during the debate. These include actions that are the responsibility of my Department of Justice. One of those actions to be led by me as an Attorney-General and

Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation, together with the Minister for Children and Youth, is to develop an action plan to support implementation of the Justice Sector Strengthening Plan in Tasmania.

This will include engaging with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, or the ACCO sector, in the provision of culturally appropriate support and programs for Aboriginal people in custody. Tasmania's plan for Closing the Gap 2025 to 2028 also includes actions to develop an Aboriginal Youth Justice strategy with relevant ACCOs and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, underpinned by self-determination and focused on prevention, early intervention and diversion strategies for Aboriginal young people, and to scope and build our core engagement to the provision of adult justice services, including by leveraging development of the Justice Sector Strengthening Plan.

My shadow, honourable Ella Haddad, and member for Bass, Michael Ferguson, asked about assessments and how many additional offenders are expected to be considered by the Committee as a result of the inclusion of attempted crimes and additional child sexual offences. Certainly, in the past three financial years, the number of relevant offenders considered by the Risk Assessment Committee each year has ranged from 17 to 55, averaging at 38 offenders per year. That's the advice I've received. Estimating the additional number of offenders who will need to be considered by the Committee due to the amendments in clauses 4 and 7 of the bill, is challenging as their eligibility as a relevant offender will commence at varying times based on how long their custodial sentences are.

For attempted crimes, the numbers will almost certainly be extremely small. Based on data collected by the department at the end of May this year, there were only two offenders sentenced for attempted crimes who would at some point become eligible as relevant offenders. At the same point in time, there were 26 offenders who had been sentenced for the types of offences relating to children and young persons in this bill - will add to Schedule 1.

In any given year, anywhere between 10 and 15 of those offenders might be expected to reach the nine-month point prior to the expiry of their sentence and, therefore, be considered by the committee. I would note that the majority of those offenders were convicted of indecent assault under section 127 of the Criminal Code. The conduct that may be included in section 127 offence is broad and may vary in seriousness. On that basis, it would be expected that some of those offenders would not meet the threshold required for making a High-Risk Offender order and the DPP would accordingly decline to make an application.

My shadow minister, Ms Haddad, asked about matters raised by other stakeholders and the funding of the HRO order applications. I can acknowledge and understand that. I acknowledge that the office of the DPP received specific additional funding in respect to the HRO order applications, and that no similar funding has been provided to Tasmania Legal Aid in that respect. Of course, that's a matter for future budget initiatives as well, but noting the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund and the $2.5 million that I recently approved for Tasmania Legal Aid with respect to their good work in our Magistrates Courts. This was the amount of funding that was requested. A request was made and the full request was granted by our government through the Solicitors' Guarantee Fund. I acknowledge that in this debate today; it's on the public record, of course, and I'm just reiterating it this afternoon. While it's accepted that the HRO order applications are likely to be complex, it is important to remember that the number of such applications is very low. For example, since the act commenced nearly four years ago, the number of HRO orders made by the Court each year has never exceeded four.

In terms of Dr Woodruff's matter raised again by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, including attempted crimes as serious offences: in terms that risk of inconsistency, confusion, overreach, I just note, and the advice I have, is that the submission from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service did not articulate how the inclusion of attempted crimes would risk inconsistency, interpretive confusion or unintended overreach, or provide any examples to support its stated concerns.

The government does disagree with the assertions in that submission. The parameters of extending serious offences to attempts are clear and unambiguous. They are based not on interpretation but on the inarguable fact of whether an offender has or has not been convicted in a court of law of attempting an offence.

The definition of serious offence is used in section 24 of the Act to define who is an eligible offender, which in turn determines whether an application for a High-Risk Offender order can be made in relation to that person. While this expands the potential cohort of offenders who would need to be reviewed by the High-Risk Offenders Assessment Committee and who may be then referred to the DPP for consideration, it has no impact on the factors that the DPP would normally consider in determining whether an application should actually be made in relation to an individual. It also does not change in any way the statutory test the Supreme Court applies to deciding whether to make an HRO order or the matters that the legislation requires to have regard to in making that decision.

The second part of Dr Woodruff's question related to the statutory principles and the need to account for historical and social impacts on Aboriginal communities. Again, the advice I have is that part of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service submission appears to be based on a misunderstanding of how High-Risk Offender orders applications are considered by the Supreme Court. It's critical to understand that the Court's consideration of the HRO order applications is not an exercise in sentencing that weighs up and balances various mitigating and aggravating factors. It is not about determining an appropriate punishment based on sentencing principles. Rather, it is a determination by the court as to whether the offender does or does not meet a specific statutory threshold that is set out in the Act based on their individual risk profile.

The historical and social experiences that have negatively affected Aboriginal communities may indeed profoundly impact on an individual Aboriginal offender and help us to understand why they have engaged in offending conduct. This impact can be captured in the behavioural and management reports that must be provided to the Court as well as further submissions made by the offender or the legal counsel during court proceedings. However, the ultimate decision for the Court is not whether the offender's pattern of criminal behaviour can be explained, it is whether the Court is satisfied to a high degree of probability that the offender poses an unacceptable risk of committing another serious offence unless the High-Risk Offender order is made. In making that decision, section 36(1) of the act mandates that the safety of the community must be the paramount consideration.

If the Court determines that on all of the evidence available an offender does not indeed meet that threshold of posing an unacceptable risk, it is appropriate for the order to be made to ensure the community is protected. This is true regardless of the historical and social factors that have influenced that offender's behaviour, whether they have resulted from individual experiences or broader cultural influences. While sentencing is about determining the appropriate punishment for past behaviour and possibly sending a message of deterrence to the

individual or the wider community, consideration of the High-Risk Offender order is not a sentencing exercise; it is a determination of likely risk related to potential future behaviour.

Dr Woodruff - Isn't it effectively applying a sentence after that determination? Through you, Chair.

Mr BARNETT - It's a determination made by the Court in accordance with the legislation.

I do want to touch on your next question, which I'll do, that might flow through to that, because it related to the limited extension of the custodial period and the overreach question which you put. The government acknowledges that post-sentence detention for any period of time should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The proposed amendment guards against misuse by requiring the Supreme Court to be satisfied that the extra period of detention is necessary in order to enable arrangements to be made to give effect to the High-Risk Offender order conditions. The Court will not approve the additional detention, unless it is so satisfied. It is important to understand that delays to arrangements being put in place in order to give effect to the conditions imposed under the High-Risk Offender order may not necessarily be attributed to, or be within the full control of Community Corrections.

Noting that the paramount consideration of the court in making a High-Risk Offender order is the safety of the community, that was my initial comment, regarding the objective of this bill. It is reasonable that time be extended by a short period if required to ensure that critical objective is met: safety of the community. If the Court has already determined the High-Risk Offender conditions are necessary to protect the community upon release of the offender, the objectives of the act would not be met if the offender was released without those conditions being able to be properly monitored and enforced. If any issues relating to the making of arrangements cannot be resolved within the time period allowed by the court, a further application under the proposed new subsection 4 would need to be made, considered and approved by the court.

Dr Woodruff asked about the nine-month period in which an application for an HRO order can be made, why it is not sufficient time for all monitoring and supervision arrangements to be made. I'm advised that in the briefings and advice to the honourable member for Clark, Kristie Johnston, who asked similar questions hopefully this will assist the honourable member and Dr Woodruff and others the processes and considerations relating to the HRO order applications are inherently complex and necessarily thorough. It can easily be the case that additional time is required at various stages of this process.

To provide a few examples: the High-Risk Offender Assessment Committee meets quarterly and it may be that a particular offenders case is not considered until a month or two after the nine-month period commences in which an application can be made. The committee may seek behavioural reports, management reports, risk assessments, all of which can take time to prepare and finalise, particularly where the services of a psychiatrist or a psychologist are required. Once all relevant materials have been obtained by the Committee, the Director of Public Prosecutions must allocate suitably experienced prosecutors within his office to thoroughly review them and prepare recommendations for the DPP. The DPP must also give very careful consideration to the decision he must make as to whether an application is warranted and is likely to be approved by the court.

There are also various points during the Supreme Court proceedings where delays may occur. After the filing of the application, the court must allocate hearing dates when the judge, the DPP and the offender's counsel are all available. At the request of counsel or on its own motion, the court may indeed need to adjourn proceedings multiple times so that further reports and information can be obtained, for example where the offender's counsel wishes to obtain an alternative psychiatric report. It will only be towards the end of the lengthy and complex process that the court confirms precisely what conditions it will impose as part of the high-risk offender order and what arrangements are required to facilitate them.

Dr Woodruff asked about the crime of stalking and bullying, and I think the honourable member for Bass made reference to that as well with regard to being included in serious offences, being added to schedule 1 and what sort of conduct is being addressed. I will respond to that. I think one of the advisers to the Tasmanian Greens asked about this during the consultation process.

The advice I have is that section 192 of the Criminal Code sets out the crime of stalking and bullying. This bill adds that crime to the list of serious offences in schedule 1 of the *Dangerous Criminals and High Risk Offender Act*. Stalking and bullying was not included in the consultation draft version of the bill but was added to the final bill following the department's consideration of stakeholder submissions received.

I note that this crime is included with a qualification, which is that the person against whom the offence is committed must be a child or young person. This aligns with our government's 2024 election commitment to ensure that child sexual offenders can be assessed for the risk they pose to the community and the need for monitoring through the high risk offender order. This approach is also consistent with the *Community Protection Offending Reporting Act 2005*, which includes section 192 (1) as a class 3 offence provided that the person against whom the offence is committed is a child. Hopefully that answers that question.

With regard to Dr Woodruff's question about what if there are behavioural changes, the advice I have is that section 24 of the act defines who is a relevant offender, which in broad terms is a person who is 18 years or over, has been convicted of a serious offence as defined under the act and is either serving a custodial sentence for a serious offence, being detained as a declared dangerous criminal, or is already subject to high-risk offender order supervision in the community.

The High Risk Offender Assessment Committee established under section 26 of the act has responsibility for reviewing all relevant offenders whose time in custody or current HRO order is expected to expire. This would normally occur shortly prior to or during the nine-month period to the date of expiring.

To go on to Dr Woodruff's question about behavioural changes, this might assist the honourable member. Where the DPP applies to the Supreme Court for an HRO order under section 33 of the act, the application must be accompanied by any behavioural reports, management reports or risk assessments that were prepared. The DPP may also provide any other information relevant to the application, so the application and accompanying documents must also be served on the offender.

That summarises to the best of my ability a response to the honourable members' contributions. It has been quite comprehensive and I do appreciate the feedback and the support that's been flagged.

Mr Ferguson - I asked about 18 and 17.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, and I have a response so let's get that in before we wrap up. To the honourable member for Bass, with regard to the difference between the minimum age of 17 years for a dangerous criminal declaration and 18 years for a high-risk offender order, the parliament agreed to that difference when the act was passed. My advice is that it was recognised that for the most severe cases, those warranting detention under a dangerous criminals declaration, a minimum age of 17 was appropriate to ensure that the court could act if necessary if there was a young person whose risk profile was so dangerous that keeping them in custody was the only option to protect the community, so that age of 17 years was maintained from the former dangerous criminal provisions that had been in the *Sentencing Act 1997*. As a new second-tier scheme, the 18-year-old minimum age for high-risk offender orders was set to align with similar provisions in other jurisdictions. I hope that assists the honourable member. Once again, thank you so much for the feedback from honourable members in this place.

Bill read the second time.

DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS AMENDMENT BILL 2025 (No. 46)

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 5
Section 35 amended (HRO orders)

Dr WOODRUFF - I canvassed our views about our concerns with this section 35 amendment in the bill before us, and I listened to your comments, Attorney-General. I'm not persuaded by them. I did hear a very long list of reasons, including administrative issues that have to be travelled through in order to get to a point and I hear that there's a long shopping list of things to be done. There's obviously lots of moving parts in that process.

Notwithstanding that, nine months is a long time and one week is just seven days, so I am still perplexed how at the end of a nine-month period we can seek to deprive a person of their freedom simply because of a whole process of nine months hasn't been organised in a timely fashion.

You've said it's not a logical or compelling reason for the court to deny a person their freedom essentially. Well, we will see about that. The court would see about that and the court would make its own determination, but what you're creating here is a situation where this provides an opportunity for an application to be made for an extension of seven days to detain a person beyond their sentencing period. As I see it, it's a bit like holding a gun to the head of the courts, because they're looking at a situation where the DPP is making a plea essentially for

the importance of holding another person in detention past their sentence for another seven days so that they can get their paperwork together. The application that they're trying to have assessed is to basically say this person is a high-risk to the community.

It puts the Court in an untenable situation. It is impossible for them to reasonably, if they're looking at the protection of people in the community, when we've got the DPP making the case, they're essentially saying, 'If you let them out in seven days without this being in place, you're essentially putting the community at risk.' That's a completely unreasonable situation for the Court to make a reasonable assessment about - an unpressured assessment about whether it's reasonable to hold a person in detention for no reason other than for the state to get its paperwork together. I don't think that provides the Court with the opportunity to make an unbiased assessment. It's putting pressure on the Court in that situation to always move to approve those seven-day extensions.

You said that if the department knows that it can drag the chain, then it will. It's not the department dragging the chain, it's actually the person who's in jail who has the chain attached to them, and you're seeking to deprive a person of their freedom because the department's processes haven't been sufficiently prepared in time.

I hear what you're saying about the nine months. What happens if there's a month after that nine-month period where the high-risk offender panel is meeting and they missed that extra bit of time? The government could make a case for bringing forward the period of time from nine months to 12 months before a person is released that an application could be made to start that process. If you're really so concerned, why not make it 12 months before a person is released that you can start the process and that will get past all the significant administrative hurdles that you've made a case for. We don't believe that seven days at the end of their sentence, holding a person, incarcerating them when their sentence has been completed is fair or reasonable under these circumstances.

We don't support this clause.

Mr GARLAND (Braddon) - I have one question. Does the wording of this new clause 5 allow the Court to detain an offender for more than seven days if at the end of the seven-day period, the necessary arrangements still haven't been made?

Ms HADDAD - I go back to the example that was given by TALs. They said that, for example, electronic monitoring can take up to 28 days to be approved at the moment. What would happen if someone were detained for an extra seven days under these new provisions and electronic monitoring is one of the controls that the DPP has applied for? They'd have to be released at the end of those seven days, but that decision on electronic monitoring might not have been completed by that time. That's the example they gave about the complexity there.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the queries. With respect to clause 5, I acknowledge the contributions made and appreciate that. I do also take this opportunity to congratulate the Chair for the first time in the role as Chair in the Committee and I think you're doing a great job.

I think I will say that on behalf of everybody here. I think we're all nodding. Thank you for that.

Dr Woodruff - I wouldn't say we've tested him very harshly yet.

Mr BARNETT - Not yet.

In terms of clause 5 and the new subsection 4 that allows the Supreme Court to make an order for a limited extension of an offender's detention in custody prior to their release, subject to an HRO order, the Court may only make such an order if it is considered necessary to make such arrangements in place, so that any conditions imposed under the HRO order can be met when the offender is released. I'm trying to make the point that we don't want to set up the offender to fail. It's important that you go through that process and any conditions that are imposed are sensible and appropriate in accordance with the views of the Court and that the offender has that opportunity to meet those conditions. We don't want to set the offender up to fail, so that's why the system's designed that way.

The new subsections 5 and 6, I'm advised, contain related amendments concerning the issue of a warrant of committal to ensure that any period of detention ordered under the new subsection 4, is properly authorised. Again in setting up a system, it has to be properly authorised. You have to go through a process and that's exactly what the bill prepares and puts forward. The new subsections mirror similar capacity for the Court to order a limited extension of detention that already exists in section 37 of the principal act in relation to interim HRO orders. As in section 37, the amendments are designed to facilitate the successful release from custody of persons subject to HRO orders so as to avoid a lack of suitable arrangements leading to a breach of the conditions. We're setting the system up to succeed and setting the offender up to succeed, not to fail.

The further advice I have is that they're not administrative issues. They're important decision points in the application process. Under the legislation if the offender breaches that condition, they have committed a crime and can be returned to prison. I mentioned earlier about the importance of community safety, and that's been the priority. It is not in the offender's interest to release them in circumstances where they are essentially set up to fail, because it is impossible to meet a condition set by the Court. Hence the importance of the DPP being required to table those relevant reports that I made reference to earlier.

I note that the comparable extension provision has never been used for interim HRO orders and they will not happen as a matter of course. I appreciate that. I'm also advised with respect to the honourable member for Braddon, in terms of that extra time, my advice is that the Court would need to receive a further application from the DPP to consider the merit of that going forward. That would require a further application from the DPP. That's the advice I have.

Dr WOODRUFF - I have one other thing to mention in relation to these high-risk offenders. It was in relation to the matter of indefinite detention. I put on the record how disappointed I was at the honourable member for Bass's interjections during his speech, at my shadow Labor opposition leader Ms Haddad. It was incredibly unbecoming of him and his government that he spoke like that, as I remember it was Ms Haddad who said something along the lines of 'Indefinite detention was not intended by the legislation' and that provoked an unholy outburst from Mr Ferguson. I think he said words to the effect of 'You better be sure you're right if you want to bring that in here', which I thought was an aggressive and hyperbolic way to deal with a matter of law, as Ms Haddad was. The point is, you better be sure you're right if you get on your high horse - Mr Ferguson was well and truly on his high horse - and

you especially better be sure you're right. Mr Ferguson is wrong. The 2020 reforms to the dangerous criminals framework addressed the fact that it was very dangerous to discharge a dangerous criminal declaration, but it was still technically possible to do that.

The prior arrangements still had a mechanism to discharge a declaration despite it not being very effective, so they clearly were not intended to provide indefinite detention without the ability to overturn them.

Ms Haddad - which is what then attorney-general Elise Archer was remedying in that declaration.

Dr WOODRUFF - Exactly right, Ms Haddad. I believe the honourable thing for the member for Bass to do is to make an appropriate apology to Ms Haddad because she is right and he was wrong. The point is, it wasn't his words alone, it was his language. As I said, it was hyperbolic, it was populist, and it was essentially an attack on a member raising a point of argument.

It's not the tone of this parliament that I thought we had decided on and I am very disappointed at him and at the government for - let us not lapse into that way of talking. The member was raising her view and if he didn't agree with it, he could have talked about it in a much more reasonable tone, but it was essentially, as I felt, an attack on Ms Haddad. I have said enough, and I hope Mr Ferguson remedies that outburst.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair, to the Leader of the Greens, I wanted to indicate I appreciate your feedback. I was disposed with my advisers during that interlude: some interaction between a member for Bass and the shadow attorney-general and indeed yourself and others. The advice I have here is that the previous dangerous criminal provisions in the sentencing act did effectively amount to an indefinite detention because the declaration remained in place until the offender successfully applied to the court for a discharge. That's the past history and analysis of -

Dr Woodruff - The word is effective.

Ms Haddad - If I can by interjection as well, I cannot find the *Hansard*.

Mr BARNETT - That's why I am trying to understand where this debate -

Ms Haddad - If I can by interjection, Attorney-General, I cannot find the 2020 *Hansard*, but I remember there was a Supreme Court case. The conditions for discharging an order had to be made to the same judge who had made the order, is my memory. I could be wrong. I can't find the 2020 *Hansard* right now, but that could feasibly not be possible to achieve if that judge had retired or was no longer practising.

From memory, that is what former attorney-general Elise Archer was remedying, in part, in that original legislation because there were some circumstances where offenders could not be released from a dangerous criminal declaration, even if the courts and the Director of Public Prosecutions thought they should be.

Mr BARNETT - I haven't read the *Hansard* either. I am making the point that what was relevant in the sentencing act did effectively amount to indefinite detention. That is the advice

I have because it remained in place until the offender successfully applied to the court for a discharge. That's the advice I have. That seems to be the fact. I don't know what else. It's probably helpful to have a look at *Hansard.*

Let us try to just work our way through this bill. Everyone's entitled to their views.

Dr Woodruff - I hope you are not going down that path. The point is Ms Haddad is entitled to her view, to be listened to respectfully and she was talking about a matter of law and she is right and Mr Ferguson is wrong.

Mr BARNETT - People are entitled to express their views in this place. Free speech and the member for Bass was making a point -

Dr Woodruff - No, he was being rude.

Mr BARNETT - and the shadow attorney-general has made a point. I am making the point that community safety is our top priority as a government and as a parliament and that is what this bill is about.

I've made that point on a number of occasions and we don't resile from that. We remain steadfast in our support of improved community safety and I want to acknowledge and appreciate the member for Bass for his contribution, and others here in this place as well.

Deputy CHAIR - (Mr Razay) - The question is -

That the clause as read stand part of the bill.

The Committee divided -

AYES 28	NOES 6
Mr Abetz	Ms Badger
Mrs Archer	Mr Bayley
Mr Barnett	Ms Burnet
Dr Broad	Ms Johnston
Ms Brown	Ms Rosol (Teller)
Ms Butler	Dr Woodruff
Mr Di Falco	
Ms Dow	
Mr Ellis	
Mr Fairs	
Mr Ferguson	
Ms Finlay	
Mr Garland	
Mr George	
Mrs Greene	
Ms Haddad	
Ms Howlett	
Mr Jaensch	
Mr Mitchell	

Mr O'Byrne
Ms Ogilvie
Mr Pearce
Mrs Petrusma
Prof Razay
Mr Rockliff
Mr Shelton (Teller)
Mr Vermey
Mr Willie
Mr Winter

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 8 agreed to.

Title as read agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

DANGEROUS CRIMINALS AND HIGH RISK OFFENDERS ACT 2021

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

JUSTICE MISCELLANEOUS (EXPLOSIVES OFFENCES) BILL 2025 (No. 47)

Second Reading

[5.04 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Honourable Speaker, I move -

That the bill be now read the second time.

This bill amends the *Criminal Code 1924* and the *Police Offences Act 1935* to create new criminal offences and police powers relating to explosive devices, substances and related material.

Whilst the new provisions capture explosives in all contexts, including commercial ones, the bill is specifically intended to fill legislative gaps regarding homemade or improvised explosive devices and substances.

Homemade or improvised explosives are often unstable and pose significant danger to the community. Use, possession, supply or manufacture of these devices and substances, whether for the purposes of experimentation, causing harm or as a form of intimidation, poses a high risk of danger to the person themselves as well as to other members of the community and property. These devices and substances also pose a high risk to police who have reported

locating such items when undertaking duties such as responding to reports of dangerous situations or when executing search warrants relating to controlled drugs and firearms. In several cases, these materials have been found at the residences of people associated with organised crime.

Despite these risks, gaps in the current legislative framework mean that, depending on the circumstances, there may not be suitable offences to respond to this conduct. For example, the *Police Offences Act* does not contain any provisions specific to explosive devices or substances. Some existing offences which could potentially apply, such as those found in Sections 170 and 181 of the Criminal Code, require a specific intent, which can be difficult to prove in the absence of clear evidence as to what the person was intending to do with the device or substance. Other potentially applicable offences, such as Section 141 of the Criminal Code, require an impact on members of the public, which limits the circumstances in which they may be used.

Relevant provisions in other legislation, such as the *Explosives Act 2012*, *Security Sensitive Dangerous Substances Act 2005* and the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, are problematic as they are more closely related to commercial and or industrial explosives and regulatory in nature and in some instances are investigated by WorkSafe Tasmania inspectors, not police. Further, many of these offences are punishable by a pecuniary penalty only, which may be inadequate in some circumstances.

This bill addresses these gaps by introducing new offences, ensuring that Tasmania Police has statutory provisions available to it to investigate and, where appropriate, charge people for offences relating to homemade explosives. It also provides the powers necessary to search for, seize, deconstruct and dispose of explosive devices, substances and materials. For the most part, the bill will not impact existing laws and frameworks that have provisions that relate to or could relate to explosives. There are several pieces of legislation in Tasmania that have provisions providing some form of authority for explosives to be used or regulated in a particular way, such as the *Explosives Act 2012* or the *Security-sensitive Dangerous Substances Act 2005*.

A person whose conduct is authorised by legislation will not be captured. Similarly, the bill will not impact on existing laws concerning terrorism-related offending. There are already comprehensive laws which would be used in the case of terrorism-related offending involving explosives and, as such, this bill is not targeted towards that type of offending. This bill is at least in part modelled on similar legislation passed in South Australia, which is considered by Tasmania Police to reflect best practice. Like South Australia's legislation, the bill creates a distinction between explosive devices and explosive substances.

I will now address the particular provisions in the bill. By way of overview, the bill inserts several minor offences into both the *Police Offences Act 1935* and the Criminal Code. Inserting the offences into both pieces of legislation ensures there is avenue for more serious examples of the offence to be dealt with in the Supreme Court, while less serious examples can be dealt with in the Magistrates Court. Each of the summary offences will be punishable by fine not exceeding 50 penalty units and imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years. The indictable offences will be reserved for more serious examples of the offences and will be subject to the default maximum penalty of 21 years imprisonment.

The bill contains a definition of 'explosive device' which is based on the South Australian legislation with some adjustments to fit the Tasmanian context. In summary, the bill defines an 'explosive device' as being an apparatus or similar item that is capable of causing or aiding in causing an explosion, as well as apparatus or item that is adopted to cause or aid in causing an explosion. However, any part of one of those items, whether complete or incomplete, is also covered, as is a device that is missing something from it or otherwise is defective.

The definition also enables certain devices to be either included or excluded from the definition by regulations, should that be necessary in the future.

The offence provisions relating to explosive devices are proposed new sections 181A of the *Criminal Code* and 43H in the *Police Offences Act*. Each of those new sections contains three discrete offences relating to explosive devices.

The first offence applies where a person uses, possesses or supplies an explosive device without lawful and reasonable excuse. The second offence applies where a person performs one or more of the specified actions for the purposes of manufacturing an explosive device without lawful and reasonable excuse. Those actions include things such as acquiring equipment, substances or material, or transporting those items.

The third offence concerns the possession or supply of information as to how to manufacture an explosive device, and once again, that needs to be without lawful and reasonable excuse to constitute the offence.

The element of 'without lawful and reasonable excuse' is a very important one, both in respect of the explosive device offences but also in respect of the other offences in the bill that I will speak about shortly.

In this context, 'lawful' means not forbidden by law. This element recognises that there are very legitimate and lawful uses for explosive devices, substances and information relating to manufacture. Explosive products are lawfully able to be used in a variety of circumstances, such as in mining and forestry activities or during cracker night.

This element is intended to preserve lawful use of these items. However, recognising that 'not forbidden by law' covers quite a broad range of conduct, the excuse must also be reasonable. This element means a court would be empowered to look not only at the legality of the excuse, but also at the circumstances of the particular case and the purpose of the provision.

The requirement for the excuse to be 'reasonable' would be unlikely to impact cases where someone's conduct is positively authorised by law, such as where they have a permit authorising their conduct.

The bill contains a definition of 'explosive substance', which again is based on the South Australian legislation with some adjustments as necessary.

In summary, the bill defines an 'explosive substance' as being a substance that produces, is capable of producing, or is manufactured to produce a practical effect by explosion, or an incendiary effect. It also extends to substances that would be an explosive substance if it did not have something missing from it or a defect.

As with the 'explosive devices' definition, the definition of 'explosive substances' also enables certain substances to be either included or excluded by regulations, should that be necessary in the future.

The offence provisions relating to explosive substances are proposed new section 181B in the *Criminal Code* and 43I in the *Police Offences Act*. The first offence applies where a person uses, possesses or supplies an explosive substance in dangerous or suspicious circumstances without lawful and reasonable excuse. This contains an additional element compared with the equivalent offence for explosive devices. The 'dangerous or suspicious circumstances' element is necessary given many common everyday substances could fall within the definition of 'explosive substance'. The equivalent offence in the South Australian legislation also contains this extra element; however, only referring to suspicious circumstances accompanied by a different definition, as such.

The second new offence relating to explosive substances concerns possessing or supplying equipment or information as to how to manufacture an explosive substance. Again, this has to be in dangerous or suspicious circumstances and without lawful and reasonable excuse.

The bill includes an offence concerning bomb hoaxes, which is contained in proposed new section 181C of the Criminal Code and 43J of the *Police Offences Act*.

In short, this offence applies where a person places or sends an article or substance somewhere with the intention of inducing another person to falsely believe that the article or substance is likely to explode, ignite or discharge a dangerous or deleterious matter. This differs from a similar existing offence in section 276AA of the *Criminal Code* because it specifically involves placing or sending an article somewhere. In contrast, the offence of making false threats of danger is section 276AA of the *Criminal Code* concerns the making of a statement or conveying of information.

In respect of police powers, broadly speaking, the bill introduces three new police powers into the *Police Offences Act*. These powers are more specifically targeted to explosives-related offending than existing powers. The new powers relate to the search of persons or vehicle for explosives - proposed new section 43K. Rendering safe or inert destructing or disposing of explosive generally - proposed new section 43L. Rendering safe or inert, destructing or disposing of evidentiary material that cannot be practicably or safely held - Proposed new section 43M.

The bill contains a power for the forfeiture and disposal of explosive devices, substances or related material after a person has been convicted of irrelevant offence contained in proposed new section 43N of the *Police Offences Act*.

Proposed new section 43O of the *Police Offences Act* will allow a court, upon application by the Crown, to make an order that the defendant pay the reasonable costs and expenses associated with testing, analysing, storing or disposing of any explosive device or substance. This is similar to the existing power in section 36B of the *Misuse of Drugs Act 2001,* relating to the analysis or examination of controlled substances and plants. In both cases, such an order is not automatic. The court has the discretion whether to make the order.

In concluding, I emphasise that this bill is not intended to impact use of explosive devices or substances that is in accordance with any law, permit, or other authorisation. Similarly, it is not intended to capture people who might have everyday items such as pressure cookers, pipes, or even petrol, if those people are using those items for their lawful and intended purpose. The purpose of the bill is to protect the community from the risks posed by the unlawful or unreasonable use and possession of explosive devices and substances that may cause harm to individuals or damage to property. This is but one example of the action this government is taking to support our police force and ensure that the legislation in this state enables police to do their job in keeping Tasmanians safe.

I commend the bill to the House.

[5.18 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make a contribution on behalf of the Labor opposition on the Justice Miscellaneous Explosive Offences Bill 2025. Through the Attorney-General, I thank his office and department for the briefing - in fact, two briefings in the end - that I received on this bill because this was one of the bills that was tabled but lapsed at the election.

I note that it amends the *Criminal Code* and the *Police Offences Act* to create new offences and powers relating to the use, possession, manufacture or supply of explosive devices, substances and related material, and aims to fill gaps in the current legislative arrangements concerning explosive devices and substances, in particular homemade or improvised explosive devices.

It was explained to me in the briefing, and as we heard from the Attorney-General, it's not intended to penalise people for the possession of household products that might have explosive properties, including things like petrol or fertiliser. I hadn't thought about pressure cookers, but the minister had that in his second reading as well. It's not intended to criminalise or penalise people for having possession of products or materials that might have an explosive property, but rather to cover gaps in the law that exist currently for when it's discovered that people are in possession of those types of things and they are not using them for their intended purpose or indeed are using them for an unlawful purpose.

I note that there are carve outs for things like agriculture and farming and mining and other pursuits that Tasmanians explore that means that they need to possess items in their homes or on their farms that have explosive properties. It was explained to me that at the moment when police discover if they assert, and I might be wrong in describing it in an anecdotal way in the way it was described to me in the briefing, but at the moment there are gaps in what police can do when they discover on searching a property that there might be homemade explosive devices basically or products being used for an unlawful purpose. This bill seeks to fill those gaps in the current legislative framework.

As we heard from the Attorney-General, it's modelled partly on South Australia's existing scheme which covers similar or provides for similar offences. It inserts new offences into the *Police Offences Act* regarding explosive devices, which is proposed new section 43H Explosive Substances, which is proposed new section 43I and Bomb Hoaxes which is proposed new section 43J and all of those are replicated in the Criminal Code.

It's important to note that they're in both those acts: the *Police Offences Act* and the Criminal Code. The police offences, their summary offences to be dealt with in the Magistrates Court punishable by fines not exceeding 50 penalty units or imprisonment for a period of not exceeding two years or both and the Criminal Code offences are indictable and carry the potential maximum sentence that exists for most but not all criminal code offences, which is a maximum of 21 years imprisonment.

While I am speaking about the criminal code, honourable Speaker, I might note that there is the capacity for courts to send a Tasmanian offender to prison for life and that is only available for two offences, two crimes in the Criminal Code - C-O-D-E code as the member for Bass told us - and that is murder and treason. I'm told treason is used very infrequently, but the member for Bass might like to reflect on the fact that our law does allow for indefinite detention through life sentencing and he might like to reflect on the last debate, not that I would reflect on a vote of this House.

In addition, this bill puts in place new police powers. As it was explained, there are gaps at the moment in what police can do when they do find homemade explosive devices in Tasmania when they're doing other work. The *Police Offences Act* contains several search powers and seizure powers and the ability to dispose of property and so on, but they're specific to certain situations and this situation is a gap in that search and seizure regime.

This bill will put in place the ability for police to search persons or vehicles for explosives, destruction and disposal of explosives generally, and destruction and disposal of evidentiary material that can't be practically or safely held.

I do have a couple of questions for the Attorney-General on this part, and there are some amendments proposed by the Greens. I don't intend to go specifically to the detail of the amendment, but I did want to ask a couple of questions.

First, the ability to search persons or vehicles for explosives. One of the community consultation submissions, I can't recall which one now, did talk about the fact that it looks like the intent of this bill is to deal with these things occurring on private property and there are already search provisions available to search vehicles and search people in a public place and whether this bill needs to extend to searching people in a public place when there are other abilities for police to search people in public and indeed, vehicles in public. So, whether or not the changes proposed in this bill are about searching vehicles on private property in addition to private property, or whether they are expanding the already existing search powers that police already have to search members of the public in a public place or a vehicle in a public place.

My final question is just around the disposal of evidentiary material that can't be held practicably or safely, which I think is section 43M. This came up in a previous debate, I think, where the parliament was amending the *Coroners Act* - it might not have been the *Coroners Act* - but it was something about the storage of evidentiary material in the courts. It was dealing with things like courts having to keep cars or boats or really big, bulky things, and it's impractical for them to have to retain those things, but they might still have an evidentiary purpose for future legal action. In those circumstances, I think there's a requirement that they take photographs and video evidence of that evidence that is to be destroyed. I understand absolutely that there would, no doubt, be several instances where explosive material can't be practicably or safely retained for an evidentiary purpose because by its nature it's dangerous explosive material, but I wondered whether or not there's any expectation that they'd be

photographs taken before that kind of evidentiary material is destructed or disposed of, in case it's needed to be relied on in future legal proceedings, either by police prosecutions or by defence, or anybody involved in a court matter.

As I said, from hearing from the Attorney-General's Department that the motivations for this bill are to bring us into line with some other interstate regimes following national harmonisation efforts that have been going on since 2018, and to respond to gaps in the current Tasmanian legislation that hinder the prosecution of explosive related offending. As I said, to police operational requirements for clearer search and seizure powers when dealing with suspected explosive materials, as well as industry feedback on outdated definitions, and regulatory frameworks not reflecting modern explosive substances.

I did want to also just put on the record another question if the Attorney-General is willing to go to it in his summing up, and that was raised by the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, the TLRI. They note that the bill is based very much on South Australia's laws, but with some differences, and specifically they say this - and I quote - it's on page three of their submission. They say:

> Unlike the Tasmanian draft bill, the South Australian offence does not refer to 'dangerous circumstances' and legislatively defines 'suspicious circumstances' as circumstances that give rise to a reasonable suspicion that the person is intending to cause harm to another person or to cause damage to property or to assist another person to cause such harm or damage.

They go on to note that there is no such clarification in the Tasmanian draft legislation, this bill, and that they believe that this leaves the scope of 'suspicious circumstances' ambiguously broad in scope. They say under the draft bill there is no requirement for the assessment of 'suspicious' or 'dangerous circumstances' to be made on an objective basis, such as would be a requirement 'reasonableness'.

They say that in South Australia, there are qualifications or limitations placed on 'suspicion'.

(1) there is a clear requirement of reasonableness in relation to the suspicion; and

(2) the suspicion is directed to the intention of the person, that is, an intention to cause harm to personal property.

They also talk about the fact that there doesn't seem to be that mental element in the new offences created, and particularly, they note that in the proposed code offences, *Criminal Code* offences, the mental element would be a voluntary and intentional act of use, possession or supply and they say that this is unusual for offences in the code that typically depend on an additional mental element such as knowledge, subjective recklessness, or specific intent. They give some examples of that and how intent is dealt with in other code-based offences.

I would be really grateful for some more information from the Attorney-General on that specific concern raised by the TLRI. Sometimes that might be really clear on a particular search. It might be very obvious that there's a homemade explosive device sitting right there, or that there is manufacturing equipment or some really clear obvious evidence that these explosive materials are in that person's possession for an unlawful purpose.

There may be sometimes where it's a grey area and it is provided for in the bill that obviously there are times when it is lawful to possess things that have explosive properties. Whether or not that mental element needs to be incorporated into the bill somehow, that's the concern raised by the TLRI and they say that in the South Australian regime there are some guiding principles in the legislation about how to determine the intent of the person who is found to be in possession of those dangerous materials.

That's all I have to contribute at this stage, but I look forward to clarifying those few questions.

[5.32 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to be speaking on this bill today on behalf of the Greens Justice spokesperson, the member for Hobart, Ms O'Connor in the other place. The purpose of this bill has been articulated as filling a legal gap with respect to improvised explosive devices and explosive substances, and the fact sheet that accompanied the consultation bill did a commendable job in articulating the legal gap that currently exists, as well as the extent to which the existing framework applies.

That's the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2012* and the *Explosives Act 2012*, as well as the *Security Sensitive Dangerous Substance Act 2025*, which provide some form of regulation for explosives. However, this framework is a regulatory one that largely relates to explosives in industrial settings and is administrated by Worksafe rather than police matters.

It is noted that some offences exist within both the *Police Offences Act 1935* and the *Criminal Code Act 1924* that are relevant, but this framework is imperfect. For example, as I understand it, the definition of dangerous article in the *Police Offences Act 1935* may cover explosive devices but may not cover explosive substances. The need to fill these gaps was either supported and/or unchallenged by the submissions made to this bill and on that basis, I can indicate that the Greens support the proposed introduction of the new offences and the related provisions.

We do, however, as has been flagged and circulated to relevant members this morning, have some amendments to move during the committee stage of this bill and they are specifically amendments to section 43 to replace references to reasonable suspicion with reasonable belief.

When this bill was first tabled, it was done so with a wave of other police legislation, notwithstanding that this technically falls under Justice, but those other police bills, including on knife crime, wanding, hooning, possibly the Community Protection Bill as well, with the latter two being prorogued at the election, each of them contained provisions and had loosened definitions, and I will get to that later, that on the face it may appear to subtly increase police powers, but the outcomes of these are potentially substantial, especially on minority communities.

To be clear for members who weren't here at the previous debates, the difference between reasonable suspicion and reasonable belief is what's caused concern within the community. That threshold changes is largely what's attracted public submission feedback and concerns from the Community Legal Service Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, and the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute.

To summarise a brief general definition, reasonable suspicion is the state of mind that falls short of a full belief. It requires some substance or facts to support that suspicion, but does not require absolute certainty. Reasonable belief is a stronger state of mind than suspicion, and it implies a greater certainty that an act has occurred or is occurring.

Prior to the passage of recent legislation, there were vanishingly few references to 'reasonable suspicion' in the *Police Offences Act*. The standard in the vast majority of cases is 'reasonable belief'. There has been no attempt to build a case for a 'reasonable suspicion' threshold.

While we don't have specific statistics available to us on the differences between 'reasonable suspicion' and the 'reasonable belief' threshold success rate on recent legislation, the wanding trial prior to the knife crime reforms provided some data.

This trial occurred before the 'reasonable belief' threshold in section 15C of the *Police Offences Act* was replaced with a 'reasonable suspicion' threshold. Of the 213 searches conducted, 54 weapons were discovered. This means that of 213 searches where the officer 'believed' that a person did have a dangerous article, as opposed to 'suspecting' they might, this belief was only accurate 25 per cent of the time. This rate was even lower in the western district, where only four of 31 searches, or 12 per cent, resulted in a weapon being found. Again, these searches were legally required to only be conducted on the basis that the office are 'truly believed', not merely 'suspected' that the person did have a dangerous article on their person, a belief that panned out as low as 12 per cent of the time in the western district, and at best 30 per cent of the time in Launceston.

This is the higher evidentiary threshold that has routinely been put aside in favour of the lower 'reasonable suspicion' threshold, including in this bill. This raises the question of how inaccurate the suspicion will be, not only for searches, but also for a suspicion that a person intends to, for example, use a canister of petrol in their possession to cause injury to a person or damage to property, not only for the purposes of a search but for the actual element of the offence under this proposed bill. Yet the government has again brought nothing forward to actually build a strong case for the adoption of a 'reasonable suspicion' over a 'reasonable belief' threshold.

My question to the minister: does the government have any examples of circumstances where police were unable to meet the reasonable belief threshold to conduct a search and then that individual went on to commission a serious offence? We have asked this question before at the other bills of the police minister in respect to this threshold, and we're yet to receive a single example of where it was needed, let alone a broad enough trend to justify weakening civil liberties so I'm hoping that the Attorney-General might be the person to enlighten the House on these consistent changes.

I will touch on what the shadow attorney-general, Ms Haddad, mentioned, the TLRI submission, and read that out for members in advance of the flagged amendments. The TLRI has noted:

> At common law there is no power for police to search a person before arrest or to detain any person for any purpose. The right to security of a person is also recognised by international human law. Generally, under existing legislation, the basis for a search of a person is the police officer's 'reasonable

> belief'. The TLRI expressed concern that the current bill would also introduce a standard for search to suspects without any justification for this lower standard.
>
> Further, given the justification for new offences appears to relate to the inadequacy of existing laws for explosives on private property, for example, during warrants for drug or firearms, it is not clear why the new power is required for searches conducted in public places.
>
> There is an existing search under the *Police Offences Act* section 15C(2) which provides authority for a police officer to stop, detain and search without a warrant any person in public whom the police officer reasonably believes has possession of or carries any dangerous article without lawful excuse and stop, detain and search without a warrant the person's vehicle.

I will also touch on the commission of inquiry. As with the aforementioned bills last term, there have been concerns raised on the risks to young people and the Community Legal Service submission points this out. It says:

> The National Children's Commissioner has recently noted some children and young people reported feeling unsafe when interacting with police. They record incidents of abuse and mistreatment, racial profiling and a lack of support. We believe that reform should be focused towards reducing contact between children and young people in the criminal system, a position supported by the commission of inquiry, who emphasised that children involved in the criminal legal system experience heightened disadvantage and are at a risk of institutional and other abuse. Attorney-General, are minors exempt from the loosening threshold as they were in the hooning bill but they were not in knife crime?

A further issue also that the shadow attorney-general touched on is that the definition of dangerous or suspicious circumstances is quite broad. The dangerous circumstances element applies to a person's use, possession or supply of an explosive substance that possesses or is capable of possessing a significant risk of injury to a person or property. Arguably, possession or supply of an explosive substance in any circumstance is capable of possessing a significant risk of injury to a person or property.

However, the bill does not provide a second element of the offences in that it only applies if a person does not have a reasonable and lawful excuse. Nonetheless, the definition could have been considered more thoroughly so that the reasonable and lawful excuse element didn't have to be relied on so heavily. The TLRI also flagged further refining in some terms used in the bill and I quote from their submission:

> A final point can be made here about the apparent ambiguity of some of the terms used. For example, it is not clear what behaviour is covered by 'use and supply'.

This to me contrasted to the approach taken in the *Misuse of Drugs Act 2001*, where key terms are clearly defined such as 'prepare', 'possess', 'traffic' and 'supply.' In addition, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service also raised concerns about the potential of a lower search

threshold leading to profiling and disproportionate targeting of Aboriginal people. These concerns were also shared by community legal services.

TALS also pointed out in their submission a lack of definition around 'reasonable', which is increasingly important under the loosening 'reasonable suspicion' threshold. They say police officers can only infringe on an individual liberty when it is deemed objectively reasonable to do so. However the ambiguity in defining what is reasonable, subjective judgments on standards and the many factors that may be considered to arrive at determining 'reasonable suspicion' creates a 'mess' for decision makers.

Simplifying this complex series of assessment, and increasing the threshold that enables police power, can remove any bias or subjectivity, aid police in making sound decisions, and instil more public confidence in police exercising power and, as Community Legal Services Tasmania say in their submission, the risk of net widening with vulnerable groups not only is likely to be disproportionately targeted but also to experience increased risk of interaction with police.

Concerns of this nature are well documented. In their submission to the recent Victorian inquiry into the criminal justice system, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service noted expansion of police powers and the disproportionate use of these powers and of heavy public health fines against already marginalised communities leads to engagement with police which ultimately leads to more arrests, more people unnecessarily taken into custody, and higher incarceration rates.

As is in the TALS submission, what cultural training is being undertaken by Tasmanian police and what training on subconscious bias is provided specifically with the loosening of these stop and search thresholds?

The bill is cited as being based on South Australian legislation. However, the South Australian offence does not refer to 'dangerous circumstances' and it does provide a legislative definition for its contents on 'suspicious circumstances'.

From the TLRI submission, there is no requirement for the assessment of 'suspicious or dangerous circumstances' to be made on an objective basis such as would be required under a requirement of 'reasonableness', and they go on:

> In South Australia there are qualifications for limitations placed on suspicion -
>
> (1) There is a clear requirement of reasonableness in relation to the suspicion.
>
> (2) Suspicion is directed to the intention of the person, that is an intention to cause harm to a person or property.

In concluding, I echo the Greens comments from similar past debates that this tough on crime approach isn't working, increasing police powers is not the deterrent that is required and is why other countries around the world have shifted into other models of justice and reformed their systems. We need far greater resourcing directed into dealing with the underlying causes of crime and we in Tasmania still have a way to go.

I have indicated the Greens support for the purpose of this bill, but it is a shame that the Police Minister's agenda to lower evidentiary thresholds continues to mar a range of legislation in this place that is otherwise broadly supported across the Chamber.

[5.45 p.m.]

Mr SHELTON (Lyons) - Deputy Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this bill. As already stated today, the bill arose from the request from the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management that the Tasmania Police have encountered issues with people possessing and using dangerous and explosive devices and substances and there often being no suitable offence on the statute books to capture that conduct.

The purpose of the bill is to fill this gap and ensure that police have the tools needed to charge people where they have something that is in their possession that is dangerous to people or property.

Just a background - and most people in the Chamber are aware of the dangers that we have in our household - in a previous life, I've had a dangerous goods licence and taught some dangerous goods courses where the separation of dangerous goods is imperative in industry, and unfortunately we live in a world today through the internet where anybody with some computer skills can actually readily find out how to mix different household chemicals to create a dangerous situation. I fully applaud our Tasmanian Police for being proactive in trying to mitigate any issues that might happen in the future.

This bill strengthens Tasmania's criminal justice framework by introducing new offences and police powers relating to explosive devices, explosive substances, and associated material.

Whilst the bill captures explosives in all contexts, including commercial ones, the bill specifically addresses concerns over improvised and homemade explosives, which can be highly unstable, unpredictable and pose a serious danger to the public, to police and to property.

Despite these risks, there are currently gaps in our legislation which means that our police may not always have the clear offence to charge in cases involving improvised or homemade explosives. Some offences require proof of intent, others require an impact on members of the public, and some are targeted towards commercial environments or are regulatory in nature.

This bill seeks to address those gaps by creating new offences and powers. New provisions are being inserted into the *Police Offences Act* regarding explosive devices, explosive substances, and bomb hoaxes. These provisions are mirrored in the *Criminal Code*.

These new provisions include:

- A definition of explosive device, which in summary is an apparatus or similar item that is capable of causing or aiding in causing an explosion, as well as the apparatus or items that is adapted to cause or aid in causing an explosion;

- A definition of explosive substances which is summarised is that substances that is capable of producing or is manufactured to produce a practical effect of explosions or incendiary effects;

- A new offence for using, possessing or supplying an explosive device without lawful or reasonable excuse, as well as an equivalent offence of explosive substances;

- A new offence of manufacturing an explosive device without lawful or reasonable excuse;

- A new offence targeting the possession or supply of information on how to manufacture such devices;

- A new offence relating to the possession or supply of equipment connected with an explosive substance or information as to how to manufacture an explosive substance.

Importantly, these laws will not impact lawful use of explosives such as mining, forestry activities, or cracker nights. The bill is also not designed to overlap with terrorism legislation.

The bill includes an offence for bomb hoaxes applying where a person places or sends an article or substance somewhere with the intention of introducing another person to falsely believe that that article or substance is likely to explode, ignite or discharge in a dangerous or deleterious manner.

The bill also empowers police to search people or vehicles for explosive materials, render such materials safe or destroy them when needed, and to dispose of items that cannot be safely held.

Following a conviction, the bill also contains powers to allow courts to order the forfeiture and disposal of explosives and related materials. It also requires the offender to pay reasonable cost for analysis testing, and for storage or disposal.

Honourable Speaker, the bill empowers Tasmanian Police with the legislative tools needed to respond to dangerous and evolving threats and to protect the public whilst also preserving lawful use of explosive material. This is another example of the government's strong commitment to keeping Tasmanians safe.

I commend the bill to the House.

[5.52 p.m.]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons - Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation) - Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand here and acknowledge the contributions made by the shadow minister and likewise the member for Lyons, Tabatha Badger representing the Greens, who is also representing the honourable Cassy O'Connor from the Legislative Council.

Before I respond, I acknowledge the members of the small business community in the Chamber today and thank them for their presence and to honour all small businesses, knowing that tonight I will have the opportunity as minister for Small Business to host the Tasmanian Small Business Council and to acknowledge the wonderful work of Geoff Fader, Robert Mallett and the team. I want to acknowledge you all tonight. Edwin Johnstone, of the Confederation of Greater Hobart Business, Kerry Muller and the team from down there at Kingston with Beck and Alison, it is wonderful to have your presence in the Chamber.

Having said that, I want to again acknowledge my department and thank them for their terrific support: Bruce Paterson, Peter Davis, Hanna Brown, Shannon Filby and Inspector Jim Simmons. On behalf of Tasmania Police I want to acknowledge the Police minister Felix Ellis, who's been a strong supporter of police right across Tasmania because he knows the importance of community safety, and the importance of police on the front line. He's a tireless advocate for our community and for standing up for police. Indeed, he and many Tasmania police officers recently climbed 27 floors to raise much needed funds.

Mr Abetz - He didn't only climb, he ran.

Mr BARNETT - We're not sure how quickly he ran, but he got there. He had a bit of sweat on his brow and he made it for a very good cause. Congratulations to Felix Ellis.

Having said that, I also want to acknowledge the stakeholders for the consultation process for working through this important legislative reform with my department. I want to acknowledge the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute. We have a very good working relationship with them. I appreciate Jeremy Prichard and the team and everything that they do. Likewise to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service for their contribution, and the community legal centres and TasCOSS who also provided feedback.

It is important and this bill is about building a safer community. That's what this Liberal government is all about. We've been talking about that in other debates during the course of today. I am very pleased and proud to be part of a government that is delivering improved and better laws for Tasmania, improving our justice system and community safety, so that all Tasmanians can achieve their potential as individuals and families, and as small-, micro- and medium-size businesses, and the like. I am really pleased and proud of that.

In the few moments I have, I will start responding to the remarks of shadow attorney-general Ella Haddad, member for Clark, about the Criminal Code and the *Sentencing Act* review. I have asked the Sentencing Council to undertake a review of life sentences and I have asked the Council to review the lifetime sentences in Tasmania and the terms of reference for the review are to examine the operation of sentencing for crimes that attach a maximum penalty and, as was referred to earlier, for murder or for treason. I have asked for a review of that and am looking forward to getting that analysis and research undertaken because, in my view, there could very well be other offences that would apply.

I am looking forward to responding with the queries of Ms Badger on behalf of the Greens about examples from Tasmania Police to identify the importance of reasonable suspicion as opposed to reasonable belief. I will come to that shortly, once I have that opportunity.

Ms Haddad and Ms Badger both asked about the new search provision and I can share the advice I have as to why it is necessary. There is currently no law that clearly and unambiguously gives police the power to search for homemade explosives. This means that homemade explosives are often found incidentally when police are undertaking their duties, as part of responding to reports of dangerous situations, for example, or when executing search warrants relating to controlled drugs or firearms. There is, therefore, quite clearly a legislative gap which needs to be rectified and that's what we're doing and yes, it is based broadly on the South Australian legislation.

Our police would likely have the power to search for some explosive devices under the authority of section 15C of the *Police Offences Act* on the basis that they are dangerous articles. However, having regard to the definition of dangerous article in the *Police Offences Act*, there are some explosive devices and substances that would not clearly fall within that definition. There is an imperative for us to bring forward this legislation to fill that gap.

Dangerous articles within the context of section 15C would also be likely to be restricted to items that are dangerous in the form that they are in at the relevant time. This could create problems where a person has all the components for an explosive device or substance but has not yet combined them. That is a key point and I mentioned that in my second reading speech.

I have another example. If information was provided to police that a person was carrying in their vehicle some pipes, fireworks, and smokeless powders - being a substance used in making ammunition for firearms - those items would unlikely be considered dangerous articles because of the separate state they are in. They are not dangerous, they're not weapons. It is only when combined that they would be highly dangerous. The situation would be similar for precursor chemicals. Nevertheless, it is critically important for police to have the power to search in that sort of situation.

In summary, the new power is intended to be similar to the power in section 15C, except for more clearly applying to those explosives.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Answer to Question - Longford Police Station - Neighbourhood House

[6.00 p.m.]

Mr ABETZ (Franklin - Leader of the House) - Deputy Speaker. In response to the question asked by the Member for Lyons, Ms Badger, I can provide the following information. The former Longford Police Station and Police Residence is situated on a 2067-square-metre block of land in the township of Longford. The property was declared surplus by the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management on 31 July 2022, and was referred to Treasury for disposal on 19 January 2023.

In accordance with standard policy, Treasury has confirmed that no other government agency wishes to acquire this property. There has been interest expressed in the property from several interested parties, including the Northern Midlands Council and an aged care provider. Accordingly, the property will be sold via a public process to ensure a fair and transparent process. This is the standard approach. The Minister for Parks is responsible for the *Crown Lands Act 1976* and, as such, any decision around the disposal of the property sits within his portfolio. Subject to the Minister for Parks' approval of a public sale process, Treasury will engage a real estate agent in the local area to undertake the marketing and sale of the property. All interested parties will be notified as soon as the property is on the open market.

As I alluded to this morning, proceeds of the sale will be provided to the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to support its capital and maintenance program.

Advice on the second part of the question taken on notice this morning will be provided by this Thursday.

Shelter Tasmania - 50th Anniversary

[6.02 p.m.]

Mr BAYLEY (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate the 50th anniversary of a great Tasmanian advocacy organisation, Shelter Tasmania. Two weeks ago, at the conclusion of parliament, I dashed out to join a room where formal celebrations were well underway. Attending was a raft of people with a connection to Shelter past or present, staff, departmental and provider employees, consultants, parliamentarians and advocates. The event was a genuine celebration of a much-loved and respected institution and its people.

On this, let me start by acknowledging the current CEO, Pattie Chugg. I do this upfront because of those 50 years, Pattie has been with Shelter for more than half, a remarkable contribution. A Shelter celebration is near impossible without a Pattie celebration. Pattie started with Shelter in 1998. Since, she has helped put housing and homelessness on the agenda year after year and works to deliver outcomes for thousands of Tasmanians. Indefatigable, Pattie continues to work across the sector to develop united positions and advocate to decision makers to do more to meet the needs of vulnerable Tasmanians.

With the housing wait list now sitting at over 5200 applications and applicants waiting longer and longer, getting Tasmania to deliver on its obligation to meet the human rights of its residents is hard and getting harder. On any given night, over 2000 Tasmanians experience homelessness in a dual cost-of-living and housing crisis, with rents rising, inadequate protections for renters, a lack of minimum standards and whole homes being lost to short-stay hotels like Airbnb. The need for people like Pattie working in organisations like Shelter is more desperate than ever and the work they do is as critical as always.

Like many of our great NGOs, Shelter began in the mid-1970s as an unfunded, volunteer-based organisation focused on housing for vulnerable Tasmanians, specifically those on low incomes. It joined with other similar state organisations, forming a nationwide network of Shelter organisations as a founding member of National Shelter.

Remarkably, this culture of volunteerism continued for years, with Shelter receiving its first direct funding, a sum total of $1,000 for administration costs in 1990. In 1994, after 19 years of volunteer-run operations, Shelter received one year's funding for a part-time project officer. In 2018, Shelter first received five-year funding, allowing it to properly plan for future programs, employ people with some sense of certainty and security, and deliver programs with some degree of durability. Today, Shelter is part of a broad community services industry collectively advocating to the Tasmanian government for certainty of funding, five-year contracts, indexation to keep up with CPI and timely negotiations conducted in a way that allows for continuity of staffing and program delivery.

In 1978, Shelter foresaw the challenge of servicing estate housing debt and still getting ahead on public housing construction and it began the work of advocating for the removal of the state's public housing debt. Always an albatross around states' necks, the housing debt was again in the sites of Shelter in the mid-2000s. After a 15-year campaign of advocacy, the

$157 million debt was finally waived by the federal government in 2019, seen as a major achievement of Shelter and others.

Not limiting itself to advocacy, in 1979 Shelter stepped into the referral and crisis accommodation space, providing housing information and referral services and offering emergency accommodation in five Hobart houses as an initiative that was later renamed the Housing Assistance Service in 1986.

In 1981, Shelter was incorporated as Tasmania's peak body for housing and homelessness, representing the interests of others in a burgeoning sector looking out for the needs of everyday Tasmanians. Shelter has consistently done this collaboratively. Whether it's across the sector or across the parliament, Shelter works with allcomers to develop and implement plans and solutions.

In 1995, Shelter partnered with the Tasmanian government to hold Tasmania's first Community Housing Conference, and in 2006 it was a leading player in the Affordable Housing Crisis Coalition, an initiative with others to raise the profile of the housing crisis.

Coordinating policy development across the sector has long been a core function of Shelter, working up joint policy to allow a collaborative effort in lobbying and advocacy, increasing effectiveness and ideally outcome delivery.

Today, Shelter continues to stand up for renters' rights, addressing the loss of whole-home rentals in short stay hotels and proper government strategies and investment in housing and homelessness services. It delivers training and education and has helped build the social housing workforce capacity. In 2013, it delivered a Certificate IV in Social Housing Program.

On behalf of the Tasmanian Greens, past and present, I offer my utmost congratulations to Pattie, her colleagues and all involved in Shelter Tasmania's remarkable 50-year history in this state.

Time expired.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki - 80th Anniversary of Nuclear Bombings

[6.07 p.m.]

Ms HADDAD (Clark) - Deputy Speaker, tonight I rise to recognise the 80th anniversary of the horrific World War II nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This solemn anniversary is a call to action for all of us to recognise the devastation that nuclear weapons inflict, and to commit to the enduring responsibility we share to ensure they are never used again. This morning, I tabled a motion to this effect, and I urge members to reflect on that motion, which now sits on the parliamentary record.

In 2019, I had the privilege of leading a parliamentary delegation to Hiroshima. We visited the Peace Memorial Museum, which was a deeply moving experience. We laid a wreath at the Hiroshima Memorial. We observed a child's tricycle that had been buried with its three-year-old owner, as well as pieces of clothing belonging to innocent people who never made it home. We were so fortunate to meet with and hear directly from Keiko Ogura, one of the survivors known as the Hibakusha, or bomb affected people. She told us that as a young child

she watched as her world collapsed in fire and ash. Now in her 80's, the memories she shared were vivid. Her grief was undiminished. Her story was etched on all of us that day and served to solidify our resolve to do what we can to ensure a future free from nuclear threat. Those survivors who are still with us in Japan are, of course, very elderly and it's our responsibility to ensure their memory is not forgotten.

We heard also from the Hiroshima mayor, Kazumi Matsui, who told us about the Global Mayors for Peace Network, a commitment to safe, resilient cities. I note that the city of Hobart is signatory to that agreement, and they held an event just yesterday marking this anniversary. I was very sad not to be able to attend.

The devastation of nuclear weapons reached our own country, through the British tests carried out in Australia between 1952 and 1963 at Maralinga, Emu Field and the Montebello Islands. The fallout from those tests had devastating effect, in particular on First Nations people as well as on service people and their families.

One person affected was First Nations leader Yami Lester. He was exposed to the testing as a young boy and later lost his sight. His daughters talked about the effect that that had on their family. They spoke of relatives cancer, of women who lost pregnancies, of babies being born with abnormalities, and of elders dying young.

They spoke of Country that is still unsafe, places that can't be visited and water that can't be used. Their stories show us so clearly that the impact of that testing has had an enduring effect on multiple generations.

This is why the motion I tabled this morning matters. It asks us to recognise these 80th anniversaries, the devastation they inflicted and the continuing suffering they represent. It asks us to honour the Hibakusha, as well as Australian test survivors, especially First Nations people and veterans. It affirms Tasmania's support for a nuclear-free future and recognises the 2017 UN Treaty on the Protection of Nuclear Weapons is a vital instrument to achieve that goal. It acknowledges the work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, known as ICAN, and I sincerely thank ICAN co-founder, Dr Tilman Ruff, for meeting with me recently and talking about the campaign. I'm a signatory to that ICAN pledge. I have been for a number of years and I encourage other members of this parliament to sign on too. It's one small step that we can each make as Tasmanians to show our commitment to a future free of nuclear devastation.

Peter Murphy - Tribute

[6.11 p.m.]

Mr FAIRS (Bass) - Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to pay tribute to a true Tasmanian media icon. I'm talking about Peter Murphy. Affectionately known as 'Murph', who, after 41 years and 12 days as the weather guru on Seven Tasmania, last night called it a day.

Murph has been part of our nightly routine for over four decades, which is incredible in an industry that's so cutthroat. He's guided us through heatwaves, floods, cold snaps, those tricky Tasmanian days when you needed to pack both sunscreen and a raincoat just to be safe. Murph's career has been a long one for sure, and we actually started out as competitors. He was at 7EX and I was at 7OA, as it was known back then. There was no love lost between the two

stations, but it was here that I first got to hear his world-class dad jokes and one-liners. At that point, they were directed at others, not me, so that was fine. Little did I know that that would soon change.

Murph and I got to know each other a lot better when I joined Southern Cross back in 1995 when we worked together. Time and time again, Murph teamed up with Jo Palmer, who was reading news at the time, trying to throw me off during sports grabs live on air. Murph always and still does enjoy giving me heaps about the Crows. Who can blame him on that one at present? We'll leave that there. To this very day, Murph still argues that Jo and Andrew Palmer were brave, very brave, in fact, for letting the two of us MC their wedding. We were well behaved. Well, I was.

Murph, throughout his amazing radio and especially TV career, has done plenty for the local community, with causes like Give Me Five for Kids, helping raise hundreds of thousands of dollars. Murph recalls one year when I was dressed as a Stormtrooper for that fundraiser. Murph being Murph, made some sort of remark in relation to me having my own orbiting solar system. I remember we argued frequently about the pronunciation of female tennis players' names and more recently, with my election to state parliament, I remember him as MC for a Hawthorn President's lunch. Murph being Murph, couldn't resist having a crack at me once again apologising over the fact that it was a sit-down lunch and not an all you could eat buffet.

Then hosting the Launceston and Hobart Cup telecast, the Governor, Premier, people like that always in attendance, Murph again as MC said the Premier had to rush off to attend urgent business, which no doubt related to the overspending in the party dining room thanks to Rob Fairs. Murph never ever meant anything by it. It's just his amazingly quick wit, which is as revered as he is today.

As a host, doing a live telecast with Murph, who can be anywhere near a camera or microphone, it is very stressful because you don't know - or when you knew he was going to come out and whether you were in the firing line or someone else he would have a crack at.

Surprisingly, you may not know, but he worked in financial services for some 30 years. Peter Gutwein was actually his first boss.

Murph was a one-eyed Swan supporter and I have to say, his television career - circling back to that - was simply remarkable. Murphy is the longest-running TV weatherman in Australian history. A whopping 41 years and 12 days of weather reports, equating to about 9000 telecasts. We shared about 3000 of those. That's about tens of thousands of cold fronts, countless showers developing later and probably a record number of times saying the words 'partly cloudy'.

If he'd been paid a dollar for every time he said, 'chance of rain', I think Murph could have retired a few years ago. We all know that Murph is famous for being able to produce laughs at will, but he's certainly much more than that. He's a man with a good heart and if you ever need him in your corner, he would be there without question.

Murph, congratulations on your stellar career and thank you for providing generation after generation with not only weather reports but some amazing and unforgettable moments on Tasmanian television, like the Pads TV commercial, which today is still a classic in my view.

To you and your lovely wife Donna, good luck for what comes next. You certainly deserve a well-deserved break, but I know one thing for sure, our TV screens will never be the same.

Forced Adoptions in Tasmania

[6.15 p.m.]

Ms JOHNSTON (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight in the Adjournment to talk about forced adoptions in Tasmania. Between 1953 and 1980, hundreds of Tasmanian women had their babies taken from them in what we now recognise as forced adoptions. These were not only regrettable practices of the past, but they were also unethical acts, often unlawful even by the standards of the time, which inflicted deep and lasting harm.

The victims of these practices are now elderly, many are in poor health and some have already died waiting for justice. They have carried grief, trauma, and shame for decades. Their experiences being sedated or bound during labour, having objects held over their faces so they could not see their child, being threatened into signing papers while still on a hospital bed are very shocking.

These mothers were owed a duty of care by the state. Consent to adoption was required even under the old legislation, and the state had a duty to ensure that consent was freely and properly given. Instead, consent was obtained under duress, fraud, while women were plainly unfit to give it. In some cases, consent was forged or obtained within days of birth and the law itself said this was not permissible.

This parliament has already heard the evidence and the 2012 Senate inquiry recommended that limitation periods not be used as a barrier to justice. Premier Rockliff himself wrote to the Australian Lawyers Alliance on 8 July this year saying:

> We are committed to ensuring that people who are affected by forced adoptions have avenues for appropriate compensation from the state.
>
> I remain of the view that civil action is the most appropriate avenue for claims against the state arising from forced adoptions, and a re-elected Liberal government will ensure these claims are managed expediently and fairly.

Despite years of correspondence and repeated undertakings, these women have received no substantive response. The state promised to reply in March 2024. It's now September 2025. Progress has been delayed by staff changes and elections, but for the victims, the clock has not stopped. One member of a client group has died. Others fear they will die before their cases are resolved. Every extra month the delay re-traumatises this group. Every letter ignored sends a message that their suffering still does not matter.

This government does not need more evidence. It does not need more reports. It needs to act. Acting means honouring the Premier's public commitment not to plead the statute of limitations except in truly exceptional circumstances; entering genuine negotiations to provide a fair redress without forcing these women into long bruising litigation; recognising, as the plaintiff's paper makes clear, the state's duty of care was real and the breaches were serious and the damages lifelong.

The women who were victims of forced adoption practices were minors, young mothers, vulnerable and unsupported. They were in the care of the state hospitals and officers who had the power to protect them and instead inflicted trauma. The consequences have been devastating: depression, PTSD, substance abuse, disruptive family relationships, economic loss and, in some cases, suicide.

The moral and legal case for redress is overwhelming. What is lacking is political will. I call on the Premier today to make good on his written word. Do not drag these women through a class action. Do not let them die waiting. Set up an appropriate compensation process now, one that is timely, fair and trauma informed.

Sadly, we cannot undo the harm of forced adoptions, but we can at least provide recognition, compensation and some measure of justice before it's too late.

Jingles the Greyhound - Tasmanian Greyhound Community

[6.20 p.m.]

Ms FINLAY (Bass - Deputy Leader of the Opposition) - Honourable Speaker, recently I had the great pleasure to meet with Katie and Josh, a family that trained greyhounds and their extended family. Today I was shown a letter that they received about one of their dogs and I'd like to read it into the parliament tonight. It's from Sylvia.

> Thank you for taking the time to read my letter in support of the continuation of greyhound racing in Tasmania. The plan to phase out greyhound racing in Tasmania has come a shock and betrayal to so many of us. I feel the responsibility to speak up, to tell the truth, and pose some questions to the anti-racing contingent.
>
> My name is Sylvia Mace, I'm proud to give a home to two retired racing greyhounds Monty and Jingles. It's Jingles' story I want to share with you today in the hope of enlightening even one single person to the truth of what is often referred to as the industry, but which I prefer to call community.
>
> On Saturday morning, 20 September 2025 I took my two greyhounds to the Launceston Heritage Park Greyhound area. Now I don't consider this to be the ideal place to run my dogs, but given the lack of options available, that is where I took them. As is the instinct of greyhounds, Jingles soon began a game of chasey with a small-breed dog in the adjoining park for all other dogs, which directly abuts the greyhound area. Great thinking there.
>
> In the blink of an eye, and who's to say whether it was due to a misjudgement of movement or a quick dip down one of the park's many potholes, Jingles had an open calcaneal fracture. That is, her heel bone had totally broken from the rest of her leg and pierced through her skin. The one saving grace, other than the tendons remaining intact, I suppose, is that she had not also been cut by one of the errant shards of glass I noticed in the grass.
>
> Thank goodness for the two gentlemen at the park who helped me carry my poor girl back to the car to rush her to the vet. Once with the vet she was

analgesed, X-rayed, splinted, and we paused to make a plan for her. Might I take a moment to emphasise here that even a greyhound running in a park in her retirement can sustain a hock injury. This is not a hazard which exists solely on a racetrack, but I digress.

Meanwhile, I sent a message to Katie and Josh, Jingles' racing family, totally without any expectation and just as a courtesy to let them know what had happened to our girl. Never had I seen people galvanise into action as willingly and quickly as they did to help us out. All of a sudden, I was plied with a crate to keep her safe, textbooks to help me care for her well, offers of food, dressing and supplies. They even sent her X-rays to vets all over the country, even internationally for opinions and advice and, ultimately, they took control to organise to get Jingles on a plane from Launceston over to Sandown Vet Clinic in Melbourne for the very best care she could receive. From that moment, they have been on the other end of the phone to answer any questions I have.

This journey with Jingles does bring up some burning questions for me, but Katie and Josh are not the people to go to for the answers on these ones. It's you, it's all of you that need to answer it. That cruelty claim is inflicted upon racing greyhounds. Where is it? The supposed neglect, you can show me that? The way greyhounds are thrown aside when they're no good for racing any longer, which ones exactly? Jingles is now a pet. She's officially retired, registered in my name and, strictly speaking, solely my responsibility.

So, explain to me how a community that responsibly breeds, rears, trains fastidiously cares for, retires, carefully rehomes, and remains involved in the lives of their beloved dogs is a cruel one?

Tell me why Katie and Josh sprang into action to help their retiree? It's all for the love of their dogs. The care never goes away. The love breeders and trainers have for their dogs is of equal magnitude to the love anyone has for a family pet.

But this isn't just one instance, is it? They're just one of the good ones. Yes, well, one instance picked out of countless acts by countless members of the greyhound racing community, that if you choose to look, you would see everywhere.

I've adopted each of my greyhounds straight from their trainers. The dogs have all arrived to me in impeccable condition. Shiny coats, clean teeth, impressively muscled, happy, goofy, confident in the love humans provide them. I'm going away for the weekend. I ask Katie and Josh, would you mind the dog staying in your kennels? Guess what? They're always happy. Their dogs always have clean quarters, they have pristine yards, they play like any other dogs. It's blindingly obvious to me that these dogs are adored and adore what they do.

I can guarantee you the trainer of every rescued greyhound would love to hear how they're doing. Honour their past and respect the community that

knows them best. When you think you're doing the right thing by the greyhounds by just phasing out racing, think of Jingles and think of me and Josh and Katie, and I hope we remind you that you're doing the wrong thing.

Tasmania's Visitor Economy

[6.25 p.m.]

Ms HOWLETT (Lyons - Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak about Tasmania's visitor economy, one of our state's biggest success stories. I'm thrilled to take on the Tourism, Hospitality and Events portfolio. I thank the members of this House today who joined us at our industry led briefing. I'm grateful for the industry leaders who led the session: Amy Hills from TICT; Steve Old from Hospitality Tasmania; Marnie Craig from Business Events Tasmania; and head of our tourism agency, CEO Sarah Kingston Clark.

The Tasmanian visitor economy contributes $4.5 billion to our gross state product. It supports 50,800 jobs. That's one in six Tasmanians, and one in three across rural Tasmania. Visitors support not only our tourism and hospitality businesses, but many other sectors as well, including our primary industry sector, retail, transport and also construction.

As the new minister, I hit the ground running and it was great to join some of our industry operators in Canberra earlier this month for Australian Top Tourism Town and Guides Awards. I was so proud that Cat Davidson of Inala Nature Tours, Bruny Island took out the top honour as top tourism guides. Nature-based tourism is a huge part of why people come to Tasmania and our guides workforce is an integral part of that so this was a really important win.

Silver medals for the Top Tourism Town awards were also claimed by Deloraine and Devonport. I was proud to stand alongside my Tasmanian friends including the acting Mayor of Meander Valley, Stephanie Cameron and the Mayor of Devonport, Alison Jarman, two strong supporters of the Tasmanian visitor economy and inspirational women in public office.

Congratulations to all involved and I know Tasmania will continue to stand out on the national stage.

In Canberra, I also met with important federal colleagues including the Tourism minister, Don Farrell, and Infrastructure minister, Catherine King. These meetings were very productive and provided a good opportunity for me to discuss key tourism priorities for our state.

This included the multiple significant public investments in iconic tourism attractions, such as Cradle Mountain. These projects are at different stages and have some complexity to the funding arrangements between the Australian government and ourselves.

Honourable Speaker, I will continue to fight for our fair share of federal funding for Tasmanian tourism infrastructure.

Dementia Action Week

[6.28 p.m.]

Prof RAZAY (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, last week was Dementia Action Week from 15-21 September and World Alzheimer's Day was last Sunday. I had the pleasure last Friday to give a presentation on dementia to the School of Seniors at Criterion House, Hobart.

The progress of Dementia and Alzheimer's disease is increasing with ageing populations worldwide and it has become one of the leading causes of death in Australia. It is currently estimated that more than 400,000 Australians and 50 million people worldwide have dementia, and that will be increasing to 900,000 Australian and 130 million worldwide by 2050. It is a fast-growing epidemic.

Unfortunately, there is widespread misconception that dementia is an inevitable consequence of ageing and there is a false view that nothing can be done to help people with it. That's why many patients and carers do not seek early assessment and treatment because they think there is nothing that can be done for people with dementia.

However, our understanding of the pathology, risk factor, diagnosis, and treatment of dementia has improved considerably. For example, Alzheimer's disease, which is a type of dementia, is now considered a multifactorial disorder in which genetic susceptibility and risk factor are important. There is also treatment that might help slow down the deterioration of dementia. For example, there are cholinesterase inhibitors that improve the acetylcholine in the brain, and recently immunotherapy which helps clear their amyloid from the brain, which might slow down the deterioration in dementia.

The good news is that Alzheimer's disease can be prevented, and the Launceston Alzheimer's Disease Risk Factors study showed that healthy diets that are rich in fish, especially omega-3, avoiding obesity and abdominal obesity, and not smoking can reduce the risk of dementia. More importantly, exercise is so important because not only can it reduce cognitive decline, but it can even help people with Alzheimer's disease in improving their cognition and physical activity.

The best example as learned from longitudinal studies, shows that lifestyle modification early in life not only can make you live longer, but it can also reduce cognitive decline and the risk of dementia. A recent study from England, in which they followed up with people and assessed their cognition after walking, found that walking three kilometres a day can reduce the risk of dementia by 25 per cent. If you walk 8 kilometres a day, that can reduce it even more, by 50 per cent. I am hoping that just walking, which costs nothing, can help greatly with reducing cognitive decline and dementia.

Therefore, one of my main messages is to raise people's awareness that early assessment, diagnosis, and treatment is so important. Quite often, people worry if the memory problem is due to dementia. I will tell you the good news: 45 per cent of people who come to my memory clinic have mild cognitive impairment and not dementia and they feel very reassured about that.

The other thing that I wish to raise people's awareness of is the importance of finding a treatable form of dementia. For example, normal pressure hydrocephalus, which results from a buildup of fluid of the brain. People think it is rare, accounting to 1-2 per cent of dementia,

but we found that up to 15 per cent of people with a memory problem or dementia have a condition which is treated by inserting a shunt in the brain. It can help greatly in improving their physical and mental function and enable them to live at home independently, prevent them from going to a nursing home, and it will help greatly in reducing health costs in the hospital and in the community.

Bushy Park War Memorial Swimming Pool

[6.33 p.m.]

Ms BADGER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on the Bushy Park War Memorial Swimming Pool, which I am sure all members have received an email about in the last couple of days. I drive past that pool pretty much every other day and it is sad to see what is usually a hive of activity over summer without the usual anticipation of being open for the season. The pool has been closed for the last two years while the Styx River Bridge upgrades have taken place, but this summer it won't open as there are upgrades to the pool facility itself to be done. If these works are not invested in, the pool won't reopen at all. Like many small rural community pools, the Bushy Park infrastructure has reached that point in life where it requires some not insignificant, but neither unattainable investment.

The Maydena community has just made a decision to fill in its closed pool, while conversely, the Mole Creek Community Association sourced the funds to upgrade their infrastructure. They even went on to go and get their bronze medallion so that they could volunteer as lifeguards over the summer. Their pool reopened last November. These two pools are under different management models to that in Bushy Park, but they offer examples of the decisions to come if the Derwent Valley community choose and the work to be done.

One issue for the Bushy Park pool is that the backflow waste does go into the river. That's fixable. Indeed, all aged pools in Tasmania need to be upgraded so that is no longer happening. Similarly, the new filtration pump equipment can readily be replaced. I am told from those in the industry that a modest state grant can keep this irreplaceable community asset up to scratch on that front. Other issues include safe access around the new Styx Bridge. That simply requires some creative logistical planning and rethinking. It's not an insurmountable issue. Historical parking arrangements, including those at the Glenora School, remain a workable option and I note that if the pool is decommissioned and it were to become a park, car parking and access are still matters that would have to be planned for. However, this is not just a pool; it's a war memorial built by and for the community honouring those who served. That's a really special history for this community to have, and that in itself should attract greater funding and grants to maintain the facility. At the end of the day, whatever decision is made, it must have a social licence.

The Derwent Valley councillors are the present custodians but the state government can, of course, help. Fundamentally, community must be at the heart of the decision-making process. I acknowledge the Derwent Valley Council for empowering community to have their voices heard on the issue at local forums, albeit after the community saw a motion to close the pool and acted for a more democratic decision-making process so that all options and opinions could be heard and considered.

I thank everyone in the upper Derwent Valley who have been reaching out about the Bushy Park Pool. In particular Tamara, who put together the petition to save the pool which

gathered over 900 signatures. The community have chosen and they've shown overwhelming support for saving the pool - one of the few facilities available to the upper Derwent Valley community. I call on everybody in this place to support any reasonable level of state funding that can be devoted to helping to keep this facility, be it a grant for an independent audit of the upgrades required and the associated costs, or a sum assisting either the council or local community to assist with the repairs.

Should the present community determination persist, and I suspect it will, then I look forward to a swim at the Bushy Park Pool in the summer of 2026-27.

King Island - Common Issues

[6.36 p.m.]

Ms DOW (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about a number of issues that my constituents on King Island always raise with me, whether that be them phoning into our office or when I'm actually on the island. There are four issues:

(1) The new ambulance station;

(2) The cost of living;

(3) The Port of Grassy study; and

(4) Access to the Patient Travel Assistance Scheme (PTAS) which is another issue that I'll come back to on another day, Speaker, in this place.

King Island has very experienced and dedicated volunteer ambulance officers who have done an amazing job, given many, many years of dedicated service to the community. I place on the record my thanks to them for their service to our community over many years. Currently these volunteers have no station to work from. They have a chair and a desk at the local Tasmania Police building on King Island and there is nowhere for them to change.

The Liberals promised them a new ambulance station in 2024. The site's been identified and consultation has occurred despite residents and their volunteer ambulance officers only being notified of that consultation 24 hours before it was on. Yet the community still doesn't have a definitive date for when construction of that much-needed ambulance station will occur.

My question tonight to the Health minister is: when can King Islanders expect their new ambulance station to be started to be built and when can they expect it to be completed and to be functioning?

I would also like the minister to provide an update on the community paramedic position which has been promised for the island, and commit to the volunteer ambulance officers being consulted about this new role on the island and the appropriateness of these positions for the island and the emergency response that is required on the island at any given time.

I have written to the Minister for Infrastructure about the cost-of-living pain being felt by King Island residents after a number of residents have raised their concerns with me. I put on the record again the extreme hardship I'm hearing from residents about the price of groceries

and other living expenses on King Island. This is a subtle reminder tonight for the minister to get back to me so that I can provide a response about action being taken by the government to my constituents.

Finally, I seek an update from the government on the Port of Grassy Infrastructure Study, which the government committed to back in 2024 at the state election then.

King Island's economy is supported by agriculture, fishing, mining and tourism. These industries rely on sea freight handled through the Port of Grassy. The port provides a docking place for vessels to load and unload freight, cargo, livestock and passengers, making it a vital component of the supply chain. I understand that there will be a focus through this study on port infrastructure, including the wharf, breakwater and the harbour.

It will also consider functional infrastructure like roll-on roll-off ramps and sheds, and storage amenities, and equipment such as containers and trailers. There's been a consultation process back in April, but we're waiting for the final report. I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to release it, to inform the community of its recommendations within this report, and to get on and fix King Island shipping services.

A Tasmanian Lifeline

[6.40 p.m.]

Ms ROSOL (Bass) - Honourable Speaker, I rise to speak this evening about A Tasmanian Lifeline (ATL). Lifeline Tasmania provide a range of services and programs in the state, the most well-known of which is the Lifeline Crisis Support Line. I acknowledge the long-time commitment of the Premier to Lifeline.

A less well-known service, but no less important to Tasmanians with mental health difficulties, is A Tasmanian Lifeline. ATL is a unique service established with state government funding in response to COVID-19 in 2020. It provides support to individuals and communities.

The service operates from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m., seven days a week, 365 days a year and runs with 20 paid professional staff.

I hear often from people who are having difficulty accessing mental health care in Tasmania. The Mental Health Council report that long wait times, high costs, unavailable appointments, and a lack of local services are among the top barriers to accessing mental health care. I would add to that that mental health services are also piecemeal and difficult to navigate, particularly for people who are not in a good mental space.

That's where ATL has been a benefit to the state. It provides free daily support with no wait times from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m., and Tasmanians are feeling the benefit. While funding was initially intended to be a short-term response to the increased stress people experienced during COVID-19, the support line is continuing to receive up to 600 calls a month, and last quarter it experienced a 20 per cent increase in calls. Around 30 per cent of calls come from young people under 26 years of age, a figure that's not surprising given that nearly 50 per cent of young Tasmanians report a mental health condition.

At the other end of the age spectrum, about 40 per cent of callers are aged over 65, many experiencing loneliness and isolation. Any Tasmanian can call the support line and talk about whatever they need to. They're not judged, but they're heard and they're cared for. The service provides callbacks that give an ongoing check in and helps callers know that they're not alone.

Rather than calling an ambulance or presenting at an emergency department in distress, ATL is providing an alternative place to access mental health care wherever a person is.

As it stands, the funding for A Tasmanian Lifeline is due to expire at the end of June 2026. That's still some time off, but I raise it now because the impending closure of inpatient services at the Hobart Clinic has drawn attention to the dire state of mental health services in Tasmania. While the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing has assured Tasmanians that public mental health services have the capacity to cope with the closure of Hobart Clinic inpatient services, the Greens struggle to believe this.

My office receives more emails about problems with accessing mental health services than almost any other issue. Even without the closure of the Hobart Clinic, Tasmanians are having trouble accessing the mental health support they need. It's hard to see how public services will be able to absorb the increased need, particularly when public mental health services focus on low-intensity community services or acute hospital services for severe mental illness.

There is a significant gap in the subacute space, a gap which is currently being filled by the Hobart Clinic. Given this situation, the importance of prevention in the mental health space cannot be overemphasised. The number of Tasmanians experiencing mental ill health is growing, and it's important that we are doing all we can to support people as early as possible to help address their needs and prevent deterioration in their mental health.

That's why I raise ATL today. The ongoing funding of this service is important for our state and particularly important for the many people who call and receive immediate support. I quote from some of the feedback about the ATL:

> I sometimes forget you're calling but I really love that you offer a call back, that someone is calling me, and without ATL, I wouldn't be here. I would have got sicker and be gone.

The world is a troubling place these days and Tasmanians are living with higher levels of stress and distress. For that reason, the Greens call on the government to listen to the stories of need, the stories of failure within the system, and to invest in mental health services funding to the level people need. That includes committing to the ongoing funding of A Tasmanian Lifeline. It provides a warm, accessible service and Tasmanians deserve to continue to have access to it.

Illawarra Road, Longford - Landowners

[6.45 p.m.]

Ms BUTLER (Lyons) - Honourable Speaker, for a number of years I've reported back to this House in an advocacy role for the landowners of Illawarra Road. I am talking about the section, most people in the room would have travelled along there, from the Longford

roundabout - which is also in need of some good repair - to the Bass Highway. So you can keep going straight and go through to Carrick and Hadspen, or you can turn up onto the Bass Highway.

The road, which has been planned to be upgraded since this government have been in power, is now 12 months overdue. It was meant to be complete in December. It's turning a prime agricultural pathway into a heavy-freight vehicle pathway. It's meant to have double overtaking lanes where you've got heavy trucks, B-double trucks doing 100- maybe 110 kilometres an hour with wire down one side. However, we've actually got a situation where you have very busy farm-owners and their staff pulling out onto those overtaking lanes with trucks coming down on their tractor as they're trying to pull out onto that. It's a huge issue, and it's a huge safety issue.

What's happened is the department of Infrastructure have put up 80 kilometre an hour slow-down sections, they've put up demountables, and everything is stopped. They've taken down some trees and they've put in a bit of new fencing, but the reason why they're stopped is because they haven't done a safety risk plan on what that will look like when those 110 kilometre an hour or 100 kilometre an hour trucks are barrelling down that highway on those farm owners as they're trying to enter and exit their properties.

The department were not interested in putting underpasses under that for the farmers who have property on either side, for their stock and for their vehicles. They're also not interested in listening to the farmers over many years because they knew better. What we have now is a problem where the contractor is not prepared to build the road because the department still haven't finalised the plan of that actual road. That's the situation we're in. That's what a dog's breakfast this has become.

This is a prime agricultural path, and the department, our Department of State Growth still hasn't been able to finalise and it's 12 months overdue, a proper project plan of what that road's going to look like. Those adjoining landowners still don't know what that road is going to look like, even though all the 60 kilometres per hour signs and the 80 kilometres per hour signs and the demountables are still sitting there, and all the traffic's travelling at 80 kilometres an hour - which the landowners quite like as they said they can get a lot of sleep now; it's not nearly as noisy and they can turn in and out of their driveways onto that road because it's safe.

This is what happens. The department comes in, they build these roads, and then it's the people who have to deal with the aftermath. There is a lady who spoke in this House during the week. She was fantastic. Her name is Frances Stewart, and she spoke about this. She's one of those adjoining landowners and she was here doing a Pathway to Politics course. This is what she said and she has given me permission to say this in tonight:

> Some years ago, I was of the first of the farming families along the stretch of road we've all travelled thousands of times, the road we rely on to get safe tractor access to our properties and paddocks, our stock to market, our kids to school, and customers to our farm gate businesses.
>
> When the road upgrade plans came, they weren't just lines on a map, they were decisions that will cut through our livelihoods, carve up properties, and make farming harder for generations. We aren't taking it lying down. We're spending hundreds of hours, late nights researching, meeting at kitchen

tables, preparing submissions, mapping alternatives and gathering evidence. We aren't just objecting, we are offering practical, workable solutions.

But when the government decisions came, it was clear we were never truly part of a genuine consultation process. We are being bullied and our voices have been brushed aside. Our lived experience, the knowledge built over decades on that land, count for nothing. We have been treated as an afterthought although we will bear the brunt of these decisions.

Every highlighted risk to multiple threatened species and heritage assets has been concealed and ignored. Road safety and noise guidelines have also been ignored. Instead, we face reports that have been commissioned by government with directives to particular outcomes that favour the corporations set to benefit from the road changes. Consultation is not a box to tick, it is the beating heart of true representation.

Acknowledgement and Commemoration of TFS Volunteers

[6.50 p.m.]

Mr ELLIS (Braddon) - Honourable Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate some truly extraordinary people who have kept Tasmanians safe for decades, people who have served for a long time and some who have served for a lifetime. I had the privilege of attending the Northern Region Tasmanian Fire Service medal presentations over the weekend, and we celebrated some truly remarkable people.

We honoured our fire service volunteers with two separate medals that were presented. The first was the National Medal or, as some call it, the National Medal for Service, which is Australia's most awarded civilian honour, and it is for those people who protect our communities either through law enforcement or times of emergency and national disaster and, to qualify, you need to provide 15 years of dedicated service to a recognised agency, of which of course the TFS is one, and, then, the TFS Long Service Medal, which is provided to those volunteers who have served for more than 10 years and is a medal that is awarded by the Tasmania Fire Service itself and is recognition of that dedicated service.

Some of the people, as I mentioned, have truly incredible experience and, so, if the House will allow me, I would like to read their names into the Hansard. Firstly, the National Medal Third Class, which is actually a service of 45 years - each class is recognition of 10 years:

Ralph Berry, of Weymouth, National Medal Third Class; and Dennis Hall, of Frankford/Birralee, and I will come back to Dennis in a little bit.

The National Medal second class, so that's 35 years of service: Kim Brundle-Lawrence, of Carrick, I will mention her later as well; Jonathan Burley, of Derby; Tom Marrick, of Hadspen, Christine Medcraft, of St Patricks River; and Brian Medcraft Snr, of St. Patricks River, as well, truly a power couple there; and Bill Scott-Young, of Poatina.

The National Medal First Class, for 25 years of service: Sharon Burr, of Bridport, and Scott Hayes, of Legana.

The National Medal, for 15 years of service: Aaron Bailey, of Winkleigh; Catherine Goss, of Longford; Marcus Haywood, of Branxholm; Shannon Hibbard, of Falmouth; Tatum Lyon, of Legana; Alan Perrin, of Kelso; Luke Webb, of Longford.

The Long Service Medal for 50 years' service to the Tasmanian Fire Service we awarded to Brian Baxter OAM. Fifty years is truly an extraordinary contribution to anything, but to do it in a frontline emergency services role for his community at Pipers River is truly something extraordinary and really does take your breath away.

The Long Service Medal for 40 years, awarded at the 45 year cadence: Ralph Berry, of Weymouth, because, of course, this is a new award; Michael Breen, of Winkleigh; Dennis Hall, of Frankford/Birralee; Katherine Hammond, of Legana, Craig Ringswald, of Pipers River; 40 years to Carol Davey, of Ansons Bay; and Susan Ford, of Musselroe Bay, who I will mention as well; Neville Hall, of Frankford/Birralee; Bill Scott-Young, of Poatina; Ross Strickland, of Bracknell; Dennis Woods, of Perth.

The Long Service Medal for more than 30 years' service: Kerry Brown, of Lilydale; Jonathan Burley, of Derby; Terry Hire, of Hadspen; Morris Liddington, of Relbia; Ian Morrison, of Lake River; Sharon Burr, of Bridport; Ron Denne, of Longford; Ian Gabbardise AFSM, of Hadspen; Jim Jetson, of Bridgenorth; and Andrew Thirkell-Johnston, of Poatina.

We had the opportunity to share some great stories. Dennis Hall reminded us that he was basically part of the brigade needing to fundraise for the station and for their trucks, and TFS would match them with putting the pumps on the back.

He said he has actually got 50 years of service but they did not keep records from when he started, so they probably docked him five years for that. Susan Ford talked about when she joined 40 years ago she was doing it because she was looking after the kids at home on the farm at Musselroe Bay and hubby said, 'Well, you better step into the fire service because I won't be able to, I will be working on the farm.' She did, and she's loved it ever since.

Kim Brundle-Lawrence, I mentioned her previously. She is an extraordinary woman serving across a whole range of different services. Very rarely do you see four class for the National Emergency Medal for service in times of great crisis. She is an incredible woman, just as all the people who we recognise on Saturday.

Time expired.

Landfill Sites - Auditor-General's Report into Management

[6.55 p.m.]

Ms BURNET (Clark) - Honourable Speaker, I would like to bring the attention of the House to the Auditor General's scathing report into the management of Tasmanian landfill sites tabled in this House today. The report spells out how a chronically underfunded Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is unable to enforce or even detect environmental breaches at landfill sites owned and operated by councils who are so lacking in strategic guidance from the state government that they are looking to other jurisdictions for best practice.

I note from submissions and comments received, the last point on page four is there were no responses from Break O'Day Council, the Minister for Environment, or the Minister for Local Government. That says quite a lot about the inappropriate and very slow response in relation to waste by this government.

Tasmania has the lowest resource recovery rate in the country, with half of our waste going to landfill. Almost half of this is organic waste, and we don't even have the appropriate levels of food organic collection across much of our councils. This is releasing a lot of methane which is many times more dangerous than carbon dioxide when it comes to greenhouse gas effects on climate change. This green waste could be diverted into industrial composting.

The waste industry says there's no chance of hitting the national target of reducing landfill waste by 50 per cent by 2030. They say that what's needed is a nationally consistent approach to popular programs like container deposit schemes and landfill levies and strategic statewide leadership when it comes to tackling waste.

We know how successful the recycle rewards program launched on 1 May has been. It was delayed, but Tasmanians overwhelmingly want to do the right thing when it comes to waste. This has reduced a lot of roadside waste and diverted a lot from landfill.

Tasmanians have a high rate of recycling clothes and love op shops and tip shops, but government leadership is required to divert more waste from landfill. Just as the recycle rewards is popular, conversely the single-use plastics program has been slow in delivery and it's a blight on the government if this simple process is not put into place sooner rather than later. The recent failure of global talks to reduce plastic waste underlines the importance of acting locally, and the City of Hobart have shown that we can phase out single-use plastics but even the most well-meaning councils are simply not resourced to deal with waste by themselves.

Likewise, the EPA doesn't have the data or resources it needs to operate successfully, reacting to serious incidents instead of preventing them. A survey of former landfill sites found PFAS chemicals in the leachate of every single one. And what of rogue operators? What happens when there are poor disposal practices? This ultimately falls on neighbours to monitor and report and not the EPA nor responsible councils allowing our waterways and neighbouring properties and environment to suffer.

Our Environment minister should be working urgently on updating the *Environment Management and Pollution Control Act of 1994* and empowering the EPA and local governments to regulate landfills properly.

Without a statewide approach to waste reduction, toxic chemicals will continue to leak into our soils and waterways. It's long past time for state and federal governments to provide clear leadership, invest in the circular economy, and take serious action to reduce the amount of waste we produce, plastic, organic and all other forms of ways to divert it from landfill. In summary, this Auditor-General's report on landfills in Tasmania suggests that our environment is being trashed, literally. The Greens call on the Environment Minister -

Time expired.

The House adjourned at 7.00 p.m.